

CHAPTER 49

Winter POV

My eyes feel heavy and gritty as I blink them open, the light bright and the hospital sounding busy from what I can discern. I had apparently fallen asleep during the night while Dr. James watched over me. To my surprise though, he seemed to be gone and I wondered if he'd left to deal with a patient. He is a busy doctor after all and has to supervise his staff.

Oh well, I thought to myself with a shrug. It was none of my business and it was morning anyway. I doubt anything's going to happen to me during the day. I take care of my business and look down at my hospital gown with a sigh. I don't have any other clothes to change into, so all I can do is grab a new gown and have a quick shower, before walking back out and frowning. There's a man I recognize, well sort of, standing guard outside in the hallway, his head peeking in as he watches me. What's he doing here, I wonder? Had Doctor James told him to stand guard? Or was it someone else? He looks so serious as well though. What's up with that?

"I'm here to watch over you," he tells me gruffly, and I give him a nod and a small smile. Well, that's a relief, I guess, but I wonder who has given him the order to do that. Was it Dr. James or was it, Alpha Kai? I suspect the latter even if I can't prove it. I felt a little flutter in my stomach at the thought that Alpha Kai might have come to visit me or that he cared enough to send one of his men to take care of me. It gives me a warm feeling, even if he hasn't accepted me yet, he still shows signs of caring. I would hold onto that as small as it might seem.

I climb back into bed, shivering slightly from the cold, and hastily pull my blankets back over me. The man is watching my every move, but he's also scanning his surroundings with his eyes. What kind of danger does he believe I might be in? I honestly think that last night was an accident, but I'm now seriously thinking that I'm wrong. Otherwise, Dr. James' wouldn't have reacted the way he had.

It wasn't an accident, Winter, it was a deliberate attempt on your life. You have to be careful and don't trust anyone, especially not Alpha Kai. Asshole that he is.

Sabriel, watch your tongue. I know that you don't particularly like Alpha Kai, but he is in a difficult position. After all, he has a girlfriend already. It must be hard for him. It's like he's stuck between a rock and a hard place.

Not really. He's just making it hard. Trust me, the mate bond is sacred.

I still want to believe he'll come around.

Of course, he will! He's crazy not to want someone as incredible as you Winter.

I love you, Gabriel.

Love you too, girlfriend.

I smell the most delicious scent and inhale greedily. I know this smell and would recognize it anywhere. It's Kai's and he's heading toward my hospital room. I can hear his footsteps as they approach and they sound angry, stomping like he's majorly pissed off and I cringe. Was he mad at me? I haven't done anything wrong though, I think to myself, slightly annoyed.

The footsteps stop just outside of the door though, and I exhale in relief. Then I hear his voice muttering to the man who is watching me from outside.

"Langdon", Kai says firmly "I require your assistance with something."

"Whatever it is, I'm at your service" the man, who must be Langdon, said calmly.

"Good, because it's an unusual request."

I frowned at that, wondering what kind of request Kai was going to make. Is Langdon perhaps his Beta? It would make sense. It must be pretty important if he's asking his Beta for something.

"I need you to take Winter in for now and keep watch over her."

I hear a splutter and realize it's coming from poor Langdon, who obviously hadn't been expecting such an unusual request. I feel a little indignant as well. I didn't need anyone watching over me, I was perfectly fine with keeping myself safe. After all, I'd traveled a fair distance on my own, and that hadn't been easy. Even as a mute.

"Alpha Kai," Langdon says slowly, once he's recovered from the initial shock, "do you really believe I'm the best man for that job? Isn't there someone else you'd rather assign to this?"

"There's no one else I trust. Someone tried to kill Winter last night. It could have been anyone. You're the only one I would trust wholeheartedly with my mate."

"Someone tried to kill her" gasps Langdon, and although I strain my ears, wanting to hear more, they drop their voices so low that I'm unable to hear any more of the conversation.

Damn. Sabriel is excited that Kai's showing he cares for us. I'm confused as to why I'm being watched over by someone else if he cares so much. Then footsteps again and Kai comes bustling in, looking absolutely furious as I blink at him.

"Winter," he says gruffly as I sit upright and regard him warily. "This is Langdon," he says, motioning to the other man who comes in and looks hesitantly at me.

"I want him to keep watch over you for now," he says grimly, and I just nod, looking down at my hands and feeling disappointed. He was handing me over to another man, instead of protecting me himself. It more than stung a little.

He exhales, sensing my disappointment. It might be my imagination, but Kai also looks slightly guilty, fidgeting and moving from one foot to the other.

"About yesterday," he says finally, avoiding my eyes, and I felt myself instantly deflate, suspecting where this was going and not wanting to hear it. Please, I think to myself, please don't say the words I think you're about to say. I don't know if I can bear it.

"I should never have kissed you as I did. I had no right, please forgive me" he adds, and I feel sick to my stomach. He's apologizing for the kiss like it didn't mean anything to him, while it had meant so much more to me. I try to keep tears from forming in my eyes.

Langdon looks around the room, looking distinctly uncomfortable, also not meeting my eyes. Clearly, he hadn't been privy to that information, because he also looked very surprised.

"Langdon," he says, addressing his Beta, who snaps to attention, "do not let Winter out of your sight for any reason."

Langdon nodded, looking serious. I want to scream and am bitterly aware that I cannot. I'm here, I want to scream, right here, and I can hear everything. Talk to me!

Kai looks at me and something flashes in his eyes, so quickly that I almost miss it. Was that concern? Or perhaps guilt?

"Winter, I want you to listen to Langdon. He's here to protect you and to keep you safe. Dr. James informed me as to what went on last night and I'm making sure nothing else happens. Until we can find the culprit, you'll be staying with Langdon."

Well gee, thanks, I thought to myself sarcastically. I would hate to ruin his day. I know I'm being irrational, but he's making me absolutely furious, so much so, that my hands are slowly balling into fists.

"Alpha Kai, how long am I required to keep Winter with me?" asks Langdon unsurely.

Kai's head whips around and he glares at Langdon, who gulps nervously. His eyes turned pitch black for a moment and I stared in fascination, wondering if his wolf was in control or if Langdon had just made him that angry.

"For as long as it takes", he thunders, and Langdon flinches.

"Yes of course, sorry Alpha Kai" he quickly mutters and Kai just harrumphs at him.

"Dr. James is discharging you, Winter, so Langdon, you're to take her to your place and wait for further instructions. If anything happens, inform me immediately", Kai snarls, and Langdon emphatically nods while I just stare at both of them in a rage. Do they not realize how condescending it is that they're talking about me as though I'm not even in the room? It was infuriating.

"I have to go," Alpha Kai says quietly as I stare at him, my eyes pleading for him to stay. He seems to hesitate. "I have to go and talk to Candice" he murmurs and my heart sinks. Of course, he was going to his girlfriend.

How stupid of me to think otherwise. After all, why would he choose to actually be mates with me, when he had someone like that wanting to be with him? I couldn't even compare to how beautiful that girl is.

Langdon and I watch as Kai turns and leaves the room, his footsteps thudding loudly on the hospital floor. Langdon gives me a long considering look and I can't help it, my face crumples and my tears start to flow, making Langdon even more panicked as he attempts, rather futilely, to comfort me.