

CHAPTER 54

Winter POV

God, I'm pathetic, that's the only way I can think to describe myself. Ever since I left the hospital and have been confined to this large house of the Beta, I've moped around and refused to eat. I can tell Langdon is getting fed up with me, but honestly, I'm so far gone by this stage that I don't even care. All I can think of is him and the way he treats me, one moment like I'm precious to him and he can't wait to touch me and then, at the same instant, like a burden. He could easily get rid of me by rejecting me. Why hasn't he? It would solve both of our problems.

Sabriel, of course, is clinging to hope. He'll come around, just you wait and see Winter.

Sabriel, why do you care so much? Honestly, I think we could do so much better, don't you? What is it about this man, that has you drooling for him so much?

He's handsome for a start and I bet he's well-endowed.

So? I'm willing to bet we can easily find another man just as handsome and, ahem, well-endowed. Besides, it's not the size that matters but how you use it. Isn't it?

He might not show it but he needs us.

No, he doesn't Gabriel, he's an Alpha. The last thing he needs is a weakling like us or a mute Luna. Honestly, he'd be doing himself a huge favor by rejecting us.

Don't ever talk like that! Otherwise, I'll do something to embarrass you the next time we shift Winter, I mean that.

You wouldn't dare.

Try me. We both know I'm not bluffing.

It's not an empty threat and I'm frightened to wonder what it is that she would actually do. With Sabriel, there's no predicting her next move. But I'm bored as all fuck. However, something Sabriel has said excites me and I perk right up. It's been ages since we last shifted and went for a run. What is there to stop me now? I grinned to myself. Langdon's already left to go discuss God knows what with Alpha Kai in regards to pack business and sternly told me to stay put. But why should I listen to him? I have a right to do what I want so long as it doesn't hurt anyone. Besides, it would just be for a little while. I'm dying being cooped up inside this bachelor house of Langdon's. I need a good distraction.

Sabriel, I want to shift. Let's go for a run.

You don't have to tell me twice, but what about Langdon? He'll be super angry with us. I'm not taking the blame for this, not when it's your idea. Remember that.

Screw Langdon. He doesn't own me and he can get stuffed if he thinks I'm staying here on his orders.

I knew you had it in you girlie. Let's get this party started! Oooh yeah.

I shift, not even caring that my clothes are ripped to shreds in the process. Sabriel is ecstatic at being free, prancing around in my head. I laugh, realizing that we maybe should have shifted outside, but at least we stand a better chance of getting away quickly, right? I let Sabriel have control, if only to get her to shut up. But then she does the most disgusting thing ever by the front door, resting on her haunches and literally peeing next

to the door as I stared in disbelief. She lets out a low growl of satisfaction and begins to trot toward the woods, her tongue lolling out of her mouth.

Sabriel, you have just marked Beta Langdon's door. Do you have any idea how angry you've probably just made him?

Well, I didn't have to do the other one, otherwise, I would have left a steaming heap of it to go with. Show him what I truly think about him.

Ewww, that's disgusting Sabriel. I don't care if you are a wolf, there are boundaries, you know!

I don't believe in boundaries. Ever.

Well, clearly.

It's beautiful outside, the sun is warm and shining down on us. We creep closer to the trees and sniff at the pine scent, delighted in the nature surrounding us. We run, trees passing by in a blur, our paws hitting the dirt floor with a thud. I feel the exhilaration of being free from everything and away from all of my troubles, even if it's just for a little while.

We come to a small stream and, out of interest, Sabriel stops to look at it. I drew in a breath shocked. *Is it my imagination or are we slightly bigger now? Not too much, but enough that it was noticeable.*

We're bigger because we're growing as a person. You defied Langdon's orders to stay put and put your wants first for a change. This is only the beginning of what our transformation could be. Just grow as a person and become more confident. Winter, that's all it takes. Not to mention believing in yourself.

You make it sound so easy, Sabriel.

That's because it is. Wolves are cocky, don't you know? We have no room for doubt in our heads. We just do it, so to speak. Bet we get massive once you finally do the deed.

Did you really have to bring that up for heaven's sake?

Hours passed by and with great reluctance I took back control, trotting back towards the pack house and our prison, so to speak. Damnit. I hate this, Alpha Kai bloody well needs to explain himself to me, and soon! We were approaching the edge of the forest when we heard a low, furious growl from right in front of us. Langdon is standing there with his hands folded across his chest, glowering down at me. Well, I'm fucked, I think mildly to myself. Sabriel just swears at him in her mind and threatens to pee on him as well. I seriously consider letting her do it. That's how annoyed I am.

"Did you have a nice run?" Langdon says sarcastically, "because you've been gone for hours, Winter" he snaps, and I tremble while Sabriel wants to chomp at him.

His eyes narrow and he grits his teeth. Man, he looks majorly pissed off. "You peed on my door," he says incredulously, while Sabriel snickers in amusement. "Literally peed on it" he fumes.

"Peed next to it" he corrects himself, "but you still marked your territory!"

Ha, guess he had no one else do that to him. I was betting a crazy ex of his would have. Just goes to show.

Shut up Sabriel, can't you see how mad he is right now?

I can always make him madder!

Please don't, I don't think my heart can take it.

Langdon lifts his head up to the skies and squints his eyes at the brightness. "God, I don't get paid enough to deal with this shit. He can darn well look after you himself. I don't have it in me to keep playing nursemaid, I'm a man for heaven's sake". Now he's almost shouting at the sky, Sabriel listening intently, fascinated by him, "A man's castle should be private" he's venting, walking back and forth. At this rate, I'm going to end up with whiplash from looking back and forth. Sabriel is fascinated by his behavior and enjoys herself by watching it.

I think we've tipped him over the edge, Sabriel.

Yeah, he's gone loco. How cool. We should have done this to him earlier.

"I've been nice, I've followed his instructions, and does he thank me", he's roaring now as I sit on my haunches and watch. I don't dare interrupt his tirade. Besides, at the moment, it's like he's completely forgotten about me.

"If he wants her to be looked after, then he can bloody well take care of his own mate" he booms at the trees, birds taking flight as he startles them from their perches. "I need my space back" he wails tragically. Even Sabriel is feeling sorry for him now. Clearly, he misses being a bachelor.

Suddenly, he stops in his tracks and stares directly at me, his jaw clenched and his eyes dark, almost pitch black. "Shift" he whispers furiously and I reluctantly do so, standing there, completely naked in front of him and shivering slightly.

He averts his eyes and pulls his shirt off, handing it to me. At least he's still being semi-nice. It doesn't last long.

"Right" he mutters once I'm dressed "that's it, new plan. This isn't working, I'm going to force him to do the right thing" he snarls, gripping my arm and forcing me to keep up with him.

I wonder where we are going. I don't have long to wait. "I'm taking you to the dungeon" he explains apologetically as I stare at him in shock "it's the only way I can think of that Alpha Kai will come to see you. I refuse to be put in the middle anymore", he adds grimly, and I stumble along with him, feeling sorry for myself. Will Alpha Kai actually care enough to come down and retrieve me from the dungeon or will he let me stay down there out of his sight and neatly tucked away? This blows. So much for being free. Sabriel is wrestling with the notion of biting Langdon and I plead with her not to. That will only make things worse.

The door to the cell slams shut and I stare at Langdon morosely as he flushes and glances away. "I'll come and get you if he doesn't come," he says guiltily, "but I'm at my wits' end Winter! I'm a bachelor for heaven's sake and I'm too young to play a father. Besides, Kai needs someone like you, he's just too bloody stubborn to see it. Wait down here, I bet you anything he'll be letting you out by nightfall and, finally, he can darn well have a proper conversation with you, as your mate" he growls. The door to the dungeon shuts with a loud clang and I sink to the floor with a grimace. Langdon had better be right about this because Sabriel was coming up with all sorts of unique ways to pay him back and he didn't want to know just how far she was willing to go. I'm even scared of some of the ideas she's coming up with and how willing she is to take her revenge.