

## CHAPTER 60

### Winter POV

Needless to say, I was still exhausted and drained the next day, and Alpha Kai was still watching over me. I examined him while he slept, fascinated at how peaceful and innocent he looked as his soft snores filled the air. His scars were just as rugged and stood out against the whiteness of the hospital lights, but to me they made him look even more handsome. I still caught him out of the corner of my eyes during the hours he spent by my side, occasionally tracing them when he thought I wasn't looking. I suspect now, that it has nothing to do with being self-conscious, but rather that there's a whole other story, one that he has yet to tell me, that causes him to do it.

When I'm discharged, I'm relieved, as is Kai, who claims he has important paperwork to get to. I feel bad for disturbing his business, but he doesn't seem to be too phased. I'm wondering how I'm going to walk back to the pack house, my limbs still quite shaky and, to be honest, I'm that tired, I'm not sure I'll actually make the trip when Kai shocks the hell out of me by picking me up and carrying me bridal style. As we make our way out to the main entrance, I see several nurses stop and stare and Dr. James, I swear, winks at me on the way out. I grin. I'm rather fond of that doctor. He's so jolly it's hard to find anything to dislike about him.

"Let's get you home" Kai mutters, my arms wrapping around his neck tightly. His hair is soft against my hands and I have to resist the urge to tug on it. His grip is so secure, that I have no fears of him dropping me.

Not with his muscular body and the protective look in his eyes. I trust him completely and that alone shocks me. When was the last time I allowed myself to trust anyone? Even someone whose family is like my brother Damien? Too long. But with a childhood like mine, was that really not to be expected? It feels nice to trust someone, even if it's slight.

*You know, you could easily kiss him from your position, right? Those luscious lips of his, just begging to be touched with ours...*

*Sabriel, I don't think now's the time. Besides, we're still becoming accustomed to trying this whole mate thing and that's if I don't get killed first.*

*That's the thing with you humans, you always have to take it so damn slow. How do you expect to get laid, if you don't start getting the show on the road?*

*I'm not ready for that, Gabriel.*

*Well, at some stage you're gonna do the deed. Unless you want me to take over and do it in wolf form with his wolf? Because I'm totally ready to make that sacrifice for you Winter. Just say the word.*

*Um no thanks Gabriel. I would rather not have you make that sacrifice.*

*Sigh. Well, if you change your mind, woman, I'll be ready to step in in a heartbeat.*

She sends me inappropriate images of her getting it on with his wolf and I fight the urge to block her. Right now, her presence is soothing, even if she's frustrating me just a little bit. The day is pleasant at least, with the sun shining and a gentle breeze caressing my skin and hair. The sky is so blue with barely a cloud in the sky and I inhale the scent of pine and dirt coming from the nearby forest as we walk. It's a beautiful day, one that's meant to be enjoyed.

"I'm going to put you to bed" Kai mutters, his arms tightening further around me as I look up at him wide-eyed. "You need to rest, Winter" he adds firmly as I shake my head at him.

I pout, but he's not dissuaded. "No, you will do as I say", but his voice is teasing and lighthearted. It's pleasant to hear and to see him looking so carefree, instead of strict and foreboding.

Fine, if he wants to take care of me, then maybe I should let him. He's only trying to take care of my well-being after all, and being in a relationship is all about compromise, isn't it? I can accede to his wishes for now. But only for now. I can be just as stubborn when I want to be.

The pack members openly stare out on the grounds, several jaws dropping open as they see their big bad Alpha Kai, holding a woman in his arms and openly carrying her into the house. I guess even with all the gossip, it still shocks them to see Kai with his mate in the open. Hopefully, they see it as a good thing.

He's careful to take me up the stairs slowly, my heart thudding wildly in my chest, despite knowing he would never drop me. He takes me into the bedroom and gently places me on the bed, taking my shoes off and placing the bedcovers over me. I want to moan, I'm in absolute heaven.

"I'm going to place a guard on the door" he mutters. "Make sure no one enters the room while you get some sleep."

That sounds a bit overprotective, but I can see his point. Someone has tried to kill me twice now. It's not such a bad idea. It means I'll sleep a hell of a lot easier.

Then he surprises me even more, giving me a gentle kiss on the forehead as I stare up at him, my eyes shining brightly at him. The last person to ever do that was my mother when I was little and it brings back a feeling of nostalgia.

"I'll see you later" he promises and is out the door before I can so much as nod. I watch the back of him and feel a sense of loss, even though I know he's only going to be downstairs and in the study. It's not like I'm not going to see him again for Christ's sake.

I don't know how long I've been asleep when I'm rudely awakened by someone shoving me roughly off the bed. I hit the ground with a thud, wincing at the pain as my eyes shot open and I looked up to see an angry, pissed-off woman, her arms on her hips as she glared down at me. How the hell did she get past the guard? I know who this woman is, I've seen her before, hanging off of Kai and it makes sense that it has to be none other than Candice, whom Kai had broken up with recently. What the hell was she doing here, and what the fuck did she want?

*Kick her in the nuts*

*She's a woman, Sabriel. She doesn't have nuts*

*Kick her in the vagina then, I'm guessing it will still hurt.*

*I can't do that, let's just see what it is she wants.*

*I don't think she's here for a friendly chat somehow Winter. I don't like the look on the bitch's face.*

*She's Kai's ex-girlfriend. I can't just hit her.*

*Say's who? She's not even supposed to be here. Where the fuck is the guard?*

I awkwardly scramble to my feet and back away slightly. A quick glance at the doorway shows the guard wasn't there. That's not good. How did she manage to get him to leave his post?

"You must be Winter" the woman sneers and I give a small nod, watching her every move tentatively.

Her eyes narrow as she rakes me over with her gaze, a look of contempt in her eyes. I flinch but bravely stand my ground.

"I don't know what he sees in you," she says heatedly "you're nothing but a pathetic omega. You're too skinny, you're dirty and you can't even speak. How on earth are you going to be his mate when you are this weak?"

I just blink. Maybe if I just stand there, she'll just leave me alone. She strides forward and stares at me, shaking in her anger.

"I deserve to be Luna" she hisses, "not you. Do you have any idea how repulsive it was to pretend to love that disgusting man with those horrendous scars? How much effort I put into pleasing him? I was all set to be his chosen Luna and then you had to come along" she says shakily, and I feel sick to my stomach.

She'd led Kai along on a string and the only thing she gave a damn about was the fact she wouldn't get to become Luna? Cold, calculating bitch.

Kai isn't repulsive. How anyone could use someone like that is beyond my comprehension. All she'd ever wanted was to be Luna, and she'd been prepared to lie and manipulate in order to get what she was after. She was disgusting, not Kai.

She must have sensed my reaction because she raised her hand and swung it, intending to slap me across the face.

My hand grabs her arm before she can, to my astonishment. My reflexes were quick, it seemed, and before I could stop myself, I slapped her instead, watching in great satisfaction as she clutched her red cheek and howled.

Unfortunately, this time I'm a little slower and she gets a good kick to my guts as I double over and clutch at my stomach. Fuck that hurt. Sabriel's ready to shift and tear her into strips, but it turns out not to be necessary.

Just as I'm straightening back up and she's preparing to take another swing at me, a voice speaks from the doorway, causing me to stiffen and her to stop short, her mouth opening in shock.

"Candice, what are you doing to my mate?"

It's Kai and his eyes are pitch black as he stares at his ex-girlfriend.

"Kai" she, stammers "I was just coming to meet your mate," she said, pointing at me, "and she attacked me" she lied. My mouth falls open.

Kai sauntered into the room, his eyes never leaving hers. "I put a guard on Winter's room," he said softly, his tone dangerous and ominous. "Where is he?"

"He wasn't here when I came to the room" Candice muttered, but neither I nor Kai believed her.

His eyes glaze over and it's evident he's mind-linking someone. Several warriors come rushing in. "Take Candice to the dungeon" he demands, and Candice's mouth falls open as she begins to back away, a terrified look on her face now. Did she honestly think there would be no repercussions from this? To be fair, I wasn't sure he'd punish her for this, but he looks determined to. Sabriel was prancing around like a unicorn in my mind, pleased at our mate's decision.

"Kai, you have to believe me" she pleads, "it was all her."

He's having none of it. "I saw what happened, Candice", he shoots me a look, "and I'm proud of Winter for standing up for herself. " He adds with a low growl.

The warriors grasp hold of her as she kicks and bucks, screaming obscenities as she's dragged roughly away. "You'll pay for this" she screams over and over, but everyone ignores her and before too long she's gone, her voice fading away completely. I stared at Kai uncertainly. Am I

in trouble? But instead, he crossed the room and held me tight against him, his head on my shoulder. "Sorry" he murmured in my ear, "I'll make sure she never troubles you ever again."