

## CHAPTER 63

Winter POV

I'd heard rumors and gossip going around the pack house that Kai ended up torturing Candice for what she'd done to me. I don't know how to feel about it. On one hand, the bitch had tried to attack me, but on the other hand, she had also been Kai's girlfriend. Wouldn't it have hurt him to have done something so cruel and mean to her, even if she claimed to have never loved her?

*She deserves it, Winter. No one can attack an Alpha's mate and expect to get away from the consequences. Not even an ex-girlfriend. He's showing the pack there are consequences for touching you. It was to be expected and she knew it as well.*

*I know, but sometimes I feel detached from Kai, or maybe really detached. I know we're still trying this mate's thing but it feels so awkward and stiff. I know almost nothing about him. Part of me really wants to get to know him some more.*

*We could seduce him.*

*That's not what I meant by getting to know him, Sabriel!*

*But you would be getting to know a part of him, hint, hint.*

*You have absolutely no shame, do you?*

*None whatsoever and that's the way I like it.*

The door swings open and I crinkle my nose as the stench of blood and lots of it, permeates the air. My eyes widened in shock and disbelief as I saw a disheveled Kai, with blood splattered on his clothes. I feel nauseous. Was this blood Candice's? I guess he had done the torture thing after all. I almost backed away but he held up a hand, halting me in my tracks.

"Steady now," he said soothingly as he walked slowly into the room, shutting the door and locking it as I watched "I'm going to get cleaned up, and then we are going to talk." Um, I think a little amused. "Well, I'll talk" he amends, hurrying into the bathroom. I'm left wondering what it is he wants to discuss.

*There you go, he wants to have a discussion. That's great Winter. Maybe he'll tell you about himself.*

*That would be nice. I feel like we're just strangers sharing a room at the moment.*

*Well, you could acquaint yourselves with each other.*

*Sabriel, stop going there, you're a horndog.*

*Yeah, but a horndog will get some eventually. You, on the other hand, are being as pure as the goddamn snow. You need to get laid girl, release some of that frustration. Heck, jump his bones, you'll thank me later. Or go join him in the shower.*

*No thanks, he's covered in blood and I'm not going to lose my virginity in the shower?*

*Why? It will mean you're extra clean?*

*I don't think it works that way, Sabriel.*

*There's one way to find out.*

*I'll pass, thanks.*

I dimly hear the shower turn off and stare in awe as he makes his way into the room, dressed in only a towel that wrapped around his delicious body. My mouth drools as I stare at him, unable to look away from his muscled chest and arms, my heart thumping wildly while Sabriel begins to prance around my head, like an excited puppy. For once, I was too shocked to scold her. His eyes glint with amusement as he looks at me and cocks his head.

"Like what you see?" he says huskily as my jaw drops open and I feel myself becoming flushed.

Yes, oh god yes, I wanted to scream out but instead forced myself to look down at the ground and blushed, highly embarrassed by my reaction to his body. He gives a chuckle and I hear him rifling through the drawers for clothes, which makes Sabriel extremely sad. Now she's pouting like it's my fault he's putting clothes on.

"You can look now," he says gruffly, and I look up, seeing him come towards me, a smile on his lips. He kisses me, the sensation so pleasurable my lips tingle where we touch, his tongue caressing me until I open to him, his tongue delving in and beginning to plunder me as I gasp, my body beginning to quiver. Reluctantly, he pulls back and I blink, coming back down to earth with a disappointing thud.

"We need to talk," he says and gently tugs me to sit on the bed, while he fetches a pen and paper for me. "It occurred to me, that neither of us knows each other's stories," he said, "and I think you deserve to know why I initially didn't want a mate, even if I've changed my mind now."

I gave a small nod and waited for him to continue. He looks off towards the window, deep in thought. Finally, after a few excruciating moments of waiting, he begins to talk, quietly at first, while I listen intently and hear his story that makes tears well up in my eyes.

"I've had these scars since I was little, due to a rogue attacking me as a child. It never really bothered me much; I was young and foolish enough to think everyone would treat me the same way they had before I got them. But it didn't end up turning out to be the case."

My heart hurts to think he might have been treated differently due to a few scars. How could children be so cruel? So evil?

"I found my mate, my first one at least" he continued, as I felt a small spurt of jealousy within my breast, "not long after, I shifted into my wolf. She was a quiet, studious girl, one that I went to school with and she had the most delicious scent I've ever smelled, well at least until now" he added, glancing at me as I blushed.

"She was sitting under a tree, reading a book as I came up to her. I was so full of myself, so high and mighty, it never occurred to me that I might be rejected. Not when I was in line to become the next Alpha."

He exhales and shoots me a wry glance. "So, it came as a complete shock to find out that she was more than willing to reject me. I could have lived with that" he admitted sheepishly "if she hadn't told me that the reason she didn't want to be with me, is because of these damn scars", he said, tracing them with a finger. I wanted to reach out and stop him, but I didn't dare.

I felt nothing but pain for him. The scars weren't hideous and it wasn't a reason to reject your mate. It must have been devastating for him. Was it any wonder that he was self-conscious about them? What kind of girl did that to someone with whom they were meant to be with? A shallow, vain girl, that's who. Was it any wonder he fell for someone like Candice?

"Ever since that day," he says, fidgeting with his hands, "I've told myself that I'll never put myself in a position where I can be rejected by another mate or in a vulnerable position again. Candice was one of the few girls I dated, and she lasted the longest. Most women look at me and see my scars, instead of the real me. I know now, that Candice was really only

wanting to be Luna, but I convinced myself that no one would ever love me for myself."

I want to cry, his voice sounds so pained, so full of anguish. I want to take it all away, show him that there are women who will love him and not because he's an Alpha. He could have been an omega and I would have accepted him still, scars and all. Why couldn't he see just how handsome he is? I barely even notice the scars anymore. They're a part of him.

I reached out and took his hand, holding it firmly in my grasp and eyeing him carefully. It's moments like these that I really wish I could actually speak and tell him what I'm thinking and feeling. I even opened my mouth to try but nothing came out. I saw a flash of disappointment on Kai's face as well.

"Anyway, you deserve to know. I will change Winter. That is if you're willing to forgive and forget everything that I've done to you so far. We could start with a clean slate?" he offers and I can hear the hope in his voice. He was trying to extend an olive branch. The question was, would I take it?

I want nothing more than to start with a clean slate and forget about the past. He was hurting and I was hurting. Wasn't it time to embrace each other and what the future might hold for us instead? I have to release my hand so that I can scribble something onto the paper he's given me. I held it up for him to read.

I forgive you.

He looks relieved, hugging me so tight, that it's hard to draw breath, slapping me awkwardly on the back. But there's something that is preying on my mind and it's only right that I tell him my story too, so that he can understand where I come from and why I feel the way I do.

I begin to scribble while he looks over my shoulder.

My name is Winter and I'm eighteen years old. My mother was killed by rogues when I was small, and my brother Damien and father blamed me for her death because she died protecting me. They beat me and made me into a slave for them. The scars on my body are mainly from them.

I was bullied relentlessly at school as well and life did not get easier. Then one day, my father sold me, like a prostitute, to a friend of my brother's called Thomas, who tried to rape me. I ended up having to kill him, to save myself. Not long after that, some students stabbed me and blamed me for Thomas's death, resulting in my running away.

I traveled alone through packs and the forest until I came upon a group of rogues who chased me into your territory. The rest of what happened to me, you already know.

It's not very descriptive, but it's to the point and I see his eyes darken as he reads it. He looks furious.

"Son of a bitch" he swears as he finishes, holding me in a tight hug again "I didn't know Winter. I must have made things so much worse for you. I swear, I'm going to make this up to you, make you see that you're meant to be my mate and that I'll treat you right," he promised thickly, and I melted in his embrace, a smile on my face. Because there's nothing but the truth in his words and I believe him one hundred percent. The path we choose now is the one that will determine both of our futures.