

CHAPTER 65

Kai POV

I feel like a completely different person. Like weights been lifted off my chest. Winter trusted me enough to divulge her story to me and I'm outraged on her behalf. Her brother was an asshole and so was her father. It was too bad I couldn't get my hands on both of them, because if I could, I would be torturing them slowly, listening to their screams with pleasure as their blood splattered all over the dungeon walls and floor. I can't believe Winter has forgiven her brother; despite everything he did to her. She's just so forgiving and kind. So sweet. So beautiful. She's perfect in my mind, absolutely perfect.

Alpha Kai, Alpha Laurence is in your office, requesting to see you.

What on earth is he doing here?

I've no idea, sir, do you want me to tell him you're unavailable?

No, I will be down there momentarily.

I break the mind link off, feeling highly annoyed. I wanted to spend time with Winter today. I eyed her thoughtfully. Maybe she wouldn't mind coming to the office with me and meeting Alpha Laurence? It can't hurt to ask anyway.

"Winter?" I asked gruffly, feeling a bit out of my depth "Would you like to come down to my office and meet another Alpha from a neighboring pack?"

Her eyes lit up and she gave a fervent nod. I wonder if she's bored being here, with me constantly hovering over her. Am I being too possessive? I have no clue. But my wolf wants to be near her all the time, and if I'm honest with myself, so do I. I make a note, to stop being too clingy and make sure she has room to breathe.

I take her hand and walk downstairs with her, feeling the usual sparks as my wolf almost purrs in contentment. He's been a lot happier since I accepted Winter as my mate, instead of constantly being irritated at me. It makes a nice change. Usually, we're bickering with each other or blocking each other out of anger. Storm has become a lovesick puppy at the moment.

We walked through the office where Alpha Laurence was waiting. I stared at him with a grimace. I've never liked the man. He's probably slightly older than me and has shaggy auburn reddish hair with green eyes. He's shorter than me, I noticed with a small smile of satisfaction, but still stout and bulky with muscles that fairly bulge from his arms. Winter looks a little hesitant and I give her a small smile, drawing her forward as Alpha Laurence smiles at her.

"Alpha Laurence," I said firmly, "I would like you to meet Winter, my mate."

He looks absolutely shocked for a moment, but then recovers and smiles brightly as he gently takes Winter's hand and gives it a kiss. My wolf and I glared daggers at him, both of us feeling the urge to rip the man to shreds right then and there.

Winter gives a shy smile.

"You are the most beautiful creature I've ever seen," Alpha Laurence tells her and she beams at him.

She looks happy. I feel grumpy.

"To what do I owe the pleasure, Alpha Laurence," I said tightly, wanting nothing more than for the man to leave the office so that Winter doesn't have to be in his proximity anymore. Maybe asking her to come down to the office was a mistake. I'd forgotten how bloody handsome the other Alpha was. Now I'm irritated and trying hard not to show it.

I motioned for Winter to sit down, Alpha Laurence sitting in the chair beside her, while I sat across from them.

"Are you comfortable my dear?" Laurence asks her and she nods and bites her lip, shooting me a helpless look as I scowl at the other man.

"Winter is mute," I told him, "She cannot speak but she can write down anything you want to know."

I hand Winter a pen and paper, which she accepts, looking grateful.

"My apologies sweetheart," Laurence tells her, sounding remorseful.

I glower at him. Nobody gets to call my mate sweetheart but me!

Fuck this, let's just rip him a new asshole and be done with it.

Storm, we can't do that to another Alpha, no matter how much I'm tempted.

He's hitting on our mate, right in front of us.

I think he's trying to be polite.

I don't. If he keeps looking at her like that, I'm going to rip his fucking head off.

Calm down Storm, let's just see what he wants first.

I think it's fairly obvious what he wants, Kai, can't you see him making eyes at her?

We just can't attack another Alpha because we're jealous Storm.

Who made that stupid rule?

"I have some news that you might find interesting. There are several people that are traveling throughout the various packs and territories. Two, in particular, were of interest and now I know why. They are looking for Winter apparently. One of them claims to be her brother. I didn't know who Winter was. I was informed of this by another pack further away, in case they posed a threat to the woman. It's pure luck that I came here first. I wanted to make a personal visit to a friend of mine in the next pack over and stopped here first. Now I'm glad I did."

I look over at Winter, whose eyes are opened wide as she listens intently. She makes a scribbling motion with one hand and I realize what it is she wants, realizing the pen I gave her wasn't working, and hastily grab another one from the desk and hand it to her. She leans against the table as she scribbles, showing Alpha Laurence the paper first and then me.

Do you know if any of the men were called Damien at all? He's, my brother.

"I believe that might have been one of the names," Alpha Laurence said regretfully. "I'm afraid I can't say for certain, but at least now you can be on your guard, should they come to your territory, Alpha Kai."

You bet your ass I'm going to be on my guard. If they step foot on my grounds I'll kill them. Or torture them. I don't know, but I don't care. I want revenge for Winter and what he did to her. But why does she look so excited at the prospect of seeing him again? I know she has told me, well written down, that she's forgiven him, but that doesn't mean I automatically have to like him.

"Anyhow," Alpha Laurence says with an easy-going grin as he stands back up "I believe that I'll be going to visit that friend of mine now. You'll let

me know of any further developments?" he asks, and despite myself, I nod.

He had the courtesy to come and speak to me, and now because of him, I'm aware of a possible threat to Winter. It could be someone posing as her brother and even if not, I'm suspicious of these two people's motives. He's done me a kindness and I need to remember that, no matter how much Storm hates the man.

"Thank you for speaking to me", I grunted out.

"Winter," he says, turning to my mate, who looks startled, "It was a pleasure meeting you my dear", he adds and gives her a cheeky wink while I stand there fuming.

If looks could kill, Alpha Laurence would be a dead man walking by now. As it is, the bastard shoots me a wink and then leaves while I stand there dumbfounded.

You know that unmated males will continue to hit on our mate, don't you?

Storm, she's not the kind of girl to welcome that sort of attention.

I'm not saying she is, but don't you think it's dangerous that she isn't marked yet? At least if she bore our mark, the unmated males would know that she's been claimed. What if the other boy looking for her, is that first mate of hers? Johnathon, wasn't that his name? The one who rejected her. How long did it take for her to admit to us she'd been rejected as well? Maybe she's not over him. Did you consider that?

It is him looking for her.

It's a possibility, Kai. Even you know it could be him; I can feel it. I know it's him. What if it's because he's changed his mind and wants to be her mate now? What if he tries to break you and Winter up? What then?

Even if it is him, and I'm not saying it's going to be, we will deal with that when he gets here. He's not going to just waltz in and declare his love for Winter and take her away. At least I don't think he will, damnit Storm, now my stomach is in knots.

Need I remind you of that night when one of the pack members accosted her while she was setting the table as an omega? Do you want that kind of thing to keep happening to her? Especially when she can't scream for help? If she was able to mind-link us, don't you think that would be a lot more reassuring? Not just for us but for her? It would make things a lot safer for her if she had the ability to get help when she needs it. Besides, it's not like you don't plan on marking her at some stage anyway, is it?

Storm, don't you think you're being a little too overprotective?

If anything, you're not being protective enough, Kai.

Storm is making a valid point. Winter has been in danger numerous times since she arrived at my pack. Part of it was because of me. I recognized that, but someone was still causing trouble for her. What would happen if I couldn't get to her on time? She'd be a goner. Her wolf was too small to stand up to even an average wolf at the moment. She was frail as a human being too. Delicate. I can't be with her every minute of every hour of the day, no matter how hard I try. I could put guards on her, but then what if the guards tried something? Langdon wouldn't babysit her, not anymore. Maybe this was the best option? I'm so confused but I have to make a decision.

All I want to do is protect her. Storm's words keep echoing inside my head as I stand up and gently tug on a bewildered Winter's hand. She looks puzzled but stands, leaning into me as I bend down my head and gather her in for a kiss, my tongue delving into that sweet mouth of hers, caressing her tongue, gripping her hair tightly with one hand, and twining it around my fingers.

Winter will always be in danger while she's unmarked.

Storm's words are insistent and loud in my head. He's not wrong. Before I can think it over some more, or hesitate about what I'm about to do, I find my mouth trailing down her neck, kissing the nape of it softly as her eyes close and she grips my arms tightly with her hands. She's so trusting, I think, a little sadly. There's no hesitation in that girl at all, not when it comes to showing affection, and I wonder if it's because she's had so little of it since she was a small child. I would have thought she'd shy away from it, but instead, she eagerly welcomed all of my attention.

Slowly, I let my canines out, feeling regret and guilt for what I'm about to do, but Storm's words won't stop repeating in my head and it's making it difficult to change my mind. With one smooth motion, I pierce her delicate skin with my teeth and bite down, eliciting a hoarse gasp from her as she struggles in my grip. I shrink my canines back inside my mouth and slowly pull away, licking over the wound until it seals itself closed. There's a tattoo of a black wolf on her neck, dark and prominent against her pale, ivory skin. Now, no one would touch her, the mark clearly stating that the Alpha, which is me, has marked her as his mate.

She's so pale though and trembling as I look back at her. There's such anger on her face that I flinch, her eyes are swimming with tears. But there's something else that doesn't quite seem right. Her eyes roll up into the back of her head, and I only just get to her in the nick of time, scooping her into my arms as she faints dead away. I wiped the tears away from her eyes, feeling like a right bastard.

"What have I done?" I whispered to myself, ashamed at the action I'd taken and wondering what caused her to faint.

It's not the typical reaction of a mate that gets marked, but maybe I frightened her that badly? Fuck. God, I'm an asshole.

I carry her all the way to the hospital, making a nuisance of myself until she's placed in a room, and settle myself into a chair. I will be there when she wakes up, and I will suffer the consequences of what I've done. But even as I vow to do that, a small voice in the back of my mind tells me that I've done the right thing. I just hope Winter realizes that and forgives me for what I've done.