

CHAPTER 79

Langdon POV

My first initial reaction is shock when Alpha Kai informs me of Candice's subterfuge and willingness to kill Winter out of revenge for Kai breaking up with her. I've always known that Candice was nothing short of a detonator ready to go off at any moment. She's always been slightly unstable, desperate to climb to the top, and coveted the Luna position above all else. Nothing, and no one, not even her mate, was going to get in the way of that. Still, it doesn't stop me from feeling a little sorry for her. What can I say? The mate bond still works on my side. I curse the fact that I never accepted the rejection, it would have saved me a ton of heartbreak. I guess I'm just a glutton for punishment. No more, I decide.

Poor Kai. He looked so shocked when I told him. I think he was hurt as well. But what could I say? Candice had rejected me on sight because I wasn't an Alpha and she'd set her sights on Kai. I close my eyes and exhale slowly, picturing that day in my mind. It's forever imprinted in my memories, a painful reminder that I'll never be able to get rid of, no matter how hard I try.

I'd just come back from another trip to the Cold Ice Moon Pack on business. We'd successfully negotiated yet another treaty and our pack was becoming stronger under my and Alpha Kai's leadership. I was ecstatic to be back home, tired of the traveling and needing some rest and relaxation. It had been a long trip and an even longer visit. I was happy to

be back in the pack and even happier to be home. I couldn't wait to get to bed in my own house.

I'd no sooner gotten out of the car when the most delicious and amazing scent of caramel wafted towards me. At first, I thought someone was baking, but as I followed it, sniffing out the source, I came across a woman I had never seen before. Damn, she was beautiful. If I'm honest with myself, she still is. Her pale smooth ivory skin, those big eyes of hers that had blinked up at me in astonishment. Her hair gleamed in the light and a figure to die for. I'd almost been drooling when I stopped where she was apparently walking and touring the pack grounds. I knew instantly why my wolf was going insane in my mind. There was no doubt about it. She was mine.

"Mate" I growled in disbelief and watched as her eyes had changed color, her wolf coming close to the surface. God, I was delighted. I'd waited so long for my mate and now she was finally here. I didn't have to keep looking at each pack I went to anymore. I finally had her. She was all mine. My heart was swelling with joy and contentment. This was what I had been waiting for. The moon goddess had finally blessed me with my own mate to cherish and love.

But then she took a step back, and then another as I stared at her confused. I didn't understand why she looked so hesitant at me. I wasn't going to hurt her. I would never hurt my mate.

"No" she breathed and I flinched, hearing the disgust and the repulsion on her face. "God no, I won't," she said, and my mouth dropped open. She won't what? Won't accept me? Surely she was kidding? She didn't mean what she was saying, did she?

She squares her shoulders and looks directly at me, crinkling her nose and looking like I'm something on the bottom of her shoe.

"I, Candice of the Silver Shining's Pack, reject you, whoever the hell you are, as my mate now and forever more" she spat. I stared at her numbly.

She hadn't even let me get my name out and rejected me on the spot. She flips her hair over her shoulder and storms away as my jaw drops open. I hesitate. Should I go after her? Maybe I could convince her to take it back? If she got to know me better, she would see that I was a loving mate. Wouldn't that be enough to convince her she'd made a mistake?

But my pride is stung now and I glumly begin to walk back to the car. So much for that, I thought to myself sourly. Should I just accept the rejection, or would she change her mind once she'd had time to calm down and collect herself? I lightened. Maybe she was just in shock at the whole thing. She probably just needed time to think things through. I would wait, and I would speak to her again. I would give her time to adjust to finding her mate and get over her shock. I would cling to the hope she would come back to me and realize she had made a mistake.

But she hadn't been interested at all, not in the following few days when I'd attempted to reach out to her, snubbing me and turning her face away, every time I tried to so much as utter a word in her direction. I'd finally given up when Kai called me into his office.

I'd hurried to the study, thinking it was something wrong, that Kai had mind-linked me for something important. I knocked on the door and waited impatiently, feeling sick to my stomach as I smelt her scent there as well. What was she doing in his office? Did they know each other? Maybe they were friends, I thought to myself hopefully. In which case, maybe Kai could convince her to give me a chance.

"Come in" called Kai and he sounded happy, deliriously so. My stomach drops. Something's wrong.

I walk in and see Candice standing behind him, hands on his shoulders, a broad smile on her face as he sits there looking relaxed.

"You called for me, Alpha Kai" I muttered, glaring at Candice. Kai, thankfully, doesn't seem to notice the look I'm giving her.

"I want you to meet Candice," he says with a large smile, "my girlfriend. Candice, this is Langdon, the one I was telling you about. My best friend and my beta." I flinch. He has no idea how much he's just hurt me.

So Kai knew nothing about us being mates then. I opened my mouth to tell him but then paused. I can't tell my best friend that she's using him. Not now. Maybe later, when the flush of the new romance has worn off. Otherwise, I may have to try and hint at it, but I don't want him to be unhappy. God knows he's barely dated due to those scars of his that he thinks are hideous. Women can be so cruel sometimes. I have no doubt Candice is going after him due to an ulterior motive, but I doubt Kai is going to listen to me, and I'm too ashamed to tell him about my rejection.

I hold out my hand and force myself to grip hers, my eyes cold and icy as I stare into hers. "It's a pleasure to meet you," I say with gritted teeth, ignoring the tingles that travel up my fingers and hands. I almost yanked my hand away. Kai looks confused.

"It's so nice to meet you Langdon" she coos and I scowl at her. I can't help it.

"Is there anything else, Alpha Kai?" I said pointedly. I needed to get the hell out of the room before I completely lost my temper and my senses. He looks a little surprised at my abruptness but reluctantly shakes his head.

"No, I just wanted you to meet each other," he said a little sadly, "you may go Langdon. Thank you for coming."

"Actually, I really want to go for a walk if that's alright," Candice says hastily, "it's a little stuffy in here darling," she says, bending down and giving Kai a peck on the cheek while I try not to gag.

"Sure," he says, "I'll just do some paperwork until you come back."

I rolled my eyes and walked out the door, almost jogging out of the packhouse. I just want to be left alone. I'm not in the mood to speak to the bitch right now.

"Wait" she breathes, rushing to me as I fold my arms and glare daggers at her. "Why haven't you accepted my rejection?" she says, annoyed "I'm not going to change my mind. You might as well get it over and done with," she points out, "otherwise it's going to hurt like hell every time I'm with him."

"I'll accept it when I want to, not just because you're asking it of me" I snarled back. "now get the hell out of my sight you bitch."

She scurried off, looking once over her shoulder before she gives a smirk and blows me a kiss. Arrogant bitch. I hate her now but know I have to keep that from Kai. Not that I've ever been good at hiding my emotions.

Now I curse my stubbornness. Ever since that day, I've felt the pain of the mate bond as she slept with Kai, more times than I've wanted to count. My heart's been ripped to shreds and I don't think I'll ever find a true mate to love me. It would have to be a pretty special woman for me to trust her again after what Candice has put me through, that's for sure. I don't know that such a woman even exists.

My footsteps are loud and my heart is heavy. I trudge downstairs, my head staring down at the ground intently. I should have done this in the first place. I should never have let it get this far. Still, it's a struggle to put one foot in front of the other, to keep going until I've reached the bottom of the stairs and greet the guards. They let me through without a problem, used to seeing me in the dungeon whenever we have a prisoner. They give me my privacy.

I stared at her with disinterest. Once upon a time, I would have believed she was the most beautiful woman in the world and now I feel nothing. I'm completely numb inside. I don't even feel hatred towards her. She's conscious, trussed up like a lamb to the slaughter, but there's still a smirk on her miserable face. Does she think I'm going to help her? After everything, she's done? She's in for a rude shock.

"Come to see the torture have you, Langdon." Candice sneers, her voice hoarse from screaming. I don't answer.

She tries another tactic. "Langdon, you have to help me" she whispers, "we're mates, you can't let me be killed. I'll even take back the rejection", she promises, and I smirk at her. She was really feeling desperate then.

I took a deep breath. "Correction," I told her gruffly "we were mates. I've come to rectify that."

Her eyes widened. She wasn't expecting this. But I won't let her be the death of me. She's made her bed, now she has to face the consequences alone. I steel myself.

"I Langdon, accept your rejection, Candice," I tell her, feeling something like an elastic band break as my knees buckle and I fall to the ground, the guards crying out in the background in shock.

She screams, feeling the same pain that I do and then just as quickly it fades away. The mate bond has been completely severed. It's done. I'm finally free, I think to myself sadly, but it's come at a cost.

The guards help me to my feet and I dust myself off, thanking them. I turned away without another word and began to ascend the stairs, ignoring her screams behind me.

"Langdon, Langdon, don't do this to me."

I'm not doing this to you, Candice. I think to myself bitterly, you brought this on yourself. You reap what you sow.