

## CHAPTER 81

### Winter POV

I stare at Candice, directly in her eyes, noting how pale she is. She has dark circles under her eyes that are almost black, but then again, how much sleep can a person get in a dungeon? My bet is not much. She doesn't look as beautiful as she normally does, her black hair disheveled and looking like a rat's nest, her body suspended above the ground, her arms over her head, silver restraints and shackles keeping her upright. I could see where the silver was burning her body. There was no smile on her face now, only a grim expression and hatred in her eyes. Hatred, directed at me. I flinch. It's not like I ever did anything to her. My only crime is the fact that I turned out to be Kai's mate. Apparently, it was enough for her to want to kill me.

"You don't have the guts, to handle a punishment" Candice hisses at me, looking triumphant.

I feel Kai's hand on my shoulder and turn towards him. He looks at me apprehensively. "Winter, I can take care of this, if you want to go upstairs."

I shake my head at him. I'm tired of being beaten down all the time. Tired of being treated like shit from other people. Tired of being constantly underestimated because I'm a nice person. I'm especially tired of women like Candice. So many bullies in the world. When does it end?

"Where's the trolley" I say evenly and he looks taken aback, but motions for a guard to bring one, pushing it right in front of me as Kai gives a

nervous gulp. Even Candice is beginning to look worried now. Good. That's what the bitch gets for thinking I won't do it.

*Winter, you have my support in this, do whatever you feel needs to be done. I won't judge you.*

*Thanks Sabriel, but I'm going to block you anyway. I don't want to make you ashamed of me.*

*I won't darling heart.*

*It's still for the best. I can't bear to have you watch what I'm about to do.*

I block my wolf for the first time since I began speaking to her. I don't want her to see this, don't want her to think any less of me for finally breaking. I place the gloves provided on and survey the trolley, my head cocked to the side. All of the tools glisten on the trolley, beckoning for me to choose one.

"Kai, open the door." I say quietly, grabbing hold of a whip with silver threads in it.

He opens the cell door reluctantly. "Do you want me to come in?" he asks.

"No." I tell him "I've got this." Or at least I hope I do.

Candice snorts. "Listen to her, she thinks she's got backbone all of a sudden." she laughs mockingly. Laughter that's cut short as I draw back my arm and strike forward with the whip, using all of my might. She gives a howl, swearing as I stand there, my face full of determination.

"You little bitch" she hissed and then screamed as once again, I hit her with the whip.

I tuned out her little insults, Kai's staring, the guards commotion. I focused on one thing. How good it felt to take out all of my anger, my resentment, my frustrations out on her. Candice had to have been the one behind the

poisoned tea and the incident in the hospital as well. I could have died each time because of her. She's never getting another chance to get near me or try again. I won't let her.

I wasn't merciful and I didn't hold back, striking the bitch, over and over again, watching her blood trickle down her body and onto the floor, blood splattering the walls and even the ceiling as I ripped her flesh open. When I got tired, I stopped. She'd stopped laughing, and she wasn't joking now. She was deadly quiet, sobs filling the air. Even Kai's mouth was open in shock. I guess he didn't think I had it in me. To be fair, up until now, I didn't imagine I had it in me.

I placed the whip down on the trolley and then grabbed hold of the small dagger, examining it carefully as Candice blanched.

"I'm sorry," she wheezed "Please Winter. Stop please."

I cock my head at her. "You caused that incident in the hospital didn't you Candice? Poisoned the tea as well with wolfsbane that time?" My voice was like a sing-song as I waited. I already knew the answer, but I wanted her to admit it as well.

She gulped nervously. "Yes, Yes, I was" she screamed "Please, please, show some mercy" she begged. I laughed, openly laughed at her, feeling incredibly powerful.

"You want me to show you mercy?" I whispered thickly "Where was your mercy when it came to me?"

She shut up, realizing nothing she said was going to dissuade me, tears flowing down her ashen cheeks. I grabbed hold of her long raven black hair and sawed away at it, cutting it in chunks and letting it fall to the floor. She cried the entire time. I thought I was being generous leaving her hair at shoulder length, when I could have made her bald instead.

She wore no clothes and I perused her carefully, circling around her, like a hunter circles its prey. There. A perfect unblemished patch of skin. Without warning, I thrust the dagger in and begin to cut through her flesh, Candice's head thrusting backwards as she let out a mouth gurgling scream. I took my time, being slow but diligent, wanting my artwork to stay perfect. When I was finished, there was one single word on her back that read 'Traitor.'

I give her a smile of satisfaction, listening to her weeping as I look over at Kai.

"Winter, are you feeling alright?" he asks and I look at him confused.

What does he mean by asking that? I feel perfectly fine, in fact, I feel powerful and have never felt better. It was a rush.

I stab Candice in the mid section. "That's for me" I tell her with gritted teeth as she bucks and writhes in her chains. Another stab, this time to her back "this one's for the girl you used" I snap, a little upset I hadn't asked what her name was "and this one" I pause, thrusting the dagger into her back severing her spinal cord, making her paralyzed from the waist down "is for Alpha Liam who you manipulated into doing your bidding."

I pause and then remember someone else. "This is for Langdon, the man you rejected" I say stabbing the knife into her shoulder and gritting my teeth as she screamed loudly. Her body isn't capable of moving anymore and I back away from her slowly, pulling the knife back out.

I slam the knife onto the trolley and turn back to survey her. Her face looks green, like she's going to vomit and I'm impressed she hasn't so far. Her body is slumped now, there's no feeling below her waist but that will fix itself in time. Beauty of being a shifter I guess, but it will take weeks to heal completely, not days, and it will be painful. The least of what she deserves.

"Kill me" she whispers, so quiet, that I almost miss it completely, my body stiffening as I pick up the words. She really has some nerve.

"Kill me" she repeats and I turn to her, my eyes blazing, my jaw tight and my hands clenched into fists.

"I wouldn't give you the satisfaction" I scream, venting all of my rage as the guards back away and Kai clenches his jaw. "You ruined my life and all for nothing" I laugh bitterly "You were never going to be Luna, you stupid girl. You should have just walked away."

She opens her mouth and spits out blood, that I easily dodge. She's panting, her breathing weak.

"What, do, you, want, with me" she gasps out loud.

I have to think. Even though I'd managed to torture Candice, I still can't bring myself to kill her. Am I a weakling? Or is there something I'm missing to be able to be that cold? Why can't I do it? Why can't I bring myself to kill?

I sink to my knees. "I can't do it" I mumble, frozen solid "I hate you, despise you and everything you are." I laugh bitterly "And still I can't kill you. I guess I'm weak" I mutter, rocking back and forth as her eyes gleam with tears.

"Enough" Kai growls "Winter might not be able to kill you, but that doesn't mean I won't." he snaps, picking me up and cradling me towards his chest.

Candice says nothing, her head slumps back down to her chest. But I stop him, raising my head and looking at the woman who just looks defeated and broken. What good could possibly come from killing her now?

"Don't" I say quietly as Kai looks at me in disbelief "don't kill her."

"She tried to kill you" he growls and I look away.

"I know" I respond "but look at her. She's weak now. That wound will take weeks before she can walk again. Do you really think she'll try again after this? When everyone will be on the lookout for her? She'd have to insane to do it."

"I don't know Winter" Kai growls warningly "You've seen what she's capable of. Do you really want to risk it again?"

I start to sob. I feel so repulsed at myself, of what I just did. It was like I had been another person for a few minutes, that my anger and hatred had taken over me. I need to wash myself and get clean. I can smell her blood on me and it's making me hysterical.

"Just leave her at the edge of the boundary and banish her from the pack" I plead between sobs "Please, don't make me responsible for someone's death."

"What about the girl whose family she threatened?" Kai said in an icy voice.

That stops me for a moment as I look up at him stricken. I had forgotten about that. Shouldn't she have the right to feel safe and secure as well.

"I can't kill her Kai" I whisper, my heart thudding painfully in my chest as I sniffle against his shirt, which I notice, with a wince, is covered in my tears and blood from my clothes.

"I know sweetheart, but I can't let her live." he finished and I can see the pain his words are causing. I slump in his arms. Candice can't be forgiven for what she's done and the poor girl and her family need to be kept safe. What I want is no longer relevant. It still pains me to know she's going to die, but I have to accept it.

"Get me out of here" I whisper shakily. I feel so sick, not just for what's about to happen, but what I've done. How could I?

His hands tighten and he begins to take me upstairs, but he's met by a miserable looking Langdon at the top. I flinch at the pain on the man's face. My god, this was killing him. Kai hands me to him. "Take her upstairs." he orders and Langdon gives a shaky nod and turns with me in his arms.

"Langdon, I'm sorry." I tell him and he looks down at me with the tiniest hint of a smile.

"You have nothing to be sorry for." he whispers.

We both stop as we hear Candice scream out for mercy before just as suddenly it stops, the air around us growing cold and silent. We both know, instinctively that Kai has killed her and without another word, Langdon starts to take me upstairs as I cry silently into his shirt.