

CHAPTER 82

Kai POV

I slit her neck. Winter didn't want me to kill Candice, but I couldn't let her live. So, despite everything, I made Langdon take her upstairs and I went back down to where Candice was waiting. She sneered at me. Brave, even as she watched me slowly put the gloves on and grab ahold of the knife. Even as I approached her, she stared at me, daring me to do it.

"No, don't" she begs and I ignore her, even as she begins to scream and thrash wildly in her chains. My main concern is Winter's safety and finally getting rid of this danger, once and for all.

"You have to die" I growl and walk to the back of her, placing the dagger at her throat, her eyes wide in disbelief. Feeling no remorse whatsoever, I pulled the dagger across her neck, blood spraying the walls in front of her, her screams suddenly stopping. Now there's nothing but silence and it's beautiful. Sorry Langdon I think with a wince, hopefully he did what I suggested and accepted the rejection before I tortured and killed her.

I drop the knife to the ground; it making a large clattering noise and turn to the guards who look nervous now. "Take care of that" I hiss, indicating the corpse hanging from the ceiling "clean up this mess, do you hear me" I growl with my eyes pitch black. Both of them nod quickly as I tear the gloves off and go bounding upstairs. No doubt, Winter heard Candice's screams stop and knows what I've done, but I did it to keep her and everyone else safe. She has to realize that.

Langdon meets me at the bedroom door. "She's pretty distraught." he comments "Won't stop crying. She thinks she's a monster for what she did to Candice."

I'm incredulous. Winter had gone easy on Candice, at least as far as I'm concerned. I would have tortured the bitch for far longer and far worse than what she'd done. But Winter had never tortured anyone before, in fact up till now, she was the one who'd been beaten and tortured. Was it any wonder she was conflicted? I don't think so. But she's not a monster, she would never be a monster to me.

"I had to do it." I tell Langdon, feeling sorry for the man, but he just nods and looks away, his claw clenched.

"Don't apologize." he mutters "You did what was right. Winter will understand that too."

I nod and then make my way into the bedroom, closing the door cautiously as I hear Winter's quiet sobs coming from the bed where she's lying, curled up in a fetal position. They tear me apart. She sounded so devastated. I perch on the end of the bed, trying to think of what to say and how best to try and comfort her, or at least distract her, but I'm coming up empty. I'm not good at this sort of thing and it shows.

Come on man. There's got to be something you can say to make our mate feel better Kai.

What do you suggest Storm?

I don't know, how about I'm sorry you're hurting right now?

I guess I could, but nothing is going to make her feel better right now.

No, but at least distract her from her misery, her crying is making me want to cry.

Really?

No, but I feel very uncomfortable from the crying. Fix our mate.

You can't just fix someone.

Do it anyway.

Stupid wolf, I grumble to myself, focusing on Winter who is weeping into the pillow. I reach out and touch her hair, stroking it softly. "Winter, Winter, will you look at me?"

She continues to sob, but her eyes glance up at me, tears trickling down her cheeks. She looks stricken.

"I'm a monster!" she wails "A horrible human being."

I'm confused. Why would she think that?

"Winter," I say delicately "You're not a horrible human being. Why are you saying that about yourself?"

She cries harder as I wait patiently, sitting closer to her and rolling her to face me.

"Because," she stammers "Because I enjoyed hurting Candice" she cries "That's what makes me a monster."

Oh, the poor sweetheart. She thought because she'd enjoyed it that made her horrible. After all the times she'd almost died at Candice's hand, she had every right to enjoy inflicting pain on the woman responsible. That didn't make her a monster, if anything that made her human.

"Winter, she's almost killed you, several times since you've come to this pack. She's hurt you in so many ways and not just physically. You enjoying hurting her back? That was revenge and it doesn't make you any less of a person. In fact, that makes you human." I tell her honestly, trying to project compassion into my voice. Please God, I think to myself, let this work.

Should we go get a tub of ice cream and some wine? That always helps when chicks are sad in the movies?

Storm, this isn't a movie.

Still think it's a good idea Kai. Let her binge her problems away and her sadness.

How do you know she won't bang us over the head for your stupid suggestion?

Chocolates then, what woman doesn't like chocolates? Or Flowers.

You're really uncomfortable with her crying, aren't you?

It makes me feel odd Kai, I don't like it. Make it stop, throw some jewelry at her or something.

Do you want to take over and comfort her?

Would you let me?

Hell no, you'll get us both banished from the room.

You have so little faith in me Kai.

No, I'm just a realist.

"You really don't think I'm a monster" Winter says in a wavering voice as she wipes the tears from her eyes and sits up, now meeting my eyes.

"Of course not." I tell her "If anything I was slightly impressed with how you held it together. Winter, you don't enjoy hurting people and that's alright. Your kindness and your inner strength are one of the things I love about you." I say and watch as her tears begin to fade away and the stricken expression falls from her face. Now there's a tentative smile there instead. I open my arms and she falls into them, sniffing against my shirt, her eyes closed. I kiss the top of her head, grateful to see that she's calmed down somewhat.

"Kai" she says "I love you."

It's like an arrow pierced my heart. I'm in awe at how simply she says it, how easily. Like it's second nature to her. My heart is thudding wildly in my chest.

"I love you." I say stammering back, but I mean every word. I have fallen in love with Winter. It's taken me this long to admit it to myself. She's everything to me. I don't think I can imagine my life without her.

She wrinkles her nose and gives a sniff, looking up at me repulsed. "I think we should freshen up." she says with a grimace "You have blood on you and so do I." she says with a sigh. I give her a wicked grin. "You could join me in the shower." I say with a wink and she bats her hand at me with laughter.

"No thank you. I'm thinking more, that I soak in the tub while you shower." she says pointedly.

"But what if I want a bubble bath?" I ask whining.

Dude, I'm not getting in a bubble bath. It's not manly

Chill Storm, it's not like it affects you.

It affects my image and my reputation.

Really Storm? I think you're getting a bit obsessive over how you're perceived.

Not obsessive enough. You get in that bubble bath and I swear to God, I'll refuse to speak to you for a week.

Well now it sounds tempting. Besides bubble baths are relaxing.

I don't like the feel of bubbles! Alright! No bubbles!

Sheesh, my wolf has serious issues.

"Do you want the tub after me then?" Winter asks, breaking up my thoughts.

I laugh and shake my head. "No, I'll take the shower, that way I get to feast my eyes on you naked." I tease as she blushes. God she's adorable. Even after that fantastic night together, she still gets embarrassed about showing her perfect body to me.

I start the water for the tub first, Winter turning her back to me as she struggles out of her clothes. I look at the bandages and very quietly, begin to help her peel them off. God, her wounds are healing but it's clear to see she has new scars now over the old ones. I trace them with my finger, swallowing past the lump in my throat.

She climbs into the tub and fills it, soaking in it luxuriously as I shrug out of my own clothes and fling them to the floor. I'd have to organize fresh sheets on the bed as well, but that could wait until we were both dressed.

I've barely stepped into the shower, moaning as the water hits my muscles, when that dratted Langdon decides to mind-link me.

Alpha Kai, we have a bit of a situation.

Whatever the situation is Langdon, I'm certain that you're more than capable of dealing with it, aren't you Langdon?

Well yes, but I really think you should weigh in on this. It does affect Winter after all?

Speak plainly man. What the hell is wrong then Langdon.

God, I was going to murder Langdon with my bare hands. My hands clench into fists in my anger and Winter looks at me startled, seeing my eyes are glazed as I continue to speak to Langdon, my back slightly to her. Surely, Winter was not going to be affected by anything else? Shit. Then I remember the reason for Alpha Laurence coming through. Could this be to do with that?

Patrol caught two shifters near the boundary line. Both male, both teenagers.

Well, just throw them in the dungeon, like we do with all trespassers. Candice should have been taken out of there by now and the guards were told to clean up. I'm not really understanding the problem here.

The thing is, Alpha Kai, they say their names are Johnathon and Damien. Damien claims he's looking for Winter and he's, her brother.

Fuck. This is the last thing Winter needs right now. I guess we really have no choice. Have them escorted to the study then and guard them. They better be who they say they are, else I'm going to strangle them both to death.

What about Winter?

I'll inform Winter, but I'm guessing we'll both be coming down to the study in a few minutes. Do not tell them anything. Is that clear?

Perfectly Alpha Kai. I'll see you in a few minutes.

I break the mind-link, cursing silently in my mind, turning around to face a very puzzled and concerned looking Winter.

"Kai" she says tentatively "what's wrong?"

I take a deep breath. I'm just going to have to break it to her. Even though she's just had a traumatic experience. But maybe she'll be happy to hear about her brother Damien? I'm pissed to find Johnathon, the son of a bitch who had the audacity to reject her, is also there. My hands itch to teach him a lesson. Then again, if he hadn't rejected Winter, I wouldn't have her by my side as my mate.

"Winter" I say slowly "That was Langdon. He caught two shifters near our boundary line."

"Oh," she says relieved "So it was just a patrol thing."

"Not quite," I admit, my eyes gazing into hers "Their names are Johnathon and Damien. One of them is claiming to be your brother."

I watch the myriads of expressions cross her face. First there's shock, then surprise, then fear, concern, worry and then hope, followed by a small spurt of happiness. Damnit. She's glad to find out he's come all the way here.

"Damien's here." she breathes out excitedly, her eyes dancing "My brother came to find me." she says, hastily standing up and sending water sloshing over the tub. "He must have been so worried." she whispers, almost leaping over the side of the tub in her haste.

I quickly turn the water off and reach for the towel. "Steady," I warn her "We don't know why he's come, and I get you're excited, but I don't want you to get hurt. We'll go see them together."

She clasps her hands together with glee. "My brother wouldn't have come here to hurt me." she says confidently.

Maybe not, I think to myself bitterly, but he had no issues hurting you in the past, or have you forgotten about that already Winter?