

## CHAPTER 98

Jonathan POV

"You mean she has no memories of us at all?" I ask in disbelief, the others hanging onto my every word as we crowd around in the study. Kai looks at me angrily but I don't care. How the hell does Winter manage to lose her memories. I didn't think her injuries had been that serious. Now I feel like an idiot.

"None" Kai says heavily "she doesn't remember me, her brother or any of you guys" he adds, indicating myself and Langdon.

I scowl at him. "For how long?" I ask irritably.

"It could be days; it could be months before she gets her memories back" Kai shoots back "we can't force her to try and remember"

I don't have months though. I sigh. Damien understands the reason for my angst and shoots me a sympathetic look but I don't want his sympathy.

"So, what are we supposed to do in the meantime?" I ask and Kai looks frustrated.

"We just encourage her to remember. Remind her of things she likes and what we've done together."

Well, that's not helpful.

"I don't exactly want to remind her of her past" Damien grumbles "it's not exactly something that's going to make her happy" he adds and I know his

reasoning. After all, he more than anyone, well maybe except his father, bullied Winter relentlessly at school and at home. I don't blame him for not wanting to remind Winter of that.

"I don't think we should mention her father either" I shoot out irritably and Damien gives a small nod, looking glum.

"So, we tell her about all the good things" Langdon points out, arms folded across his chest. "All the little things. I know she likes purple flowers for instance, roses in particular."

Kai looked thoughtful. "I can remind her of the first date we had together."

"Oh, and what about when you guys went for a run for the first time?" Langdon says to Kai eagerly. Kai nods furiously.

Well, I feel left out. There are no fond memories that Winter's going to have of me. Rejecting her at first sight wouldn't exactly make for a memorable moment. IT would just leave a sour taste in her mouth. My heart feels sad. I really wanted to show her how much I've changed, for the better, and instead she's lost all memory of me. The irony. I guess its karma coming back to bite me in the ass. It's the least of what I deserve.

Besides who am I kidding? Winter's never going to give me a second chance. Not when she has a mate like Kai. I didn't stand a chance of trying to persuade her to give me a shot. Besides Kai seems to genuinely love her. For who she is, and every time he glances at her, I can see the love in his eyes for her. I want that. I've given up on thinking I never want a mate, now I see just how special it is, even Langdon and Damien make a really cute couple and can't seem to keep their hands off of each other. It's really adorable.

"The only memory she has really of me, besides being here, is me rejecting her" I say softly, meeting Kai's eyes. "I'd rather she not remembers it."

"She's going to want to know who you are" points out Kai gruffly.

I look him directly in the eyes. "I plan on avoiding her until I leave tomorrow."

He looks surprised. "Why avoid her? Even if you're just friends. . ." he trails off.

I take a deep breath and steel myself "because it hurts too much to be near her and not touch her" I say honestly as Kai looks taken aback.

"Johnathon" Damien says softly "you rejected Winter, remember."

"I know" I answer "and Kai I wouldn't dream of trying to take her from you. But seeing her with you, just reminds me of what I don't have and what I let slip through my fingers. It's unbearable" I choke out.

"I understand" Kai assures me. "I would feel the same way in your shoes. But where are you going when you leave? Back to your pack, or will you continue to travel?"

I think about it. Mother's probably missing me like crazy by now and to be fair, I miss my pack and the responsibilities that go with it. I've managed to do what I set out to do, and that's save Winter. Now it's time I go back and maybe, if I'm lucky, I'll even find a second chance mate like Winter has.

"I'm going back to my pack" I say quietly "it's time for me to become Alpha again."

I look over at Damien. "Are you going back to your pack?"

You could have cut the tension with a knife as Damien tensed and Langdon looked up scowling. Clearly, they hadn't discussed the future yet. Ouch. I guess I really put my foot in it.

"I um don't know yet" Damien stammers, looking at Langdon with beseeching eyes "I think I might stay for a while, that is if it's alright with everyone else?"

"I have no problems with you staying in my pack" Kai answers easily, looking at his beta "and I assume Langdon would like you to stay with him in the meantime?"

Langdon gives a big huff. "Of course I want Damien to stay with me, but I don't want him to feel like he's being forced to."

"I'm not" growled Damien looking exasperated.

"Then that's fine" Langdon growls back.

Kai looks amused and I'm trying to stifle my own laughter as well. They are so well matched to each other, especially with their personalities being similar. I feel envious of their relationship. They're just like Winter and Kai in some aspects and it's sweet to see.

"At least I know that my mate isn't in any of the packs we travelled at" I say with a grimace "so mine might even be back at my pack. I can hope"

"Do you want to say goodbye to Winter" offers Kai "she's sleeping at the moment and I doubt you'll wake her up."

"You don't mind?"

"I wouldn't have suggested it if I did" Kai says wryly.

He stands up and I follow suit, following him out to the corridor and quietly upstairs.

"As long as you don't do make too much noise, she'll stay asleep" Kai whispers "she's a deep sleeper."

Ouch. My heart skips a beat at hearing that. Of course, he would know that she was a deep sleeper, after all they had been sharing a bedroom, well until now at any rate.

He gently opens the door and gestures me inside.

I walk inside and my eyes focus on Winter. She's snuggled under the covers, clutching a large teddy bear. I frown. I'm pretty sure that Damien was giving her a teddy bear when he went to visit. It must be this one. Her chest moves evenly up and down. Her eyes are closed and her soft snores are filling the air. Her hair is spread out on the pillow, some of it even covering part of her eyelids. I want to touch it, push it back from her face, but I'm extremely aware of Alpha Kai, who is standing in the doorway watching me.

I do it anyway. Her hair is soft, silken and I feel it with my fingers as I brush it aside, kneeling beside her.

"Hey Winter" I whisper, a lump in my throat "I um, wanted to come and see how you are doing. You look like you're okay."

I feel foolish and glance towards the doorway, relieved to see that Kai has gone, presumably to give us both some privacy. He must trust me not to do anything stupid.

"I wish I could tell you how much I hate myself for rejecting you and how much I wish I could take it back. You're a pretty special girl Winter. You're strong, brave, compassionate and loving towards everyone. Even with what I did, you didn't hate me for it. You forgave me, like it was nothing. Because that's the kind of girl you are."

I pause. "I know that we can never be together and I'm happy for you and Kai. He seems to really love you and I know that you love him. You deserve to be happy. You deserve to be loved. I hope from now on, that your life becomes a lot easier and that you continue to be happy every day

of your life. I wish I had the guts to tell you all of this to your face and more. I can't stay any longer Winter; I have to go back to my pack. I know you don't know who I am anymore, which hurts, but it's not your fault. I just wanted to wish you all the best and tell you goodbye forever Winter. I'm leaving tomorrow. I want you to know I love you, and you'll always have a special place in my heart."

I stop, feeling choked up. I lean forward and gently kiss her on the forehead, watching her eyelids flutter and then settle. I stand up and quietly walk towards the doorway, my shoulders slumped in defeat. I can't help looking over my shoulder to get one last glimpse of her, before I gently close the door behind me, leaving Winter to her sleep.

Kai meets me at the head of the stairs. I wonder how much of that he overheard. But he says nothing. Instead, he gives me a small smile and walks me back down towards the study. It's empty. Damien and Langdon have obviously left to do something else. Kai closes the door behind him.

"Listen" he says firmly "you did me and Winter a great service coming to her rescue and to warn her about the danger. Is there anything we can do for you? Name it and I'll arrange it" he breathes. I can hear the gratefulness in his voice. I cringe. There's nothing I want from him. Well almost nothing. An idea sparks in my mind. "Actually, maybe we can do each other a favor" I say with a smile, leaning back in the chair "how does a treaty between our two packs sound?" I coax.

He's silent for a moment and I wonder if I've overstepped my bounds. But then he stares directly at me, a small smile playing on his face. "I would be honored to sign a treaty with your pack. If anything should happen, I am more than happy to offer my aid Alpha Johnathon" he breathes.

"Can we organize it before the morning?" I enquire. I don't want to delay my plans. Not after officially saying goodbye to Winter. It would hurt too

much to stay here and have to watch her with Kai. I really need to get out of here.

"I can organize it within the hour" Kai answers with a grin, pulling out a bottle of bourbon from his desk. He offers me a sip but I shake my head. I've never liked the taste of bourbon. He takes a swig in front of me and then his eyes glaze over.

"Right, I've got a lawyer, a witness and Langdon coming back to the study" he says fixing his gaze on me "not to mention a notary. I told you I'd organize it quickly" he says proudly and despite myself I'm impressed. He's done it a lot quicker than I'd anticipated. This time when he offers the bourbon I take a small sip, trying not to splutter as it burns my throat going down. I hastily give it back to him.

"To a treaty between our packs" Kai cheers and I smile and nod.

"To the treaty between our packs" I say back, grabbing the bottle and drinking from it. This time it goes down a lot easier.

Within the hour the treaty is signed and I carefully place it in a bag that Kai has produced for me, along with a small pile of clothes.

"I can send you in a car with a small group of warriors" Kai says to me "it would really ease my mind to know you're not travelling back alone."

I cock my head. It sounds a lot better than travelling back on my own and quite frankly a car would be absolute luxury as the weather is getting cold and quite wet.

"Can I leave now?" I ask quietly and he hesitated then nods.

"I'll arrange it. Is there any reason you want to leave so badly?"

"I hate goodbyes" I say calmly and it's the truth. Within minutes, I'm in a car heading back towards my pack house. Goodbye Damien, Langdon and

Winter, I think to myself a little sadly. There was no telling if I would ever see any of them again.