

## **Silent Mate 101**

### Chapter 101 - The Alpha's Rejected Silent Mate

Damien POV

Well I've spent some time with Winter, trying to make her remember me and the small, very rare, good parts of her childhood but it's been difficult. She still can't fully remember and it makes it awkward. We feel like strangers rather than the family that we are. Poor Kai is devastated. It can't be easy seeing the mark on her neck suddenly gone. Plus he's too nice to just mark her without her consent. I know if that happened with Langdon I'd be pretty upset.

Langdon's been pretty quiet lately. I've just gotten into the shower, wondering where on earth he's gone to, when the door opens and he comes waltzing in. I raise my eyebrows. He leans back against the vanity and folds his arms, his expression unreadable. "Do you want to join me?" I offer but he shakes his head.

Damn. I was hoping he would.

"Thanks, but I'm enjoying the view" he purrs and I can't help but blush. Even now, I still have a reaction to the man. My body just does it automatically.

"If you got undressed, I could enjoy the view too" I grumble as he chuckles.

"Are we training today?" I ask him eagerly. He's been super wicked at showing me the ropes and training me. It's been fun. But he looks pensive.

"To be honest" he says calmly "I thought we could do something else today instead."

Now I'm intrigued. "What kind of thing were you thinking of?" I ask slyly.

He grins. "It's a surprise."

I groan out loud. I'm not particularly fond of surprises but if my mate wants it to be, then I'll go along with him. Besides, now that I'm looking at him closely, he looks excited, more so than usual. It has to be something pretty important then.

"Does Kai know about this surprise?" I ask suspiciously. After all, as the Beta, Langdon can't just walk away from the pack for anything without permission.

"Of course" Langdon says lightly as I turn the water off in the shower and wrap a towel around the bottom half of me.

He follows me back out to the bedroom. Man he must have been up super early today to be dressed and showered before me. I thought I was an early riser, but he's even worse.

"How should I dress then?" I say exasperated "formal, not formal?"

"Wear something comfortable and loose" he says and I eye his clothes with raised eyebrows. He's dressed in trousers and a shirt, so I figure I should do the same. Except that I go for black jeans and a white shirt. He looks impressed, licking his lips. I give him a wink.

"Follow me" he orders.

We walk down to the garage, and I'm expecting to see his car. But instead he retrieves two helmets and hands one to me. Well, that's a surprise in itself. I hadn't known he had a bike. Now my own heart is thudding wildly in my chest. I've always wanted a motorbike but could never afford one. Besides it hadn't made sense to get one when I had a perfectly working car. He leads me to a harley and I drool at it. It's a fine piece of work, leather seats, huge motor, one large piece of beauty. Langdon laughs at the expression on my face. He gets on and flips the helmet over his head.

"Get on" he shouts, his voice muffled by the helmet.

I gingerly get on behind him, wrapping my arms tightly around his waist for balance. He starts the bike with a loud roar, and then slowly peels out as I tremble in excitement.

We head out of the pack house and onto the main roads, swerving between the traffic. Langdon seems to be a pro at handling the bike and it's so fast, it easily surpasses the cars on the road. The wind is rushing through my hair and I feel free, freer than I've ever felt in my life. We begin to slow down once we reach the city, to my disappointment and he pulls into a parking lot, full of cars. I narrow my eyes. Has he brought me to a carnival? Sweet, uptight Langdon? Surely not.

I climb off the bike and pull off the helmet, Langdon climbing off slowly, a wide smile on his face. "I hope you like carnivals"

he teases. My heart skips a beat. Man I love carnivals. I wonder who told him, or like me, he loved them as well.

"Brilliant" I breathe out, handing the helmet to him and watching him place it on the handle bar.

"I thought it was time we went for our first date" he announces, grabbing hold of my hand and leading me to the entrance. He pays for our entry and then we head inside.

My head swings everywhere. Where did we go first? There were so many choices. Then I spot the rollercoaster and my eyes light up as I drag him over. Langdon clutches the front of the seats, looking green as we go up and over, spinning around fast. When it's finished I have to help him out, his legs swaying slightly as he walks. I have to stifle my laughter.

"How about that one?" I ask eagerly, pointing to a ride that went up high and then dropped quickly.

Langdon goes pale. "Sure" he stammers.

"We don't have to" I protest but he shakes his head.

"No let's do it."

The poor sweet man screamed the entire time we dropped. He also went so pale I thought he was going to faint. I helped him out, feeling slightly guilty. I should have insisted on doing something else.

"Langdon do you even enjoy carnivals?" I ask suspiciously.

He looks sheepish. "I kind of heard you say how much you like them, so I thought it would make a perfect date" he mumbles "I'm not too fond of them myself to be honest."

I'm so touched. He was doing something special for me, even though he didn't really enjoy it.

"How about the ferris wheel" I say softly. Surely that ride would be alright for him.

His eyes light up. Score one for Damien, I think to myself.

"Let's do that last" he suggests "get some ice cream and fairy floss first?"

Man I'm down for that. Not to mention the endless games that are waiting for me. Langdon seems content to stand and watch me, eating the fairy floss and even stealing mine. Not that I mind. I'm having a blast. We even do a ring toss game together. He's really relaxed out here and it's a good side of Langdon that I'm seeing. He's not so uptight out here, away from all his responsibilities of the pack. He's even content holding my hand, despite the strange looks we are receiving and the occasional insult under someone's breath. It doesn't seem to bother him at all. It doesn't bother me. I thought it would, but to be honest, all my focus is on him and the enjoyment of the date. Everything else around us seems to fade away.

"Man I'm stuffed" I growl, patting my stomach. So much fairy floss and ice cream, not to mention the hot chips and hot dogs I've eaten. I feel like I'm about to explode. Langdon hasn't fared much better, but he mainly stuffed himself on fairy floss. Apparently it's a weakness of him.

"I feel like I'm going to need to be rolled back to the motorbike" grouses Langdon "I shouldn't have eaten so much."

"You ate less than I did" I point out with amusement "you really should have tried one of those hot dogs."

He wrinkles his nose. "Do you even know what's in a hot dog" he demands.

"No" I groan "and I don't want to know. Not unless you want me to be sick at any rate."

"Is there any other games or rides you want to go on?" Langdon queries.

I shake my head, then remember. "We were going to go on the ferris wheel" I mutter. It's not as crowded at the carnival now, not when it was starting to get late. We'd spent out here.

"Oh yeah" Langdon said quietly.

We turn towards the ride, grateful to see there's hardly anyone waiting. Langdon pays for our tickets and I swear he's talking to the ride operator, because it takes him ages to come back.

"Everything alright?" I ask him.

He looks taken aback. "Yeah everything is fine" he babbles.

My eyes narrow. He's up to something, I'm sure of it.

We get to the head of the line and sit down, putting the safety bar over us. The ride begins and the view is amazing. You can see over the city, the bright lights, the sunset, all of it. It's beautiful. I'm in awe. I'm glad we decided to do this ride last, because the view is nothing short of spectacular. Then the ride stops suddenly. I glance downwards nervously, but Langdon has a wide grin on his face. Did he know the ride was going to stop when we were at the very top?

"Langdon" I say "did you do this?"

He smirks. Then moves closer. His hands grab hold of the sides of my face, his eyes staring into mine as I swallow nervously. God he's beautiful. He moves forward, his face inches from mine, and then slowly, tenderly, he places his lips against mine, one of his hands going to the back of my head and holding it in place. I moan out loud, his tongue diving inside, touching mine and caressing it as I push my lips back against his, giving as good as I've got. It feels like time has stopped still, everything around us, the noise, the lights, fading away into the background. My hands go around his neck, pushing deeper in the kiss,

my own tongue eagerly dancing with his. My hands itch to explore him, to feel him all over, and I'm only dimly aware that we're out in public.

Then the ride starts again, causing both of us to pull back reluctantly. "That was so romantic" I tell Langdon and he looks pleased.

"I bribed the operator, that's what took so long" he beams. I grin back.

When we get off the ride, I'm sad to see the evening is over. IT was such a nice day and it was made more special spending it with my mate. I sadly take hold of Langdon's hand.

"What's wrong?" he asks.

"Nothing, I'm just sad the date has ended" I try not to snuffle. After all there will be plenty of dates. Won't there? Langdon looks confused.

"But there'll be loads of other dates" he points out, stifling a smile "I promise you that. Plus we still have to ride the motorbike back" he says and I cheer up. There is that.

The drive back is quiet. It's hard to talk anyway with all the noise from the bike and the wind. We get back to the pack house and Langdon takes my helmet and puts it away. I'm about to turn and head to the pack house with him, when he pulls back on my hand and stops me.

"Just a second" he says quietly. "Damien I want you to know that I genuinely care about you. I'm not taking this mate bond for granted, there will be other dates."

He exhales as I listen, a smile on my face. "I'm not really good at expressing my feelings. But I can do better. In the meantime" he says with a chuckle, holding out his hand with the motorbike key.

I stare, not comprehending. What was going on? What was this.

"It's yours" He clarifies "the bike. I got it for you. I know you've always wanted one."

"It's mine" I whisper and he nods.

I fling myself into his arms. "Thankyou so much" I utter over and over again as I hug him. He pulls me back and then I astonish him by giving him a massive kiss. One that gets my heart racing, my body beginning to get turned on by touching him. I pull back and grab Langdon by the hand, the key firmly held in my other one.

"What do you say we take this to the bedroom" I breathe, about to show him just how much I appreciate him. The perfect end, to what had turned out to be the perfect day.

Chapter 102 - The Alpha's Rejected Silent Mate

Kai POV

Winter's been acting really strangely lately. Even Damien has noticed it and her memories still aren't coming back. At least not completely. Is it possible that's the reason for it all? I still can't get the image of her eating steak for breakfast and then licking the blood. Sure, shifters crave meat, but I don't think even my cravings gone that far. Maybe she's pregnant? Like having weird cravings? But wouldn't she know if she was? Besides I don't think bringing up the possibility is a good idea. She'll most likely start yelling at me. I think it's safer to put that idea by the wayside for now.

I'm sitting in the study, perusing my paperwork. There's so much of it. But that's the life of an Alpha. Everything has to run smoothly in the pack. The phone rings and I frown. Only certain people, mainly other alpha's have the phone number in the study and it's a small amount at that. I pick up the receiver.

"Alpha Kai here" I growl.

"Oh Kai, thank god I got hold of you" the voice says. I stare down at the receiver. The voice is somewhat familiar to me. In fact, I'm almost certain of it. This has to be Johnathon. What the hell does he want?

"Johnathon, this better be an emergency" I say tightly.

There's silence on the other end.

"Well I wouldn't quite say it's an emergency" his voice says quietly.

"Johnathon, cut the bullshit, what on earth is going on?"

A large exhale. My hands clench into fists. He isn't even here and he's driving me insane. Fuck sake. What does the moron want now?

"Look, it was an accident" Johnathon begins. Not the best way to start a sentence. "Winter's father was being held at my pack as a prisoner." I roll my eyes. Tell me something I don't know.

"I already know that" I growl "so what about it?"

"Well, while I was gone, at your pack" Johnathon says delicately as I listen intently "her father managed to escape. I am assuming he will make his way to your pack. Apparently he knows where Winter and Damien are."

"Shit" I swear, slamming my hand onto the desk and placing a large dent in it. I close my eyes. For once, can't we just get a break. Especially Winter. She's had enough to deal with.

"How could you let this happen" I snap irritably "what good is your pack if it lets someone go free."

"I'm just as upset as you are" Johnathon growls back "but what's done is done. I just wanted to give you a heads up. Because he's a piece of work, let me tell you."

"Thanks" I mutter "I'll get my men to keep an eye out. But damnit Johnathon, I'm majorly pissed off at you."

"I can live with that" Johnathon says easily "goodluck with everything." Damn it, he's completely ruined my day and I bet he doesn't give a shit about it either.



I slam the phone down and put my head in my hands. Great. Another thing to deal with. Winter's father was abusive to her, her whole childhood. No doubt she felt safer with him a prisoner. How on earth do I take that sense of safety away. Do I even tell her? Maybe there's a way to keep her out of the loop and deal with this problem at the same time.

I mind link Langdon and Damien Can you both come to the study. It's important so come straight away, don't dawdle I warn them. I hope Winter is sleeping upstairs. She seems to sleep a lot lately.

A knock on the door. "Get in here now" I snap and they walk in, sitting in the chairs opposite the desk, while I hastily close the door behind them.

"We have a bit of a situation" I say with a grimace "Johnathon just rang to inform me that they've had a prisoner escape."

"That shouldn't really be a problem" Langdon says confused "why doesn't he just track the prisoner down." He folds his arms over his chest.

Huh. I should have asked the little bastard that when I had him on the phone.

"I'm guessing because the prisoner's now too far away to track" I say wryly "normally it wouldn't be our problem either, but the prisoner happens to be. . ." I trail off not wanting to finish the sentence.

Damien pipes up, his face completely ashen "mine and Winter's father. Isn't that right" he adds quietly. I give a small nod.

Langdon exhales. "How long do we have?"

"Until he gets here? Could be weeks, could be days, especially if he makes his way here without stopping anywhere else" I say grimly.

"Fuck" whispers Damien. For once the boy doesn't look cocky, in fact, he looks like he's going to be sick. Langdon grabs hold of his hand and gives it a squeeze.

"It's alright Damien, we'll keep a close lookout for him. He's just one shifter, and not even a strong one at that" Langdon said trying to soothe his mate who looked distraught.

Christ, if this is the reaction Damien had, then there was no way I was going to even entertain the thought of telling Winter.

"He can't be that bad" I say to Damien "can he?" I ask sounding uncertain.

He looks grim. "He tortured Winter for her entire childhood. I'm also to blame for that, but he enjoyed it" he whispered incredulous "he actually derived pleasure from hurting his daughter."

God, I want to beat the man into a bloody pulp. With luck, I'll get my chance to.

"Is he a strong fighter" I muse and Damien shakes his head, then looks at Langdon, biting his lips.

"He's a lot stronger than me" Damien tells his mate. "I never could stand up against him."

"We still have plenty of time until he gets here" I tell them both "patrol will be on the lookout as well, but honestly I don't really think he poses much of a risk or danger. In all likelihood someone from patrol will round him up and put him in the dungeon. He doesn't sound that strong to me."

"I agree" Langdon says firmly, looking directly at Damien who doesn't look convinced. "You have nothing to be afraid of, not when I and Alpha Kai will protect you and Winter."

Damien looks slightly calmer. "What are you going to tell Winter?" he asks "she thinks she's safe and that he's a prisoner in Johnathon's pack. Well she did" he mutters "with her amnesia I'm not sure if she even remembers that."

I shrug, trying to look carefree. "I'm not going to tell her anything" I say lightly "I don't want anything to stress her out anymore than she already is."

"You can't just keep the truth from her" Damien protests "she needs to know so that she can keep herself safe. You'll only make her angry by not telling her."

"I'm trying to protect her" I thunder "she doesn't need to know. What good would it do? She would just be constantly looking over her shoulder and jumping at every little noise."

"She's stronger than that" Damien counters. Langdon stays silent in the background. I scowl at him. His mate is challenging my decisions and it's pissing me off.

"I won't let this harm her or put her back from her recovery" I shout, getting to my feet and sending several things flying off the desk. The door swings open. Winter stands there, her arms folded, an angry expression on her face. Damien gulps. Langdon looks nervous and I give her a small smile. How long has she been standing there and listening?

She strides forward and puts her hands on the desk, her body leaning forward, her eyes staring directly into mine. Fuck. This isn't good.

"What is it that you don't want to tell me" she says very quietly, but the tone of her voice is ominous and enough to make even Langdon cringe. It's blatantly clear that she's furious.

"Listen Winter" I say hastily "it's not that big a deal. . ." I trail off, her eyes narrowing as she glares at me. She's not buying it at all.

"She has a right to know" Damien hisses "after all it concerns her. "

"Fine" I bark at him "the both of you get the hell out of here" I thunder.

Damien peels himself off the chair and tugs Langdon to the doorway. Langdon gives me an apologetic glance over his shoulder, before he leaves the room with his mate.

Winter folds her arms across her chest and stamps her foot impatiently. "Well" she says snarkily "what is it you're hiding from me Kai? Don't lie to me" she warns.

I sigh. "Fine, your father, has escaped from Johnathon's prison. Apparently he's on the way here."

Silence. Awkward silence.

She falls back into a chair, a hand to her mouth in shock. Tears form at the corner of her eyes. She clearly remembers her father then. Shame. I would have preferred she never remembered him ever again.

"You're sure?" she asks me, almost desperately "you're sure he's coming here and not somewhere else?"

"I'm not sure, but Johnathon says he knows where you and Damien are, and I need to act accordingly."

"You were going to keep this secret from me" she says scandalised "how could you Kai? I have a right to know that he's coming for me. Even if it means that I have to stay inside to be safe, you should have told me immediately."

"I only just found out" I explain heavily "Damien and Langdon were my first priority. I just didn't want to stress you out" I say, flinching at the look on her face.

"You have no right to make decisions for me without my consent" she says, throwing her hands up "you wouldn't like it if I did that to you."

No I wouldn't, I have to admit. "I was trying to do the right thing" I argue back.

"Well stop making decisions for me" she cries "I'm an adult Kai, I can make my own. Please, promise me, you won't try and hide anything from me ever again."

Her voice is soft, pleading with me. Her eyes are beseeching me. I can't resist the tears that are forming in the corner of her eyes. She's more upset than I imagined she would be.

"I promise I won't hide anything else from you" I say sternly "but you have to listen to me and keep yourself safe. Is that fair?"

She gives a nod, a small smile on her face.

"Kai" she says gently "I will try and keep myself safe, but I won't lock myself in a room while everyone else goes about their lives. I might not be prepared to fight my father, but I also won't let him take over my life and living."

"Good" I say with a smile "because I don't want that for you either. Winter, how would you feel about visiting the training ring over the next few days? Get some training in? I'm sure Sabriel is missing it."

For some reason she looks inexplicably sad. Have I said something wrong?

"I um" she hedges "haven't been feeling well lately, so it might not be a good idea to visit the training ring, until I'm fully well again."

Now I'm concerned. She hasn't been feeling well for a while now. "Do you think you need to see a doctor?" I ask "maybe just for a checkup?"

She shakes her head. "No, I think I'm just a bit under the weather" she admits "I'm sure that with plenty of rest and fluids, that I'll start to feel a lot better soon."

I'm not so sure about that. But she reaches over and takes my hand, squeezing it gently. "I remembered a little bit more today" she tells me eagerly. Her memories have started to come back in dribs and drabs, which is a good sign. Even if it's slightly frustrating, because there seems to be no order for when they come, it's completely sporadic and random.

"What did you remember?" I ask and she gives me a grin. Then I notice that she's blushing, her cheeks a bright red colour. Whatever she's remembered it is obviously something good. I bet I know what it is too.

"I remembered, our first night together" she breathes, kissing my hand "and how special you made me feel."

I bend down and kiss her, tenderly, Winter melting in my arms. "I love you" I tell her and my heart skips a beat when she repeats it back to me.

"I love you too Kai."

Chapter 103 - The Alpha's Rejected Silent Mate

Winter POV

Smack. I can feel the sting as he slaps me directly across the face. I put a hand to my cheek. His face is inches from mine and I can smell the sour taste of his breath. "You stupid bitch" he hisses, "where's the beer."

I had forgotten we were out. It was my job to keep the fridge fully stocked, but between school and studying it had slipped my mind. I guess I should be thankful that he left money for his beer, but hardly anything else for actual food.

"I forgot" I mumble, dropping my head to my chest and hoping he might show mercy. But he shows none. Instead he grabs hold of my arm and twists it as I cry out from the pain, shoving me in front of him and down to the basement, the one place I fear most in the world.

"Please" I beg, but he ignores my pleas for mercy, shoving me so hard down the stairs that I almost trip and fall. I catch myself on the railing just in time.

"Move" he snarls and reluctantly, I place one foot in front of the other, until I'm standing at the base of the stairs, his large frame thundering after me.

I can see it and my whole body trembles. I don't want to go in there. All that's waiting in there is more pain. More abuse. But he shoves me towards it, hard and my body smacks to the ground. He curses under his breath.

"Move you little bitch" he growls and I get back up, feeling woozy and lightheaded. His eyes are gleaming in the darkness and there's a twisted smile on his face. The bastard is enjoying this.

I stand in front of it, willing my body to move. But I'm paralysed with fear. He laughs, loudly and pushes me hard, my body flailing as I fall inside the silver cell he's created, just for me. I turn around and he brandishes the whip, the one that digs into flesh and gouges you, at me.

"Father, don't do this" I beg and he shakes his head at me.

"You are no daughter of mine" he spits "you murderer."

I fall silent. I am a murderer. If it wasn't for me, my mother would still be alive. I'm the reason she's dead. I'm the reason my own father and brother hate me.

"Lie down" he orders me and for a moment I waver. What would happen if I defied him? Refused to do as he said? But another part of me knows I'll only make it worse if I try. I lie down on the hard, cold concrete ground, my back exposed. I know what's coming and I bite my lip, trying to hold back the cries.

Thwack. The first hit of the whip lands between my shoulder blades. Even with my clothes on it's digging into my skin and when he pulls it back, I can feel large chunks of flesh being pulled along with it. The pain is excruciating.

Thwack. He doesn't hold back, using all of his strength to whip me. I begin to scream, the sounds echoing throughout the otherwise empty basement.

Thwack. I stop counting after the first five. My whole body is now numb with shock. I can't hold back my screams and if anything, that makes him smile even wider. My own father is enjoying hearing me scream from the pain.

Thwack. Blood is pooling around my body on the floor. The whip has silver on it, I can feel my flesh burning and bubbling as it touches the strips where my clothing has ripped and torn.

Thwack. I don't know if I'm going to make it out this time alive. It's the longest he's beaten me for and he shows no signs of letting up. Am I going to die, right here in the basement?

Thwack. I barely feel the smack of the whip anymore. I feel like I might be dying. He gives a grunt.

"You stay in here, you miserable worthless piece of shit" he declares and I hear the door to the cell closing. Part of me is relieved he's finally finished, hearing his footsteps as he storms up the stairs and slams through the basement door. Another part of me is worried I won't live through the night.

I lay there, in my own blood, my head resting on my arms. I can't move. Every single tiny movement I make brings pain. I'll heal from these wounds, but without a wolf it will take some time. Not only that, but I'll be left with yet another bunch of scars on my body to join the old ones. What if I were to kill myself, comes a voice in my head. Finally give Father what he wants and my brother as well? I try to tune out the voice but it's persistent, constant, not letting go. That was the first night, I seriously started to contemplate killing myself. While I didn't go through with it, it stayed on my mind for the rest of my days,

I blink looking up at the ceiling. Ever since Kai had informed me that father had escaped from Johnathon's dungeon, it seems like my memories are coming back in small pieces, of everything my father, and Damien have ever done to me. I can feel the pain, the hurt in the memories. My hands trace the scars on my back and stomach, realising where they have come from. I never realised just why I feared my father so much, but if the memories were any indication, he was a monster, an evil bastard who needed to be stopped. The old Winter would have been afraid, would have stayed out of the way and tried to keep herself safe, but the new Winter, the new Winter wanted to be stronger, more courageous. She didn't want to spend the rest of her life in fear.

I get up and wander to the mirror, looking at the back of myself, craning my head over my shoulder. There are all sorts of ugly scars, criss crossing over each other, long white lines that snake around and cover me. They were put there by my own father and my own brother. I feel sickened. How could someone derive such joy from hurting someone?

I think back to the rogue attack that took my mother from me. But I don't remember much. Everything's a blur. I remember being a little kid, out for a picnic with mother, sitting underneath a shady tree. This had been her idea. She had wanted to be outside and Damien and father had refused, wanting to stay indoors. Then she'd smelt something, stiffened and told me to run. But I didn't want to leave her behind. I knew something was dangerously wrong.



"It's rogues, Winter, you have to run" she shouted.

"But mummy" I had cried out.

"No, you need to go" she growled and then shifted.

I don't remember much more than that, other than running across the grounds screaming my head off, bursting inside the house while Father and Damien looked at me.

"Mummy, mummy" I snivelled, pointing.

Father had gone as white as a sheet. "Stay here" he demanded, telling the both of us to stay put.

He went' racing out.

When father had finally come back, his shoulders were slumped and his head was down. He looked miserable, sad. I hadn't known what to do and had gone to hug him, but he pushed me back.

"You" he hissed and I stared at him, my lip quivering "this is all your fault."

"What's wrong daddy?" I'd asked.

"She's dead" he'd growled "because of you"

Being a little girl, I hadn't understood what he meant, but from that night onwards everything had changed and not for the better.

"Winter" Kai said softly, distracting me from my thoughts. "Winter are you alright?" he asks me concerned.

I try to give him a smile but fail miserably. "I'm remembering things, that I would rather not" I say lightly. I'm trying to play it off like it's no big deal, but Kai sees right through me.

"Oh Winter" he murmurs, grabbing hold of me and embracing me tightly "you don't always have to act so brave, you know. I know what your father did to you. I know what Damien did. I don't expect you to just get over that" he explained.

I stifle my sobs but suddenly the gates come crashing open and I'm crying, loudly, on his shoulders as he holds me. Why can't I just be the strong girl that I know I can be? Why does the past effect me so much? Kai just holds me, saying nothing and I soak his shirt in my tears.

Winter you went through something traumatic, it's alright to cry and to show weakness.

I hate doing it though Sabriel.

Well the past is shit, no kidding, but the future, the future is what we make of it. This handsome man is most definitely a part of our future.

I like the idea of looking forward instead of backwards. But I don't think I can avoid my memories coming back Sabriel.

I'm not asking you to. I think you need to accept the past so that you can move on to a better future.

Thanks Sabriel, your advice is something I'm going to take into consideration.

I heave a shuddering sigh and burrow into Kai's shoulder. God, he smells delicious, that scent of his is mesmerising. My mouth is watering just smelling him so near. I can hear his heartbeat and it's so loud, thudding in his chest. Why is his heartbeat so loud? He pulls back from me.

"I think you need to spend some time with Damien, if those memories are coming back to haunt you" he says and I shake my head.

"He hurt me Kai" I say indignantly "he didn't stop my father and he even joined in. What kind of older brother does that to his little sister" I add hurt.

Kai sighs. "It's in the past though Winter, and he did come good. Heck he even travelled all this way to find you. I don't know if you remember how excited you were to see him, but you flung yourself right into his arms."

"But what if he hurts me again?" I ask in a small voice. My god, I sound like a small child, instead of a grown woman. So much for being brave and confident.

Kai looks thoughtful. "I don't think he will, not intentionally. He really seems to love you Winter, and your amnesia hasn't exactly been easy on him either."

Ouch. That hurt. Big time. Who cares about Damien? Not when I was the victim.

"Maybe if you're there, I'll spend time with him. Or if Langdon is there" I say slowly "but I don't want to be left alone with him, not yet at any rate. When he shows me I can trust him, then I'll see him alone."

"That's fair enough" Kai agrees, giving me a long lingering kiss that has my knees knocking together. "But how about you at least come downstairs. We can all sit together in my study or have lunch together in the dining room?" he suggests.

That sounds too much like being a family, which we are not. I think about the study idea, but I'm not ready to face Damien just yet. I need time to process everything. I need time to be alone and not be pressured to do something I don't want to do. Quite frankly, I just don't want to see my brother just yet.

"Maybe next time" I answer quietly "I think I'm just going to spend time in here and read a book."

He looks like he wants to protest but sees the look on my face and just nods. He quietly leaves.

After he's gone, a thought comes to me and I sigh. I might have to see Damien after all. Because not once, did my father ever tell me, or show me, where he buried our mother.

Chapter 104 - The Alpha's Rejected Silent Mate

Kai POV

"No, there hasn't been any sightings of the son of a bitch just yet" I snarl, holding the receiver tight to my ear, and imagining it to be Johnathon's neck as I squeeze it tightly.

"I've sent my best trackers out but too much time has passed to pick up his trail" Johnathon says on the other end of the line, not sounding remotely apologetic. Does he not realise the full magnitude of what he's done? How on edge both Winter and Damien have been since they have heard the news? Does he think this is a game? My anger rises with every word that he speaks.

"I've sent mine out, there's nothing there. Are you sure he's coming for them? Maybe he got smart and decided it wasn't worth dying over" I hiss. Maybe the man possessed some common sense. It was entirely possible.

There's silence on the other end of the phone.

"I don't think he'll give up on them quite as easily as you seem to think he will" Johnathon says quietly.

I glower at the telephone. This was all his fault to begin with. If it wasn't for him and his bloody useless pack, this man would still be in prison. Well a dungeon at any rate. Instead of heading here and traumatising my poor Winter all over again.

"How's Winter and Damien going" he has the audacity to ask me. I grit my teeth.

"Damien is on edge, expecting to see his father at any moment. As for Winter, she's holed up in the bedroom and it's bringing back some nasty memories. She's about to have a nervous breakdown" I growl.

"I'm sorry for that. By the way, we forgot to tell you about the rogue. You won't understand but Winter will. The rogue she saved, showed us the way to your pack. That's all she needs to know. It might be enough to cheer her up some."

I frown. What the hell did he mean by the rogue she saved? No one saved a rogue. They would kill you as soon as look at you. Johnathon had to be playing a cruel trick. Was he messing with me?

"Yeah sure" I say dryly. He senses my unease about it.

"It's not a lie, talk to Damien about it. He'll tell you it's the truth" he defends hotly.

I roll my eyes. Sure I'll get right on that. He's silent for a moment while I fume on the other end, fighting back the urge to hurl the receiver at the closest wall and break it.

"Do you require some assistance?" he asks "because I can come back and help until he's been captured again."

The hell he would. I don't want him anywhere near my pack, let alone near Winter making those googly eyes at her again. Besides, my pack was fine to deal with one lone shifter for heaven's sake. It was laughable that he thought we might need his assistance. I'm one of the strongest packs in the country and one of the strongest Alpha's. In fact, now I was viewing it as an insult.

"Thankyou for your concern, but that won't be necessary" I tell him with a sneer.

"Kai" Johnathon says lowly and I have to strain to hear him "take care of Winter, because if she so much as get's a tiny bit injured" he pauses "then I'm coming for you. Take care of her or else" he snaps, slamming the phone down and hanging up on me.

Did that little bastard really hang up on me? I stare at the phone incredulously, but the beeping sounds mean that Johnathon, has indeed, hung up. That little asshole. No one hangs up on me. I slam the receiver down several times, banging it hard, taking out all my anger and frustration on it. I keep banging it until there's a knock on the door.

"What" I growl and Langdon comes walking in, without Damien which is a surprise in itself.

"Not in a good mood, I see" Langdon says with a smile of amusement on his face as I scowl at him.

"What do you want Langdon" I say a bit sulkily, almost pouting like a child. Damn that Johnathon. He's put me in a foul temper. I feel like punching something and if Langdon isn't careful, it's going to be him. I scowl at him.

Langdon flops down in the chair. He looks tense, there's a crease across his forehead and his usual jovial smile feels forced. This isn't like him at all. Maybe I should be listening to what he needs as well. Evidently he was being as affected by the possible threat of the father like I was. After all Damien was his son. No matter how strong and brave Damien comes across, even I know he must have been terrified to have a father like that as a child.

Langdon puts his head in his hands, looking older than his twenty-three years. His brown hair is shaggy, tied back in a small ponytail. He doesn't look anything like the cool, confident, put together man that I knew.

"Man, I hope this asshole turns up soon" mutters Langdon "I don't know how much longer I can keep Damien calm. He's terrified Kai. A young man, an adult male, is terrified of his father. What kind of monster would this father have to be, to cause that much of a reaction in his own son?"

I sigh. So Damien wasn't faring too well either. Langdon looks exhausted. "He's not eating properly, he's not sleeping. When he is sleeping he has nightmares. It's all I can do to get him to hold it together. Then to top it off Winter has stopped speaking to him, which has put him in a depressive mood. I don't know what else to do. I left him sleeping to come see you. If he knew I was gone. . . " Langdon trailed off. I got the hint. Damien needed Langdon to be by his side.

"Winter's not faring much better" I admit, clogged in the throat. "She's sleeping but not well and I know she's having nightmares. All of this has started to bring her memories back. Her childhood trauma is all coming back to her, not to mention Damien's part in it. That's why she's not speaking to him. I can't force her to either. That has to be a decision she makes for herself."

Langdon sighs.

"How is patrol going?" I ask leaning back against the chair. My temper has soothed itself somewhat and I no longer felt like punching the walls or poor Langdon.

"I've increased it but there's been no sightings. Patrol is on the lookout and I even got several pack members hiding in the trees keeping a lookout over the forest. If this man comes, we will see him before he makes it onto the grounds."

I hurrumph. At least we were well prepared. But when it came to helping our mates, both Langdon and I were feeling helpless.

"All you can do is be there for him Langdon" I tell him "I don't think Winter or Damien are going to rest easy until their father has been caught. Until then, we do our best to comfort them."

Langdon grimaces but gives a small nod. "Maybe Damien will join me at the training ring" he says quietly "it will give him a chance to vent out his anger and frustration and make him exhausted enough to get a proper sleep."

"I think that's a great idea" I tell him, with a small smile. I watch the poor man leave, his shoulders slumped, looking like he was carrying the weight of the world on his shoulders.

I groan. Winter hasn't come downstairs yet again today. Which can only mean one thing. She's holed up in our room again. This doesn't bode well. It was like she was afraid, so afraid, she couldn't bear to leave the room. Doesn't she understand that I will protect her? That nothing is going to get past me and sink its claws into her?

I walk upstairs and pause outside our bedroom. I can hear the sound of sobbing, crying, and it wrenches my heart. She sounds so broken, so upset. Should I really disturb her? But my hand knocks on the door anyway. If she tells me to leave, then I'll honour her wishes. But instead, to my shock, the bedroom door is wrenched open and she flings herself into my arms. My hands go around her automatically, even as she wraps her legs around me and it feels like I'm carrying a koala. Her head rests on my shoulder and I can feel her tears beginning to soak my shirt. Her whole body is trembling as well.

"Winter" I say cautiously, rubbing her back as I sit on the bed. She refuses to look at me.

"Winter, honey, what's wrong?" I ask, hearing her snuffle. Her small cries are painful to hear.

"I remembered" she whispers "I remember everything."

Hallelujah. She finally got her memories back, just like the doctor had originally said she would. My arms tighten around her. I'm well aware of what painful memories she might have in regards to me and the complete asshole I was to her originally.

"My father is a monster" she whispers "and so is my brother."

Ouch. It didn't look like Winter was about to forgive Damien any time too soon. Still I remember what Langdon said about Damien being completely miserable and decide to at least try, to make Winter see reason.

"Winter, your brother was just as afraid of your father as you were" I say, hearing her sobbing stop. "He went along with your father, because he was afraid your father would hurt him if he didn't. That doesn't make it right, or any less wrong, but he did go good for you didn't he? Start to care for you properly? He even travelled all the way here to save you from Thomas."

She was quiet. Like she was digesting his words. Maybe he'd gotten through to her. She took long shuddering breaths. Encouraged, Kai continued to speak to her.

"Langdon says Damien isn't sleeping well. Is barely eating and he's completely miserable because you've stopped talking to him."

She finally pulled back and I could see her face. I hold in my grimace. She has dark circles under her eyes, red puffy eyes, her hair is matted and dishevelled and she's ashen, completely pale. Paler than I've ever seen her. Whatever she's been doing up here, it hasn't been to sleep.

"Is Damien really that upset?" she asks, climbing off me and sitting on the bed, her arms folded across her chest.

I give a small nod. "To be honest I think Langdon misses you as well" I say pointedly as she looks away from me for a moment, looking thoughtful.

"Kai" she says "it's just that the memories won't stop coming and I'm afraid. I'm afraid to close my eyes in case it's another nightmare. I've had so many nightmares and they all seem to be so real" she



whispers, her body shuddering. My god, I hadn't realised just how badly she was being affected by all this. No wonder Langdon looks so miserable and exhausted. He was keeping as close to his mate as possible, whereas I have been doing all my work and leaving Winter to hole up in the room by herself.

"What if I stay with you while you sleep" I suggest quietly.

She stares at me for a moment, fidgeting with her hands. Then a look of relief covers her face. "You would stay with me?" she asks uncertainly.

"Yes" I say, getting up off the bed and pulling everything off it, pulling the bed covers back. She gets in slowly, lying down on the pillows, her face staring at me as I sit beside the bed. I pull the covers back over her and kiss her forehead. I frown. She feels warm but doesn't seem to be too phased by it. Her eyelids slowly flutter closed as I watch over her intently. Slowly her breathing evens and I push her hair away from her face. There's a small smile on her face and she looks a lot more serene. I settle against the bed. I will stay here as long as she needs me until she wakes up on her own. I hadn't realised how afraid she was. I need to be a better mate.

#### Chapter 105 - The Alpha's Rejected Silent Mate

#### Winter POV

I'm screaming, at the top of my lungs while thunder crashes down in the distance and the rain pours outside. It helps to muffle the sounds coming from the basement. My father is grinning, enjoying the sounds of my screams while Damien stands in the background. My eyes meet his, pleading for help, but he just looks away.

Slap. My father's hand slaps me directly across the face as I dangle in the cell, my hands chained over my head, my legs dangling uselessly. It hurts, but no more than what he's already put me through already. I feel the sharp stinging pain of the knife as he trails it lightly across my back.

"Should I write something" my father sneers as I try to stifle my sobs and remain quiet. Besides it's not me that he's asking, but Damien who hovers in the background, like the coward he is.

"I think she's had enough" Damien says lightly "if she can't make it to school then they'll know something is wrong. Winter's never missed a day in her life."

For a brief second, a brief moment, I had thought he was trying to save me. I should have known better.

"Nah, she can take more" my father mutters.

The tip of the blade pushes in harder as he drags it across my skin. My flesh burns and bubbles from the silver, a sharp cry emitting from my throat. Blood trickles down to the floor.

"Your turn" my father says quietly and my head whips up to see Damien. He looks like a deer caught in the headlights. But my father shows no mercy. He hands the knife to Damien, who I bitterly realise, has already gloved up, like he was expecting this to happen. Damien eyes the knife, twisting it over and over in his hand, a dark look on his face.

"Do it already" my father barks out and Damien slowly, wanders over to me, the knife held firmly in his grasp, his eyes looking up at mine.

My body tenses in preparation. He plunges the knife into my side, stabbing me and leaves the knife in as my father crows with delight in the background. I scream, hysterically trying to dislodge the knife with no luck, my legs kicking and my body bucking wildly. There are tears trailing down my cheeks. It's with relief that I feel Damien pull the knife out, but just as quickly he plunges it into my abdomen, blood pooling around the wound. This time when he yanks the knife out, I feel woozy and dizzy. My body's been pushed past my limits. I no longer care if I live or die, I just want the pain to stop. The torture. The torment.

I'm lowered to the floor and the chains are torn off. My father hums under his breath. "Make sure she gets food and water" he tells Damien "can't have her dying on us now can we."

I stare at my brother hazily and for a moment, I swear I see regret on his face. But it's gone just as quickly, as though it had never been there in the first place.

Another flashback. Another piece of the so called puzzle slotting neatly into place. I try not to rock back and forth on the bed, even as tears come to my eyes. How anyone could do that, to their own daughter

and sister defies all belief. Was I not good enough? Other than apparently killing my mother, was I such a terrible person that I deserved to be punished? Why else would Damien have taken such joy in it?

You're not a terrible person Winter.

Sometimes it's hard to tell Sabriel.

Why don't you just ask him? See Damien face to face? He owes you an explanation.

You're right. He does. He can damn well start explaining himself.

You go girl, sock him one if you have to. Get those answers you've been asking for.

Right. I'm going. My hands clench into fists. Damien does owe me an explanation for everything. Kai is currently in his study but I know that Damien and Langdon have been walking around the house lately and staying close by. I yank the door to the bedroom open and stomp down the stairs, now in a full blown foul temper. No matter how much I eat and drink lately, nothing seems to satisfy the hunger and thirst I seem to have. This just makes me angrier.

I check the house first. No sign of Damien. I even check the grounds outside quickly, but don't venture too far. For some reason I can't seem to bring myself to go too far from the bedroom. The bedroom is safe, secure. It feels like a haven to me. I sigh. Something tells me that the person I want, has to be in the study or Langdon's house. I'm betting on the study. Damien is literally clinging onto Langdon lately and doesn't like to be too far from him. Just like I don't like to be too far from Kai at the moment.

I walk down the corridor and reach the study door. I sniff and wrinkle my nose. I can smell them all in there, but they smell weird to me. Slightly unpleasant which is odd, because Kai's scent should smell delicious to me at least. I must be getting sick or something. I shrug. I'll deal with it later. I tense and then smack the door to the study open. As I suspected, Kai, Langdon and Damien are all in there, discussing god knows what.

Kai goes to get out of his seat. "Winter now's not really the time" he begins, but I ignore him.

I focus all my glaring on Damien who's cringing in his chair. Obviously he can see just how much of a temper I'm in.

"This is between me and Damien" I say calmly "both of you can get out."

Kai opens his mouth to protest, but then Langdon shoots him a look and they both excuse themselves. I fold my arms across my chest. Damien stays silent.

Finally I can't take it any longer. "How could you" I burst out "you tortured me with father and you didn't do anything to save me" I almost scream in my rage.

"You don't understand" Damien mumbles and I turn to him, my eyes flashing and my lip curled up in a sneer.

"You're right I don't understand. I don't understand how a brother can take part in torturing his sister. How you just kept quiet. How you didn't try to stop him, not even once and how you even participated with him on occasion."

Now he looks pale. "I didn't have a choice" he pleads. "You think he wouldn't have done the same to me if I'd refused?"

I think Damien's full of shit. "Dad never laid a finger on you" I scoff "you were his precious son. It was his daughter he hated. You weren't responsible for mother's death, I was."

Damien stands up, sending the chair he's sitting on to the ground with a large crash. "You have no clue how hard it was to stare into your eyes and still torture you while you cried."

"No, because I was the one being tortured. Maybe you should have seen how much that hurt from my side" I say sarcastically. He swallows nervously.

"Look, I was terrified of father" he admits "enough that I would have done everything he said, if it meant that he didn't hurt me instead."

"You were a coward" I spat out.

"Yes I was a coward" he yells out spreading his arms wide "and I regret what I did to you, every damn day. I have nightmares about what I've done. I know that no matter how hard I try, I'll never be able to make it up to you."

He's damn right about that. My rage feels like it's spiralling out of control. My breathing is heavy, my hands won't stop clenching and unclenching as I stand there and I'm gritting my teeth. I so badly want to punch the lights out of him, but even now, I can't bring myself to hurt him. Damnit. My eyes fall on the desk instead and before I can stop myself, I pick it up, which astounds me, I didn't know I was that strong, and throw it against the wall, shattering the desk into splinters while Damien stands there in shock. I feel mildly impressed with myself. Fuck, I'm strong.

"How did you do that" breathes Damien in disbelief, staring at the ruins of the desk on the floor.

"I used my anger" I snap at him, trying to breath and still feeling the urge to kill him.

"Look Winter, I don't know what it is you want from me" Damien says quietly, wringing his hands and standing on the spot, putting his weight on one leg, then the other. "I am truly sorry for everything I did to you in the past. I can never make it up to you, because you're right. I was your brother and I should have protected you instead of doing what I did. There are no excuses. I stuffed up, made a horrible mistake and you suffered because of me. "

It's like he's taken the wind out of my sails. I'm starting to feel deflated. Instead of rage, I'm starting to feel overwhelming sadness. "I have scars all over my body that won't go away" I choke out.

"I know" he whispers.

"The memories, they'll never fade" I continue.

"I know" he whispers.

"I have nightmares Damien" I say, bursting into tears "and I'm afraid all the time. Why couldn't Johnathon have just killed him" I howl "because waiting for him to come is killing me."

"I know" he whispers "because the same thing is happening to me. I can't eat, I can't sleep, I have nightmares and I feel like I'm constantly looking over my shoulder. I feel the same way you do Winter. If it wasn't for Langdon I would have probably lost my mind right now."

I sniffle. If "it wasn't for Kai, I'm pretty sure I would have had a nervous breakdown by now. He's been my rock this entire time.

Damien's eyes are shiny with unshed tears. "I can't make up for the past Winter" he says with determination etched on his handsome face "but I can try and have a future with you. That is if you're willing to let me. I don't blame you if you never want to forgive me, but you forgave me once before. I do love you as a sister and I want to show you that I can be the brother you deserve."

I'm openly crying now. My emotions are a mess. He closes the gap between us and hugs me, pulling me in tight against him as I rest my eyes and place my head against his chest. His hands grip me tightly around the waist and I breathe in his scent which still smells strange to me.

We stand there, for several minutes, just clutching onto each other and saying nothing. I finally let go of all the anger that I've been holding onto with Damien. There's no point holding onto an old grudge. He can't change the future. He did travel this way for me. I know he loves me and a small part of me, despite everything, loves him back.

There's a tentative knock on the door and then Kai and Langdon step in, looking at the destruction of the room with raised eyebrows.

"Sorry" I apologise sheepishly "I let my anger get the best of me."

Kai looks at his desk. "Who broke the desk?" he asked curious.

"I did" I say very quietly.

He looks amazed. "That desk is so heavy and solid that I struggle to lift it on my own and you managed to throw it across the room" he exclaimed "strange" he mutters to himself.

"Is all forgiven?" asks Langdon and I give him a nod, stepping away from Damien.

"All is forgiven" I say and mean it, sailing out of the room. Kai and Langdon look at the desk as I leave and shoot each other a glance full of meaning.

Chapter 106 - The Alpha's Rejected Silent Mate

Damien POV

I'm too little to understand but I can't stand to watch him hurting my little sister Winter. I pull on his arm, "Stop daddy" I tell him, Winter cowering on the ground in an effort to stop his fists from hurting her face. She's crying and it makes me feel sad for her.

He glares at me. "Your sister is a murderer" he spits out "she's the reason that your mother is dead. She killed her and now she gets to pay. Don't get in my way or you'll be next" he threatens. He waves his arm and sends me flying, my back hitting the wall as I crumple to the ground in tears, before he starts hitting poor Winter again who is crying and begging for him to stop.

It's raining and there's thunder in the background. Winter is in the cell, the one that father purposely built just for her, crying and screaming as he whips her. I can smell the blood in the air. I'm older now, but no less afraid of him. I can barely stand the screams, the crying as he hurts her. She's lying there on the ground, completely helpless. She's much weaker than either of us, and the fact she has no wolf, makes her even more helpless. It also means she's slow to heal, something that the old man takes sadistic pleasure in.

"Please stop" she screams, as I watch, feeling numb.

Whenever she is getting hurt I either feel angry because I'm the one carrying it out, or numb when father does it. Her voice is pitiful and weak. She's begging for mercy, but it's pointless. She should know by now, it's been years, that father is incapable of mercy or forgiveness. He's incapable of anything but drinking his precious alcohol and inflicting pain.

I can hear the thwacks of the whip as it meets her flesh. The sound of her cries in the small basement. The sizzling sound of the silver meeting and touching her bare flesh. The smell of burning flesh is sickening. I gag.

My father is smiling. He's not holding back, using his strength to whip her and I can't even remember the reason for it. It takes very little to make him angry these days. But I hate the cell. It's monstrous. But the thing I fear the most and which makes me ashamed, is that he'll use it on me one day when I make him angry. That's how much of a coward I am.

"Please" Winter sobs, her hands scrabbling at the cold concrete floor, her body covered in gouges and scratches, her voice is hoarse from screaming. "Please stop."

Father hits her again and she falls silent. Her head turns to the side and she looks at me. I suck in a breath. Her eyes are dead, staring blankly. The light's gone completely from them. It's like she's given up completely, no longer even making a sound as the whip continues to strike her back. I feel sick. I'm a coward. But if I step in, who's to say father won't turn on me with the whip? The bastard is a lot stronger than me. To my shame, I say nothing, turning away and walking upstairs as my father continues to torture the little sister I've long since stopped trying to protect. Now, I protect myself, no matter what it takes.

The flashbacks are coming more regularly now. More intense, more in my face than ever before. I don't know what's caused it. It could be the argument I had with Winter, or it could be the fact that I know father is on his way. I place my head in my hands. Why can't I stop remembering? It's so painful, it sticks in my mind and won't let go. Every sound, the pain, the feelings, all there as I relive what I don't want to remember. My breath comes out in short heavy puffs, my heart is thudding wildly in my chest. I glance over at Langdon, who is sleeping peacefully, his brown hair all tousled and across the pillow. Thank god I haven't disturbed him. He needs sleep. I know he's gotten very little since I've started with the flashbacks and he hasn't really left my side. He senses my fear, even though I've tried not to show it. How pathetic am I? Even fully grown with a wolf, I'm afraid of my father. I don't see what Langdon sees in me sometimes. He could do so much better, you know?

I climb over him slowly, trying not to jostle him. If he wakes up, he'll insist on staying awake with me and I can't have that. This insomnia is slowly killing me. I can't sleep. My whole body trembles as I get out of bed, putting on a heavy sweatshirt of Langdon's for comfort and slowly creeping into the kitchen. Warm milk is meant to help you sleep right? At this point I'll try anything. I open the refrigerator and grab the milk, pouring it into a saucepan. I grab a mug and place the saucepan on the stove, stirring constantly until the milk is warm. Then I sit at the dining table.



I yawn. I'm so tired. You would think that if I were this tired, that sleep would come naturally to me. But no. No matter how exhausted I feel, my body refuses to sleep. It's infuriating. I sip my warm milk. At least that's making me calm down somewhat. The milk soothes my sore throat and I relax in the chair. I don't even mind that I'm sitting in semi darkness, the only light that there is is coming from the few windows that are in the kitchen.

There's nothing to fear here, I chant to myself. It's just Langdon and myself in this house. I'm perfectly safe. But my body, even though it's slowly relaxing, refuses to stop trembling. Then I hear the sound of footsteps and my heart sinks. I was so sure I'd gotten out of the room without disturbing the poor bastard. Sure enough, Langdon comes walking in, his hair all dishevelled, looking all sleepy and adorable I might add. He yawns widely, putting a hand to his mouth. I feel guilty that he's awake.

"Do you know what time it is?" he comments quietly.

I shake my head. His eyes soften as they gaze at me. "I'm guessing you couldn't sleep again" he said pointedly. I flush and look at the table.

He doesn't look angry. In fact he just looks calm, grabbing himself a hot drink of coffee and sitting opposite me. "I thought I told you to wake me up when you can't sleep" he chides.

"I don't want you to have to sit with me when I have insomnia" I burst out "it's not fair to you and you need your sleep. Kai relies on you as his Beta."

He's silent for a moment. "Kai might rely on me, but I care about you Damien. We're mates. I am happy to stay up with my mate and comfort them when they can't sleep."

I lower my head in my hands. "They won't stop Langdon. I can't make them stop."

"The memories" he guesses "the flashbacks? They only started when Winter stopped talking to you and you found out about your father escaping his cell. I think that your fear is producing them."

He's probably right. "You must think I'm pitiful" I say weakly "to be afraid of my own father like this. Not to mention disgusting. I treated Winter horribly just to save my own skin" I tell him, tears forming in the

corner of my eyes. "I could have stopped hurting her, could have stopped bullying her at school at least. Instead I chose to keep going. It's a wonder that Winter's forgiven me when I can't even forgive myself."

Langdon runs a hand through his hair, making it stick up in different directions. "Has it occurred to you, that maybe you need to forgive yourself" he argues "you were a kid Damien, making the best of a bad situation. You already confessed that you were afraid he would torture you as well. You were trying to survive" he argues "even if it meant hurting another person. We're not perfect, none of us are. All you can do is look forward and try to make amends with Winter now. She wants a relationship with you, you want one with her. The flashbacks are preventing you from looking forward."

"How can you even stand to be with someone like me?" I ask him thickly "you're so damn handsome, you're perfect, you're confident and you make me feel like I'm the only person in the world for you. Not once have you even judged me for what I did."

He gives me a small smile. "I don't judge you, because you're judging yourself enough for the both of us" he says calmly "and I am with you, not just because we're mates, but because you're funny, kind, sweet and pretty damn good looking yourself" he adds as I blush. I'm pretty certain my cheeks are like a beet red right now.

I glance down at my empty mug and push it away. I hadn't even been aware I was still drinking from the mug.

"Damien" Langdon says quietly "your father is not going to lay a hand on you or Winter. You are both safe from him. Kai and I have patrol on the look out for him. He's never going to harm either of you again. I wish you believed that" he said with a shake of his head and an exhale.

"I wish I could too" I say feeling ashamed and angry "but until the bastard's caught, I'm always going to be looking over my shoulder expecting the worst and so is Winter. I just want this all to end."

"It will" Langdon says firmly "you just have to hold on for a little longer."

It was easy for him to say, but not so easy for me to actually do. Still he's trying to help and it's sweet. My mate genuinely cares for me. I love the fact he cares so much, even when I feel guilty about it. After all he's probably got other things that need attention, besides myself. Still it gives me a warm feeling inside.

Langdon finishes off his drink and stands up. "Do you feel able to go to sleep?" he asks.

I feel wide awake but give a small nod. The worst case, I'll just lie next to him until it's time to get back up.

His eyes narrow on me and he looks suspicious. Uh oh. Maybe I wasn't convincing enough? He comes round to me and grabs my hand. His hands are nice and warm, although rough with calluses from all the training he does. He rubs my hand gently. His eyes search mine and then he bends his head down and gives me a kiss, soft, gentle, his lips soft against mine.

"Let's go to bed" he breathes, pulling back and I willingly follow him as he tugs on my hand and leads me back to the bedroom. Langdon plumps mine up as I quickly go to the bathroom and I slowly climb on to the bed and snuggle down. Langdon climbs in beside me and pulls the bedcovers over the both of us. His arm snakes out and pulls me against him, so that my back is resting against his chest. His other hand reaches over and to my shock, he begins to stroke my hair.

It's soothing. His touch is gentle. The last time I was touched like this, had been my mother soothing me back to bed. Despite myself, my eyelids begin to flutter closed. It's so relaxing. Langdon smiles down at me.

"Sleep" he soothes "sleep Damien."

I yawn and my eyelids close. He never stops stroking my hair. My body relaxes underneath the covers and I feel myself beginning to get sleepy. I can't even fight it and I don't want to. My body begins to drift off and the last thing I hear, or think I hear before I'm fully asleep, is Langdon's voice saying "I love you."

Chapter 107 - The Alpha's Rejected Silent Mate

Winter POV

The pain in my head is excruciating. It's unlike any headache or migraine I've ever had before. It's so bad that I'm currently lying in bed with all of the blinds closed and curtains pulled, the darkness surrounding me so that my eyes don't hurt from the sunlight. It's like my head is pounding and I'm so incredibly

thirsty. No matter how much water I drink though, it doesn't negate the thirst. I'm also incredibly hot, like I'm burning up. Maybe I've caught a virus or something, who knows. I thought shifters very rarely got sick. In fact this is the first time I've really gotten sick like this ever. I don't want Kai to catch it, but he says he has a great immune system. In other words he doubts he'll get it.

I'm so lonely. Since I've gotten sick I've been avoided like the plague. But it's much more than that. There's a voice inside of me and it's not Sabriel's. This is the secret I've been harboring for days, not telling anyone. Because I'm afraid. I'm afraid of what the voice constantly tells me to do. Sabriel's voice has gone completely silent. She's stopped speaking to me and I know it has something to do with the evilness inside of me.

Kill them, kill them all Winter. They are all betrayers, can't you see that? Your brother hurt you, you must hurt him back, show him what it feels like.

Leave me alone, I don't know who you are, or what you are, but please, please just go away.

Don't you understand yet? My voice is yours child. The thoughts in your mind that you don't dare speak of, all the bad things you think about on a daily basis.

I would never kill someone, that's a lie.

Is it? Right now you're thinking about killing someone aren't you? The one person who has hurt you the most? You want to hunt him down and kill him for everything he did to you and your brother. You crave his death. You want him dead. Why do you feel like that is so wrong?

The voice falls silent as I give a small sob. They are not wrong. I do want my father dead. He ruined my life and Damien's. Why should he be allowed to continue to live and hurt us? But the rest of it, the rest of it frightens me. I would never wish my mate or my brother dead, no matter what they have done to me in the past. I wish I could talk to Sabriel. I give it one more try.

Sabriel, do you hear me? I'm scared. I don't know what's happening to me. I don't know what's going on. Please speak to me, let me hear your voice. I'm begging you. I don't know what I'm going to do if I've lost you forever. I miss you so much.

I'm literally begging to hear her voice. Part of me is fearful that I've lost my wolf forever. That Sabriel has vanished because I can no longer sense her at the moment. Which means I can't shift into my wolf form either. The only defense I have with my father coming. Without being able to shift, I'm vulnerable, weak, reliant on others to keep me safe. It stings and it sucks big time. Not to mention, I'm too afraid to tell Kai I've lost my wolf. Because I know he would panic, would want me to go to the hospital for all sorts of tests. He has enough stress at the moment without me adding to it.

You have more strength at your fingertips than you think Winter. You are not vulnerable, you are a hunter, a huntress, capable of so much more than what a pathetic shifter can do.

I don't want to know. I just want you to stop talking in my head. I can't deal with this right now. I want Sabriel back.

When the voice speaks again, it's harsh and brutal. Sabriel is gone, get that through your thick head. There's just me now and you're going to have to learn to get along with me or it's going to be a futile struggle between the both of us. You need to embrace your strength, your uniqueness, the fire within you. Even the parts you consider evil, are a part of you even if you try to ignore it. I am your only friend now. Deal with it Winter.

I just lie there, quietly sobbing. The voice is getting stronger, more insistent. It sounds like it's hissing constantly and it really doesn't like Kai or the others. In fact, it often comments that I should do things like push them down the stairs or poison them. The worst thing is, that the voice is so hard to ignore. Unlike with Sabriel, I can't cut it off or put a mind block up because it just breaks through. It taunts me, mocks me and calls me names. But it sounds like me and that's the part that's so frightening. Because what if the voice is me?

A knock on the door, breaks my thoughts. "Winter are you awake" Kai calls and I give a small grunt, watching as the door swings open, blinking furiously as light enters the room. He comes and perches on the bed.

"How are you feeling?" he asks concerned. He reaches out and touches my forehead. His hand jerks back in shock.

"You're burning up" he exclaims, crossing to the bathroom. I say nothing. I feel hot, but not too much. I've been hot the last few days.

I hear the sound of running water. Kai comes back out. "A nice cool bath should do the trick" he says quietly "it should help bring your temperature down at any rate."

I burrow under the covers. I don't want a cold shower right now. I don't want to leave the bed. But Kai isn't taking no for an answer. He pulls the covers off as I let out a squeal, scooping me up in his hands and carrying me to the bathroom. He stands me up and strips off my clothing while I let out a small murmur of protest. Then he picks me up and places me gently in the water.

I let out a small hiss. The water is cold, and it takes time for my body to adjust to it. When I do, I lean back in the bathtub, letting my body sink right down as the water washes over me. I start to feel cooler than I have in days. Kai sits on the floor next to the tub, not caring if he gets wet. His eyes are intently watching me. I feel self conscious.

"How are you feeling otherwise?" he asks.

Like I want to rip your head from your body, you pathetic, dumb shifter.

I have to ignore the voice, my heart thudding wildly in my chest. I need to make Kai believe that everything with me is alright.

"I'm okay" I murmur "just have a bit of a headache and a bit hot. Otherwise I'm alright, just tired" I try to assure him.

He doesn't believe me for a second. "Winter you're not just a little bit hot, you're scalding to the touch" he says firmly "as for the headache, it's been how many days now?" he prods.

It's none of your business you stupid mutt.

"A few days" I answer weakly, trying to concentrate on Kai and not the ugly voice in my mind.

"I'm worried about you. So is Damien and Langdon. I really think that you should visit the hospital and see a doctor."

Don't let him force you. He doesn't know what he's talking about. We could hold his head under the water right now if we wanted to.

"I'll be fine. I just need to rest and recover" I tell Kai dully. I clench my hands into fists under the water.

Kai doesn't look convinced, but I shoot him a pleading look and he sighs.

"Fine, but if this continues then I will insist on you seeing a doctor. Is that clear?" he asks sternly.

Crystal clear, I think miserably. "Yes" I answer quickly.

He clears his throat. "Look I came up here to share with you that there still has been no sightings yet of your father."

What a shame. It means we have to wait some more before we kill the old bastard. Never mind, we can think of different ways to kill the man to pass the time.

"Patrol is still keeping a close eye. I hope that helps comfort you a little bit" Kai is continuing as I blink and refocus on him "I know it's not much of a comfort but at least we know he's at least another few days away."

"That's good" I say automatically. The voice snickers in my mind.

"Would you feel safer with Damien and Langdon?" asks Kai suddenly "his house is further away from the pack house and is easier to defend?"

The question should be will Damien and Langdon feel safe with you in Langdon's house. Should we tell him that?

"Um, I would rather stay here in my bedroom" I say quickly "I feel safer with you Kai" I add, lying through my teeth. Kai looks pleased with my answer. The poor bastard really believes what I'm saying and a fresh wave of guilt floods over me.

"Of course you're safe with me" he answers "I just want to make sure you feel secure here."

"Well I do" I answer quietly.

The water is more than freezing now and I stand up, shivering slightly as Kai hands me a towel to wrap myself in. I do, my teeth chattering and make a beeline back to the bedroom. I would get dressed, but prior experience has taught me that I'm about to go hot again and quite frankly I can't be bothered putting clothes on. Not this time at least.

Kai lets out the water from the bath and saunters in, looking worried. "You look like you've lost weight" he comments and I glance down at my body self consciously. I hadn't realised, but now that he mentioned it, food had been the last thing on the agenda.

"How about I send something up" he offers and I realise that he will just get more concerned if I refuse the offer.

"I would like that" I say calmly.

He comes over and gives me a peck on the cheek. "I have to go back and do some work, but I'll check on you later alright."

"Alright" I say automatically.

"I'll send that food up" he promises. I just nod.

He vanishes out the door and I give a sigh of relief. The idea of food makes me nauseous but it wouldn't hurt to at least try to eat something. Kai is as good as his word and within minutes, there's a plate with a burger and fries, plus a coca cola by my side as I eye it. The smell is amazing and my mouth waters. It looks delicious. Slowly, almost reverently, I pull the burger out of the bun and hold it between two fingers. I sniff. I'm almost drooling. I take a bite and almost moan with the sheer flavour of it hitting my taste buds. I devour the burger within moments, licking my lips when I'm done. The fries smell almost as good but the second I put one in my mouth, I spit it back out in disgust. It tastes like charcoal. Yuck. I wipe my mouth with my hand and send the fries scattering to the floor. I sip the coke and my stomach



churns. It doesn't like it. I frown. It's coca cola for heavens sake. Since when did I stop liking soft drink? It's perplexing. Reluctantly I place the drink back down on the bedside table. I guess I'm not drinking that either. But my body is craving something, something more and rich and flavoursome. I just wish I knew what it was. The one small hamburger wasn't enough to satisfy it. Then I glance over at the mirror above my dresser and freeze. Two glowing red eyes stare back at me.

## Chapter 108 - The Alpha's Rejected Silent Mate

Kai POV

When I go to check on Winter later, she's fast asleep in the bed, snoring away lightly. I walk closer and frown. There are dried tears on her cheeks and puffiness around her eyes. She's definitely been crying. But why? Is she that fearful of her father? Or is it from not feeling well? I hesitantly touch the side of her face. Her fever seems to have vanished, or at least for now it's gone. It seems to have a habit of coming and going at the moment. Poor Winter. I sit on the bed and stare at my mate. She's had a lot going on at the moment and is under a lot of stress. Her memories are coming back now, in dribs and drabs thankfully but I'm still not sure of how much exactly that she's remembered about our time together and I can't bring myself to push.

She stirs and mumbles in her sleep. It's adorable. Cute. The blanket slides down under her breasts as it moves and I suck in a breath, staring at those creamy globes and feeling a twitch coming from my cock. God she's beautiful. Storm wants her badly. He's disappointed when I tell him that we have to wait until Winter is better. He pouts in my mind and I'm forced to put a block up, so that I don't have to listen to his constant whining.

As it is, I'm feeling like I need to leave, my hands craving to touch her all over. It would be rude to disturb her sleep for something so crass. But before I can stand upright, her hand snakes out and grabs hold of my arm, tightly. I'm surprised at her strength. She has a firm grip and it's almost painful. That's laughable right. I'm a big bad Alpha, she shouldn't be anywhere near as strong as me.

"Stay" she mumbles sleepily.

I watch as her eyelids begin to flutter open, her eyes focusing on me. She gives me a tentative smile. "Please don't leave" she begs.

"I won't" I tell her, wondering why she's so upset and distraught. Something's happened but I don't know what.

She struggles to a sitting position, letting the blanket fall to her hips.

Don't look, Don't look, Don't look I chant to myself feeling hysterical. Typically, my eyes shoot to her breasts. Damn my body and my eyes. She doesn't seem to notice thank god, that I'm acting like a horny teenager.

"Winter, what's wrong?" I ask and she bites her lip and looks away.

Silence. I can hear the clock ticking in the room, it's that quiet. "Nothing" she says finally "nothing's wrong."

Right, and pigs can fly. She's lying. But I'm not going to pressure her for the truth, not yet anyway.

"Are you hungry?" I ask instead "I can get you some food."

She wrinkles her nose. She hasn't really had much of an appetite lately.

"No, thankyou." she answers.

I'm feeling helpless to do anything. Then she takes a deep breath and gets to her hands and knees, eyeing me suggestively. Her eyes stray towards my cock which is covered, thankfully, by my sweatpants. She licks her lips.

"I think I'm hungry for something else" she purrs. I gulp.

She stands up and moves so fast, she's almost a blur. I blink in astonishment. Man, can that girl move fast or what.

She slowly, teasingly, slides my pants down as I stand there trembling, too afraid to move and spoil the moment. I like this side of Winter, the confidence and the teasing she exhibits.

My cock springs free, hard as a rock and erect as fuck. She licks her lips again and then sinks down to her knees. She slowly licks the tip as I close my eyes and groan out loud.

"You taste good" she breathes.

Fuck is she trying to get me to blow my load? She puts one hand on the end of the shaft and slowly, inch by inch, takes my cock inside her sweet pretty little mouth. God the feeling is so intense, it's all I can do to hold onto my self restraint and my self control. Part of me is itching to get her onto that bed.

She begins to bob her head up and down and I moan, her throat is fucking tight and the suction is unbelievable. Her hand begins to move back and forth and I'm a goner. I'm panting like crazy, barely keeping myself upright while Winter continues, a smile on her lips. She knows exactly what she's doing to me, the little minx.

When I begin to feel the tingles of an approaching orgasm, I force her to her feet. She looks up at me with those big innocent eyes of hers, her eyes sparkling with joy.

"My turn" I growl, undressing her slowly, reverently, before placing her on the bed, lying spread eagled, waiting for me.

I crawl onto the bed and grab hold of her ankles, keeping them firmly apart. I bend my head and sniff her mound. My mouth waters. I want to taste her. Slowly, I lick along the folds of her pussy and hear her let out a small cry. I grin. I love hearing her cry out in pleasure and right now she's about to do a hell of a lot of it. I slowly, lick along her clit, hearing her give a gasp as I continue. I slowly build up the pressure as she pants and writhes beneath me, unable to move her legs and forced to endure everything I'm doing to her. Soon her body tenses and I can tell she's almost ready to cum. I insert one finger into her slowly and pump it back and forth, continuing to lick her pussy as she moans out loud.

"Oh god Kai" she's moaning over and over.

I give a wicked grin. The girl has no idea what's going to happen next.

I insert a second finger and curl them both up, thrusting back and forth while my tongue stays on her. I'm hitting the g-spot and her mouth is open in a silent scream. Seconds later she screams out "Kai" for real as her orgasm washes over her. I keep it going, forcing her to have a second orgasm as she wails and writhes, her body tensing and arching. She screams again, loudly and I give a grin, slowly letting go of her ankles and sitting on the bed looking nonplussed.

She comes back down to earth and stares at me hungrily. "Please Kai" she pleads and I cock my head at her.

"Please Kai what?" I ask prodding her "tell me what you want Winter" I growl "say it, say the words."

She's almost sobbing now. "Please Kai, I want your cock inside of me" she whispers.

Well she doesn't have to tell me twice. I arrange her on the bed, on her hands and knees, that delectable little ass of hers right in front of me as she looks over her shoulder unsure about this position. If she doesn't like it, then I'll change it, I'm not a complete asshole, but I want her to try it at least.

"Trust me" I tell her and she gives a nod. I slowly run my cock along her slits, teasing her a little. She whimpers. Damn, she wants my cock badly. Truth be told I'm desperate to be inside her sweet little pussy.

I line up at her entrance. "Ready?" I ask her and she nods, looking shy.

I slowly, inch by inch, push my way inside of her. She arches her back, making it easier to gain access, although she probably didn't mean to. It was mere instinct. Fuck. She's so damn tight. I can feel her walls clenching around my cock.

"Oh god, oh god" she pants as I push all the way in.

"You feel so big" she whimpers "I feel full."

I don't answer. Instead I slowly pull all the way out and then thrust all the way in again as she tries to keep her balance. I keep doing that, pulling all the way out and going all the way back in as she trembles beneath my body. I want to take my time, make her feel every inch of me as I take her. Her little bottom is rocking back and forth, meeting my thrusts. I grip it and hold it still as Winter makes a whining noise at me.

I begin to move a little faster, thrusting in harder. She grips at the sheets, her head lowered now, breathing in and out deeply.

"Fuck" I moan, feeling her ass right up against me as I take her.. I reach around and squeeze her breasts, making her gasp. Fuck they are so soft. Everything about her is perfect. Just right.

I want her to cum again. Cum hard while my cock is inside of her. I reach around with my hand and begin to finger Winter's clit furiously as she moans.

"Cum for me" I growl "cum for me Winter."

She mewls, scrabbling at the sheets, her body beginning to tense as I give a wicked grin. Her body is responding right how I want it. I increase the pressure. She almost bucks beneath me.

"Cum for me" I hiss and she bucks before her body stills, her walls clenching tightly around me as an orgasm washes over her body. I grin triumphant.

"Kai" she sobs "god Kai, I can't take much more."

I withdraw and flip her over, so that she's lying on her back. Then I push back in while she's still recovering from the orgasm. In this position I can thrust harder and faster while also being able to bend down and take Winter's breast into my mouth. Her mouth falls open. She gasps. I begin to thrust as hard as I can, Winter meeting me halfway eagerly. Fuck. My cock is tingling now and I can't help myself. Her walls are still throbbing and clenching around my cock. I give a loud growl and then tense, shooting my seed inside of her.

Before she can move, my hand snakes back down to her clit, teasing it, touching it while I remain buried inside of her. She wriggles and moans. "Please, god" she begs and I begin to furiously circle her clit making her whimper.

"Kai" she screams, going over the edge, her body shuddering. That's how I like to hear my name, I think to myself smugly. Once her orgasm has finished, I pull out and get up off the bed, grabbing a washcloth and bringing it back to Winter who's still lying there looking stunned.

I gently wash around her pussy, cleaning her up and then throw the damn thing in the hamper. I pull her into my arms and stroke her hair.

"Kai, that was" she begins with a hitch in her voice "amazing" she finished.

"You make it amazing" I tell her and I mean it. Werewolves are sexual creatures by nature, but it's always better having sex with your mate and intended partner. She blushes.

"Would you stay with me a while?" she asks quietly "even if it's until I go back to sleep again? I don't want to be alone right now" she finishes.

"Of course I can. I'm pretty tired after all that anyway, so why don't I catch a nap with you" I suggest.

Her eyes shine at me. Yep, huge brownie points right there. Way to go Kai.

"Yes" she whispers and turns her back to me, snuggling under the covers, looking over her shoulder. "Will you hold me Kai?" she asks.

I would hold her until the end of time. I climb in beside her and pull her against me. I can hear her heart beating, it's thudding loudly and rather quickly. Must have been what we just did.

"Winter is there anything you want to tell me?" I whisper.

"No" she murmurs "I just need you to hold me right now."

Well, at least it was something. But in the back of my mind is a suspicion that Winter is hiding something, and it's something big. Why won't she talk to me? I'm her mate. I can be trusted. Whatever it is, I hope she spills her secret soon.

## Chapter 109 - The Alpha's Rejected Silent Mate

### Winter POV

The voice in my head is getting stronger, more insistent all the time. It's bloodthirsty, wants me to hurt the people I love and it's taking all my willpower to remember who I am anymore, let alone avoid doing anything the voice tells me to do. Kai is suspicious of me, I know he is. He might not have said anything, but his eyes are so intent when he watches me, like he's waiting for me to do something in front of him. Does he suspect that I'm changing? Part of me hopes not, but the more logical part of me is screaming out that he knows, that he's come to his own conclusions.

The fever is still ongoing. But the rest of it, the fatigue, the sore joints, all of that has disappeared and to be honest I've never felt better in my whole life. But I still can't speak to Sabriel. I miss her like crazy. I want to confide in Kai, but I'm afraid of what will happen if I do. What if he decides to put me in the dungeon because he thinks I might be dangerous? I can't risk that. Not when he's put me in the dungeon before.

Can't you hear their little heart beats racing along the voice hisses and don't they smell delicious and juicy? Just take a taste, a small taste of Kai and see how delicious he is. You know you want to. Give in to your desires, embrace what you are becoming. Why try to hide it? You are strong, you are powerful. You are more than just a shifter now. Stop being such a coward and let the instinct take over.

It's getting harder to ignore the voice. Because even though I'm up in the bedroom for instance, I can still hear Kai's heart thudding in his chest. It's beating steadily and I can even hear the blood pumping through his veins. I lick my lips, wondering how his blood would taste if I were to take a sip. I frown and shake my head, pacing back and forth in the room. Something is up. Kai's heart rate is increasing. Which means he's feeling stressed. I open the door and creep down the stairs. I can already tell that Langdon and Damien are in the room, but to my surprise, they leave the study, just as I make it to the door.

"Hey Winter" Damien says gently and I give him a small smile and a hug.

"Hey, where are you guys going?" I ask lightly.

They shoot each other a look. "Back to the house" Langdon says lightly "maybe watch some television, or a movie. Relax" he finishes, grabbing hold of Damien's hand and leading him away as Kai motions for me to sit down.

I barely hear Damien and Langdon leave the pack house, all my focus is on Kai and the worried expression he has on his face.

"So Winter, how are you feeling?" he asks gruffly.

I raise my eyebrows. He's hiding something, but I'll play along for now.

"Better, except for the fever, everything else is fine" I tell him "I feel so much better."

He gives a small smile. "I'm glad, I was getting worried about you" he said lowly "and was considering the hospital."

Thank god he hadn't forced me to go. "Well, as you can see, I'm fine" I say with a forced laugh "awesome actually."

He regards me steadily. I gulp and look around the room nervously. I'm trying to avoid looking at him. It doesn't help that his heartbeat is so much louder in here. It's almost pulsating in my head. I want to scream out, it's that loud. But I pretend everything is normal. That nothing is wrong and that I'm the same old Winter I've always been. I have to keep the facade going for as long as possible.

"Nothing, seems off at all?" asks Kai.

I blink at him innocently "no, why do you ask?"

He just huffs and sits back in his chair. "No reason" he says quietly. Liar.



"So what's happening at the moment?" I ask between gritted teeth "because I could tell that Langdon was lying to me."

Kai grimaces "he's always been a terrible liar" he admits.

I wouldn't have to ask if they had been discussing whatever it was like normal people in the study, because I would have easily overheard them. They'd been smart enough to mind-link with each other instead so I hadn't.

Kai gives a loud groan. "I don't want you to panic" he begins, leaning forward, his eyes watching me without blinking "but there's a possible sighting of your father coming towards the territory. We can't say it's your father for certain, it could just be a lone traveller."

I say nothing. I feel this inexplicable desire to know if it is in fact my father heading towards the pack. My hands clench into fists. I feel anger flare inside my breast. This was it. This was the moment we'd all been waiting for. The moment has finally arrived.

"How far away?" I ask casually.

Kai looks at me warily "He's almost an entire pack away. If they hadn't called to inform me of a stranger coming this way, we wouldn't even know about him. It will take at least a day on foot or several hours as a wolf for him to arrive Winter, so there's no need to be hasty" he finishes.

No need to be hasty! There was every goddamn need to be hasty. If it was my father, then we should use surprise to attack him and kill. Why would we wait? It didn't make sense. I don't even care that it's just one shifter, that we should easily be able to deal with. All I can think about is how much my father enjoyed torturing me and the fucked up childhood I had because of that bastard. I'm ready to deal with him myself.

"All we can do is wait" Kai says quietly "you're protected here Winter, remember that."

My head isn't listening to him at all. Instead the voice is persisting in my mind, telling me we need to kill my father, to take care of him by ourselves. I let the voice wash over me. It's becoming soothing, saying

everything that I'm already thinking and feeling. It's right, we needed to do this on our own, not wait for father to come here, but rather take the fight to him.

"Let's go get some rest" Kai says and I stare at him incredulous.

Does he really think I'm going to be able to sit around and relax right now? Is he kidding?

He gets up and walks around the desk, taking hold of my hand and gently tugging me along behind him. I'm so stunned, that I let him, walking woodenly up the stairs, and into the bedroom again.

He's trying to trick you Winter. There's a reason he wants you in this room. Don't let him control you. Don't let him lock you up like an animal. Don't let him take away the chance to finally kill that evil father of yours.

I stare at Kai suspiciously. He's rifling in his pocket and comes out with a key. Son of a Bitch. The voice was right. Kai was trying to lock me up in the bedroom. How could he do this to me.

"This is for your own safety Winter" Kai says quietly, going to the door as I stare at him with wide eyes "you've been stressed out about your father for weeks and this way you know he won't get to you."

"Kai" I say slowly "don't do this. I'm begging you to not lock that door."

He looks at me sadly "I need to know you won't try something stupid."

That's enough for me. I race over and grab hold of his arm, squeezing tightly, using my new strength to get him to drop the key to the floor. His jaw drops open and he wrestles with me.

"I won't let you lock me up" I snarl at him "I'm not some animal you need to cage."

"That's not what I was doing" he grunts.

"Liar" I hiss "I should have known I couldn't trust you."

We wrestle some more, Kai attempting to get the key. I move fast, faster than even I thought was possible and circle him. Without hesitation, and with a fair bit of anger, I raise my hand and punch Kai hard enough to send him toppling to the floor. He's laid out flat and his eyes are closed. Shit. How hard did I hit him? Apparently hard enough to knock him completely out. I hesitate then take hold of the key that was on the floor. I feel slightly guilty and stare down at Kai for a moment. Then I gently shut the bedroom door and lock it with the key, throwing it down the stairs. He should never have tried to do this, this was his own fault. Stupid man.

Well done Winter. See how easily you overpowered Kai? That's how strong you are now. You don't need his protection. You don't need anyone to protect you. You are a force to be reckoned with. They should all be fearing you.

I start heading down the stairs. relieved that Damien and Langdon aren't in the pack house. The last thing I want is to have to fight the both of them as well. I have no doubts that if I run into them, they'll both try to stop me. I head out onto the grass. There's very few pack members around and those that are, merely ignore my existence or wave quickly. This is perfect. I run towards the forest. I'm so fast that trees and scenery pass by in a blur. I'm faster than I ever was as a shifter. I easily get past the pathetic patrol we currently have on. Then I pause. I have no clue what direction to head in. But maybe the voice inside my head might know?

Smell him out. He's your father so you will easily recognise the bastard's scent. It won't have changed. Let your instincts and sense of smell guide you to his location. You can smell things from miles away when you concentrate on it. You can also hear things from far away such as footsteps. Listen for the sound of cracking twigs and crunching leaves. Even shifters make noises as they run, do they not?

I wrinkle my nose and then take a giant whiff. I'm almost sick as the pungent scent of alcohol and cigarettes hit my nostrils. The scent is definitely reminiscent of my father, that's for sure. I can also smell strong body odour and old food. Yuck. He's on foot rather than in shifter form, which is surprising. But if he's drinking then it won't be too much of a surprise. He was always fond of his damn alcohol. It means he's moving slow. In fact as I'm listening, I can tell that he's not even travelling in a straight line. He's weaving back and forth. He's drunk. Good god, how stupid could he be. This was going to be way too easy. My lips curve into a smile. I have nothing to fear. He's incapable of fighting in such poor condition.

This was my chance. Before Kai wakes up and before he's found. I take a deep breath and centre myself. My eyesight becomes even more focussed as I look in the direction I need to go. I clench my hands into fists and narrow my eyes. My heart thuds loudly in my chest. I begin to run, trees and scenery passing

by. I smirk. My father is about to get a very big surprise and a not so warm welcoming from his only daughter. I relish the chance to finally kill the man who's made my life a living hell for the majority of my life. I feel sorry for Damien who won't get a chance to do the same.

## Chapter 110 - The Alpha's Rejected Silent Mate

### Winter POV

He's close. The smell of his disgusting body odour combined with the blatant scent of cigarettes and alcohol is getting stronger, more pungent. My heart is racing in my chest. My hands are clenched into fists. I'm ready for this. Ready to face the monster who made my life a living hell and ruined my childhood forever.

We will slaughter him and leave his entrails for the animals to consume. Drain him of his blood and tear his body apart from limb to limb. He will never mess with us again and he will never hurt another human being ever again. He deserves to die. You know that too Winter. He can not be allowed to live.

I'm also dangerously aware that Kai might have woken up by now or been found by Langdon and Damien. He's going to be incredibly pissed when he wakes up, I think to myself a little guiltily. But then, what had given him the right to think it was okay to lock myself up in the bedroom for my own safety? Did he think I was that fragile and that frightened? Was I really coming across that pathetic? God, if that's the case, then I need to show him just how capable and strong I am right now.

He's an arrogant fool. You didn't need him to protect you like that. He tried to lock you up in a cage like an animal. The irony is that you are so much stronger than him Winter. He's a fool if he hasn't realised that yet.

I try hard to ignore the voice but it's persistent. It puts thoughts and ideas in my head as I run and eventually it becomes impossible to block it out. Or maybe I'm just tired of blocking it out. I run, my breath coming in short puffs, but I never get tired or out of breath. Which considering the distance, is a small miracle in itself. My eyes are sharp, taking in every minute detail as I go past. I jump and it's a massive leap, taking me closer faster than running. But I don't mind taking it a little easy. After all, I'm not quite sure what I'm going to do when I come across my father.

But I can't prolong the meeting any longer. Because I sense him and his actual presense up ahead. I slow down to just a walk, my eyes scanning ahead as he walks into view. He looks just like I remember him, the same greasy dark hair tied in a ponytail, the small pot belly, the stained and dirty clothes, bare feet and repugnant smells surrounding him. He hasn't changed one iota, not even after spending time in Johnathon's dungeon. It clearly made no difference to the bastard at all.

He stops when he sees me and I cringe at the wide smile that comes onto his face. I can tell he's drunk because he's weaving slightly as he walks, instead of walking in a straight line. God knows where he got the alcohol from. Probably stole it on his way here.

"Winter" he says cheerfully as I glare at him "it's been a long time."

Not long enough, I think to myself grimly, feeling rage inside of me. "What is it you want father?" I ask angrily "why bother coming here?"

He pretends to look hurt, but I'm not fooled by the bastard at all. "Why you're my family Winter, you and Damien. I came to take you both back home, where you belong" he says and then adds "I am your proper guardian after all."

"No, you want something else, what is it?" I ask patiently. As if he wants us to be a family. What a pathetic liar he's attempting to be.

His eyes narrow and then a calculating look appears on his face. I knew I was right and that he had an ulterior motive.

"Fine, I figure that you and your so called mate, he's an Alpha isn't he? Would pay money to get me out of your lives. After all, I'm currently unemployed because of you and Damien. The least you could do is set me up. I'm sure your mate has plenty of money at hand."

"You want us to pay for you to go away" I say lightly, incredulous at his demands. Is he really this moronic and delusional?

He shrugs. "Why not. We both know you wouldn't want me anywhere near you after what I did to you" he says slyly.

My voice rises. "You tortured me. don't pretend like that was nothing. You tortured and abused me for years and now you want me to pay you money to go away."

He laughs. "I tortured you, you little bitch, because you reminded me of your mother. God" he exclaims "even now you look just like the bitch. I can't stand it. I could never look past it, it's like she's there, constantly getting a dig in at me, revelling in my misery."

I blink confused. From the way he's speaking, it almost sounds like he believes mother is alive. But he'd told us she'd died in the rogue attack. I begin to feel suspicious. "Mother didn't really die in the rogue attack, did she father? You just told us that story to save face."

His face contorts and he looks at me meanly. "What would that information be worth to you" he taunts "would it make you feel better Winter? To know that she abandoned all of us in order to be with her precious lover of hers? That she never came back for you or Damien? I took care of you both, housed you, fed you, while she stayed away, enjoying herself and forgetting all about everyone she left behind. Your mother was nothing but a whore in the end. She ran away from me and our life together, telling me she wasn't happy anymore. Ha. You don't do that to your mate. You don't just leave them. The bitch had the nerve to reject me. I wish I had killed her. She deserved it."

I feel numb. The way father spat out the words, his disgust evident in his voice, as well as the lingering hurt, all felt like he was telling the truth. Had my mother abandoned me and Damien without a care in the world? Perhaps she hadn't thought father was capable of laying a hand on us. Maybe she meant to come back and couldn't for some reason. It all whirled in my mind. The only thing that remained crystal clear, was the fact that my mother was alive. All these years being punished for her death, and she was alive and safe out there somewhere. Tears come to my eyes.

"You're not getting a goddamn dime out of me" I tell my father, my voice dripping with hatred. "Leave now before it's too late." Although I suspect it's already too late as my bloodlust becomes overwhelming.

The voice in my head is getting louder and it's becoming harder to ignore it, particularly with the amount of rage I'm feeling inside of me. I want to tear my father apart.

"I'm not leaving" he spits out "in fact why don't you make this easier on yourself and come to me Winter. You've always been such a placid little thing."

I cock my head. I'm not placid anymore, but he doesn't appear to know it. In fact, as I eye him, I realise he doesn't see me as a threat at all.

"Where is she?" I ask bluntly "something tells me you know where she is, father. Where did our mother go after she left your sorry ass?"

He glares. "I don't know where the bitch is, if I did, she would no longer be alive" he spat out. I believe him. He's that petty that he would have tracked her down. Hurt her, like the coward that he was.

Kill him. He lied to you and Damien. He told you that your mother died in a rogue attack, when he knew she was alive after all these years. You could have looked for your mother years ago if it wasn't for him. Don't let him control you anymore. Get rid of the asshole forever.

My steps are slow but steady. A triumphant grin comes over his face as I walk towards him. I pretend to look meek and weak, the same old Winter that he was used to. I feel what feels like fangs come out of my mouth. His mouth drops open. He points at me. "Your eyes are red" he splutters and then, before he can shift, or do anything, I feel my body move so fast it's a blur. I grip him around the throat, tight, preventing him from shifting, my eyes glaring into his. I'm enjoying his weakness, his struggling. The idiot is so drunk he couldn't have shifted successfully anyway. How stupid could one man be.

His hands clutch at mine, frantically trying to move them. I throw his body across the ground and watch it hit a tree. He gets to his feet, trying to shift, but after a few bones cracking, he goes back to human form. You would have thought he would make sure he was sober when coming to the pack but nope, he'd had one too many drinks.

I grab him and raise him up high, delighting in how strong I am, how feeble he is compared to me. I lick my lips, feeling hungry, hearing his heart race in his chest and his blood pump through his veins.

"You bitch" he wheezes "monster."

Maybe I am a monster. But he's not one to throw stones. Because he's the worst, abusive, monster I know. I slowly lower him down, so that he's facing me and I stare at the nape of his neck. The fangs, or canines? Whatever they are protrude out of my mouth and instinctively I place them against my father's neck and then push down.

Blood, so much blood to drink. It eases my thirst and soothes my sore throat. It feels deliciously warm, rich, potent, I hum in ecstasy as I continue to drain him, his body struggling to begin with, then going limp as I continue. Soon enough, the blood runs out and I give a small whine of disappointment. My father's body is limp and I drop him to the ground, staring down at his ashen face. I still have so much anger inside of me. So much rage. My nails turn sharp like claws.

My hands thrust inside the body and I pull out his heart, smiling with glee as the blood stains my hands. I throw it across the forest and turn back to the body, this time pulling out his intestines and entrails. I sniff, sensing that someone is coming up behind me. My body tenses. Would this be yet another enemy to destroy? Or a friend? The scent is familiar but I'm in a haze, all I see is red, everywhere. I'm desiring nothing more than to keep killing, to find more blood to drink. Already I can tell there are wild animals nearby and I lick my lips, hungry again.

"Winter, sweetheart, look at me" I hear from behind me.

I frown puzzled. I recognise the voice. I'm sure of it. Slowly the red begins to fade from my eyes. The anger begins to fade as well.

"Winter, look at me" continues Kai.

I'm reluctant. Now that I've come back to myself, I shudder at the dead body laying at my feet. I feel sick to my stomach. I stumble backwards. What have I done? My god, what kind of monster am I? But then I remember everything and it takes all I have not to kick the dead body at my feet, feeling nothing but disgust at the man who dared to call himself my father. I'm not sorry he's dead.

"Winter" Kai's voice is persisting and I slowly, quietly turn around, cringing at the horrified look on everyone's faces.

Kai is the first to get over his initial shock. He blinks a few times then slowly moves towards me. His eyes dart to my father's body but he says nothing. I look down and see blood trickling down my shirt.

"Kai" I say my voice shaking "I don't know what to do"



He gathers me into a hug. "It's alright sweetheart we'll figure this out together. "

I shake my head. "No, you don't get it. I know that Thomas turned me into a hybrid" I whisper and Kai just holds me tighter.

"I've suspected that he might have done for awhile, but it's only now that I am certain about it" Kai tells me.

I shiver. "I'm a monster" my voice cracks. "I'm disgusting."

"No you're not" Kai says gruffly, turning me away and walking back towards Langdon and Damien. "I don't care if you're a hybrid Winter, we'll work it out. I still love you no matter what." He says firmly, his eyes staring directly into mine. "You are still the woman I fell in love with. I don't blame you for what happened here, although" he says somewhat wryly "it might have been nice if you hadn't knocked me unconscious."

"Sorry" I whisper guiltily.

"I still love you Winter as well." chimes in Damien, patting me awkwardly on the shoulder.

"I as well" says Langdon gruffly.

I say nothing as Kai steers me away towards the pack house grounds. But in my head, all I can remember is that my mother is out there, somewhere, still very much alive. How was I going to tell Damien? Or worst, should I even tell my brother that our mother abandoned us, even if it was to save her own life?