

Silent Mate 131

Chapter 131 - The Alpha's Rejected Silent Mate

Kai POV

I feel frustrated. Every time I try to go to Winter, Vanessa somehow makes me forget that's what I want to do and I find myself doing her bidding instead. Lunch was spent at the table, learning about Drake who seems to be slightly uncomfortable in his mother's presence. He certainly doesn't act like a loving son at any rate, but I could be reading him wrong. It's hard to say. My friend King Axel is also silent, staring down at his food, his eyes glazed over. He hasn't uttered a word, Vanessa instead doing the majority of the talking. The same thing happens at dinner, and I push my food around on my plate, not hungry, my stomach churning nervously as the sky begins to darken. My gut begins to cramp in response.

Drake too, looks out the window. He seems to be contemplating something but it's hard to say what. The room is full of tension.

"It's almost time" Vanessa says in a husky voice "for the ritual. Winter will finally be free of her vampire side" she says, turning to me and staring deeply into my eyes. I feel my body becoming loose and relaxed, my mind free of everything but what she is telling me. Drake lets out a snort and she shoots him an angry glance. I know she didn't want him to come down here, she'd told him bluntly it wasn't the right time but he'd showed no caring about that at all. He'd actually been quite snide about it, but Axel had been delighted to see him, much like a father seeing his son. It had been touching to see. At least someone seemed to care about the boy. It was a shame he hadn't ended up with a better mother.

Vanessa glances outside with a gleam in her eyes. She turns to her husband who blinks at her confused, an absent expression on his face. "Axel" she says brusquely "go to our room. You are no good to me right now. You can't help with the ritual" she explains, a sly expression on her face.

For a moment, there's a look of disappointment on Axel's face, but just as quickly it fades away as he stands up and bows to his wife, who watches him keenly. "As you wish my queen" he says monotonously.

He turns and walks away with slow, steady footsteps, the sound fading into the distance.

Drake watches him go with a brooding expression on his face. He looks upset on Axel's behalf. His mother merely raises an eyebrow at him. He stays silent. She smirks.

"I must fetch a few things from my chamber" she informs me haughtily as I listen, my feet not moving as my body remains still "stay here with Drake while I do so."

"As you wish" I say automatically and she smirks.

Vanessa or rather, Queen Vanessa, turns and glides out of the dining room, a look of concentration on her heavily made up face. Drake gives her the finger behind her back, luckily she doesn't turn around and see it. Loving son, he is not coming across as. I turn to look at him, my head at least able to turn. I wonder if I should be anxious about that. Nah. I'm good.

Drake frowns at me. Smack. He raises his hand and slaps me directly across the face, causing me to stumble backwards.

"Ouch" I snarl and he looks at me repentant. Well sort of anyway. It quickly fades. Bastard.

"Sorry" he whispers "but pain seems to be the only thing that breaks my mother's spell. You should be able to move now" he added.

I move my foot experimentally and gasp. He's right, I can.

I give him a sidelong look "did you go to the dungeon?" I hiss and he nods, his face pale.

"I did and I met my brother Damien" he advises "they are still in there, but I plan to leave in a minute and free them. You on the other hand" he whispers frantically "need to do everything my mother tells you to. Not that you'll be able to do otherwise, the second she's back here, you'll be under her spell."

"Then why aren't you?" I snap and he gives a bitter laugh.

"I guess because I've grown up with her. I'm immune."

"What is she?" I ask anxiously "how does she have so much power over me?"

He looks incredulous, as though surprised I haven't worked it out yet. Now I feel stupid for no damn good reason.

"She's half siren" he whispers, checking the doorway "no man can resist her. Did you honestly think your friend chose her as mate" he says and I still.

"Oh my god, no wonder" I murmur feeling sick and somewhat angry as I stare at the boy "why haven't you stopped her?" I ask and he looks at me grimly.

"Because she's still my mother. Not to mention she would see it coming, it's no secret that I can't stand her" he adds.

We hear the sounds of footsteps coming and he motions at me frantically to get back into the position I had been in when she left. I hurriedly oblige and she comes waltzing in, clutching several items to her breasts which she hands over to a very apologetic looking Drake.

"Drake my dear" she purrs, thrusting her breasts out as her son winces and looks away embarrassed "would you do me a massive favour and take this out to my altar table outdoors" she says, grasping his arm and looking into his eyes, even as he tries to evade her. "Kai and I have one more thing to grab before we can begin. You don't mind do you?" she asks.

Drake's eyes meet mine and I know he's going to the dungeon now he's been given the opportunity. I give a discreet nod and he smiles a little at her. She visibly relaxes.

"Thankyou" Vanessa tells Drake warmly as he gives a grunt and a nod, starting out of the room with his hands full of items "we'll see you out there" she adds with a grin.

I eye her as he leaves. She seems so confident, so sure of herself. I can feel the siren part of her calling to me, doing my best to resist it, but it proves to be futile. My whole body seems to be floating again and I don't feel anything like myself. God, I'm useless, I think annoyed as she runs her hand up my arm.

"Kai my darling' she says sweetly, tingles spreading up my body "I think it's time to fetch Winter now, don't you? We need her, after all, for the ritual."

I nod and she leads me out of the room and throughout the castle, until we reach the bedroom that Winter and I have been staying at.

She pushes the door open and walks inside, gesturing for me to follow. My steps feel leaden as I come to the side of the bed, staring down at my mate with confusion. She lies there, snoring softly away, her body curled up in a foetal position. She looks so innocent and so vulnerable. I once again try to resist the spell, but cannot break it's hold on me. Vanessa's eyes gleam with satisfaction as she eyes my mate on the bed, who appears not to be aware of either of our presences.

"Pick her up Kai, but gently please" Vanessa instructs me in a husky voice, pointing down at Winter.

Damn her to hell, I think sourly. My body moves to respond to her direction though, my arms scooping Winter up and holding her cradled to my chest. Her head lays back limply and her arms and legs swing back and forth in my grasp.

"Follow me" Vanessa says lightly, gleefully leaving the room.

We head through a variety of winding corridors and out of the castle, heading southwards on the grounds. Something large and shimmery is in the distance, gleaming in the moonlight. I can't make it out, but it appears to be what she's aiming for, her body striding purposely towards it, smiling in the moonlight. Winter's body feels light in my arms, as light as a feather, her body cold against my bare skin. We continue in the direction and my eyes make out what the large item is. It's a large table of sorts, I suppose you could call it. But it was made of white stone or marble or something like that. Long and rectangular, it's the perfect size for a person to lie down upon.

Vanessa nods as she spots the various items she'd given Drake piled haphazardly next to it. "Damn that boy" she swears. glancing around with annoyance on her face "where on earth has he gotten to now?

He never did have the stomach for my spells" she said with a derisive snort. She motions for me to put Winter down on the table.

I gently place her down, her face staring up at the moonlit sky, her arms and legs by her sides. Vanessa leans down and retrieves something else I didn't see and I blanch as she waves the chains around. "Tie her to the table."

Resist, damnit, I think to myself, but already I've grabbed the chains and wound them around her and the table. She pushes a padlock at me and I lock it, stepping back and looking at my mate gravely. Why does she resemble a sacrifice to me? It makes me nervous but I still don't move towards her.

The moon is high in the sky now, stars twinkling overhead. There was a slight chill to the air and part of me wonders how it is that Vanessa is so unaffected by it, clad in a simple short black dress that clings firmly to her figure. She tests the chains and beams at me. "Nice and tight" she approves "well done my soon to be King."

I feel dread at that promise. I don't want to be her king. I just want to be Winter's mate and even that was at risk right now, considering everything I've done. Why aren't I completely under her spell? Because my thoughts are my own, I notice with surprise. Is it because Drake slapped me? Or because I can't stop thinking about my mate in between Vanessa's talking?

She begins to light some candles, placing them in a large circle around the table, the flames, lighting on their own. Not only that, but they do not flicker or fizzle out despite the chilly air and brisk wind. They don't topple over either, standing firmly on the grass. She also makes me stand back so that I'm not inside the circle.

"Done" she mutters to herself, standing back and eying it critically.

I dart my eyes around. Where the fuck was Drake? He had said he was going to the dungeon so where was he? Surely it didn't take that long to free a few lousy prisoners? If he didn't hurry this ritual was going to be done and dusted and there was nothing I could do to prevent it. My body was refusing to move unless she told me to.

"A few more minutes" Vanessa said quietly, spreading out her arms and swaying back and forth "and then I will have what I desire most" she exclaims.

Her gaze drops to Winter and she smirks "so much for being a powerful hybrid" Vanessa says snidely "she's the weakest one I've ever come across. She has all this power at her fingertips" she says unrepentently "and doesn't use it. What a waste. She doesn't deserve it. She doesn't want it. So I'm going to take it and so much more. I will finally have everything I finally wanted. What I deserve" she laughs quietly, as I stare at her in dismay. She sounds crazed, but then, wasn't she crazy? I couldn't keep up with the way her emotions kept changing so quickly.

She bends down and grabs a chalice and a small dagger. Vanessa hands the chalice to me and my hand closes around it automatically, holding it steady in front of me. She aims the small dagger with a white crystal handle, at her forearm and closes her eyes, preparing herself to draw blood, from what I can determine.

Suddenly we hear a loud shout and my eyes fly open in relief. "Get the fuck away from my daughter, you bitch."

Chapter 132 - The Alpha's Rejected Silent Mate

Damien POV

We spent ages waiting for Vanessa to start her fucking ritual thing, that poor boy Jared still locked up in that cell we left him in. We couldn't risk being caught in the castle and stuck to the grounds, spotting Winter being carried out and Kai carrying her once it became dark. Drake was annoyed, finding us and scolding us for not waiting but he shut up when I glared at him. He did however, leave us briefly to go and let Jared out of the cell and I respect him for that. Clearly the two of them are close friends. He's loyal, a nice characteristic to have.

We duck behind some bushes nearby, watching as Vanessa instructs Kai to place Winter down on the stone slab, restraining her with chains around the table. Kai is moving but it's mechanical, his movements jerky as though he's trying to resist.

"It's the siren part of her" mother whispers "Kai's clearly under her spell." Well duh.

Drake joins us. I cast a look at him.

"Have any of you thought of a plan?" he asks rather desperately as we all shake our heads at him.

"Well that's just great" he huffs.

Langdon seems concerned, narrowing his eyes. "She's about to draw blood" he murmurs "now might be a good time to interrupt her."

I open my mouth to answer but Mother has already stood up and strode around, staring a startled Vanessa in the face as she shouts out loud "get away from my daughter you bitch."

"So much for that" mutters Drake, getting up and walking around, Langdon and I following. Elena has given away that we've escaped from the dungeon, even if she didn't meant to, so there was no longer any point in hiding. I could kill her though, for losing control, even if it's out of fear for her daughter.

Queen Vanessa is beautiful, her hair flowing in the wind. Her eyes are eerily bright as she smiles in welcome at us, the dagger slowly dropping to point at the ground. "Well isn't this a nice surprise" she trills her voice lilting in the air. "So many nice visitors" she adds.

I frown. Why can't I move? I try to step away but can't. Judging by the looks on everyone's faces, including Elena's, they can't as well. Vanessa moves closer, her eyes narrowed on me in particular, a small smirk on her face.

"Well Drake how coincidence that your twin happens to be here as well" she scoffs touching my face as I flinch. She grins.

A few more steps and she stops directly in front of a frozen Drake, his eyes glaring at his mother angrily as she sighs and shakes her head, tsking in disappointment.

"I expected more from you, my son. Where is the loyalty to your mother?" she says sadly, a hand clutched to her chest.

"You're not my mother" he spits out "You've never been my mother. I'm just a trophy for you to parade around. You don't care about me" he growls "you just needed me to help you lure in certain men."

Vanessa gives a large sigh and then turns to my mother, a sadistic smile on her face.

"Here is your so called real mother" Vanessa drawls, as Elena tries to raise her hand to her. She catches it and digs her nails in, causing Elena to yelp in pain. Drake goes pale. His eyes are horrified. He glances over at me and I stare back, feeling just as helpless.

"It's been a long time Elena, hasn't it" Vanessa continues and my mouth drops open.

What did she just say? It wasn't my imagination, she just called my mother by her first name. Which means the two of them knew each other.

"Screw you Vanessa" hisses Elena. She groans as Vanessa drops her arm. I can see nail indents on her from where I stand. There's also a slight bit of blood welling up.

"So rude" says Vanessa annoyed, walking back to Kai and placing a hand on his chest as he stares at her like a lovestruck puppy dog.

"After all I did for you" she snaps, as Elena rolls her eyes.

"What do you mean?" I force out.

Vanessa gives me a coy look. "Did your mother not tell you how you were conceived?" she asks wickedly.

I'm confused. She laughs. Elena turns her head to face me. "Don't listen to her" she pleads.

I ignore my mother. Drake is also staring intently at her. "Tell me" I growl.

Vanessa shrugs. "Well your mother knew me when we both attended school together" she said with a disgusted glance at a distraught looking Elena "we were friends, despite the fact I wasn't a shifter. When she met your father" she told me, raising her eyes, contempt on her face "she found out that she was unable to bear children. A rare oddity in a shifter, but it does happen" she says with a pitying look at me. "So she came to me. Your father, it turns out, was desperate for an heir back then and Elena was desperate to give him one. The timing worked out well. I willingly agreed to cast a spell on her in order for her to conceive but with an ultimatum. You see" she sighed "I too wanted a son to love, to adore. My kind find it extremely difficult to bear children as well and the spell would ensure she had twins."

"Myself and Drake" I uttered out, casting a scornful look at my mother. She'd lied to me, yet again. Why was I so surprised?

"Yes" said Vanessa sweetly "your mother had to give up one of you to me and she did so without any qualms at all. Your father went along, because I gave them a substantial amount of money in return as well. Imagine my surprise when your mother came back, wanting a daughter to go along with the son she had. Very little time had passed at all, but she wanted to have the two of you close together" she explained.

My eyes dart to mother. Langdon is calm, placid, even frozen as he is, feet stuck to the ground. I can tell he's taking everything in.

"Does that mean she had twins again?" I ask, fearing the answer.

Was there another Winter out there somewhere?

Vanessa shook her head. "No, it would have killed your mother if I had used the same spell. This time she would get one daughter only and be happy with that. Another spell would kill her. I did it for her, in good faith and then she forgot about me like I never existed."

Her tone was bitter, I noticed, like she'd been hurt by mother's lack of friendship.

Elena was indignant. "I was busy being beaten half to death" she snapped.

Vanessa rolled her eyes "I told you to leave him" she hissed "over and over again but you didn't listen and then you finally did, leaving your children behind. You're a disgraceful human being" she told her.

I could agree with that. Even Drake was eyeing Elena with misgiving and he barely knew her.

"Vanessa, I'm begging you don't do this" Elena pleaded, looking down at Winter "you have a choice."

Vanessa laughed.

Her face was incredulous. "You want me to stop this ritual?" she asked with a laugh "you must be kidding. I don't care if she is your precious daughter, she has something that I want. Or rather, she has two things that I desire."

Winter was so still but her hair, her hair was slowly changing colour in front of me. I blinked but was certain it was turning an extremely light blonde. Vanessa was so busy speaking, she wasn't noticing that at all. I kept my face blank, not wanting to draw attention to that. Something was clearly going on. I was praying it was for the good and that it might be a case of her waking up. Langdon too, cast a sideways glance before looking back up. He'd noticed as well.

"What is it you want?" I asked rather desperately.

Part of me was desperately hoping that Kai would get his act together but he seemed to be blinking and glancing around like he was completely at a loss. I suppose, having been in Vanessa's presence longer, he was more susceptible to her wiles? Did it work that way?

Vanessa turned to look at me, her eyes glinting in the moonlight. Her lips curved back.

"What do I want" she repeated with amusement. "Well, I want lot's of things. But right now' she said delightedly "I want the power that Winter possesses as a hybrid. Taking her Vampire side will make me a trybrid, something that's not been done before."

"Then you'll leave her alone?" I check.

"No. She also has the baby she's conceived under my spell. I want that baby. It will be transferred into my own body to grow and develop. I've always wanted to experience pregnancy and this is my chance to."

I stare at her with hatred. She's so evil. Elena lets out a choking sound. Vanessa glances at her.

"What's wrong Elena? Are you upset about me killing your daughter? Because once I'm done, Winter will be nothing but an empty shell and I'll be the most powerful species in existence. Not to mention, her mate, will be my king and rule by my side. He's rather handsome or I happen to think so anyway."

"What about the king" asked Langdon.

"I plan on killing him too" Vanessa snarled "a more boring shifter, I have never met. I want his kingdom, not him. He will go, just as all of you will."

Something was spreading on Winter's forearm. It looks like a mark of some description. Or tattoo. It's tribal and it's dark. It seems to shimmer for a moment and then stills. How curious. Elena is spitting vile curses at Vanessa who is merely laughing as she walks back over to Kai and draws her arm back up, the dagger shining brightly as she tenses her arm and gets ready to pull it across and draw blood.

"With this blood" spits out Vanessa, dragging the dagger across her arm and causing blood to trickle. Kai hands her a goblet. "I will force Winter to drink it, mixed with some herbs" she added, bending and grabbing a small container, shaking it and trickling it in. "It will purge her vampire side out and it will come to me. It will be all mine."

I try to force my body to propel forward. I'm shaking from trying so hard and I can see the others doing the same, Drake in particular grunting and swearing as he tries.

"Mother don't" Drake shouts as she stares at him "enough of this evil. Stop while you still can" he growls.

She raises an eyebrow and shakes her head. "Sorry Drake but I know you. You've sided with my enemies and I can't forgive that. If it's any consolation to you" she says quietly "I will make your death a painless one, I promise. You deserve that at least."

He looks like he's been struck across the face before it hardens as he stares at his mother. She looks unrepentant. I grit my teeth and feel the tiniest bit of movement.

Kai sways slightly on his feet. He's trying to move, I can sense it. Vanessa still remains oblivious, too busy gloating over what she's about to do. Winter's arm moves, twitches slightly. I see Vanessa move towards her, the goblet firmly held in both hands, the smell of the herbs disgusting and pungent, strong in the air as we gag. She stops and looks down at Winter, cocking her head.

"Such a weakling. What a shame you didn't embrace it" she tells her.

How does she not notice Winter's hair changed?

She lifts the goblet up and prepares to put it to Winter's lips. To everyone's shock, Winter's arm swings up and grabs Vanessa's hand, gripping it tightly as the woman squealed, her eyes fluttering open.

"Think again bitch" Winter snarls, her eyes glowing red "I'm going to kill you."

Chapter 133 - The Alpha's Rejected Silent Mate

Winter POV

I can hear voices above me, distant, like they are talking underwater and it's frustrating. But the last bit is clear and my eyes flash open as I grasp Vanessa's arm, before she can spill any blood from the goblet into my lips and tell her "I'm going to kill you."

I swing up and dart to the side, eyeing her with nothing but contempt. Everyone else is frozen. Vanessa seems to be in shock.

"How is it that you are immune to my spells?" she croaks, dropping the goblet with a clang.

I shrug. I actually don't know. What I do know is that I feel powerful, strong, like there's something pumping through my veins. I'm different but I like this feeling. It's addicting. I feel like I can take on the world, but my main concern right now is the bitch in front of me. She's going down and I'm going to be the one to do that.

She flings a bolt of lightning at me and I move, the bolt hitting the tree with a loud hissing sound. The tree topples with a cracking noise.

I glance around at everyone who appears to be helpless. "Let them go" I tell her firmly "your fight is with me."

"You really think tha I'm that stupid" she spits out, circling around us all, eyeing me warily "they'll attack me the second they are free."

This time a fireball flies towards me and I duck in time. She smirks at me. Arrogant bitch.

"I have plenty of trips up my sleeve" she says arrogantly "I intend to have that power you possess" she cries "and that child of yours too."

Like hell she will. I race towards her but she sends a giant burst of wind towards me, causing me to fall back and hit another tree. This time the poor tree topples to the ground from the crash. Whoops. I feel a sharp pain in my side, but ignore it, focussing on her instead. I can't let down my guard. She's powerful, but I'm stronger.

"Winter, be careful" cries my mother in warning. She's eyeing me helplessly. I feel bad that they can't move. It's kind of annoying as well because Vanessa is using them as shields as she flings her power at me.

"Just give up already" snapped Vanessa, a fireball just missing me by an inch as it goes flying past.

"Never" I snarl, my fangs protruding from my mouth as I give her a fake and insincere smile. "But you feel free to if you're scared."

Her eyes glint at me. "Kai" she says suddenly, turning to my mate, "go and fight Winter for me. She's trying to hurt me" she purrs.

My mouth drops open. Is this bitch for real? Oooh, what a goddamn coward. How dare she use my mate against me.

Wow, she's gotten desperate already huh.

Sabriel what do we do? We can't hurt our mate.

We could outrun him? Knock him unconscious? Drain his blood and make him half vampire?

No none of those. We're going to have to try and keep him at bay while fighting Vanessa.

Goodluck with that. That bitch is crazy. At this rate, she'll send all of them at you.

I know. let's do this.

Well if we die, we die together. It was nice knowing you Winter.

Same Sabriel.

Kai gives a gigantic shudder and then begins to move towards me, his eyes pleading, his mouth in a tight line.

"I don't want to do this" he says "but my body won't listen to me."

"I know" I tell him bravely "I know."

I cock my head at him. Maybe Sabriel did have a good idea after all. Kai begins to get closer and I don't move, not until the very last second, where I use my vampire speed to get around him, effectively swinging my arm at the back of his head and hitting him as hard as possible. My hand connects with a crunching sound. Kai's mouth falls open and then I watch, sadly and regretfully, as my mate crashes to the ground, facedown, completely and utterly knocked out.

Vanessa gives a shriek of frustration. She stomps her foot as I chuckle, relishing her little tantrum.

"That didn't go to plan, did it" I taunt her.

She narrows her eyes. "I was laying bets that you were too nice, to injure your mate, but I guess I was wrong about you" she snarls "so much for being sweet and innocent" she digs. I just laugh.

Whoosh. Another fireball. I duck just in time and see that it comes dangerously close to Damien. Then I blink. That's not Damien. My eyes travel around and I see two Damien's. My eyes widen. Did he find his twin? Is that what I partially overheard? I get distracted, a fireball hitting my arm and I curse as I swat at it, sending it fizzling out. Damn it hurts like a bitch.

"Hurts does it" she mocks me. I flip her the finger.

It does hurt. I glance around at the others. They are far too vulnerable out in the open like this while she flings fireballs. I'm putting them in danger, staying like this. They can't dodge or duck like I can. I stare at Vanessa, narrowing my eyes at her, jumping to the side as she screeches in frustration at another near miss.

I hear the Vampire voice.

Give them blood to break the spell that comes from the siren part of her that paralyses her victims.

Whose blood?

Yours silly. You aren't affected by her spell are you? You're not very bright sometimes are you?

I'm choosing to ignore that.

Huh. What do you know. While I dodge fireballs and the occasional lightning bolt, I use my fangs to pierce the skin of my wrist, causing blood to trickle down my wrist. I shoot to twin Damien first and trickle it into his mouth while Vanessa stares, not comprehending what I'm doing. I do the same to Elena and real Damien, as well as smear some into Kai's mouth. They all begin to move and Vanessa gives a shout, "You bitch, what have you done", her tone extremely angry.

I grin. "Come and get me" I growl and shift, heading directly to the woods as she screeches indignantly.

My paws thud across the ground, dodging trees, fallen branches and debris, my tail wagging. The vampire side is ecstatic at how well everything is going. Everything seems so effortless. I can hear Vanessa behind me. For a witch she's definitely fast and finally I turn and shift back to the vampire part of me. She stops in her tracks.

"You're done" I shout out, my voice loudly echoing in the wind "you're nothing but a pathetic witch who uses her powers to get men because your too ugly for them to want you."

"How dare you" she screams. This time she sends dirt flying everywhere. I wince as small rocks hit me across the arms and chest. Never mind, they aren't doing much damage.

My speed is overwhelming as I race towards her and grip her by the throat. She gasps as I raise my arm back and then send her flying into a tree, her back hitting it with a loud crunching noise, her body sliding to the floor. She screams, spitting out blood as she stands back up.

"That was for Kai" I blurt out "I know you put a spell on him. I know what you did."

She barely gets an answer out when I'm holding her again. This time I reach my arm out and grip hers, breaking her arm as she flails wildly in my arms. I drop her and back away.

"I can heal that" she cries and I watch her broken arm slowly mend itself.

"I know" I say slyly "but it wouldn't be much fun if you couldn't."

She sends what looks like a small tornado at me. I get stuck in it, cursing, wind rushing around me as it lifts me high up into the air.

I brace myself. She lets me drop. I fall to the floor, on my back, my bones healing instantly.

"Nice one" I congratulate her, malice dripping from my voice "but now it's my turn. Let's see you heal this you bitch" I snarl and move.

This time I get behind her and wrench one of her arms behind her back. Before she can utter a spell or a word, I wrench her arm out and rip it completely from her body as she screams. I fling it away and walk back around to face her, blood spouting out everywhere. She uses her other arm to cauterize it. Even witches can't regrow limbs I think with contempt. I almost want to spit in her face.

"That was for Damien" I tell her, cocking my head and looking pointedly at her legs as she turns and tries to stumble away. "Where are you going?" I call out.

She looks back, absolutely terrified. Her so called plan, or ritual that was to happen tonight, had completely backfired on her. I'd also ripped off her right arm, knowing it was the stronger one that she used to conduct spells. Her left one would be weaker and so would the spells she tried. I also suspected, that one armed, her siren side would be dormant or extremely weak as well.

I start to skip. She's unbalanced with one arm, struggling to move away. She definitely can't run. This feels like fun. The vampire side of me is gloating now. I move and get in front of her, forcing her to halt in her tracks. She weakly holds up her arm and sends a fireball at me. It fizzles before it even touches me. I grin, showing her my fangs.

"I'm hungry now" I purr "I can hear your blood pumping through your veins, the heavy breathing, your heart thumping. It sounds so delicious" I continue as she blanches.

"Don't" she tries but I just tsk and step closer.

I grab her by the throat, and force her head to go to the side, exposing the creamy side of her neck. My fangs pierce her skin as her body jolts, her other arm weakly trying to push me away. She tastes sweet

with a hint of bitterness as I begin to drain her, sucking greedily at her blood. My mouth is watering. I feel rejuvenated, energetic as the blood continues to slide down my throat. It's so smooth and fresh. So delicious. It's sweet, tantalising. I feel triumphant. I've won and conquered her, she no longer poses a threat to me.

I'm careful though, not wanting to take too much, at least not yet. She has to suffer, for everything she's done. I still remember the helpless feeling of having to take the drug she gave me so she wouldn't kill Kai. I stop and pause, her skin is pale and her face is ashen. She's close to passing out but not yet. My other hand reaches up, clawing away at her midsection and chest. She gurgles, as the blood drips down onto the forest floor and seeps into the dirt, staining it red, as I stare in satisfaction. For a minute, I feel pity for her, but it fades. I also hear voices in the background and know that Damien and the others are coming. I stiffen however, as I hear the footsteps of someone else coming. Christ, did I not hit him hard enough? I was sure he'd be unconscious for ages yet. But it's him and I turn to face him, holding a very still Vanessa in my grasp. He halts, no doubt stunned by my red glowing eyes or the smile that won't leave my face as I torture my victim.

"Whoa, Winter" Kai says, holding up his hands "don't you think that you've done enough?" he protests, looking slightly green as he looks at Vanessa.

I shake my head. She hasn't suffered nearly enough. Not to my satisfaction at any rate. I want her to hurt more. I want her to die screaming. "No" I tell him heatedly, "she has to die."

"She's almost dead anyway" he argues pointing at me.

We begin to argue while I forget what I'm doing. A rock, a large one, suddenly rises from the ground while I stare in disbelief. I throw myself forward but it's much too late, the rock hitting Kai across the back of the head. He lands to the ground, the rock on top of him. It's bigger than his head. His skull looks slightly mushed. I give out a scream of rage, ripping off Vanessa's head and flinging it across the ground, letting her body drop to the floor. I run to Kai. I pull the rock off his head and examine him, panicking at the sight of blood and more. I desperately try to feel for a pulse, but to my anguish and despair, cannot find one.

"Kai" I scream, beginning to shake him as Damien and the others come into view "Kai wake up."

Chapter 134 - The Alpha's Rejected Silent Mate

Winter POV

I wish I could say that I didn't remember the next few moments, or hours but it's imprinted on my mind. Shouting and screaming for Kai to wake up, shaking him with my arms. I don't remember which one it was, either Damien or his twin Drake, confused in the moment as I screamed for my mate, taking hold of me, and dragging me back away from him as I flailed around and struggled against them.

"Let me go" I screamed " I need to go to Kai. He needs me"

It finally hit me that it was Damien holding me back, his eyes staring down at me with, was that sympathy in his gaze? Why would I need his sympathy? Kai was alright, he just needed the hospital, I convinced myself, he needed medical attention, that was all. He would be fine, I tried to convince myself, but the words felt hollow.

The other one, Drake was looking down at the body of his mother with an unreadable expression on his face.

"She's definitely dead" he muttered, looking at my mother who was bending down to check Kai all over. "What about him?"

My mother was checking for a pulse. I stilled, looking at her desperately and she wouldn't meet my eyes.

"There's a tiny pulse, barely there, but it's there" my mother finally said and Drake nodded. He moved towards Kai and firmly grasped him in his arms. The sight of blood hit me again and I blanched, the smell repugnant. I couldn't stand to see my mate hurt and it was all my fault, I thought bitterly. Why hadn't I just killed Vanessa immediately instead of toying with her? I should have just been done with it. Instead I'd played with her and Kai had been hurt as a result. I was an idiot. What had I done? Bile rises up in my throat, threatening to empty my stomach contents as I double over in grief, Damien's strong arms the only thing holding me up.

"I'm taking him to the hospital" announced Drake and my other brother, the one tenderly holding me, gave him a small nod.

He rushed off, my mother coming to my side, to my surprise, whereas Langdon, followed behind Drake, also heading to the hospital. I suppose as the Beta, it's his duty to find out his Alpha's condition. I struggle weakly in my brother's arms, all my strength suddenly zapped out.

"I killed him" I sob wildly "Kai's dead because of me" I scream out.

Damien shakes his head. "He's not dead. Mother found a pulse" he pointed out, and then glances behind me at the corpse still lying there. "Vanessa is gone, thank goodness. You got rid of her. Winter, don't blame yourself for this, we tried to get Kai to hold back, but he was insistent on going to your side."

That just hurt me inside even more. My mother pulls my hair back from my forehead. "Sweetheart" she croons "this isn't your fault. Why don't you let Damien hold you and take you up to the hospital? I'm sure you could use a checking over as well" she adds pointedly. But my wounds are healed, one of the very many benefits to being half vampire and half shifter. We heal incredibly fast.

Part of me wants to change Kai, it would heal him, make him better, but he can't consent to being a hybrid and I won't force that on him. One time he told me he didn't want to be one, apologising to me, and I had to respect that, but by god, it was killing me inside and part of me wanted to be selfish and do it anyway. I was hoping the surgery would go through and that I wouldn't have to be tempted to do just that.

I let Damien swoop me into his arms, cradling me against his chest. "For what it's worth, I am sorry about Kai. But he'll pull through Winter, he's a stubborn jack ass, you know that" he adds.

I desperately want to believe him. Believe everything they are telling me, but there's something in their eyes as they glance away, something they aren't saying to me. He begins to walk and I cling to him, holding desperately onto his flesh which warms me on the outside. But it's the inside of me that's chilled to the bone, inside of me that hurts so much that I want to scream out all my pain and anguish.

The hospital is busy, crowded and chaotic. We walk inside and a nurse spots us both, looking me over with a critical eye. "Do you require assistance?" she asks over the noise.

Damien shakes his head. "Actually we're looking for a patient, would have just been brought in, Alpha Kai?" he asks with a smile. The nurse almost swoons.

"He's in surgery at the moment, Your friends are currently in the waiting room" she added, taking us down there "I'll come inform you when the surgery is over."

I barely grasp anything she's saying. Damien sits me on a seat, my mother taking one on the other side of me. Langdon and Drake look at us with a grim expression. "They're doing surgery on his brain Winter. We don't know if he'll make it."

I let out a cry, Damien's arms enfolding me. Drake looks at me sadly, but doesn't try to touch me. It's not the best circumstance to meet your sister, I guess. But I find myself reaching out a hand to him, he hesitates but then takes it, giving it a gentle squeeze in sympathy. "What are his chances?" I ask thickly.

He's an Alpha, this can't be right. Don't Alpha's heal better than other wolves? What about Storm. Oh my god, I can't lose them, I can't, I think to myself.

My mother tries to calm me. "Winter, you need to breathe honey. You're going to collapse at this rate. Just breathe. We won't know anything until the nurse comes back."

My eyes fill with tears. Someone, god knows who, hands me a box of tissues which I gratefully accept, blowing my nose and wiping my tears. My whole body feels lightheaded.

"I think she should lie down" I hear Langdon say in genuine concern "she looks like she's going to pass out. She would have used a lot of energy up with that fight" he informs them.

My mother moves. My brother hops off his seat and then gently pushes my unresisting body down over a few chairs, placing a jacket over me. "Sleep" he murmurs as I let go of Drake's hand "we'll wake you when we hear something."

I open my mouth to protest, but the tiredness overtakes me. The truth is I had expended a lot of energy and right now, Sabriel was also going insane at the thought of our mate being injured and hurt. My eyes close of their own accord even though I try desperately to fight it, frightened that no one would wake me up with news.

I drift, but not so deep that I can't overhear them talking around me.

"What is she going to do if he doesn't make it? How will she cope?" Langdon.

'We'll be there for her. No matter what. She needs our love to pull her through" my mother.

"I feel so bad. I should have been able to fight, my mother is responsible for this, well not my real mother but still." Drake

"It's okay. Kai is a tough son of a bitch. The bastard will pull through, I'm certain of it." Damien.

But as the hours pass, the voices begin to change. I can hear snoring next to me and surmise that it must be Damien.

"Langdon, will Winter be okay?" Drake. He sounds so concerned, like a brother even though we've just met.

"I don't know" Langdon answers stiffly "she's strong, brave, fearless at times, but to lose a mate, is to lose your entire world."

Silence. Nothing but silence. He's hurting too, his voice sounds pained. His best friend was in surgery as well and his Luna was losing it at the moment.

Hours pass. I feel my strength returning, my eyes beginning to flutter open. My mother reaches down and helps me to sit, gently patting me on the back. "Do you want something to eat?" she asks, pointing to a tray of sandwiches which must have been brought by one of the nurses. I consider it, my stomach is growling and churning. I don't want to eat, but going hungry isn't really going to help the situation either. I gingerly reach over and grab one, munching it absently, my eyes on the revolving doors.

"Still no news?" I ask rather hopelessly. Surely that was a bad sign wasn't it?

"No news, he's still in surgery" answers Langdon with a sigh "but they do keep coming to inform us so that's something. King Axel is recovering. Turns out Vanessa tried to poison him before the ritual. He's out of critical condition but also anxious about Kai."

I give a slow nod. The hospital is so depressing, being surrounded by all white, the walls just a glaring reminder of where you are and what you are doing. I've always hated them and now I've been stuck inside of one for almost, from the looks of it, 16 hours.

I get up and go to the bathroom, letting myself have a small cry. I use the cold water to splash on my face and cool down some of the redness and the puffiness of my eyes. It's refreshing and I blink back further tears.

Winter, our mate, our mate is hurt so bad

I know Sabriel, it's my fault

It's not your fault. There's no blame here child, just fear for our mate and his safety

I can't do anything to help him Sabriel and it hurts

I'm hurting too, my child, my heart feels as though it's bleeding.

Oh my god Winter our mate

Sabriel ends that sentence on a scream full of anguish and despair. I feel the most intense pain of my life in my chest and scream, dropping to the ground, one hand to my heart as it thumps wildly. My screams continue, the pain washing over me, again and again, my body curled up now in the foetal position, unable to move, only to feel the neverending waves of pain. I can hear shouts outside the door but it barely registers. It hurts, hurts so bad, and I find myself desperately clawing at my chest to make it stop, the make whatever this intense pain is go away, blood trickling down to the floor. The more pain I feel, the more frenzied my clawing becomes. What the hell is this pain?

The door bursts open and several nurses file in, grabbing hold of my arms to prevent me from scratching and wounding myself any further. "Doctor get the sedative ready" a nurse shouts as my arms begin to flail around and my body begins to writhe from the pain. A man in a doctors coat steps inside, carefully holding a syringe. My eyes widen. What are they doing? Couldnt' they see that I was fine, that I didn't

need help? My mate was the one that was needing the help, the assistance. Why weren't they with him? Then I see mother's face and Langdon's as they look down at me, their faces pale and ashen.

"Winter, this is for your own good alright, it will help take the pain away" the doctor murmurs.

Pain. What did they know about pain? I was being slowly tortured, from the inside, unable to make sense of it all. All I could do was fight them in disbelief. Some part of me, knew something was very wrong.

A sharp prick as the syringe or needle goes into my arm, the nurses all panting heavily from the exertion of trying to hold back my limbs. I give a small hiss, glaring up at them all. The pain begins to slowly, ever so slowly, subside, my body becoming limp and boneless, the nurses letting go so that my arms and legs flop to the ground.

"It's taking effect" the doctor commented "let's get a stretcher to put her on and get her to a hospital room."

I feel myself being lifted up and placed on something hard and cold. My mother reaches out and holds my hand, walking beside me as my eyes blink in confusion, my vision becoming somewhat blurry.

"Winter, I'm so so sorry" my mother whispers, her voice shaky and cracking "they did all they could, but in the end, there was just too much in the way of injuries and complications. I'm sorry to tell you. . ." she pauses, her eyes brimming with tears as I wonder where everyone else is "I'm sorry to tell you honey, that Kai didn't make it. That's what that pain was."

Just like that, I learnt that I had lost my mate and my whole world, my eyes shutting and my mind drifting off in a pleasant haze brought on by a sedative. Kai was gone forever and there was nothing I could do about it. I should have changed him when I had the chance, selfish or not.

Chapter 135 - The Alpha's Rejected Silent Mate

Kai POV

Drip, drip, drip. The sound is incessant, bloody annoying and I open my eyes, my mouth widening in shock as I scream at the fact that it's like I'm underwater, feeling the water on my body, but unable to tell which way is up or down because it's so damn dark. My arms flail around, my body moves every which way, in a frantic attempt to get some air, certain that I'll die if I don't get some oxygen into my lungs. It takes several minutes, before I calm down enough to notice that, despite the fact I'm underwater and floating around, I'm not drowning and my body doesn't appear to need air. What the hell is going on?

The last thing that I remember is something hard and heavy hitting me right on the head. Not Winter, but a rock, branch, tree limb? All I know is it hit me hard, and fast, before I could dodge it. I remember Winter's frantic screams, over and over again, while I was unable to open my eyes, or do anything. She was so hysterical, it had killed me to listen. Someone had finally held her back, her touch suddenly gone, my body feeling so cold, like it would never be warm again. My heart suddenly skips a beat as a realisation dawns on me. Have I died? My god, no, I couldn't have. But Storm is quiet, and no matter how hard I try to reach my wolf, there's no answer. I feel like there's a part of me missing, like Storm has been wrenched out of me. It's disquieting. But if I'm dead, then where am I? Is this hell?

I hear a sudden sucking sound, and then without warning the water begins to slowly push down, until my body is lying there, a small puddle beneath me, feeling like I'm in quicksand, it's that hard to move myself into a sitting position. I rub my hand over my eyes and blink, but it's still dark, my eyesight seeming to be like a normal human beings, rather than as a shifter, and I awkwardly get to my feet, stumbling slightly. My body is cold, shivering violently as I glance in every direction, but all there is, is an empty landscape, no grass, no trees, no clouds, no sky. Nothing but blackness all around me.

"Hello" I shout, "anyone there?"

No answer. I huff and contemplate my situation. In the end I decide to start walking, in a random direction, in the hopes I come across something, anything that will tell me where I am. I need to get back to Winter, she's waiting for me. I won't let her think I abandoned her. If I have to claw my way out of her, I will. My feet move with purpose, my stride never faltering. Hours pass and I begin to despair, thinking I really am in hell. Why else would it be so dark and so cold with nothing in sight?

Just as I'm beginning to think of giving up, light appears up ahead. Like a strobe light from a play, in the distance. I squint at it and then begin to walk a little faster, feeling myself get a second wind. Whatever that light was, I wanted to know where it was coming from. I jog, lightly, and the closer I get, the more light there is, until I find myself blinking against what seems to be harsh sunlight, my hand over my eyes. I turn around in bewilderment, suddenly finding my feet are standing on ground and grass, blue sky overhead and millions of flowers spread across the ground for the eye to see. A lake is off to the side and a swing hanging from a tree. Wait. Is that a person on the swing?

I walk slowly towards the small dainty figure, her features coming into focus as I approach, her hair silvery in the sunlight, her skin pale, her eyes the clearest and brightest blue. There's a knowing look on her face as she halts the swing, her bare feet barely touching the floor. I gulp. She doesn't appear to be a human, but rather something else, emitting a dangerous and powerful aura. I stop where I am as she slowly gets to her feet and then glares at me, as though personally affronted by something I've done to her.

"You" she shouts incensed as I jump and then stare "how dare you."

She has to be talking to me right? I glance around but there's no one there. Yep, just me. She strides right up to me and points her finger in my chest, breathing rapidly in her anger.

"You idiot" she howls.

Now that's a bit much. I don't even know this woman but she shoots me such a scathing look, that I wisely decide to keep my mouth shut.

"It's not your time. You, you" she splutters, hands now on her hips "are not meant to be here. You are meant to be with her!" she exclaims with a snarl. "You nincompoop" she growls.

My mouth falls open as she turns and storms away, glancing over her shoulder, shouting at me "follow me dumbass."

I follow. It's not like I know where I am but what is this woman's problem? She finally stops at the foot of the lake, where I now notice a big black, familiar, wolf, resting under the tree.

"Storm" I cry and go to walk towards him when she flings her arm out and prevents me.

"Stop, he's resting right now. You will not ruin his recovery" she snorts "or I'll kill you."

I notice a small vial next to Storm, shimmering with red blood. It's so bright in the sunlight and I feel myself drawn to it, like it's beckoning me.

"Can you tell me where I am" I snap at the woman, angry now.

"Don't get rude with me" she says and then relaxes, gesturing around her. "This is the space between" she murmurs, biting her lip "where all people go before they die."

I really don't like the sound of that. "Am I dead?" I ask "who are you?"

She looks offended. "Haven't you figured that out? I'm the moon goddess" she says icily "and I am none too happy with you Alpha Kai."

I gulp. Fuck. The moon goddess is pissed at me. Really pissed. If looks could kill, I'd be nothing but ashes in the wind by now.

"I'm sorry" I apologise, not knowing what else to do.

She sighs. "You fool. How could you let down your guard like that and let yourself be hit" she demanded.

"I didn't want Winter to go so far she'd hate herself. I thought that Vanessa was weakened. I was stupid, I know that" I tell her firmly.

"Well it was a dumb thing to do" she grumbles "now I have to do something about you."

Uh oh. "Like what?" I ask her nervously, trying not to give rise to my panic.

"Well, I can either let you die, or I can offer you something to keep you alive" she said quietly "but it requires a sacrifice as all things do. The thing is, you've not done the greatest job at being a mate to Winter" she points out seething "and I would require you to do much, much better."

"I could beg you not to end my life, but in the end the decision is up to you" I say evenly, my heart hammering in my chest "but I will say this. I know I've been crap to Winter, my god, I feel like the worst human being in the world sometimes. I hate myself at times. But I have never stopped loving her. She's

my everything. The reason that I want to keep going every day, when part of me wants to just sink into a depression that's hard to get out of. She's the reason I've found a reason to smile again. She's taught me what love, real love feels like. She's shown me what it's like to be affectionate and what it's like to crave a person so badly, you'll go to any lengths to do what they want or need. Winter is my reason for living, she makes me stronger and more compassionate as a human being. I've changed, maybe not enough, but some and I don't want Winter to ever think that I left her, or stopped caring. If you kill me, then all I ask is that you give her a mate, that loves and adores her as much as I do, and who shows her the love that she deserves."

I see a slight smile of encouragement on the moon goddess's face. But it doesn't matter, because all I can see in my mind's eye is my precious Winter. I feel a pang at the thought that I may have to leave her, but if she can find some happiness with another person, then I can find some small consolation in that. My heart is breaking and all I feel is agony, stuck in the depths of my own despair. If I'm honest with myself, I don't want Winter to find someone else. No one is going to love her like I do, no one will understand her like I do. I stare straight at a quiet and serious moon goddess.

"I take it back" I state, my eyes turning black "Winter is my mate and will stay my mate. No one loves her like I do. No one cares for her like I do. She's always been mine and she always will be" I declare, my heart skipping a beat. The moon goddess is silent, awed in fact.

"That's all very well but are you willing to make a sacrifice" she says with a sidelong glance.

"Name it, I'll make whatever sacrifice I have to" I growl "anything, if it means going back to her."

She nods, pleased. She takes my hand and shivers run up my spine as I feel the full magnitude of her power, tugging me over to where Storm rests and the vial sits, glinting in the sunlight.

"Blood" she says, pointing to it "to be specific it's Winter's blood. You drank some earlier but not enough for the transition to take place."

I frown. Transition? Into what? Horror then shock. She means into a hybrid. I glance back down at the vial, my heart hammering now. I have a feeling I know what the sacrifice is.

The moon goddess bends down, her white dress sweeping across the grass and grabs ahold of the vial, ignoring the sleeping Storm. She balances it on the palm of her hand. "If You drink this, you will live"

she says softly "but you will also become a hybrid, like Winter is. Unlike her, the transition will happen immediately and without any hiccups." A pause "you'll be able to control your urges but you will need to feed every so often as Winter does. You'll be exactly like her and Kai" she says sternly "there is no cure. Witches cannot take the vampire part out of you or Winter. Are you willing to go through with this? To live as a hybrid? Or shall Winter find love with another mate?"

There's no malice in her tone, but I stiffen at the mention of Winter and another mate. I regard the vial silently and reach out to take it. The glass is smooth, cold, tiny in the grip of my own hand. She waits, her eyes wide, for me to do it and without a word, I open the stopper and drink it down in one quick rush, the blood sweet and tart. I drop the vial to the ground with a clatter.

"You love her, don't you" said the moon goddess with approval "and she loves you. I can hear the grief and the pain she's emitting from thinking she's lost you forever. She needs you Kai and you need her. Start showing her how much because she needs it. It's not enough to speak it. Actions sometimes can speak louder than words" she said.

I watch her bend down to pat Storm. She stands up and then glares. "Well" she says with a flourish of her hands "hurry up and wake up already" she snaps. I feel myself start to fall, and then, gasping for air, I sit upright, a hand to my chest, blinking at the bright light as I suddenly come to in a part of the hospital I never would have imagined. The moon goddess had a lot to answer for, I thought a bit acidly, or she had a wicked sense of humour, because I'd woken up in none other than the morgue! I blink and then hear the sound of a scream, a woman running towards the door, as though her life depends on it. Great, I think sardonically, this was going to be a little difficult to explain and all I want is to see Winter. Thanks a lot moon goddess.

Chapter 136 - The Alpha's Rejected Silent Mate

Winter POV

So much pain. It's intense. I feel like I'm burning up. The last thing I remember is being sedated by hospital staff. I stare blankly up at the ceiling. He's gone. He has to be. That pain was him dying and I remember my mother's words "I'm sorry, he didn't make it."

But how could Kai leave me like that? Abandon me? I thought he loved me. If he loved me, he wouldn't leave me to be all alone. I need him. Does he not know that? I can't live without him being by my side. I just can't.

Grief overwhelms me. I hear footsteps and then my mother's blurry face appears above me. She gives me a smile but I ignore it. I feel her hand stroking my hair. "Winter, honey" she murmurs, her own voice full of grief "I'm so sorry" she whispers.

I turn my head, tears trailing down my eyes and onto the sheet. Maybe if I pretend, for just a little while, that Kai is still alive, the pain will go away.

"Hey Winter" says another voice and Damien comes into view, pulling a chair up beside the bed, gripping my hand tightly, squeezing it gently. "I know you're upset and you don't have to talk, I just want to be here with you. If you need something tell me, and I'll get it" he adds.

Damien always knows how to make me feel better. He knows right now that I don't want to talk. Because to talk right now, would just end in more tears. I swallow and give him a shaky smile, my body trembling on the bed. I wonder where Drake is or Langdon. Maybe they are together. Then I realise that Langdon would be full of grief as well. Kai was his Alpha, as well as his best friend. He would need comforting as well.

I curl up into a tighter foetal position. I hear my mother sigh as she strokes my hair. "So young" she murmurs "the pain will fade eventually Winter, but you can't give in to it and let it destroy you. It will kill you, if you let it."

"Let her grieve" my brother booms at her, shocking me and almost making me jump in fright "she can take time for that mother. She loved Kai and he loved her. It wasn't like what you had with that man" he said in disgust.

Mother's hand pauses. "I never said it was" she said hurt "just that I know how it feels to lose someone."

Please, I think to myself, please don't fight in front of me right now. I can't take it. I don't want to be stuck in the middle between them. Not right now. I don't have the energy for it, let alone the inclination to stop them.

My brother makes a grunting noise, but thankfully lets it go. Mother goes back to stroking my hair.

"Do you want a water or something sweetheart?" she offers.

I shake my head. Food and water is the least of my concerns right now. Or blood. I wonder where Sabriel is but she's silent, grieving her way, or at least that's what I'm hoping.

Damien eyes me carefully but says nothing, leaning back in the chair, my hand still held tightly in his. God, I hope he never lets it go, it's a small comfort to me.

Then it bursts out of me, in a fury. "This is my fault, it's my fault that Kai's dead" I shriek out loud, curling up tighter "I should have stopped, I should have killed her straight away. Kai would be alive if it wasn't for me" I sob, "I killed him, my god I killed him."

"You didn't" Damien tells me gruffly, moving to kneel in front of my watery eyes "Winter, he should have stayed on his guard more. He put himself in danger. You're not responsible for his death. Blaming yourself is only going to make it worse. Trust me, you didn't do it."

I don't believe him. Damien is just saying it in an attempt to make me feel better. It's nice of him, but it fails to placate me. My mother continues stroking my hair, as though that's all she can think of to do.

"Langdon must hate me" I murmur "I don't blame him if he does. I killed his best friend." My voice catches as I begin to cry even harder.

"Langdon doesn't hate you" Damien said softly "Winter, please stop" he pleads "stop with the self blaming and hatred. It's not going to help. You need to be strong right now. Alright. Sabriel needs you to. She must be hurting something fierce. Both of you need to help each other."

My tears slowly start to subside. But they don't fully stop. They'll probably never stop.

"But what do I do now Damien?" I whisper, staring at him, my mother listening but not speaking "what am I supposed to do without him there?"

He sighs. "You start by grieving Winter, like any normal person. Then eventually, you start to put your life back together, one step at a time. You're not alone" he points out, "you have me, you have mother"

I swear that was sarcasm in his voice when he said that "you have Drake and you have Langdon for starters."

"Where is Kai?" I ask sniffing "I want to see him."

Silence. Damien looks as though he's debating what to say. His jaw tightens and he glances up at mother, who seems to have gone pale and ashen.

"Where is he?" I burst out, frantic, sitting upright as Damien catches me "which room?" I'm heedless of my actions now, wanting to go to my mate, not even thinking straight.

"Hang on Winter" Damien says, as I try to get up. "You can't go down there."

I stare at him confused. "Go down where?" I say impatiently.

He glances away. "You can't go down to the morgue" he finally utters "it's not allowed Winter."

The morgue. They had put my beloved Kai in the morgue. My whole body shakes. I had thought maybe, he would be in a hospital room, not thinking logically. I pale, and look at my brother, feeling sick to my stomach. My mother sees it and grabs a wastebasket just in time, putting it to my mouth as I vomit up my stomach contents. Not that there's much. My shoulders heave as I clutch at the wastebasket like a lifesaver.

My brother looks green. He's never really had a stomach for someone being sick. But he valiantly stays where he is. Mother pushes my hair back so that I don't get vomit in my hair.

"I'm sorry" I mutter miserably "I didn't realise that they would have. . ." I trail off.

"It's okay" Damien says quietly "maybe we can ask about going down there later."

Mother glares at him, he raises an eyebrow at her.

I try to rally myself. Kai would want me to be strong, I think to myself, he would want me to pull myself together. But my face crumples anyway. My heart hurts, my chest hurts. My whole being hurts. Part of me wants to beg for sedation again, so that I don't have to feel or I can just be numb. But then I would just want it for longer and longer. It's dangerous to be numb, because then it's harder to feel.

There's a commotion and several nurses and security staff running through the corridors. Damien frowns, looking concerned. He glances at mother. "I'm going to go see what's going on" he says gently "mother stay here with Winter and neither of you leave this room" he adds firmly.

Mother opens her mouth to protest but then shuts her mouth. There's a look in my brother's eyes that say do not mess with me. She takes the hint and moves closer to me, Damien going out of the room and jogging in the direction of all the noise.

"What do you suppose is going on?" I ask weakly, mother taking the wastebasket and moving it away from me thankfully, the smell was getting to me.

"Who knows" she shrugs "probably a difficult patient needing to be held down or something. I'm sure it's nothing dangerous" she adds, seeing the look in my eyes.

I just nod and stare at the ground.

The commotion gets louder. Several screams and shouts. Mother begins to look worried. "Maybe I should at least close the curtains" she begins to mutter. Right. That makes sense. Curtains will definitely derail a crazy patient, I want to shout at her in disbelief.

"Stop" I hear Damien's voice shouting. Then a bunch of people yelling.

"Damn your brother for getting involved" Mother snaps "he should have stayed out of it. What if he gets hurt."

I say nothing. Damien can more than take care of himself. Even if mother hasn't realised that yet. I wipe my mouth with the back of my hand. Then wince. I hop off the bed on shaky legs.

"I'm going to go rinse out my mouth" I mutter, heading towards the bathroom connected to the room I'm in. Mother nods, looking grim. She looks nervous. But the commotion seems to have died down and I assume it was to do with a patient being difficult. Otherwise I'm sure we would have been told otherwise by the nurses.

I stagger into the bathroom and turn the faucet on, dipping my hands under the water and cupping them, splashing my face. It's refreshing and it helps to wake me up some, as well as dry my tears. I cup my hands again and this time thirstily drink. I pat my hair a little. I barely recognise the girl in the mirror. My hair is different, a light shade of blonde that's almost white,. my eyes are brighter, my skin is paler. Any other time I would have thought I was beautiful. But at the moment, all I could think was that it was strange to look this way, instead of a mess like I'm feeling. The vamp-side of me detracted from looking like a slob. It was sad.

I swore I heard footsteps. But then I hear mother's voice, sounding slightly strangled. "Winter" she calls "can you come out please? There's um" she pauses, slightly hysterical "someone here to see you."

I don't want to see anyone else. I scowl at the mirror. Part of me itches to break it, hurt myself in a way, but I just clench my hands into a fist and then release it with a loud whoosh.

"Coming" I call, opening the door and then shutting it with a loud crash.

No, it can't be. My eyes are deceiving me. Either that or I've been dreaming this whole time, because of the sedative. Because I can't possibly be seeing this. But it's so real, so lifelike. My mouth drops open, my eyes widen. My mother is there, pale, a hand to her mouth. Is she seeing this too? Was I hallucinating? But I so desperately want it to be true. My heart gives a pang. A shiver runs down my spine. My feet are stuck to the floor, refusing to move, tears form back in the corner of my eyes. Can this really be?

He stares back, his eyes red, looking over me anxiously. I swallow, hard, feeling a lump in my throat. Then, without warning, my feet move, and I race towards him, flinging myself into his strong arms, my arms curling around his neck as I sob into his shoulder. It's him. It's really him. His hands grip me tight, holding me close to him. For a moment nothing is said, Sabriel exploding to life in my mind. She begins to howl, in happiness, the sound filling my mind.

"Is it really you" I whisper, sobbing.

"It's me" Kai answers "I'm back Winter and I'm never leaving you alone again. Do you hear me" he demands "never again."

Chapter 137 - The Alpha's Rejected Silent Mate

Langdon POV

I couldn't believe it, after all the anguish, the despair and the grief, that son of a bitch Kai was alive. He literally stumbled past me, clad in a pair of scrub pants, security guards all over him, before Damien managed to sort out the confusion. I guess the moon goddess has a sick twisted, sense of humor, because he woke up in the morgue. I can't help but think to myself, that it's a tad bit hilarious and the least that Kai deserved, for making us all think he was dead. He's in the room with Winter at the moment, and I'm not about to interrupt. She was devastated, we all were, but she was literally begging for death because he was gone. None of us could comfort her. Damien was about the only one who could really get through to her, and I was so lost in my own sadness, I couldn't offer her anything.

Drake gently takes my hand, tingles running up my spine. I wipe my eyes for what seems like the hundredth time, tears of joy spurting from the corners.

"I can't believe he's alive" I blurt out again "I could have sworn he was a goner. Should have known he'd find a way to come back."

Drake is silent, he's a good listener, but there's also something else, something heavy on his mind. I feel guilty. Ever since we've met, I've not had much time to talk to him, but can you blame me? My head has been awash with thoughts of having to take over as Alpha and what I would need to do to keep the pack running. I've barely had time to take a breath, and it's hardly the time to get to know another potential mate.

"Listen" Drake says quietly "I can understand that right now is not the best time for this discussion, what with Kai being dead" he pauses and frowns "and then coming alive again. I could feel your pain, Langdon, just sitting beside you. But what I really want to know, is if you're willing to give me a chance, or if we should reject this mate bond right now, before we develop feelings for each other. Before it becomes too painful to separate" he murmurs, his eyes dark and piercing, his gaze troubled now.

My wolf howls at the thought of separating from Drake, his anguish overwhelming me. He has already claimed Drake and his wolf as his mate, even though I've hesitated, not sure how Damien really feels about all this. Even though he's assured me he's fine, it does change the relationship once again.

"What is it you want" I say turning to him, my mouth dry. Once again, a mere glance, and I'm completely overblown with how handsome he is. "Tell me what it is? I can't imagine that you thought your mate would be a man instead of a woman."

Then again, I could be wrong. It might have been a surprise for me, but that didn't mean it had to be for him.

He chuckles, making me stare at him strangely. "I've been gay my entire life" he confesses wryly, "so it's not a shock for me to be mates with another man, in fact I'm ecstatic, because it would have been really weird to have been a female" he laughs.

Huh, what do you know.

"It's why Vanessa never really had a chance to use her siren part on me, because I wasn't attracted to women" he said, shaking his head "god, she hated that" he exhaled.

"She was still your mother, you're not even remotely upset that she's dead" I say tentatively. After all he did grow up with her and she raised him. He had to have some feelings for her, surely.

He shakes his head. "She stopped being a mother long ago, when she started to use her powers to kill men for sport" he said. "King Axel is the only one who's lasted this long, I suppose she must have really liked him. I did try, initially to warn the men, but they were so far under her spell, they refused to listen or believe me. In the end I gave up."

There was a twinge of regret in his tone. He must have really tried to save the men.

"Why didn't you kill her?" I asked and he looked at me sharply.

"You saw what happened to all of us back there. With a snap of her fingers, she paralysed us all completely. I never could get the advantage over her."

I fall silent. Vanessa's body had been burnt by the King's soldiers after we had left, nothing but ash remained and that had drifted away on the wind. She was definitely not coming back. Thank god. I shuddered. Her power was incredible, but also dangerous. It did make me wonder though, why she seemed to hate men so much. As though there might have been a story to that in her past. Needless to say, I was willing to bet that Drakes' childhood had not been a happy one, something he had in common with Damien. Both boys had deserved so much better.

"Look, I really like you Langdon, my wolf is in love with you already. I know that you've been with Damien for a good few months now, while you know nothing whatsoever about me, well besides my mother. But I'm telling you something" he says, intensely, "I want to be with you. More than you could know. Right now all I feel is shivers down my spine as I talk to you, my whole body is craving for you to touch me. When I'm not beside you, my wolf gets sad or angry, and all I can think about is whether you are okay. I haven't felt like this towards anyone else before, so this is new to me, but I'm not going to hide from it, I'm going to fight. So if you try to reject me" he declares, his eyes blazing, his voice full of fervor "I won't accept it."

I digest his words. The passion he invokes in me is so overwhelming that I can't breathe. He wants me. Wants to be with me and Damien. He's not wanting to walk away, he's willing to share. He's so intense, his whole body is practically vibrating beside me. His eyes are narrowed on me and his mouth is open a little bit, he's panting from that speech. He runs a hand through his rumpled hair, never once taking his eyes off me, his arms folding across his chest. His foot taps impatiently, or maybe nervously, on the floor, a steady thudding noise. My heart begins to thump wildly in my chest. My hands go clammy, like it does when I'm with Damien. My breathing goes shallow. My wolf is close to the surface. I can feel him. My hands clench into fists, I'm trying to maintain my composure to the best I can, distantly remembering that we're currently in the waiting room of a hospital. Footsteps sound behind me and I turn my head slightly, Damien coming into view. He sits beside me and I glance at him, still not fully in control.

Drake starts to move and without even consciously thinking about it, my hand shoots out, preventing him from leaving.

"Stop" I say hoarsely, my eyes turning pitch black "you're not going anywhere."

Drake gulps and sits back down, his eyes on me. Does he look a little relieved? Did he think that I would still not want him after that speech? Something begins to ignite inside of me. Damien looks at the both

of us, perplexed, before a knowing look passes his face. Without a word, he silently gets up and begins to walk away, a small smirk on his face. I barely acknowledge his leaving, my hand still gripping Drake's arm.

"I don't want to reject you" I growl "in fact, even though I've considered it hundreds of times, I can't bring myself to. I'm drawn to you, just like I'm drawn to Damien, but I'm not stupid. You are both your own person, and I can't treat you both the same. It would be unfair. You each have different personalities."

Drake's eyes are glistening now as he bites his lip. God he's adorable. I awkwardly shift in my chair, feeling a reaction coming from my cock.

"I won't be rejecting you" I declare firmly, coming to a decision "which means, Drake" I say, leaning forward and regarding him, my lips curled back "that you're stuck with me and Damien, whether you like it or not."

His lips curl into a smile and he leans forward. My hand shoots out and grips him by the back of his neck, startling him slightly as he blinks at me, my fingers twining themselves around his hair. I scoot forward on my seat and then, before he can move, press my lips hard against his. This is no gentle kiss. I'm rough, possessive and demanding. For a moment he stays still, then begins to reciprocate, a small moan issuing from his throat. He tastes sweet, like honey, my tongue caressing the outsides of his lips as I coax his mouth to open wider, my tongue slowly sliding in and caressing his. It's like a dance, the both of us, tasting and touching our tongues to each other. His small moans and whimpers are turning me on, and I grip the back of his head harder, forcing him to move even closer. I've completely forgotten about our whereabouts, my hand sliding beneath a very willing Drake's shirt, caressing skin as he trembles, sitting there, his legs splayed open. My cock begins to twitch.

A hand plants itself on my shoulder. "Ahem" coughs a very amused Damien as we jolt back, Drake's cheeks flushed in embarrassment "as nice as it is to see that you've come to an agreement" he teases "you might want to remember that we are in a hospital and in a waiting room."

I glance around. Several shifters, waiting on their partners to be helped, stare back at us, some with curiosity, other's wide eyed. None have condemnation in their eyes. A little girl points and giggles as I smile at her.

"Sorry" I mutter, slinking back in the chair "I just, couldn't help it."

Damien snorts. "I've been on the other side of that. I'm not going to lie, I'm a little jealous" he adds, looking over at Drake with a smirk "so I want you to make it up to me later" he purrs. I gulp. So does Drake.

Now my mind is awl with bedroom possibilities. After all Drake is going to have to share a bed with myself and Damien. I get excited at the prospect.

"Sorry bro" Drake mutters "I just needed to know."

Damien shrugs. "All good. Just so you know, Kai is doing well and Winter's perked right up, now that her mate has come back from the dead. The doctors are going to be discharging her shortly, once they've finished examining Kai as though he's the most interesting thing they've ever seen."

I stretch. Damien swoops in and gives me a peck on the lips. I grin. "So I take it that means we are either going back to the castle or home?" I ask drowsily. The castle was much closer. But I wanted to go home, and be with my mates. I was willing to undergo discomfort if it meant being back inside my own home. But it would be up to Kai.

Damien frowns, "I think we should go home, no offense but I'm not really wanting to go back to the castle."

"It's up to Alpha Kai" I point out, "and whether he would be up for it. He just died remember" I chortle "he might need to rest some more."

"I heard that" says a grumpy voice and my head swivels around to see my best friend standing there, Winter clutching him around the waist with desperation, a wide smile on her face.

I jump up and fling my arms around him. "I'm so happy you're alive" I gush and then grin "but the morgue?"

He swats at me and I dodge it. "Smart ass" he mumbles "like to see you wake up in the morgue one day. Anyhow" he says fixing his eyes on us, Elena behind Winter "I believe it's time to go home. I find myself

wanting as far away as possible from here" he says with a shudder "and I won't be stepping foot in a morgue anytime soon!"

Chapter 138 - The Alpha's Rejected Silent Mate

Drake POV

I look around Langdon's house in awe. It's large, to me it's like a mansion, but he assures me that it's quite small compared to the pack house and I believe him, but it's still impressive none the less. Damien has gone to secure us all drinks and Langdon is busy showing me the 'tour' of his place, stopping tracks in the bedroom. I stare at the bed. We're definitely going to need a bigger one, if all three of us are going to share it. Langdon sees where I'm looking "I'll get a larger one" he tells me firmly, a small smile on his face "if you're anything like Damien you probably take up half of it as well."

I shrug. Truth be told, I can't wait to feel him next to me, listening to his snores as he sleeps. The big man blinks at me, and goes to turn away, when I stop him.

My hand snakes out and I grip his hand, pulling him towards me. He doesn't resist and I press my lips to his, moaning as he takes charge, plundering it, his mouth becoming rough and possessive, his hand gripping the back of my hair tightly. He delves inside and begins to dance with my tongue, his arms beginning to trail down my arms and feel beneath my shirt, my heart hammering wildly in my chest as tingles run down my body. "You taste so good" he murmurs, his hand lightly trailing across my abdomen as I suck in a breath "I think I might want to taste something else as well."

This time I gasp at the implication, but he just smirks, roughly pulling my shirt up and over my head, his eyes gazing down into mine.

"Take your pants off" he instructs, his voice hoarse, eyes full of lust and something more, something primal.

I hurry to obey, kicking them off rather awkwardly. He drinks in his fill. I'm not wearing any underwear and it's painfully obvious, my cock standing erect and hard as a rock. I blush, but he just looks at me greedily.

He goes to bend down but I stop him. I would much rather have my taste of him. I reach out with trembling hands and grip the sides of his sweatpants, gingerly pulling them down, and off, his own impressive and rather large member standing to attention in front of my wide eyes. I lick my lips in anticipation. I slowly kneel as he rips off his shirt, my eyes drifting past his taut abdomen and straight to his cock. I sniff. He smells so good. Gently, I begin to lick the tip of his cock as he stiffens, his large hands on my shoulders, gripping them tightly. He makes a strangled noise. I grin.

slowly, inch by inch, I take him inside my mouth, loving the velvet smoothness of his cock, tasting the bitter sweetness as I begin to bob my head up and down, enjoying myself immensely. His fingers dig into my flesh, my hands gripping his waist and behind the buttocks, keeping him firmly in place, his body trembling. I move one hand to cup his balls, and increase the intensity and pressure, hearing him moan and cry out. It's like music to my ears. I don't let up, even though I wince as his fingers continue to dig in, feeling the way his body is reacting and knowing instinctively, that he's close, from the way his breathing coming in short spurts, to the way his body is stiffening.

"Stop" he says in a strangled voice.

I halt, disappointed and a bit reluctant, staring up into his eyes, which have turned pitch black.

"I'm not ready to cum just yet" he murmurs, helping me back up to my feet. I look back towards the doorway, but there's no sign of Damien just yet. I guess he had to make a trip to the liquor store, in order to get enough beers for everyone. Langdon doesn't appear to be too concerned, not just yet.

Langdon reaches down and lightly touches my cock, making it twitch in response. He licks his lips as I gulp, suddenly extremely nervous.

"Get on the bed" Langdon says quietly.

I move, my feet walking on their own, trembling in anticipation, slowly climbing onto the bed.

"Lie down" he says, walking towards me.

I lie down, face up, watching his every move. He stalks to the bedside table, rifling through it's drawers and then pulling something out, I don't quite see what it is, and sitting beside me on the bed.

"Relax" he growls.

He puts something on his fingers, but stops, bending down to plant his lips on mine, before slowly kissing the nape of my neck. God it feels incredible, turning me on, my own moans filling the air. My hands caress the back of him, my body writhing in pleasure. I almost can't keep my eyes open, but I want to look at Langdon, his gorgeous body there for me to view and appreciate. He gives a noise, almost purring in my ear.

"God, you're so damn hot right now" he mutters "just touching you is making me go wild and crazy. My wolf wants you bad. Just wait until I take you" he growls. Another nervous swallow.

He trails kisses down my body, sucking lightly on my nipples as I gasp in shock. He blows air on them, making them even more sensitive, a wicked grin on his face. My hands begin to grip the bedsheets. He continues downwards, sometimes licking me along with his kiss, down my thighs and lower legs and then slowly, devastatingly slowly, moves upwards towards my cock. He pauses and glances at me, something indecipherable on my face.

"Relax" he orders.

I try my best, not easy when you're horny as fuck and he won't stop touching me. Christ, my whole body is tingling and feels like it's on fire. I'm in sheer heaven and we haven't even gotten to the best part! At this rate, I'm certain he's going to kill me.

I flinch as I feel something near my entrance. It doesn't hurt, was just not expected. Then Langdon gingerly and carefully pushes a finger inside of me. He begins to wiggle it as I moan. "Let's get you stretched out" he pants, his own breathing becoming quite laboured and panting. I can't say a word, feeling the pleasure wash over me as he inserts a second finger and continues to gently stretch me out so that it doesn't hurt as much when he takes me. I can feel the cold lubrication on his fingers and they feel slippery and slick inside of me.

"Langdon" I moan. My body wiggles as he chuckles, enjoying my reactions to him. "Please" I choke out, "I can't take any more."

He laughs but stops, methodically pulling his fingers back out, making sure not to go too fast.

"I want you" I pant at him, trying to move, Langdon reaching out and stopping me. There's a look of concentration etched on his face as well as a possessive one. I feel him at my entrance as he moves and lines himself up, holding himself in check, but looking like he's in pain. "Are you ready for me" he grunts and I nod my head eagerly, bracing myself.

He pushes the tip in and stops as I pant. "Keep going" I cry out and he pushes a little further, being incredibly patient as I feel a slight sting of pain. He hesitates.

"More" I demand, the pain fading, "god please, just push all the way in" I moan.

He thrusts in and my head falls back, my mouth open in a scream of ecstasy as I begin to feel stuffed. It's incredible and I can feel every single inch of him. He waits and then, seeing that I'm in no pain, begins to slowly thrust back and forth. It's heaven and it's hell. It's delicious torture as he moves inside of me, holding himself above me, my legs spread wide to allow him to go even deeper.

I can't breathe, I'm in that much pleasure. All my inhibitions have fallen by the wayside, and all I can do is stare up in a haze of delirium while he increases the intensity and the pace, slamming all the way in and pulling all the way out. My legs quiver, my body trembles, I shriek his name again and again, completely lost in the throes of our love making. My heart is hammering so loudly, I'm sure it could be heard for miles, as silly as that sounds. He stops and then stares down at me, while I blink up at him in confusion.

"Get on your hands and knees" he growls and I move to obey, peering over my shoulder in uncertainty. His eyes are such a piercing black, that it takes me a moment to realise that his wolf has taken control.

Without hesitation or warning, he thrusts inside of me, hard, ramming into me as a yelp escapes my lips. This is so much different to Langdon, even at his hardest. It's raw, primal and brutal, but exhilarating at the same time. He's no longer gentle, taking me to new heights of pleasure as I rock back and forth, meeting him, feeling the power behind his thrusts. His hand slaps me on the buttock, a sharp sting that only adds to the pleasure.

"Oh god, oh god, oh god" I moan, thrusting back just as hard, my cock starting to tingle. I'm damn close, but I don't want it to end. Not when I'm having so much fun.

"You like that" Langdon, or rather his wolf growls, "good."

He goes even harder, one of his hands reaching out to grip my cock, which is painfully hard. I cry out, but his touch, despite his hard hammering of me, is gentle and firm, slowly pumping up and down, as I groan. His hand moves faster, his thrusts begin to slow but continue to be hard and waves of pleasure continue to wash over me. Fuck, I just can't take any more. It's too much, between him using his hand and thrusting away inside me. My body stiffens and with a jolt, my seed comes spilling out, all over his hand and trickling onto the bed sheets as I give a wild shout.

I feel Langdon or his wolf, move behind me, his head close to my ear and then a sharp sting as something sharp pierces my skin. It takes me a moment to realise that he's marked me as his, claimed me just like he claimed Damien. He withdraws his canines and licks the wound, licking away the blood, his own body stiffening as he cums, deep inside me, at the same time. I collapse onto the bed, panting heavily, drenched in sweat, the same as him, as he too lies beside me. To my utter surprise though, he's not panting anywhere near as hard, and merely looks as though he went for a quick run. I feel like I've run a marathon, my legs feeling like complete and utter jelly. I'm not even sure I could walk to the bathroom right now without toppling over. My muscles are stiff and sore, but I'm absolutely ecstatic at being marked and at the awesome and mind blowing sex I just had with my mate. I feel a bit more comfortable with the dynamics of the relationship now.

I glance down at Langdon who gives me a peck on the cheek. To my astonishment, as I stare, wide eyed, I see that his huge cock is already erect again and I swallow hard. There's no way that I can take another round, not when this was my first time. My body just couldn't take it.

"Um, Langdon" I breathe, "I don't think. . ." I trail off, not sure how to phrase it.

He sees where I'm looking and smirks. "Don't worry" he grins "this time it's not for you."

Damien walks in and smirks as he looks at the both of us, not upset in the slightest over what's occurred while he's been gone. "No" he growls "I think that might just be for me this time."

Chapter 139 - The Alpha's Rejected Silent Mate

Winter POV

I don't think I've stopped crying since I've seen that Kai's alive and well. He had quite a story to tell, with the final result being that he made a decision offered to him by the moon goddess. I can't believe it. Part of me is thrilled that he's with me again, but another part of me feels awful that he had to make that sacrifice, to become a hybrid like myself in order to stay alive. I did this to him, but he insists it was his choice to make and he made the right one.

The ride home was fraught with tension, my mother sitting in the backseat, silently watching the scenery. Poor King Axel had been left alone, to deal with the aftermath of Vanessa and what had gone on while he had been under her spell. I wish the poor bastard luck, for he had been married to her, for well over a year. You would think he would dislike Drake, having been her son, but he didn't blame the guy in the slightest. He'd been just as much a victim to Vanessa, just in a different way. I guess he's right.

Kai's hand rests on mine as we drive, my eyes intent on the window, the music playing in the background from the stereo. His hand feels warm, his fingers tight as he clutches at me, not wanting to let me go. Not that I want him to, not after such an awful scare. For the rest of my life, I will never forget that awful moment of thinking he was dead. My stomach churns, and the nausea I'm experiencing becomes worse. Bile rises in my throat and I swallow, hoping it will stay down, but with no such luck.

"Kai" I groan "pull over, quickly,"

He glances at me and immediately pulls the car to the side of the road, as my stomach turns sour. The second the car has stopped completely, I bolt and rush to throw up in a small pile of bushes. Yuck. My stomach heaves and I gasp for breath, continuing to gag. I wipe my mouth with the sleeve of my shirt and grimace.

"Urgh" I moan, on my knees, Kai suddenly behind me, his hands gripping my hair and holding it up in case I need to be sick again. I'm thankful for the small breeze coming through, it feels somewhat refreshing.

"Are you alright?" Kai asks after a minute, one hand moving to stroke my shoulder softly "are you getting car sick?" he asks nonplussed. I'm incredulous. Surely I can't be experiencing morning sickness so quickly? Then again, was a hybrid pregnancy different to a shifter pregnancy? Then the dawning realisation, that any child of mine, would be born a hybrid as well. Would they develop faster? My mind is awl with all the possibilities and I feel faint, swaying slightly as Kai grips me hard, trying to force my body to still. I close my eyes and take deep breaths, willing all my thoughts away, focussing on the now. Eventually the light headedness and frantic racing of my thoughts dissipate.

"I'm alright" I finally tell him, awkwardly forcing myself to my feet, his hands helping me to get upright, "I guess just being cooped up in the car, made me feel a little sick" I admit. Does he even remember the fact he was under Vanessa's spell when we supposedly conceived? His facial expression makes me feel like it's been forgotten and I resolve to speak to him when we get home.

"Can we hurry this up please" my mother snarls, sounding annoyed "it's dangerous to be on the side of the road, vulnerable like this" she murmurs.

I frown at the anxiousness of her voice. She's fidgeting in the car, looking on edge. What did she think was going to happen? When we were so close to the pack?

"We're coming" I yell back at her, rolling my eyes. God, what on earth was her problem? We couldn't take a few minutes, just to relax a little before getting back in the car, for heaven's sake.

I turn and give Kai a hug, sniffing his scent in appreciation. Even being a hybrid, his scent is almost the same, just the slightest difference to him. Unlike me, he has taken to it very well, and seems to be able to access his vampire side without issue. I feel a little envious of that fact. But now, mine is just as easy, so I shouldn't be jealous.

"I love you" Kai murmurs "so much. I would become a hybrid a hundred times over, if it means never having to leave your side" he mutters, fingers stroking my hair.

"I love you" I whisper, feeling my heart thumping wildly in my chest, tingles spreading all over "never, ever. scare me again like you did. I thought I was going to die, from losing you."

He exhales and pulls me in tighter. My mother is scowling from her seat. "We need to move" she snaps icily "christ, you can do this when you get home."

"What the hell is up with your mother" Kai hisses and I shrug.

I have no idea what's gotten into her. We reluctantly return to the car. My mother gives a huff, leaning back in her seat and pouting as I change the radio station. Kai starts the car again and raises an eyebrow, giving his own little shrug and pulling back into almost non-existent traffic. We are, after all, using the back roads and in wilderness, sort of. It's not a route that people like to take.

"Mother" I say quietly "is there something wrong?"

She glances at me and then adamantly shakes her head. "No, we're just wasting time and I want to be in a nice comfy bed tonight" she says coldly.

It stings, that she can speak to me so rudely. I try to give her the benefit of the doubt though, perhaps she too, was feeling a bit sick? Maybe she got travel sickness?

Kai tightens his jaw, and I can see that he's becoming very annoyed with her, but he says nothing, concentrating on the road and keeping his eyes fixed ahead. I sigh. The tension is very thick in the car now and I feel uncomfortable, watching out the window, my hand automatically reaching over to touch Kai's. He grips it and then relaxes slightly, his jaw unclenching. I smile at him, in an attempt to placate him.

Man your mother has a stick up her ass, or what.

You are so not wrong Sabriel. She's being so damn rude. I have no clue what's up with her.

Throw something at her and tell her to lighten up.

I can't just ditch something at her. It would be just as rude.

Might make her think twice about the comments she's making. Or we could I don't know, push her out of the car while it's moving, then we wouldn't have to deal with her at all.

I'm not going to push my mother out of a moving car.

Would you be willing to let me take over and do it then? Because I really don't like her, and Winter, I don't trust that bitch, one bit. I think you need to be more cautious. She has an agenda, I'm sure of it.

I like to believe the best in people Sabriel, she's had it rough.

So have you. The difference is you aren't acting like a complete bitch

Alright, alright, let it go already Sabriel. I'll be more cautious around her, happy now?

Deliriously so.

I try not to laugh at Sabriel but the image of my mother being shoved out of a moving car, by my wolf, is enough to make me smile and stare at the window.

"We're running late" mother snaps, folding her arms like a child "damnnit Winter did you have to stop back there for so long?"

I turn and stare at her. As far as I knew we didnt' have a timeline to be back. Damien, Drake and Langdon had gone before us, while we had taken the scenic route.

"Since when does it matter what time we get back?" I ask suspiciously.

She flushes. "It doesn't, I didn't mean to say that" she stammers.

But my radar is up. Something doesn't feel right. Sabriel was correct, we shouldn't have been trusting my mother in the first place. Kai sees my look and pulls over, while I throw open my door and yank mothers off its hinges as she cowers, slightly beneath me. Kai looks impressed at my strength as I throw the door to the side. I didn't care if we had to run as wolves the rest of the way, I was getting to the bottom of what mother was up to.

She shrinks back. "Care to tell me why you want to get moving so badly, or why you are worried we are late?" I hiss.

My mother shakes her head. "I'm just grumpy Winter, I didn't mean to be. There's nothing going on" she protests, but for once, my ears are picking up deceit in her voice.

"You're lying" I say quietly "I can hear it. Sabriel warned me, but I wanted to give you the benefit of the doubt. Wanted to believe that you simply wanted to be my mother, but now I know, you're here for a reason, and I want to know what the reason is" I snarl.

"I'm not lying" she shouts, as Kai grabs the door on the other side and flings it away, "you both need to calm down. This must be your vampire side taking over."

I grab her and hold her tight on the arm. "I want answers mother" I murmur in her ear as she trembles. "Now."

She pales, I notice something on the seat where I've just not so politely vacated her from. A cellphone. I didn't even know she had one. Why had she been hiding it? I grab hold of it and flick it open, but everything has been deleted. It's a burner phone, not keeping any information whatsoever in it, deleting it the second that you pressed send. My eyes narrow.

"Why have you got a burner phone" I snarl, handing it over to Kai, who looks down at it in disgust, "why would you possibly need something like this?"

Her mouth open and closes. I grip her harder, watching her wiggle in my grasp, wincing from the pain.

"Let me go" she snaps, "Winter, I am your mother" she says, trying to play the victim. Yeah right. She might be my mother, but right now I was viewing her with absolute distrust.

Kai comes to my side. "There's a black truck, coming down the road, I sense they are human, but there's a lot of them" he answers. I blink and concentrate, smelling the scent of humans, and a fair few of them approaching at a rapid pace. I also hear the sounds of guns loading. "They aren't just ordinary humans" I say as Kai nods, "they are hunters."

I fling my mother to the ground, watching with satisfaction as she screams out in pain. "The only way they would know our location, is if mother, dear, gave it to them, which I'm willing to bet she did."

My eyes glare down at her, "how could you" I spit out "to your own flesh and blood."

She gives me a look, one that is scorching and full of contempt "I would never accept a disgusting hybrid as my daughter" she spits out as Kai growls, "and the hunters will give me a lot of money for you. You're special, at least to them" she says resentfully.

"Is money all that matters to you" I scream, unable to believe her audacity.

The van gets closer. Mother stands up and smirks. "I had to pretend to care, that I was a victim, in order to get you to trust me. When I found out you were a hybrid, it was like all my dreams had come true. I sold Drake, why wouldn't I sell you? I'm not your mother, Winter, I've never wanted to be your mother. You're a means to an end, and a way for me to live a comfortable life. Maybe you should have listened to your wolf more" she sneers, while Kai's eyes begin to turn red.

The van stops, and I whirl around, getting Kai's hand, ignoring mother completely as she rushes towards it, "we're going to have to fight" I shout and he nods, "wolf or vampire?"

"Vampire" he growls "and show no mercy."

Chapter 140 - The Alpha's Rejected Silent Mate

Winter POV

My rage knows no bounds as my mother takes the opportunity to dart towards a man who is hanging out the back, looking like he's the leader, as he stares at Kai and myself, his black hair tied tight in a pony tail, his blue eyes gleaming in the sunlight. He smiles widely upon seeing my mother, who flings herself into his arms, his men, standing at the ready, their guns upright and pointing straight at us. I flinch. It's hard not to feel disgusted at a woman, your own mother, you might add, betraying you like this. It doesn't even seem to phase her as she hugs the man hard, crying out "Lexus."

What a surprise. Turns out her so called mate, and Johnathon's cowardly father weren't dead. How nice. I seethe at the both of them, as mother moves away from him, a smirk on her face. Bitch. She would get what was coming to her, I promised myself, and I wouldn't be merciful.

"Surrender yourselves, and we won't harm you" the man called Lexus calls out, his arms folded over his chest "we can do this the easy way or the hard way" he adds pompously.

Asshole. Does he think we're going to just walk up with open arms and say 'take me?', if that's the case, the man is clearly delusional.

I start counting. There's a dozen men, not counting Lexus and my mother, all holding what appear to be tranquilizer guns. Their aim isn't to kill then, merely to take us out and transport us somewhere else for experimentation or for sale. Hunter's don't always kill their prey, they like to study them first, use our blood and other bits to experiment with.

"We're too open" I mind-link Kai "we're like sitting ducks."

He responds instantly as the men wait, their gazes never wavering from us, "We need to separate, draw them out into the forest and take them down that way, it's our only chance. There's too many to approach them all at once, one hit with the gun and we're dead meat."

He's right child. You need to go in opposite directions and lure them after you. Most of them are human, besides Lexus and your mother. That gives us an advantage, but we have to be cautious of the tranquilizer darts. Who knows what's in them but I suspect wolfsbane would be it's main component.

I agree. I'm going to kill my fucking bitch of a mother afterwards Sabriel. I'd do it now, but she's protected by the men.

I know, but revenge will be sweet Winter, no go Sabriel shouts in my mind, Kai also giving an indiscernable nod, both of us racing to the side as shots sound out.

Kai goes to the right, while I race across the left, my vampire side easily outracing them, weaving in and out of the trees, the men behind me cursing as they wasted several shots, darts embedding in trees and landing on the ground. My hair flies through the wind, my body not tiring. I glance around and notice that they are a bit behind, using my claws and sharp nails to help me climb quickly up a nearby tree, my eyes scanning the woods. Good, they've spread out, I observe, not sure which way I've gone. There are six of them, so they had split themselves up evenly, the other six having gone after Kai, who I hoped was alright. He was relatively new to being a hybrid but by god, he'd be a strong one. Right now I need to focus on my own safety and survival. There's no sign of mother or Lexus and I assume they are waiting by the truck, rather than doing the dirty work themselves. My eyes begin to glow red. I hear heartbeats nearby, getting louder as they get closer.

Two men come my way and I wait, tensing my body and preparing myself. I can hear their voices, both sounding annoyed and disgruntled.

"Could have sworn the vampire bitch went this way" one commented. The other one grunts at him.

"Keep your eyes open" he says annoyed "the disgusting hybrid must be nearby."

I'm a little offended by their choice of words. My nails dig into my skin for a moment as I wait for the perfect opportunity. They stop right under my tree and I move, throwing myself onto one of them, who falls, stunned to the ground, his comrade swinging around and shooting as I move, slamming my fist into his face as the dart misses, landing with a thwack into the tree I had just jumped from.

His comrade doesn't move, and I realise that he's been knocked unconscious, his head hitting a rock as he fell. Good, I move away from the other man who is howling and clutching his face, his jaw broken at least, from the sound it had made when I made contact with it.

"Bitch" he splutters and I cock my head and grin, relishing at the amount of anger in his voice. I was going to enjoy this.

He moves towards me, grabbing a knife from a halster on his pants, brandishing it at me. I raise an eyebrow. Does he think I care about the size of it?

He lurches forward and I shift sideways, grabbing his arm and bending it backwards, a loud cracking sounding, his scream loud, giving away our location. I swear and kick his knee, sending him to his knees and then use the knife, still in his hand, bending his arm and cutting his throat, the blood trickling down as his body flops to the forest floor. I hesitate, the blood smells delicious, sweet and my mouth drools at the thought of tasting it. But I remind myself there are still four men to go, and drop the knife, dashing away again as I hear more footsteps. This time it's one guy, and I don't run away too far, but swerve and dart in a different direction, to prevent the others finding me straight away.

The guy is huge, broad shouldered, with slick greasy hair and muscled body. Almost like a heavy weight champion. It's a little unsettling. The smile he gives me as he raises his gun is creepy and unnerving.

"Time to sleep" he tells me confidently and I move, running right towards him, darting left and right, the dart missing me by an inch at the most, as I slam my fist into his stomach. He gives a groan, but remains standing, to my utter disbelief. I sniff, he's human, just one that seems to be on something to make him even stronger. An experiment, no doubt.

I jump back as he swings wildly, connecting with nothing but air. "I'll get you" he snarls, no longer smiling "and who knows maybe Lexus will let me have some fun with you."

I shudder at the thought of this repulsive man getting anywhere near me, let alone touching me. He fires again and I grab the dart in mid air, my eyes narrowing in on it, my reflexes faster than ever. He gulps. I don't stop, I move, my body slamming into his, jamming him against the tree as I sink the dart into his thigh. I knee him in the nuts, making him let out a strangled gurgle, while I headbutt him as well, causing his nose to break and to bleed.

I give a smile of satisfaction. He doesn't look so cheerful now. Instead as I step back and regard him, my fangs now out as I smile, he glowers at me, clutching his genitals with one hand, bent double, the other holding his nose as he falls to his knees.

"What" he stammers and only then seems to see the dart still in his leg "bitch" he murmurs and then flops to the floor, his head hitting the ground with a thud, completely knocked unconscious. I pick up his tranquilizer dart and rummage through his pants, finding several darts to load it with. I grin and start to jog, hearing the sound of the last three hunters coming towards me. It was time to do some of my own hunting.

The other hunters had joined forces and were approaching, their backs to each other, their rifles loaded at the ready as I stayed, behind the tree, my own gun ready to go. Their eyes were intently scanning the forest, their footsteps as quiet as they could make it, given the debris and leaves scattered all over the dirt floor. They pass me and I move, coming around the side of the tree and shooting, the dart landing in the side of one of the hunter's necks. This one, maybe because he was more lean and definitely less built, touched his neck and his eyes widened, before he promptly fell to the ground, completely out of it. His mates gave a shout, seeing me and I dropped the gun, not wanting to take time to reload, one man racing towards me while the other raised his gun. I jump, the dart moving past me, almost in slow motion as I'm that fast, colliding with the first man and rolling over him. The other man runs and I shoot out my leg, tripping him up, before getting to my knees and piercing his neck, moving behind him and drinking greedily while he flails wildly in my grip, unable to stop me, his comrade staring in horror as I drain his friend completely dry.

I lick my lips and let the man drop like a sack of potatoes, my eyes on the last man standing, who is not as brave as his friends or maybe he's just smarter, who knows, the man backing away, as I stand there watching, wiping the blood from my lips with the back of my hand. I feel reenergised, the blood giving me more strength and satiating the thirst I had.

"You" I snarl as the man halts, his whole body shaking, a look of abject terror on his rather plump face.

"Yes" he stammers, before putting his hands together and begging me "please don't kill me. I won't be a hunter anymore if you let me live."

I cock my head. "How many?" I ask softly, feeling anger rising inside of me, letting it build instead of trying to stem it. I welcomed it, let it take over me. I was no longer afraid of anything that was my vampire aspect coming through.

He swallows hard, his eyes darting away. I raise my voice slightly, listening out for the sound of any heartbeats, beside our own, nearby. "How many" I repeat.

"I don't understand" he stammers "how many what?"

"How many of us have you hunted? I don't care whether they were vampire, hybrids, phoenix's, dragons, shifter;s. How many have you hunted?"

He looks nervous, sweat dripping off his brow. When he speaks, it's in a hushed voice that's croaky and scared "I don't know, over 50 I guess" he says.

Just like that, any mercy I may have shown towards the man was gone in an instant. He clearly realised as well, getting up on his feet and trying to run away, his back towards me. The foolish man. He should have known that he couldn't get away, but he tried regardless. I get behind him, my hands coming around his throat as he gasps in shock, pressing them tightly and then with full force, I break his neck and fling his body into a nearby tree. It stays there, pinned by a sharp branch, for the rest of the hunters to see if there are any more to come, in order to help their fallen men. A warning for them, that I would kill them as well without hesitation. I feel bloodlust pumping through my veins as I take a moment and wonder just how Kai is faring. A quick mind-link assures me all is well, that I can still get through if necessary and I turn back towards the direction I had initially come from. My mouth curves into a wicked grin. It was time to face my mother, and her not so dead mate Lexus who were still by the truck.

They were in for a real treat. They would get to see another side to Winter, and my mother would get to see what happened when you screwed people over, especially your own family. I begin to hatch a plan, as I make my way slowly towards the unsuspecting pair of lovebirds.