

Silent Mate 91

Chapter 91 - The Alpha's Rejected Silent Mate

Johnathon POV

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Well that's not helpful.

"I don't exactly want to remind her of her past" Damien grumbles "it's not exactly something that's going to make her happy" he adds and I know his reasoning. After all, he more than anyone, well maybe except his father, bullied Winter relentlessly at school and at home. I don't blame him for not wanting to remind Winter of that.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"I'm not" growled Damien looking exasperated.

"Then that's fine" Langdon growls back.

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

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

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

"You don't mind?"

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

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

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

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

He gently opens the door and gestures me inside.

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

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

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

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

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

I pause. "I know that we can never be together and I'm happy for you and Kai. He seems to really love you and I know that you love him. You deserve to be happy. You deserve to be loved. I hope from now on, that your life becomes a lot easier and that you continue to be happy every day of your life. I wish I had the guts to tell you all of this to your face and more. I can't stay any longer Winter, I have to go back to my pack. I know you don't know who I am anymore, which hurts, but it's not your fault. I just wanted to wish you all the best and tell you goodbye forever Winter. I'm leaving tomorrow. I want you to know I love you, and you'll always have a special place in my heart."

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

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

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

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

"Can we organise it before the morning?" I enquire. I don't want to delay my plans. Not after officially saying goodbye to Winter. It would hurt too much to stay here and have to watch her with Kai. I really need to get out of here.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"I hate goodbyes" I say calmly and it's the truth. Within minutes, I'm in a car heading back towards my pack house. Goodbye Damien, Langdon and Winter, I think to myself a little sadly. There was no telling if I would ever see any of them again.

Chapter 92 - The Alpha's Rejected Silent Mate

Damien POV

I sigh. I'm not in a great mood. Johnathon up and left without saying goodbye to me or Langdon! I've been the one travelling with him for months for christ sake. I guess he's not good at goodbyes. Besides maybe it was hurting him to be so close to Winter, knowing that he has no chance with her anymore. Who knows. Damn idiot.

Langdon can sense my mood. "Something the matter?" he asks and I turn to look, taking in his folded arms across his chest.

I don't know why, but I suddenly explode. All the tension I'm feeling, the awkwardness and the uncertainty comes to the surface.

"Is something wrong" I vent "what about all of it. Johnathon's gone, Winter's got amnesia" I say bitterly "which is ironic because now she has no idea who I am and this relationship" I mutter, gesturing towards each other "I don't even know where to start with that."

Langdon frowns. He's so calm, it's unnerving. "What do you want in the relationship?" he asks cool as a cucumber. "Because we haven't really discussed what either of us want."

Of course we haven't. We've been a little preoccupied with the whole Thomas, danger thing, and now Winter has amnesia, the last thing that's been on my mind is this whole mate bond thing with Langdon. But we do have to talk and I guess now is as good a time as any.

"I don't know" I tell him, almost shouting "because you haven't told me either way whether you want me or not. You just don't give me any idea either way. It's infuriating" I add.

His eyes darken. "So what you're saying" he says very quietly, his body tensing up "is that it all hinges on me and has nothing to do with you? That you don't get a say at all?"

That's not what I mean, I want to scream. Instead I flop down on the bed and glare at him. "What I'm saying is you've given me no indications on whether you want to accept me as your mate" I say bitterly.

He raises an eyebrow. "It works both ways" he points out "I don't know what it is you're wanting either."

I blurt it out, blushing profusely "I want to stay with you."

Awkward silence. I can't even look up at him anymore. My heart starts beating loudly in my chest. He doesn't move from the doorway. Tears well in the corner of my eyes. He doesn't want me. That's why he's being so quiet and stiff. He can't accept the mate bond because we're both men. I'm an idiot for even thinking he would want me. I brace myself for the rejection I'm sure he's about to utter, but it never comes.

"You idiot" growls Langdon and I look up, blinking furiously.

Did he just call me an idiot? What the hell.

"I've been waiting for you to tell me that, because I didn't want to pressure you" he growls.

I can feel myself lighting up. "You mean?" I ask tentatively. God, I don't even recognise myself. Where is the cool, collected and calm Damien gone? Get a grip, you moron, I think to myself furiously.

"I mean, I want you" he growls "as my mate. I don't want anyone else, so help me god. It's you."

He saunters over, reaches out and grasps my chin with his hand, his other one wiping the tears away as I look at him feeling ashamed. He bends his head down and presses his lips against mine and it's heaven.

They're coarse and rough, his hand gripping the back of my neck possessively as he plunders my mouth, forcing my lips open and caressing my tongue. I moan out loud, my own lips mashing hard against his. I can feel my arousal, my cock twitching in my pants in response but I don't care. He tastes so good, so delectable, that I don't want to stop kissing him, but eventually the both of us have to pull back and draw in oxygen.

He's panting heavily, I see with satisfaction. I'm doing the same though. His eyes are dark and it's clear his wolf is close to the surface. He pushes me down onto the bed without warning, his fingers undoing the buttons on my shirt frantically. When I go to help, he shakes his head and I lie still, eager to feel his flesh against mine.

His hands touch and caress my bare skin as I shudder, the feeling intense, pleasure coming over me in waves. He leans down and trails kisses from the nape of my neck down to my navel as my body trembles beneath his. He looks like he's barely holding onto his control. I could stop him, but my body is feeling too much pleasure to want to and I'm eager to feel him as well, even if he's preventing me from doing that right now.

"Fuck Langdon" I moan and he lets out a chuckle, pinning me with his gaze.

"You like that?" he asks huskily and I give a shy nod, writhing beneath him.

I feel his fingers at my belt buckle, undoing it and then his hand goes to my zipper and I stiffen.

"You can tell me to stop at any time" he growls, his body stilling as I look up at him shyly.

"Don't stop, I just have never. . ." I trail off helplessly. Then again, it's not like Langdon has either.

He pulls the zipper down, freeing my cock which is fully erect to my embarrassment. But Langdon looks pleased, licking his lips. I shudder. Surely he's not about to...?

But he is. His head leans down and before I can prepare myself, I feel his coarse tongue along my shaft, my hands clenching and clutching at the bedsheets in desperation.

"Oh god" I pant and he holds me down with his arms, slowly taking my shaft into his mouth, inch by inch, as I pant and writhe.

Fuck, it feels amazing and I can't keep still, moaning and mewling as he begins to move his head up and down my cock, putting all of it inside his mouth. The pleasure is incredible and he begins to use a hand to move up and down with his mouth. At this rate I'm going to explode in his mouth.

"Langdon" I whisper, "Langdon I'm about to cum" I warn him, sensing it coming.

I expect him to pull away, but instead it's like his mouth clamps down and he increases the pace, until I'm shaking, my body stiffening as I shoot my load into his mouth with a large cry. He licks his lips and swallows the lot, looking up with a grin.

I feel exhausted. Completely drained and yet my body is crying out for more. More of Langdon. Langdon stands up and begins to slowly remove his clothes as I watch with wide eyes. He's so fucking beautiful, like a god from olden times. My mouth waters just looking at him. His cock is fully erect and I stare at it in astonishment. It's huge, I doubt it's going to fit. He sees my trepidation.

"We can stop" he says quietly but I shake my head. God, even now, I'm desperate for him.

He comes over and slowly rolls me onto my stomach. Now I feel slightly hesitant. Is this going to hurt? Langdon whispers in my ear. "Calm down, I want to get you ready first" he finishes with a low growl.

I feel something at my entrance, and look over my shoulder. Langdon has a bottle of lube that he's fetched from god knows where and has spread some on his fingers. I relax. Slowly, he inserts a finger inside of me. I jolt. It's not painful, merely uncomfortable and I give a groan as he begins to spread me out, the lube cold but slowly warming as it's inside of me. He sticks another finger inside of me and I begin to mewl. I feel stuffed. Full, the feeling is incredible. He slowly thrusts them back and forth, allowing me to get used to the feeling, letting me take them in deeper.

"God, I can't wait any more" he says from behind me, sounding desperate "so if you want me to stop, tell me now before I lose control" he chokes out.

"I want you inside me" I whisper, placing my head down.

His fingers slowly withdraw. This time when I feel something at my entrance, I know that it's his cock. I take a deep breath and steel myself.

"Just breathe" he whispers and then slowly, pushes his cock inside of me as I clutch the bedsheets.

It's a lot bigger than his fingers, the feeling is more uncomfortable, but the further inside he goes, the more pleasure I feel, my hips slightly raised to allow him better access. He gives a growl as he enters me, not stopping until he's all the way in.

"Stop" I plead, feeling a slight burning pain. He stops immediately, hands gripping tightly to my waist.

I pant, trying to will my body to relax as it gets used to the feeling of Langdon inside of me. Eventually the stinging fades. "Okay" I whisper and he slowly withdraws, before plunging back in just as slowly. I moan. Damn, it feels fucking good. My head whips side to side as he continues in the same slow rhythm, the pleasure slowly rising inside of me.

"More" I moan in a gruff voice "please god Langdon" I beg. I barely even recognise myself.

He increases the pace. My own cock is rock hard again as he takes me. Soon he's built up to a fast and hard rhythm, our bodies slapping together in our eagerness. I'm not sure how much more I can take, before I feel Langdon pull me up so that I'm on my hands and knees, rocking back to meet him. He reaches around me and grips my cock, making me cry out. He furiously begins to pump his hand back and forth as I whimper, before I cum, shooting my seed all over the bed. He gives a grunt and begins to move faster, holding me still, furiously slamming inside and out as I quiver, still coming down from my own release. Then I feel him stiffen and become still, his seed spurting inside of me as he yells out my name at the same time.

We collapse, panting heavily. Langdon rolls me over so that I'm cuddling into him, his head on my shoulder, a wide smile on his face. "That was" I breathe out, still in disbelief "amazing."

He gives a chuckle and kisses me on the forehead. "Next time will be even better" he promises, his eyes dark as he stares at me with lust in his eyes. I swallow. The sex we just had was pretty fucking fantastic, I can't really see how it could be any better. My whole body tenses at the thought of sex again with him.

"Still want to be mates?" Langdon teases and I give him a playful shove.

"Yes" I growl, taking hold of his face and giving him a quick peck on the lips.

We both glance at the bed and the rumpled sheets. "I think we might need to remake the bed" I say quietly as he grins. He motions towards the bathroom. "How about you go get cleaned up and I organise fresh bedding" he suggests "if you take too long, I'll be joining you in the shower" he jokes "I need to get cleaned too."

I don't know whether that's a promise or a threat and I don't care either way. I'm already drooling at the thought of Langdon showering with me and anything else that might happen. I thought I would be too sore to go again, but my body is already craving another round. I wonder if shifter blood means that certain parts of you still heal regardless. It's an interesting theory.

I get up and he gives me a smack on the ass. I turn to glare at him and he just raises his eyebrows at me. I laugh and shake my head, heading to the bathroom and turning the water in the shower on. As I step beneath the water, part of me, a small part of me, hopes that Langdon will come and join me, even if I have to stand in here for an hour before he decides to. My cock twitches in anticipation. Being Langdon's mate, certainly seems to have it's perks.

Chapter 93 - The Alpha's Rejected Silent Mate

Winter POV

I wake up and stretch, staring out the window. It looks like a nice day outside, the sun is shining, there's big puffy clouds chasing each other across the deep blue sky and I can see tree's swaying in the wind. But I'm hesitant to go downstairs on my own. The man, Kai, claims to be my mate but I can't remember anything. I know I'm a shifter, but other than that, everything is a blank. I feel the back of my head, where the stitches are and frown. My hair is all matted with dried blood. The first thing I want to do is shower, but where are my clothes? I remember that Kai placed me in an adjoining room to what was supposedly ours and tiptoe towards it. With any luck he wouldn't be in there.

Luck was on my side. I spot a dresser and rifle through it, grabbing sweatpants and a shirt. I head into the bathroom and start the shower, my eyes closing in bliss as the water cascades down on me. It's

relaxing and I inhale the steam greedily. The water is hot, just the way I like it and I could easily spend forever in here, if it means avoiding everyone downstairs.

Winter, honey, you know it's not so bad. Your memory will come back.

Who are you?

Your wolf Sabriel. I know you probably don't remember me, but maybe I can show you a memory or two of us. Would you like that?

I don't know. . .

It won't hurt, I promise sweetling. I just want to show you a memory of us and Kai.

Alright then, I guess it can't hurt. I'm curious to see.

For a moment there's silence and I lean against the shower tiles, closing my eyes and waiting. Soon there's images flooding my mind. I can see myself and I'm shifting, my bones cracking and adjusting. We're beautiful, I think to myself, taking in my wolf form. The man, Alpha Kai is there with me and I can't stop staring at him as he too, begins to shift, his wolf a large beautiful black one, called Storm.

We take off running into the forest, lightly nipping each other, Sabriel teasing Storm and playfully fighting with him as their wolf side takes over. There's no destination in mind, just the sheer pleasure of running, watching the trees and the scenery pass by in a blur, dodging over branches and debris, our paws thudding lightly on the ground. We're out there for hours, having fun, letting our wolves run free. It's so freeing.

We make it back to the grounds and I shift back, placing my clothes on while Kai does the same. There's a wide smile on my face, even though I'm exhausted from the run. Kai is beaming at me, even as he shrugs into his clothes. We embrace and he kisses the top of my head as I lean into him.

If that was a memory then it was a pleasant one. Even the feelings associated with it, the adrenaline, the care free attitude and everything else flashed through my mind. Sabriel had done well in showing me a

memory. Alpha Kai seems far less intimidating to me now. I turn the shower off and wrap a towel around me, heading out to the bedroom and stop in my tracks. I wasn't expecting to see Kai in the bedroom and I can't help but tighten the towel around my body nervously, blushing profusely.

"I came to check up on you" he says to me quietly, not making a move to come any closer. I wonder if he can sense my nervousness?

"How are you feeling?" he adds.

"Tired" I admit sheepishly "even though I've slept a lot, it just doesn't seem to make much of a difference."

He frowns at that and looks a little concerned. I feel bad. I hadn't meant to worry him.

"Do you think you might want to visit a doctor at the hospital?" he asks kindly.

I shake my head. I've had enough of hospitals. The thought comes out of nowhere and I'm puzzled. How many times have I ended up in the hospital, to feel that way?

"No thanks" I rasp "I just need rest and food" I say wryly as my stomach chooses that exact moment to let out a loud growl.

He laughs.

"How about I show you to the kitchen" he says cheerfully and I give a small nod, my stomach churning. Man, I felt like I was starving. He holds out his arm, looking hesitant and to my surprise, I willingly take it. He beams looking so happy that I feel like I've done the right thing. Kai leads me out to the hallway and down towards the stairs. He steers me into the kitchen and I pull up short when I see two other men in the dining area. I don't know who they are. But they look over at me with smiles, although one looks to be particularly upset. I do remember vaguely one of them. Were they at the hospital?

"Winter, you might not remember them" Kai says quietly "but this man here" he indicates the upset looking one "is your brother Damien and this other one is my Beta Langdon."

I stare at my brother. There's nothing there, no memory flashing in my mind. It's strange. I force my mouth to open. "It's nice to meet you I guess" I mumble, not sure what else to say. My brother's eyes flash with disappointment. Maybe he was hoping my memory would have come back by now. I wish it had. This would be a hell of a lot easier on me.

"Why don't you sit down" my brother says gently, pulling a chair out for me.

"Thankyou" I tell him, sitting and looking over at Kai helplessly.

"What do you want to eat?" he asks and I hesitate.

I thought I was hungry but my stomach feels a bit uneasy. "Dry toast" I request "and juice."

Kai just nods and sets the toaster up. "You really don't remember me, do you?" Damien asks.

"I'm sorry" I say tentatively "but I really don't."

"It's not your fault" he assures me, Langdon reaching over to hold his hand.

"Are you both mates?" The way they are touching each other makes it appear as though they are, but I can't help asking anyway.

"Yes" Langdon answers, with a smile "is that a problem?"

"No of course not." I feel indignant that he even had to ask that. He flushes and looks apologetic.

Kai places the toast and juice in front of me. I grab the juice and swig it down, feeling incredibly thirsty. Kai grabs hold of the empty glass. "I'll get you another" he says hurrying off. I take a bite of the toast and almost moan as it hits my tastebuds, my stomach beginning to feel slightly better.

He places the glass back in front of me, full of juice, and then sits in the chair next to me.

"I'm glad you're eating" he says, placing an arm over my shoulder.

I continue to eat, Langdon and Damien discussing their day in hushed voices.

"Winter what would you like to do today?"

I have to think for a minute, then it hits me, what I would really like to do today. "I want to go for a run" I declare happily and Kai's eyes light up, although he looks concerned.

"I don't know if that's a good idea, you're still recovering" he murmurs but I interrupt

"Please." Sabriel had sparked the interest in me with the memory and now I wanted to experience a run for myself.

"Only if I go with you" Kai says finally.

We go out to the grounds and I strip my clothes off, Kai doing the same. I flush and look away from his body. It's instinctual and

I know exactly how to shift into my wolf form. Once I'm done, I howl at Kai who hastily changes. I don't even wait for him, I head straight out to the forest, my paws thudding across the ground. My wolf is large and I frown. Something about the size of my wolf strikes a chord in me, but I can't remember why. But I'm not much smaller than Kai's wolf and I easily keep up with him when he dashes ahead of me.

We play, like wolves do. Nipping at each other, running as fast as we can, tracking down wild animals and watching them run when they pick up our scent. We drink from a nearby lake and play fight with each other. It's bliss. For a while I'm able to forget that I've lost my memory, completely absorbed in this run and spending hours with my supposed mate by my side. In fact I'm having such a good time that time flies by and before I know it, we're reluctantly heading back towards the grounds.

I shift, feeling sulky. I really hadn't wanted to come back. Slowly, I begin to put my clothes back on. Then Kai shifts and my mouth goes dry. God he's sexy. He's the very image of masculinity and I can't stop myself from staring at his abdomen and chest as he starts to put his clothes on.

"Winter" he says gruffly "you keep looking at me like that and I'm going to drag you to the bedroom and have my way with you" he promises and I blush, biting my lip and looking away as he chuckles.

"Alright you can look now" he says and I glance back over, seeing amusement on my mate's face.

He saunters over. "I've been wanting to do this for quite some time" he murmurs, his face now inches from mine as I stand there trembling. He bends down and captures my lips with his, gently pressing them against mine as I gasp in shock. His tongue slowly dives into my mouth and caresses mine. I moan, my hands holding onto his shoulders to keep myself upright as he intensifies the kiss. My whole body feels like it's on fire. Is this what it feels like to touch your mate?

His hand twines itself in my hair, keeping me firmly pressed against him. My eyes close as I let myself feel, let the sparks and tingles spread throughout my body. His other hand begins to trail down the side of me, sliding underneath my sweater so that I feel his bare hand against my flesh. It burns, but not in a bad way, rather in a delicious sizzling sort of way. My own hands clutch at him, holding tightly onto his sweatshirt. I'm panting heavily now, moaning as his hand slides up towards my breast and squeezes it gently. I've completely forgotten about where we are, let alone who might be watching, completely lost in the moment.

Finally, gasping for breath, I pull back, seeing Kai's eyes have turned black. His wolf is close to the surface, or for all I know I was kissing his wolf. His lips curl up in a wicked grin. "There's plenty more where that came from" he promises me and I gulp. Maybe I should let him drag me back to the bedroom, I think to myself hazily. Then I notice his hands are keeping my legs from buckling and keeping me upright.

"I have a request for you" he says, looking down and staring directly into my eyes "something I think you'll enjoy and might help with your memory."

Now I'm intrigued. I cock my head to the side. "What is it you want me to do?"

He smiles. "I want to take you out on a date" he says.

"A date" I murmur "what kind of date?"

"I want to take you to the same place, that I took you for our first date" he says with a smile "all you have to do is get yourself dressed up tonight and I'll take care of the rest."

Chapter 94 - The Alpha's Rejected Silent Mate

Kai POV

I'm nervous. I can't believe it. All this time I've spent with Winter and I can't quite stop fidgeting with my hands. I get dressed in a separate room, so that she doesn't feel afraid of me, spending time smoothing my hair back and making myself look as presentable as possible. I knock on the door gently and wait for her to call me in.

Whatever you do, don't mess it up. She's vulnerable, remember.

Don't you think I know that Storm? I know she's vulnerable. She's got amnesia for heaven's sake.

Well then, treat her gently, like fragile china.

I'm not going to treat her like she's going to break. She's stronger than you think she is.

Don't say I didn't warn you.

Enough Storm!

"Come in" she calls in that husky beautiful voice of hers.

I open the door and walk in, my mouth falling open. God she's beautiful. She has no idea just how much of an effect she's having on me. Her smile, those pearly white teeth of hers. Her slim legs clad in leggings. She's wearing a dressy blouse and the leather jacket I got for her. Her hair cascades down her shoulders in waves. She's stunning and for a moment I'm speechless.

"Do I look okay?" she asks me nervously.

I gulp. She more than looks okay. "You look beautiful" I breathe, bending down and giving her a quick peck on the cheek. I'm not about to push it right now and try and get a long kiss, although I have to say it's taking a hell of a lot of restraint.

"Where are we going?" she asks curious and I smile and shake my head.

"It's a surprise" I remind her and she pouts at me. It's adorable, shaking her head so that her hair flies over her shoulder. I go to take hold of her hand and she flinches.

"Sorry" I apologise, I guess she's still not too sure about me. It stings a little bit, but I can't exactly blame her. I mean who knows how I would act if I didn't have all my memories.

"No I'm sorry" she says softly, and takes hold of my hand, sparks flying between us "I didn't mean to."

"No harm done" I say with a friendly smile and begin to tug her out of the room. She giggles as we descend the stairs, laughing at my excitement.

"You'll love it" I promise her, helping her into the passenger seat of the car. She gives a small nod, buckling up her seatbelt and patiently waiting for me to get into the driver's side.

I start the engine and she reaches over to change the music, to country of all things. I know she likes that type of music and I'm willing to leave her to listen to it. She stares out the window, watching the scenery go by. She fidgets with both hands and I know she's nervous. I just don't know if she's nervous of me or of going out in the first place. Soon, we've started our way into town and her eyes light up with excitement as I manoeuvre through the streets, parking in front of a club which I hope will be very familiar to Winter. The neon sign reads "Club 666" the same one I brought her to on our first date and the one that I am the proud owner of.

I help her out of her seat as she stands and grips my hand tightly, tucking herself in under my shoulder. "A club" she says anxiously "are you sure this is a good idea?"

"I promise you'll like it. If you don't we can just go home" I suggest and that seems to cheer her up slightly.

I walk her down towards the line that's all the way up the street. It's great to see how many people are desperate to get into the club. I confidently head towards the front of the line, where my regular bouncer, Leo is.

"Leo" I greet him and Winter looks at him, biting her lip.

"Do I know you?" she asks him tentatively "you look a little familiar."

Success. She remembered something. I want to fist pump the air. Leo looks bemused. "We met the last time you were here, princess" he says charmingly.

I glower at him. No one calls Winter princess but me. He just grins, recognising that he's pushed my buttons. Good thing he's an excellent employee.

"Oh," is all Winter says with a puzzled expression.

"Hey what's going on? This guy's pushing his way in, you're not going to just let him through are you? We've been waiting for ages" a young teenager shouts from behind us, sounding extremely pissed.

Leo just shrugs. "I'm not telling the owner he can't get into his own club. You do it if you're game enough" he says calmly and the boy falls silent.

Winter looks at me. "You're the owner?" she asks eagerly.

I give her a wink. "I'm just going to take her through" I tell Leo smugly, gently pulling Winter behind me as we go inside.

Winter is fairly bouncing in her excitement now, listening to the loud music and watching couples gyrate and make out on the dance floor. There's a wide smile on her face. "What do you want to do first?" I ask her.

She thinks for a moment. "Can we get a drink?" she asks "I'm a little thirsty" she adds.

We go to a booth and sit down. A waitress comes up and this time Winter orders a Dr Pepper while I order a plain coca cola.

"I think I need sugar" Winter says quietly "I keep having this craving."

Come to think of it, now that I eye her, she does look a bit pale. Maybe we should have left tonight to a different day.

"We can leave if you want" I offer but she shakes her head and smiles, leaning back against the seat.

"No, I like it here" she says.

A cute goth girl comes up. She has makeup plastered all over her face, she's wearing a tiny shirt which shows her midriff off and a short skirt with a little chained belt, knee high boots and fishnet stockings. She had lovely brown hair in pig tails and would be roughly about Winter's age. She's also, very, very drunk as she stumbles slightly into our table.

"Sorry" slurs the girl and I frown, she's very inebriated. Surely the bartender should have cut her off by now? I make a mental note to check into that. In the meantime the girl is staring down at Winter who is looking at the girl, completely fascinated.

"Can I just say" the girl continues tipsy and swaying on her feet "that you are the most beautiful girl in the room."

Well that wasn't something I saw coming. Winter looks at me helplessly, wondering what to say or do. I'm trying to stifle my laughter.

"Would you dance with me?" the girl asks hopefully.

Poor Winter looks like she's about to faint. Enough of this.

I stand up and come over to Winter's side, laying a possessive arm on her shoulders. "I'm afraid that I don't share" I drawl "but my partner thanks you for the compliments."

Winter nods profusely. "Yes thankyou" she says blushing.

The girl looks disappointed. "Well if you change your mind" she says with a grin "then come find me on the dance floor."

"Okay" Winter says quietly, both of us watching as the girl staggers away.

The second the girl is gone we both burst into laughter. Winter laughs until she cries. "Oh that was funny" she chortled "especially considering I was sitting with my partner. She's really ballsy" she continues with admiration.

"Well if you don't mind" I joke "how about dancing with me?"

She's up in an instant and we're both on the dance floor. I have to admit, I'm not much of a dancer, but Winter doesn't mind. She on the other hand can really move to the music, her hips swaying in time to it, her body pulsating on the dance floor. It's a complete turn on and I have to work hard at a certain part of my anatomy not popping up in my tight trousers. It takes a lot of effort and self control.

Several dances later, and several women glared at by Winter for daring to approach me, and we're both pooped and ready to relax in a booth. Winter fans her face which has turned slightly red. I give her some cold water and she drinks it down, throwing it back in several gulps. "Thirsty" she wheezes.

I laugh. "You're not kidding."

She grins. "Dancing is hard work."

Man she looks hot right now. Her body on that dance floor, my god I've got the biggest hard-on.

Storm, have you ever heard of giving too much information?

But we're bros so we can say whatever we want to each other.

Still, I don't need to know you have a hard on!

Why not? I know for a fact you were getting one while you were dancing with her.

Okay, that's enough, goodbye Storm.

I cut Storm off and put up a block before he can tell me anything else. Damn that mutt. Bro's indeed.

"Can you order me a dr pepper again please?" Winter asks, standing up and looking slightly unsteady on her feet "I just need to go to the bathroom."

"Do you want me to walk you over there?" I ask, glancing at the bathrooms which are in a hallway off the dance floor. She shakes her head. "I'll be fine. I just need to freshen up a little" she says weakly.

I'm not so sure but she starts to walk off anyway and I keep a close eye on her to make sure she makes it into the bathroom. Only then do I flag down a waitress and order Winter and myself a cool drink. I'd give anything for a nice refreshing beer right now, but seeing as Winter can't drink, I'm not going to either. I'm not that much of an asshole. Give me some credit at least.

The drinks come. Still no sign of Winter. I'm concerned she might be sick in the bathroom. My fingers drum along the table top as I sip at my coke. I don't want to embarrass her by trying to get in or getting

security to check on her. I take a glance at my watch. It's only been five minutes, I'm clearly getting carried away. I settle back in my seat and sip my drink, watching the dancer's on the dance floor.

A drunken man is shouting obscenities at the bar tender and I hover, wondering if I should go investigate, and possibly step in. He hasn't threatened violence but as I listen, it's clear that the bartender has cut the man off from drinking, rightfully so. It's standard policy and I'm appreciative that he's following it. The security team step in, so I don't have too and I watch as the man is dragged away, kicking and yelling all sorts of things, before his voice fades away as he's dragged outside. The bartender looks relieved. I don't blame him. No one wants to have to deal with that crap, and bartenders have to on a daily basis. How hard is it to stop drinking when it's clear you've had enough? Too hard for some people apparently.

Where the hell is Winter? I glance at my watch and begin to get concerned. It's been a little while now. What do I do? I can't exactly push into the ladies room myself. Hell no, not even as the owner. There had to be a member of security who was female who could check on her for me. I turn my head to look and sigh. They're all outside still. I turn back and almost have a heart attack. Winter is standing there, pale, her eyes red and puffy. I hadn't even heard her approach, let alone smelt her scent, but there was so many people in the club it would have been easy to miss it.

"Are you alright?" I ask, leaning over to grasp her hand. God they're so cold and clammy. I try to warm them with my own.

There's a tremulous smile on Winter's face. She swallows and then speaks. "I'm not feeling the best, is it okay if we just go home?"

If she's not feeling well, then of course we're going home. That's not even a question. I get up hurriedly. "Let's go" I say crisply and begin to drag her behind me out of the club. She feels so cold. It's odd.

"I didn't mean to ruin anything" she says in a whisper.

"You haven't" I say firmly "I had a great time tonight and there'll be other nights as well."

She gives me a small smile and nods.

I help her into the car and place the heater on for warmth. She curls up in the seat and rests her head against the window, watching everything pass by. By the time we make it back to the pack house, she's fallen firmly asleep.

I frown. She must be sick or something. I gently gather her up and cradle her to my chest, walking up towards the bedroom. I debate whether to put her in a separate room again but she's cold and I figure my body heat might help. I place her in the bed and take my shirt off, climbing in beside her, pulling her up against me as she sleeps and resting my head on her shoulder. This is where she belongs, where she's meant to be. I close my eyes. For now, I would have to be content with her company and pray that her memories come back soon.

Chapter 95 - The Alpha's Rejected Silent Mate

Winter POV

I can see the crestfallen look on Kai's face when I ask to go home. But what was I supposed to tell him? That when I went into the bathroom, my eyes, for a moment, looked like they were glowing red? That it was enough to upset me. It also meant I remembered Thomas and everything that went on. It's like my memories are slowly flooding back, but I can still feel Thomas's hands on me, see his fangs out of his mouth and even feel the pain as his fangs pierced my skin. Everything was so vivid, it was like I was right back there again.

I'm trying to tell myself the glowing red eyes were just a trick of the light, that it was a residue of the memories that came flooding back, but part of me isn't so sure. We get into the car, and I feel exhausted and drained. No matter how much sleep I get lately, it never seems to be enough. I'm always tired. I wonder if it's because my blood got drained. Maybe I don't have enough iron in my blood and need to get supplements?

I watch the scenery go by and feel myself drifting off. I'm barely aware of Kai picking me up and carrying me to the bedroom, but I can feel him as he cuddles close to my. I can hear his heartbeat beating it's slow, even rhythm as he pulls me tightly against him. It feels nice. I stop shivering, his body heat helping to keep me warm underneath the blankets. Soon instead of being drowsy, I'm asleep and dreaming.

I'm running. It's dark and the moon is shining overhead. I'm fast. Faster than I've ever been in my whole life, running as though my life depends on it. But it's not fast enough. Even as I flee, from danger, it finds me. His voice drifts towards me through the air as I shudder.

"Winter" he calls and although it's quite, barely above a whisper, I hear it, my whole body stilling in fear.

"Winter" he hisses and I turn, desperately trying to find the source of the noise, my heart thumping wildly in my chest.

Where was Kai? Or Damien or Langdon. Why am I all alone? Has he killed them all? But I thought he was dead, how is he here? It wasn't possible. It can't be.

"You can't escape me" comes the whisper again as I force my body to begin moving, crashing through overhanging branches and leaping over debris. For some reason I'm in human form and I don't know why. Why haven't I shifted to my wolf form? When I try though I find I can't. But I can run really fast. Faster than a normal human.

"Leave me alone" I scream hysterically. My feet are bare and covered in scratches, blood flowing from several cuts. It has a metallic smell that makes my nose crinkle. It smells strong.

"Winter" he calls and I stop, seeing him up ahead.

It's like living a nightmare. He's standing in front of me, a wicked grin on his face, his arms held out in surrender. "You can't escape me" he says again, his voice chilling. He's so pale, so stiff. His body is covered in all sorts of injuries and it's weird that they haven't healed. I'm trying to remind myself this is a nightmare, but it seems so real. So so real.

"You're dead" I say my voice shaky "we killed you."

He laughs, throwing back his head. "But did you really?" he asks, a smile on his face, an expression of amusement as well. My throat goes dry. I'm starting to second guess everything. But we had killed Thomas, hadn't we? Nobody could go back from what we'd done to him.

"Why are you here?" I ask shakily.

His grin grows wider. "I'm here to see my handiwork" he says and I frown.

What on earth did he mean by that?

"Did you think you would really escape me Winter?" he asks sounding bewildered "that I would just let you go without a fight."

"Why are you so obsessed with me" I shout across at him, the wind howling in the distance "what did I do to make you want me so badly?"

"You didn't do anything special, I've just always loved you" he says. My heart sinks. He's like a paranoid stalker. Was he going to stalk me in my dreams as well now? Give me nightmares that won't go away?

"Please, just let me go Thomas" I beg him, tears trailing down my cheeks "you have to let me go."

"I can't" he rasps, his eyes glowing red in the darkness, his body moving closer.

My own body is stiff, paralysed with fear. No matter how hard I try, I cannot get my limbs to move. He reaches out and touches a strand of my hair as I make a gurgling sound. Now my own voice has betrayed me.

"You're so beautiful" he murmurs, his fingers trailing down my face, stopping at my neck.

"Please" I manage to whimper, but it doesn't stop him.

"You'll thank me one day" he whispers "you were supposed to be mine forever."

I belong to Kai, I want to shout at him, but my mouth won't move now. Instead I'm forced to feel his clammy hands on my skin as he grabs hold of my hand and presses it against his lips. Yuck. His lips are freezing cold. His eyes are glinting with triumph.

My whole body is trembling. He can sense my fear and it makes him smile at me, his eyes staring directly into mine. They're so bright, so vivid. He stares at me, his head cocked to the side.

"One more, for old time's sake" he mutters and before I can even comprehend what it is he's getting at, he bends his head down and presses his lips against mine, forcing a kiss on me. My stomach is roiling and there's bile rising up in my throat. I'm going to puke but he stops, places a hand against my chest and smiles.

"I gave you a gift" he murmurs and then in a puff of smoke he's gone, just like that. My mouth opens to scream and suddenly, I burst awake.

I press a hand to my lips, trembling. The dream or rather nightmare, had been so real. So vivid. Like I had been there and Thomas really was alive. I sit up, careful not to jostle Kai who's sleeping peacefully in the bed. I don't want to wake him, but right now I can't sleep either. I crawl out and make my way downstairs and into the kitchen. Whenever I was little, my mother would make me some warm milk when I had trouble sleeping. Right now I wanted that comfort and luckily, the kitchen was empty.

Girl that was some nightmare. Gave me the heebie jeebies.

Me too Sabriel. What do you think it means?

It means nothing. He's dead. We killed him. You were just having a nightmare.

It felt real.

I know, but it was just a nightmare. Trust me Winter. He's gone. He can't hurt you anymore. Maybe you should talk to Kai about the nightmare?

I don't want to disturb him with something like this. It's just a nightmare, I'll get over it.

Well, it might help, but it's your decision.

I'll see Sabriel.

I place the milk in the saucepan and put it over the burner on the stove. I stir it constantly, humming under my breath. With luck this will make me sleepy again. I pull it off the stove and place it in a mug, sitting at the table and sipping away. Ahh, the stuff warms my throat and makes my belly feel pleasantly warm. This is what I needed.

My hands cup the mug tightly. My stomach growls lightly like it's hungry. But it's the early hours of the morning and to be honest I'm still tired. I focus on drinking, trying to reassure myself enough to go back upstairs and back to bed. But the nightmare stays fresh in my mind. I can still feel Thomas's clammy hands and his freezing cold lips on mine. I shudder.

I finish the milk and reluctantly place the mug in the sink. Maybe if I cuddle up to Kai again, my body will relax and go to sleep. It's worth a shot. I walk upstairs, my heart thumping in my chest. I can't believe I let a nightmare scare me this much. God, I'm such a coward. I make my way into the bedroom and Kai is sitting on the bed, looking all dishevelled as my throat goes dry. He glares at me. Uh oh I guess I'm in trouble, but for what?

"Do you have any idea, how panicked I felt when you weren't in the bed next to me" he hisses. I gulp. That thought hadn't even crossed my mind. Maybe I should have woken him up to let him know where I was going. "Anything could have happened to you" he continues to vent "you could have been out for a run and attacked by rogues, you could have hurt yourself and fallen down the stairs. You could have been kidnapped again" he almost shouts and I flinch, cringing at his words. He was really pissed. Not that I blamed him. After Thomas took me, Kai no doubt was having trouble keeping me out of his sight.

"I'm sorry" I apologise softly and he huffs, running a hand through his messy hair. He's not wearing a shirt and my eyes stare at his chest appreciatively.

"Where did you go?" he asks finally, making an effort to keep his voice calm. His eyes stare directly at me and I swallow nervously.

"I went down to the kitchen for some warm milk" I answer quietly, fidgeting with my hands.

He exhales. "Why didn't you wake me up? I would have come with you" he says annoyed.

I flush. "I didn't want to disturb you. Besides I was only going to the kitchen downstairs" I explained. He nods.

"Couldnt' sleep?" he asks and my heart skips a beat. He didn't know the heart of it.

"A little" I admit. "I'm tired now though."

He sighs. He pats the bed. "Come here, let's get you tucked in" he says and I come over, letting him place me into the bed and tucking me under the bed covers.

"I'm going to go do some training" he mutters "if you feel the need to get up, then mind-link me please" he says with a grimace.

I give him a nod.

He bends down and gives me a peck on the forehead. "Get some rest" he says, walking towards the doorway and eyeing me sternly "I order you to" he adds and then leaves. I close my eyes in relief. Now I could try and get some sleep, but there was something that wouldn't leave my mind. Something that was very concerning to me. In the dream Thomas had mentioned he'd given me some sort of gift. I knew it was just a nightmare but that wouldn't stop going through my mind. I can't help wondering what Thomas had meant by gift. From my memories he hadn't given me anything, not that I remembered.

It was just a nightmare I remind myself. It didn't mean anything. Stop letting it mess with your head. Thomas is dead. There is no gift. The nightmare was just that. A nightmare. It wasn't real. There was nothing real about it. It's just something that you need to move forward from. At least that's what I was trying to tell myself. But another small part of me wonders if there was something to the nightmare, some small part of it in my subconscious that was trying to tell me something, or warn me. Either way, the nightmare was going to stick in my mind for now and the foreseeable future and I was going to have a hell of a time trying to forget about it.

Chapter 96 - The Alpha's Rejected Silent Mate

Langdon POV

Life's been different with my new mate. Sometimes it's hard to know what he's thinking, but we get along well and well, the sexual chemistry is definitely there. I blush just thinking about how responsive

my mate is to being touched and to the sex itself. God, his little cries turn me on and my cock twitches just thinking about doing it again.

Damien comes out of the bathroom and looks pensive. I know he's worried about Winter and this damn amnesia. Especially since he's been travelling for so long to find her and now he's lost his chance to reminisce with her. I also know he's still beating himself up for everything he's done to her in the past. To be fair he'd done a lot of horrible things to poor Winter while she was growing up. But I know it was also due to his father and Damien's fear of him.

"What's wrong?" I ask softly as he sits on the bed frowning. I move behind him and begin to knead the muscles in his shoulders and the back of his neck in a soothing circular massaging motion.

For a moment there's nothing but silence and his heavy breathing.

"I just, I want to spend quality time with Winter." He says disappointed.

"That's a bit difficult while her memories are mainly gone" I point out and hear his exhale.

"I know. Do you think she'll forgive me again?" he asks, putting his hands up and stopping me from continuing the massage, his eyes staring beseechingly at me "do you think she'll be upset when she remembers what I've done?"

I have to pause and think. It was difficult to say one way or the other. But Winter's a kind, compassionate caring girl. I couldn't fathom that she would hold a grudge against her brother, not when she'd already forgiven him once. But I could also understand why my mate was so concerned.

"I think you'll find that she forgives you" I say slowly "after all she forgave you before, so what's to stop her doing it again?"

That makes him smile slightly. "But the things I did. . . Langdon" he says thickly and I hold a hand up, stopping him with a shake of my head.

"What you did is in the past. It's what you do now and how you treat her that matters now."

He falls silent, brooding. I can't help but stroke his hair and he lets me. It feels so soft and silky, running through my fingers.

I've noticed his breathing has hitched again and smile knowingly. I remove my hands and sit across from him, staring at him challengingly. "It's time" I tell him firmly as he looks at me confused.

"I need to know that you want this relationship and this mate bond. I know we've had sex, but that doesn't mean anything if you're thinking about walking away now."

He looks puzzled. "Why would I walk away?"

"You tell me" I shoot back "since we've had sex, you've been quiet, depressed and detached. It's like you can't hear me half the time" I say trying not to sound like I'm sulking. I feel like a pouting teenage boy though.

"Oh" breathes Damien, his eyes seeking mine "I'm sorry, I didn't realise that I had made you so concerned" he said thoughtfully "to be honest I've been lost in my thoughts for the last few days."

"Really" I say sceptical. Surely he wouldn't lie to me though, would he? But what kind of thoughts are so pressing that you fail to communicate with those around you? It didn't make sense.

"Really" he repeats "I've just been trying to come to terms with everything."

I wonder what he means by everything. Apparently it's not just about Winter then. I fold my arms and patiently wait. Damien blushes, how adorable, his cheeks bright red, as he bites his lip and looks away.

"Explain" I say softly and he begins to fidget with his hands, looking down at the bedspread. His ears are red as well. That's interesting.

"The thing is, I'm trying to come to terms with this mate bond thing" he says softly as I flinch. Was he saying that he didn't like the fact that the both of us were mates?

"Is it that you don't want to be mates?" I ask and he shakes his head. Thank god for that.

"I just needed to accept that my mate was a male and I can't stop thinking about the sex we had. How different it was and how well" he pauses and looks at me shyly "how great it felt."

I can understand that. I'd found the sex to be mind blowing as well. I'd known instinctively what to do and my wolf had grumbled because I wouldn't let him take control.

"Then what's the problem?" I ask delicately, reaching over and taking hold of Damien's hand, so that he stops his damn fidgeting.

"The problem is I don't know how you feel about me" he breathes.

Oh Damien. The poor kid was at a loss and looking around him, anything to avoid looking directly at me.

"Do you really want to know?" I ask quietly. He gives me a nod.

"I adore you" I tell him firmly "I love waking up to you each morning and snuggling against you at night. I hate when you're not with me and I have this overwhelming desire to protect you. You're always in my thoughts. When you smile, I smile. When you're sad, I'm sad" I say with an exhale "I honestly can't even remember what my life was like before I met you. All I know is that I don't feel lonely or miserable by myself anymore."

He looks stunned. Crap. Maybe I had told him too much information. I feel vulnerable, naked, exposed and very much am hoping I haven't scared him away.

"I feel the same way" he whispers as I look at him in shock. "I want to be with you Langdon, I don't want to be with anyone else" he says with a hitch in his voice.

I watch mystified as he stands up and then sits himself on my legs, facing me, his hands wrapping around my hair, his face inches from my own. It's the first time Damien's initiated contact and my heart is almost swelling with joy at that fact, my wolf prancing around happily in my head.

"You're the only one that I want" he breathes and then he leans forward, pressing his soft lips to mine as I gasp. He's gentle, a little unsure, his lips moving, his tongue diving into my mouth and caressing it. I moan, the boy is turning me on, my cock twitching in my pants and starting to become hard.

I can't get enough of him. The softness of his lips, the delicateness. He tastes so mind numbingly good that time seems to stop still and there's just the two of us, making out on the bed. I'm panting and I can see his erection as well. When we pull back, both of our eyes are dark, our wolves coming to the surface for a moment.

I close my eyes trying to regain control, something that is made extremely difficult by Damien's bottom sitting on my lap and wriggling around. He was going to kill me with this torture. My hands were itching to touch him. But I hold back, because there's an idea brewing in my mind, something that I want to ask my mate and I needed him to hear what I have to say, even if we both are itching to ravish each other on the bed.

"I want to prove how much I want you" I tell Damien, grabbing his face between my hands and staring deeply into his beautiful eyes. He looks confused. I almost want to smile, but this is serious.

"How?" he manages to mutter, once he's got his breath back.

"Let me mark you" I growl and his mouth falls open in shock. "Let me claim you as mine so that everybody can see it."

Have I gone too far? Was this too much, too soon for Damien? I'm starting to doubt myself as his eyes slide away from my own and his body tenses on my legs.

I open my mouth to say that we don't have to, when he speaks first "Yes."

Have I heard him correctly? Did he just say yes to me? "Yes?" I clarify.

"Yes" he growls back "and I get to mark you as well."

"Fine by me" I hiss "but I get to do you first."

I stand up, holding him firmly and lay him down on the bed. He looks apprehensive now but I give him a reassuring smile. I climb over him and lean down, pressing my lips to his mouth, rougher than he had been, demanding access and plundering the inside of his mouth with my tongue. He moans and it makes my entire body jolt. Fuck, that sounds hot. I can feel the sparks between us, as I push harder against his lips. My hands caress his chest underneath his shirt and he begins to pant as I touch him. Slowly I pull back, trailing kisses down his neck until I stop at the nape, his neck exposed, bare and so smooth. Reluctantly, I let my canines pop out and as he lays there, my hands still touching him, I bite into his neck, hearing him cry out as I do. I pull my head back and then lick the wound, sealing it closed, looking over at the mark of a wolf in satisfaction. He's mine now. The mark is there for everybody to see. No one will dare try and touch him now. Not unless they want their heads ripped off their body.

Damien surprises me by gripping me by the waist and laying me down beside him. He climbs over and begins to kiss me, fervently, his hand on rubbing against my leg. I moan, his hands touching me hesitantly underneath my shirt, as he begins to mimic what I did to him. I grip him around the waist, my eyes closed as he slowly breaks off the kiss and begins to kiss the nape of my neck. My breathing becomes heavy as he tilts my head to the side, giving him better access to the nape of my neck. I feel a sharp piercing pain as he bites into my flesh, and then the coarseness of his tongue as he seals the wound closed. Now I had my own personal mark from him. I too, have been claimed by my mate.

"Sorry" he says timidly, sitting up "I didn't mean to hurt you."

"You didn't" I growl "so don't apologise."

God, he's sitting atop of me and looking so fucking cute. The fact we've just marked each other, makes tonight even more special. I wonder how Winter will react and then remember the amnesia. It's a shame, she was so excited to find out that her brother and I were mates. She would have loved to find out we had marked each other. Maybe when she gets her memories back she'll be excited.

Damien's making a move to get off me and my hand shoots out, preventing him from moving. He's rubbing slightly against me and my eyes narrow as I smell his arousal. My hand moves to cup him at the front of his pants in the crotch. He sucks in a breath. I smile, gently rubbing him as his breathing deepens. He's so responsive. Within seconds I have him flat on his back, blinking in shock. I begin to pull the zipper down on his pants. He clutches the bedsheets between his fists. Fuck. I haven't even touched him yet and he looks like he's about to blow. This was going to be a lot of fun, I thought with a smirk.

"I think tonight calls for a celebration, don't you" I say gruffly.

His eyes widen. "Celebration" he squeaks. "What kind of celebration."

I undo the zipper on his pants and reach in, grabbing hold of his cock and gently stroking it. "This kind of celebration."

Chapter 97 - The Alpha's Rejected Silent Mate

Johnathon POV

Aaaah. It's good to be back home. It only took one hell of a car drive, a plane ride and the rental of a car to get back as soon as possible and I stare at my pack house with satisfaction in my eyes. I've been gone for so long, but now I can focus on my pack and my duties. I feel older somehow, more responsible. I feel a pang in my chest, remembering my goodbye to Winter. She doesn't even know who I am, let alone is going to be worried about my leaving. I guess I can take comfort in the fact that she's alright and that, in the end, we were able to save her from that son of a bitch Thomas.

I pull up in front of my pack house, and take a moment to look at it with new eyes. It might not be as big as Alpha Kai's, but it's a beautiful wooden style cabin with two stories and modern amenities. It was nothing to be ashamed of. Neither was the pack, even if it wasn't the largest in the country. I was going to change all that. I was going to make my pack, one of the strongest in the world. I had big plans.

I get out of the car and shut the door, my feet pounding into the gravel of the driveway as I walk to the front door and let myself inside. I barely make it into the foyer, before there's a whooshing sound and my mother comes racing in and literally throws herself into my arms. I can feel tears trickling down her face onto my shirt, and feel immensely guilty. Even though she knew where I was heading, even I hadn't fathomed it would be as long as it had. I was a terrible son, I thought to myself, to make her so worried about me.

"You were gone for so long" she sobbed as my arms awkwardly went around her "I didn't know if you were coming back."

I patted her lightly on her back. "Mother, I was always going to come back" I remind her gently, frowning at the wild look in her eyes "I am sorry it took so long for me to come back though" I finish up.

She continues to cry as I hold her. I don't dare move, even though my shirt is slowly getting drenched by her tears.

"Mother" I say quietly "I'm really sorry."

She pulls back, sniffing, wiping the tears from her eyes with the back of her hand. "It's just that I didn't hear from you and Mason has been stepping in for you as the Beta but even he was getting concerned and . . ." she trailed off helplessly.

"Mason is perfectly capable of taking care of pack business" I assure her "that's why I left him in charge. You shouldn't have needed to concern yourself with any pack business while I was gone."

I motion for her to follow me, heading to the trusted study where all the paperwork and boring stuff gets taken care of. Somehow I'm not surprised to find Mason sitting behind the desk, furiously scribbling away. He'd always been pedantic about making sure all of the work was done. Mason leaps up as soon as he sees me.

"Alpha Johnathon" he says formally, bending his head respectfully. "It is a pleasure to see you again."

I wave my hand at him. I don't care much for the title anymore. It leaves a sour taste in my mouth, although I can't say why that is. "Just call me Johnathon from now on" I say firmly. He nods, looking speechless.

He moves out from behind the desk and I sit in the large chair, motioning for my mother to sit down, Mason sitting in the other chair, one of his legs folded over the other.

"Did the warriors keep up with training while I was gone?" I ask turning to Mason.

"They kept to the rigorous schedule. We will have to find a new head warrior though and soon."

I'm puzzled. "What happened to Nick?"

"He found his mate and is moving to her pack to live with her" answers Mason smoothly.

Damn. Imagine that. "Who's been taking care of the training in his absence then?" I ask suspiciously. Man I've only been home a few minutes and already I've gone into Alpha mode.

"I have, between all the other duties" Mason answers.

I stare at him in shock. The poor man must be exhausted going from one thing to the other. Clearly he hasn't delegated any of the work, he was that pedantic he would rather do it himself and burn himself out doing it.

"Mason" I say very calmly and very quietly "that is going to end. You must have some idea of who's the best warrior by now. Ask them if they'll become head warrior. I want it done by the end of tomorrow. If they won't do it, then go to the next best and so on. However I have no doubts that the first one will agree, considering it's many benefits and perks."

Mason looks upset and a bit sulky. Maybe he doesn't like the fact that I've come back and he's back to being the Beta again. Too bad. He can deal with it.

"I'll arrange it by the end of tomorrow" he assures me and I give a small nod.

"You've changed" my mother breathes, staring at me, her tears long gone. "It's like you've become more mature somehow. You seem to be more responsible" she adds, putting her hands to her face and looking at me in astonishment. It's unnerving.

"Mother are there any maintenance issues in the house or gardens that you would like taken care of?" I ask in the hopes of distracting her. It works.

She cocks her head and thinks about it. "Well there's a loose step in the staircase" she murmurs "which could be dangerous. Other than that I really can't think of anything else."

"Consider it fixed" I tell her, watching as Mason scribbles it down. I have no doubt it will be fixed by the end of tomorrow as well, if Mason has anything to say about it.

"What about rogue attacks while I was gone?" I ask, leaning back in the chair.

Mason looks concerned. "We had one rogue attack while you were gone, but it was easily handled."

"Were they killed?" I ask "or thrown in the dungeon?"

Now he looks nervous. "We killed them, should we have taken one prisoner?" he asks puzzled.

I shake my head. "No, but if you had taken a prisoner then I would have wanted to know" I explain. "You did well in handling the rogue attack. Were there very many?"

"About five" Mason answers "luckily patrol spotted them straight away. The other good thing is that we had men injured, but there were no fatalities. None of our people received life threatening injuries."

God I'm tired. The plane ride, although not long, has really taken it out of me. Or maybe it's the last few weeks spent stressing over finding Winter and then saving her from that hybrid Thomas. That's probably it. It was a far better way to travel than by wolf or foot though. If I have my way, I'll only ever be traveling by car from now on.

"Did you find the girl?" my mother asks unexpectedly. She leans forward and looks at me eagerly.

"Yes, we found Winter. Just in time too" I explain "her brother is staying there. He found his mate at the same pack."

My mother claps her hands together. "How sweet" she gushes "but no girl caught your eye there?"

I shake my head. No, the only girl who had caught my eye was Winter, and due to my own stupidity, I had well and truly lost her. I had no one to blame but myself. If I could turn back time, I would do things

differently, but she was with Kai now, and she was happy and that at least was something to hold onto. Who knows if she would have found that happiness with me.

"The only girl that I am happy to see is you Mother" I tease as she laughs and shakes her head at me.

"We have to have a celebratory dinner" Mother says with a grin.

I almost laugh. I had anticipated that's what she'd do. She always loved to cook when she had the chance and this had given her the perfect opportunity.

"What do you want, I'll make anything you'd like" she offers.

"Anything you feel like making" I say honestly "a home made meal is great, it's been a while since I've eaten one."

She looks stricken. "My poor little man" she croons and I cringe. My god, how embarrassing. "I'll have to fatten you up with some decent food. I'm going to go and start cooking right now" she cries and sails out of the room, almost skipping in her happiness.

I dissolve into laughter, Mason's shoulders shaking in his chair.

"I don't know why you're laughing" I tease him "you know you're expected to attend dinner as well."

"It's just" he chokes out "she called you little man." He bursts into laughter. I scowl at him.

"Don't forget I'm your Alpha" I growl warningly but he just continues to laugh, tears forming in his eyes.

"Alright, alright" he finally says, leaning against his chair and holding his hands up in surrender "I'll stop."

"How is the pack running? Tell me the truth now mother's not here" I order.

He looks perturbed. "The pack is running fine, smoothly. Except for the head warrior position needing to be filled and that rogue attack, everything else has been smooth sailing."

I relax. The pack had been in good hands while I was gone. Mason had done an excellent job of keeping things running. I take note of the fact he has dark circles under his eyes. When was the last time that he had a decent sleep? I really need to organise a Gamma as well to help lighten the load.

"Mason" I say gently "I think we need to look at filling the title of Gamma as well. It's too much work between the two of us and you've had to shoulder the burden the entire time I've been gone."

I swear his face brightens up. Clearly he thinks this is an excellent idea. "That would be fantastic. It would be far easier if we had a Gamma to help delegate some of the work to."

"Any ideas on who the Gamma should be? I feel like it should be a decision made between us, rather than just myself deciding."

That seems to shock him. "What about Jordan? He's also the best warrior and could fill both positions? Training could be a part of the Gamma's duties?" he suggests.

It's brilliant. It's like killing two jobs with one stone. "I think that your idea is brilliant" I say honestly "let's have a discussion with him in the morning. It's best to get it done quickly."

He nods and I smile. Everything is going well. I'm about to stand up and go to the kitchen, where mother is no doubt cooking furiously, when something comes to mind and I sit back down hastily.

"How is the prisoner doing?" I ask him.

Mason looks blank for a moment. The prisoner, I want to yell at him. You know, the only one that's been there in the dungeon for the last couple of months. That prisoner. The one I swore to Damien that was never going to cause trouble again.

Come on Mason, I think impatiently.

Then he looks at me and bites his lip. Now I'm feeling suspicious. What isn't he telling me? Why is he being so quiet.

"About that prisoner" Mason says in a hushed voice "Um, the thing is" he stammers.

"Spit it out Mason" I growl, watching him wriggle in the chair, clearly nervous.

"There was an incident and he managed to escape" he bursts out. He looks away nervously.

For a minute, there's just silence as I digest his words, not fully comprehending them. Then realisation dawns. I stand up, towering over him as he cringes back in the chair. My eyes are narrowed and staring directly at him.

"How does one" I say dangerously quiet "one measly little prisoner manage to escape the dungeon?"

"See, the thing is, there was an omega and they got too close and. . ." he trails helplessly.

I can't believe it. They let the prisoner escape. One that I was intending to keep locked up for the rest of his miserable fucking life. My hands clench into fists. "How does he get away from a whole pack Mason? Did no one track him down?"

"He escaped just before the rogue attack" Mason explains miserably "by the time we ended the fight, he was well and truly gone. I didn't see the point in wasting the trackers time."

I give a loud huff and punch the wall, giving vent to the anger coursing through my body. "Get out" I say between gritted teeth "before I lose control completely."

He's out the door in a flash. I breathe, counting to ten, trying to keep my wolf from taking over, willing my body to relax. My whole body is tense, my muscles stiff, I'm breathing heavy and I'm so angry. All I feel is pure rage right now. Finally I sit back down in the chair and cover my face with my hands. How am I going to tell Damien and Kai that Winter's father, has escaped his prison cell and it was all my fault?

Chapter 98 - The Alpha's Rejected Silent Mate

Kai POV

I don't know what's going on with Winter lately. I know she's lost her memories but it's something more than that. I just can't quite put my finger on it. Last night at that date she told me she felt sick but this morning, she disappears for warm milk because she can't sleep. Who can't sleep when they are sick? It doesn't make sense. Or maybe I'm just being paranoid. Who knows.

I meet Langdon. "Training grounds" I mutter to him "I need to work out some of my frustration."

He looks taken aback but does as I ask. There's no sign of Damien and I figure that he's got to be sleeping. I wonder if they were up late last night. Then I stop and halt in my tracks, reaching out a hand to look at Langdon properly. There's a massive smile on my friend's face and there, on his neck, is a mark. They marked each other!

"Congratulations man" I say, patting him on the back. It was awesome news. Langdon more than anyone, deserves to be happy with his second chance mate. Especially after what that bitch Candice put him through.

"Thanks" Langdon says quietly "we did it last night."

I look directly at him "are you happy then?"

His eyes sparkle. "Very."

We start to walk across the grounds, both of us lost in thought. Winter doesn't have my mark anymore and while I would love to claim her again, I'm uncomfortable doing it while she still has amnesia. Storm on the other hand, has no such qualms about it.

She's our mate, she should bear our mark!

Storm we've been over this, we can't just do it without her consent.

Why not, we did it the first time.

Exactly why we can't just do that to her this time. We never should have done it without her consent originally. This time we need to be more respectful of Winter.

I don't like the fact she doesn't have our mark anymore Kai.

I don't either Storm, but we just have to be patient. She'll let us mark her again eventually.

She'd better. She's ours, no one else's.

Trust me, she knows that Storm.

Man my wolf is more possessive of Winter than I am. He's very protective of her as well. I guess Damien is lucky that Storm hasn't torn him to shreds for what he did to Winter in the past, because my god he wanted to. He really wanted to. If he hadn't have been Langdon's second chance mate. . . . He would have been in serious trouble.

We reach the training grounds. Jeff, the head warrior gives us a wave and jogs over to us. I can see two warriors in the ring sparring, both of them not giving an inch, covered in sweat from head to toe. I wonder how long they have been out here for.

"Alpha Kai, Beta Langdon" Jeff says with a smile "it's nice to see you out here. Is there something you need?"

Oh yeah, there's something I need alright. I need to vent some of my anger and frustration out by fighting. My whole body is tense and even Langdon looks like he could use a fight.

"I came out here to train" I say and Jeff looks at me, completely taken aback.

I'm a little indignant. It's not like I don't come out here, it's just that Langdon and I normally train by ourselves together to save time. But I come out here every so often to see how everyone else is going and to train some of the men and women.

"We'll that's fantastic" beams Jeff. Man he's so chirpy in the morning. It gives me a headache. "Who are you wanting to train against?"

I turn and eye Langdon who looks resigned. "I'm guessing it's me" he tells Jeff wryly. Jeff just nods. He gestures for the warriors to leave the training ring.

"Wolves or human form?" asks Langdon as we get into the training ring and separate, staring at each other.

"Wolves" I growl and he nods.

Without hesitation, both of us begin to strip off our clothes. Then I spot Damien in the crowd. He's come out here to watch. I consider pointing him out to Langdon but I don't want to distract him from our fight.

I shift, bones cracking loudly in the otherwise quiet air, there's a small crowd gathered around us, something that I'm used to. It's not often they get to see their Alpha fight another in the ring. Langdon shifts into his own wolf as well. I've always liked his wolf. It's a dark grey colour all over except for a small patch of white on the nose. He's large, only a few inches smaller than my own black wolf. We glare at each other and begin to circle one another.

I'm looking for an opening, any opening at all that will help. Langdon is the first to race towards me and I meet him halfway, both of us clawing and swiping at each other. I get on top of him and he bucks me off, sending me flying. I shake my head and run towards him, stopping just in time as he dodges to the side. Damn, he's fast, but I'm faster.

We begin to circle each other, snarling, our jaws opening and shutting. This time he leaps towards me and I jump, meeting him in mid air, my jaws clamping onto him as I land, shaking him and throwing his body into the nearest tree. He hits the tree with a large thud and crashes to the floor. It doesn't stop him though. He's up on his feet within moments. This is going to be a hard fight, just the way I like it.

But then I spot someone's face in the crowd. Someone I hadn't expected to see, considering that I had left her tucked in bed in the room. What on earth was Winter thinking coming out here? Was she insane? She should have stayed inside the pack house if she'd gotten up, instead of coming outside and into the cold air. We were going to have a serious discussion once this was over. Damn it. Now I'm distracted.

I dodge to the side just in time as Langdon attempts to tackle me. I turn and swipe him across his midsection and hear him growl in response. I jump and land on top of him, only to get sent flying through the air as he twists and kicks me off. I'd forgotten just how good Langdon was at fighting. Then again, there was a reason I had made him my Beta and it hadn't been just because we were best friends. This time I stalk over to him and tackle him to the ground, my wolf is bigger and more dominant. I clamp my jaws onto him and he wriggles and kicks. Then I go flying again. This is becoming a nuisance I think to myself. We're so evenly matched the fight could go on forever.

I look over at Winter and her face is completely ashen. She's standing next to Damien, a hand to her mouth. She looks worried. Langdon is looking over as well and has just realised Damien is in the crowd. Damien is just as pale and looks concerned for his mate. I don't think I can continue, not with Winter looking so frightened. Langdon appears to be thinking along the same lines.

I shift. Langdon does the same with a smile on his face.

"Good fight" I tell him as we both bend down and retrieve our clothes. "I just couldn't continue. . . " I say looking over at Winter pointedly.

"I know" Langdon says softly "I understand."

We both get dressed.

Then we make our way over to Damien and Winter. Damien's eyes are shining. "You were awesome" he tells Langdon. "I can't believe how well you fight."

"Thankyou" Langdon says with a chuckle. He takes hold of Damien's hand. "Do you want to do some training while I watch" he offers. Damien looks thoughtful. "I wouldn't mind doing some training. I

haven't really had the opportunity to in the last few months" he admits "even at my old pack I tended to skip it."

"Well then there's no reason not to train here" Langdon answers looking at his mate sternly.

I glance over at Winter who is looking and listening to the both of them intently. There's a smile on her face. She really does love that brother of hers, even with amnesia.

Damien glances at her. "Winter would you like to stay" he offers "I would love to spend time with you."

She frowns. I guess she still doesn't have much in the way of memories when it comes to Damien. "I don't really enjoy watching the fighting" she says slowly "it makes me feel sick to my stomach."

There's a disappointed look on Damien's face. Winter sees it. "But maybe later, after the fighting, we could talk. Maybe you could tell me about our childhood" she says.

Damien goes even paler. He swallows. "Sure, we can do that" he says faintly. She gives him a beaming smile. Now Damien looks miserable. I guess he's going to have trouble explaining her rough childhood. I don't feel even an ounce of sympathy for him.

Winter looks at me. "I know you probably wanted me to stay in bed" she says quietly as Damien and Langdon move away from the both of us.

"I would have preferred you did" I growl and she looks at me upset.

"I can't spend the rest of my life in bed" she points out "not when I need to get to know you as well, considering that we're mates" she adds with a frown.

She has a point. Doesn't mean I'm any less upset with her. I mind-link Langdon.

I'm taking Winter back to the pack house. Let me know if you need me.

Will do Alpha Kai.

Thanks.

I gently take hold of Winter's hand and give it a kiss, noting how cold it is and frowning. I shrug out of my jacket and drape it over her. "Cold?" I ask and she gives a small nod. No wonder she's so pale. It's a surprise her teeth aren't chattering together.

"Let's go home and have breakfast" I suggest and she walks along with me obediently. I sigh. I don't want Winter to feel like I'm being possessive of her, but I'm afraid to let her out of my sight after what happened with Thomas. Even though that bastards dead, I feel like I failed her. I'm not going to fail her ever again.

Is it my imagination or is she walking funny? Her body is stiff and her movements are slightly jerky.

"Are you feeling alright?" I ask softly.

She bites her lip. "I don't know. I feel strange" she admits "I don't know how to explain it, but I know that I'm really thirsty" she says "even though I drank plenty of water before coming out here."

"Maybe you're just hungry" I suggest, steering her towards the pack house. I'm concerned but trying not to show it. Something seems off about Winter. But I'm not sure what it is. Her movements are strange. Like she's having trouble walking. She's definitely not alright. Then I see her stumble and although I move fast, she drops to the ground in a dead faint as I stare down at her. I scoop her off the ground quickly. Her lips are blue now. Her hands are clammy.

I change directions and begin to head towards the hospital, Winter securely cradled against my chest. I scold myself for not getting to her sooner and hope she hasn't injured her head. That's the last thing she needs. Hold on Winter, I think to myself as I run, we're almost there. Hopefully the doctors have some idea of what caused her to faint. Because this doesn't just seem like she's sick to me.

Chapter 99 - The Alpha's Rejected Silent Mate

Winter POV

When I wake back up, the doctor is examining me, shining one of those damn bright lights in my eyes. I frown. I knew I hadn't been feeling well when I walked out to the grounds but I hadn't realised I would actually faint. How embarrassing. The doctor looks concerned. "Your iron is severely depleted, I can tell just by looking at you" Dr Jameson says. That's what his name badge says anyway.

"What do we need to do?" asks Kai anxiously.

"Well" the doctor pauses "I would suggest eating iron rich foods, such as plenty of red meat, spinach, but I also might suggest supplements. I feel you might have been drained when that hybrid took your blood and it's struggling to replenish itself."

Kai nods, looking grim. I just feel woozy.

"Everything else, appears to be fine and healthy. Winter, I really don't want to see you in here again" jokes the doctor as I struggle to sit upright.

"You can go home" Dr Jameson says to me "but I suggest you take it easy and rest when you can. Especially since your amnesia still hasn't gone away."

"Thankyou" I say meekly. Kai sighs.

"I'm carrying you back to the pack house' he says shortly. I frown at him. I'm perfectly capable of walking back, but something in his facial expression warns me not to push it.

"Goodluck Winter. Come back for a checkup in two weeks time" suggests Dr Jameson "we'll check your iron levels and give you a transfusion if it's needed."

I nod and climb out of bed, my legs almost buckling beneath me. Kai's hand whips out and supports me, preventing me from sliding to the floor.

"Careful" mutters Kai admonishing me. Like I did it on purpose. I give a huff, feeling annoyed at him. I'm not some delicate piece of china that's going to break. I was getting tired of being treated like it. He scoops me up and I give a shriek, kicking and wiggling.

"Stop" he growls and I pause, my body tense as he cradles me against his chest.

I sniff involuntarily and my mouth waters. Man, he smells delicious, his scent strong and pungent. I can't get enough of it. His arms tighten around me.

"I'm taking you back to the pack house" he murmurs and I don't bother to argue. Instead, I force my body to relax against him, rather than fight against him. He looks relieved. Slowly, he walks out of the hospital room and heads towards the main entrance.

"Where's Damien?" I ask out of nowhere and he looks at me, jaw clenched tight. Apparently Damien is a sore spot for him for some reason. But I remember speaking to Damien just before I fainted. Plus he is my brother, apparently.

"He's waiting in the dining room for you, along with Landon" he grunts as we make our way out of the hospital and onto the grounds.

It doesn't look like much time has passed since I've fainted. At least judging by the sun's position in the sky. I curse the fact that I don't have a watch or a way to tell time. I snuggle against Kai. His body is nice and warm. He walks with me in his arms with ease, as though I don't weigh more than a feather. It's actually a nice feeling. He's quiet but he looks concerned, all of his focus on the pack house which is up ahead.

My stomach growls loudly and he chuckles. "I guess you're hungry" he laughs. I blush. But it's true. I'm starving. Suddenly ravenous. It feels like it came out of nowhere.

We enter the pack house and he walks to the dining room.

"Winter" cries Damien as Kai reluctantly puts me down, one arm snaking around my waist as I lean against him "how are you feeling."

"I feel a little weak and shaky. I didn't mean to worry anyone" I answer softly. Damien leans forward and then hesitates. He looks uncertainly at me and at Kai. I don't know what makes me do it, but I close the gap and fling my arms around him. His arms instantly go around me and he hugs me tightly to him. I breathe in his scent, recognising it's familiar. A memory comes to me.

I'm so small. Just a little girl, who is running around the grass while her mother and father watch her. Her older brother is sitting on the ground, looking bored. I don't want to play by myself, it's boring.

"Come get me Damien" I cry. "Come play chasey."

At first he ignores me. But my mother gently nudges him and he slowly gets to his feet. I shriek and run, Damien's footsteps behind me. I giggle and shriek, running as fast as my little legs will carry me.

"I'm going to get you" he shouts as I speed up. I dodge around trees and jump over branches, ignoring the fact that I'm getting dirt all over my dress, wanting nothing more than to play with him.

Then he tackles me to the ground and I giggle, wriggling underneath him. He grins at me. "I got you" he says and my eyes shine up with adoration at my older brother.

The memory's gone just as quickly. But it's enough for me to feel some love and tenderness towards Damien as I give a small sob and hug him. Slowly he pulls away. "Why are you crying?" he asks me slightly panicked, Kai scowling darkly at him.

I wipe the tears from my eyes. "Just a memory" I tell him softly "a nice one."

Why does he look so relieved to hear that? Kai relaxes slightly as well. My stomach lets out a loud growl, reminding Kai why we came to the dining room in the first place.

He pulls a chair out from the table for me and motions for me to sit. Langdon and Damien join me. "Have you guys eaten?" asks Kai gruffly as he gets behind the kitchen counter.

"We have, but we could always eat again" Langdon grins.

"That would be nice, all of us eating together" I beam. Kai fall silent at my look of happiness, shooting dirty looks at Langdon and Damien when he thinks I'm not looking.

"Winter what do you feel like?" he asks, perusing the refrigerator and it's contents.

Hmmm. I have to think. But I'm craving meat like nobody's business and the first thing that comes to mind, is what I call out. "Steaks" I say hopefully and they all look surprised.

"Steaks" Kai repeats looking taken aback. "Anything else?"

To be honest, I only want the steaks. Honestly, the thought of anything else is making my stomach churn. "Maybe some juice" I answer slowly.

"I'll just make some steaks and eggs with toast" declares Kai, shooting the other's a look "if anyone else wants something different, than they are welcome to make it themselves."

"That sounds good" declares Langdon and Damien nods fervently. Good, no one seems to be too bothered by the steaks. I have to admit it's a strange craving to have. Maybe it's the lack of iron?

I sniff appreciatively as the steaks get taken out of the fridge, my mouth watering in anticipation. Even though they haven't been cooked yet, they smell delicious. I can't wait to get my teeth into one. Langdon gets up and grabs the juice, pouring a glass for everyone.

"Here" he says kindly, pushing a glass towards me.

"Thanks" I mutter, staring at the orange juice with revulsion. It had seemed like a good idea at the time, but now that it was right in front of my nose, it was making my stomach heave. I tentatively take a sip and almost spit it out. It tastes strange, like it's gone off, but when I glance over at Langdon and Damien, they don't seem to have a problem with the juice at all. Strange. I gently push my glass to the side and glance over at Kai.

He's got the frypan ready and the eggs are cooking, toast in the toaster ready to be buttered. Now he just had to deal with the steaks. "Winter, how do you like your steaks?" he asks.

I have to think for a moment. Normally I would go for well done, but my body wants something different. Before I can even consider what I'm about to do, I call out "rare" and lean back in my chair.

If Kai thinks my decision is weird he doesn't say anything, Langdon and Damien opting to have their steaks medium rare. Within minutes Kai's finished everyone's breakfast.

He brings mine over first and I can smell the tantalizing odour of the meat on the plate as he places it in front of me. My stomach growls loudly and my mouth begins to water. Kai gives me a peck on the cheek. "Breakfast" he growls and then gives the others their food before plopping onto a chair on the opposite side of me. I stare down at the steak in fascination. There's blood oozing underneath it. The eggs look like runny liquid and I scrape it to the side, not wanting to taste it. I nibble lightly at the toast but my stomach doesn't like the taste.

"Thankyou for breakfast" I tell Kai and he gives me a small smile, diving into his own breakfast. He's given me the biggest portion of steak and I reach for the knife and fork. As soon as I press on the steak, blood oozes out. It's definitely rare, I see with satisfaction. I cut a tiny piece off and place it in my mouth, chewing slowly and almost moaning as it hits my taste buds. It's so sweet, so tender. I'm desperate for more. This time I take a slightly larger piece and plop it in my mouth, closing my eyes in ecstasy. It's so juicy. So soft. It's the best thing I've eaten in a very long time.

I begin to dive into the steak while the others eat around me.

"So if you want to start training, how about together the two of us, go out there tomorrow morning?" Langdon.

"Are you sure?" Damien.

"Of course. You can only learn by training. Heck, I'll even train you as well." Langdon.

"That's brilliant. I can't wait." Damien.

I ignore them. All I want is this beautiful steak. When I glance down and see that I've eaten the entire piece of it, I almost want to cry. Kai shoves a small piece at me. "I wasn't sure if you would want more" he explains, his eyes on the steak that's gone. At least I'm eating I want to tell him indignantly.

Soon though, that piece is gone and I'm still craving more. But I don't know what. I stare down at the small pool of blood on the plate. I inhale and the metallic scent is strong in the air, but instead of filling me with revulsion, I feel hunger instead. Without thinking about it, I place the toast and eggs on the table top and lift the plate up in both hands, staring at the blood with fascination. I tip the plate towards my mouth and the blood slowly trickles down, into my open mouth, trailing down my throat as I swallow it all greedily. It's so good. I lick my lips. I even lick all the blood off the plate and smack my lips together.

Utter silence. That's the first thing I notice. Everyone is staring at me awkwardly. Kai of course looks like he's about to faint. I stare back, wondering what's wrong. They look like they've seen a ghost. What the hell is wrong with them? I wasn't acting that strangely was I? In fact, now that I'm thinking about it, I feel energised, rather than weak like earlier.

Kai is the first to speak "Winter, are you feeling alright?"

"I feel great" I tell him honestly "fantastic."

Langdon and Damien are shooting Kai sidelong glances. "Um, alright, do you want to try and rest?" asks Damien.

I shake my head. "Maybe I could join in on training? Or go for a run or something?"

"I think a run would do some good" Kai agrees "but you just fainted not long ago, so how about taking it easy until I can go for a run with you?"

I pout. "Fine, I might go read a book" I say grumpily. I get up and storm upstairs. Why were they all acting so freaked out all of a sudden?

Chapter 100 - The Alpha's Rejected Silent Mate

Unknown POV

God, I can't believe I managed to escape from that horrible dungeon. Those bastards thought they could keep me in there forever, but I showed them. I showed them all. That omega, I don't even feel sorry for messing around with her feelings. As if I was in love with her, ha. She's about the same age as my daughter Winter. Still, she served her purpose, So I can't really complain about that, can I. She was just so easily fooled. That's what they get for using omegas to bring my food to me. It was just a matter of time until I managed to sweet talk one. Stupid pack.

My feet crunch on the grass. How fortunate it was that there was a rogue attack as I was escaping. Even I can't believe my good fortune. It was like the moon goddess herself was urging me to escape. I take my time walking. There's nothing but clear blue sky for miles and no sign of rain or anything gloomy like that. The sun is warm, which is good because the only thing I have on is pants. They left me shirtless in that damn dungeon. I could shift, but I'm still weak from my injuries and find it easier to travel in human form and allow my wolf to recover.

I frown at the ground. I've managed to cover a large area of space. That bloody Alpha Johnathon was missing from the pack and rumour had it he'd gone searching for my daughter Winter, with my son no less. They thought I couldn't hear them, but I paid attention. Even when blood was pooling from my wounds, I listened and I remembered everything they spoke about. They should have been more careful. Sometimes I'd faked being unconscious in order to get them to talk even more.

I know all sorts of things. Winter being mute, my son's apparent guilt over the whole thing. I spit at the ground in anger. That bastard son of mine stood up against me and all for her. What had made him change his mind over hurting Winter? How dare he stand up and tell me no. This was all his fault, well his and Winter's. I would forever hate my daughter, no matter how much those big eyes of her's pleaded for me to stop, or the tears that she cried in front of me. Once upon a time I would have stopped instantly and hugged her, but now I can't even bear to think of touching the little bitch.

I could just leave and go in another direction. But I want revenge. Revenge for what happened to me in that dungeon. It's all Winter and Damien's fault that I ended up there. It's their fault that I was tortured. It's their fault for my miserable existence. My hands clench into fists as I walk, my head lowered down to avoid stepping on anything sharp or pointy with my bare feet.

Slam. The door swings shut on the cell in the dungeon as I race to it, my fingers curling around the bars, ignoring the burning sensation of the silver against my flesh.

"Let me out" I roar and the boy, Johnathon, stares at me with anger on his face.

"You sold your own daughter for money" he hissed and I stare at him and shrug.

Of course I had, I needed it to pay back some debts. How did this concern him? It's not like it affected him at all. He should butt the hell out of my business.

He motions to the guards. "Shoot him" he orders and I notice for the first time that the guards are holding tranquilizer darts. I have no doubt they contain wolfsbane. I can smell it from here.

I back away but it's too late. The darts hit me, one in the chest and another in my thigh. I let out a roar and pull them out, but it's too late. My body flops to the ground.

"Get him chained" Johnathon says coldly from above me.

The guards haul me up, even as I kick and fight, chaining me up against the wall, my back exposed to them.

"You bastard" I snarl, trying to look over my shoulder.

His eyes are dark, there's an unreadable expression on his face. He's holding something in his hand, but I can't make out what it is from my position. I refuse to let some young lad intimidate me like this.

The first crack of the whip surprises me more than hurts. But I can tell it's silver because my back is literally burning until he pulls it away. I let out a howl, my whole body shuddering.

"I'll kill you when I get free" I promise him, my voice shaking.

The boy is silent. "The only reason I'm not killing you is because of Winter" he says "god help her but she still thinks of you as her father, despite everything you've done to her."

Crack.

Shit. The pain is excruciating. I cry out at the second strike.

"This is for Winter" he grunts and the whip slashes my back. This time it's so powerful that I scream, involuntarily. He certainly put most of his strength into it.

"This is for Damien" he mutters as the whip slashes me again. My whole body is shaking now. I'm not sure how much more I can take, but I don't want to give the bastard the satisfaction of seeing me fall unconscious. My hands clench into fists.

"When I get out of here" I mutter slowly "I am going to kill you and my children with my bare hands."

Crack. This time I'm prepared for the whip. Then there's silence. It's nerve wracking. I can't tell what he's doing. There's the sounds of things being moved and touched. That's when I realise he's going for something else. He has to be.

"Take him off the wall and let him dangle from the ceiling" he orders and I feel the guards moving me around as I stare down at them with hatred. Soon my feet are dangling off the floor and my hands are stretched over my head.

Johnathon walks in front of me, brandishing a silver dagger. I suck in a breath. He can do some serious damage with that. He caresses it, touching the tip, his hands covered in gloves to prevent himself from being burned by the knife. He cocks his head. "You know, I suspect that Winter has scars all over her body from you. It would explain the loose baggy clothing she wears" he hisses and I flinch. He would be correct. His eyes light up at my reaction and I swear as I realise I've given myself away.

He plunges the dagger into the side of my midsection and I scream, my skin bubbling and burning bright red. He pulls it back out and examines it.

"Get the doctor" he snaps over his shoulder, and moves close to me.

"You were going to let your own daughter be raped" he breathes, his face inches from mine. "I think it's only fair that we make sure you can't physically do anything like that to anyone. You sick, twisted, son of a bitch."

I have no idea what he's talking about. A man comes down to the dungeon, looking uneasy, Johnathon looking over his shoulder and giving a quick nod. Then I feel him, he's cupping my man hood and clutching the dagger. Oh god no. I start to writhe in my chains, kicking and screaming. His hands tighten and I howl. He's going to crush them at this rate.

I don't see it but I feel it as he severs my ball sack from my body, my mouth open in an endless scream as I sob hysterically. The doctor injects me with something that makes me fall unconscious. When I wake up, there's stitches and my scrotum is gone forever. I'm no longer a man, and it's because of them.

I shudder at the memory of it all. My gaze unconsciously goes to my nether regions and my lip curls with hatred. They have ruined me forever. He ruined me forever. I spent months recovering from that ordeal, planning my revenge and plotting. Then I began to hear the rumours of Winter and I listened. I know which way to go, which direction to follow and it's because of Johnathon's Beta letting loose the information.

I sit beneath a tree, needing to rest. I had half expected them to send out a search party for me, but maybe they thought I was killed by rogues? Fuck. I need a drink like no one's business. But I don't dare walk into town. That would make it far too easy to find me. Although it they even have half a brain, they would know exactly where I was going. I plan on dragging Winter back with me. She can still earn me money but Damien would have to die. He had become too much of an overprotective older brother and I can no longer trust him to do what's right.

There's the crack of thunder in the distance. So much for there being clear skies. Now I can see fucking storm clouds gathering. Is everything going to be going fucking wrong today? I don't have the energy to make a goddamn shelter. I pause, debating my options. There's a pack not far from here. I could pretend to have run into some rogues and needing assistance. But it's risky. Especially if that fucker Alpha Johnathon has put the word out to keep an eye on me. I scowl. I guess I need to make a god damn shelter. How fucking annoying.

I slam branches down, in a right mood. My wolf is telling me to calm down but I ignore him. Since we lost our balls he's been particularly sulky. It's exasperating me. I slam the shelter together. taking all my anger and frustration out on it. The stupid thing is barely waterproof but I don't care. As it the rain is starting to sprinkle down on me and I poke my tongue out, letting the raindrops fall on it and swallowing gratefully. I'm thirsty. It's been a long travel. We haven't come across any lakes or streams yet.

I slowly climb into the shelter, keeping my head poking out. The rain begins to get heavier and soon it's hailing down. There won't be any moving until it's passed. It could take a while. I remind myself that I have time. So much time it isn't funny. This isn't a race, not for me. I would rather be slow and cautious than be caught before I can take my revenge. The wind begins to get heavier. I hope my shelter doesn't go flying. Maybe I should have put a bit more effort in. My wolf is smug. I scowl and put a block up, refusing to talk to him.

At least there won't be any rogues. They hate water and when it rains. That means I'm safe for now. Which is good, I'm not particularly in the mood for a fight right now. Even though it might help my anger out. I content myself with lying down on my back and closing my eyes. I ignore the thudding sounds of the heavy rain and the whoosh of the air as it causes branches to move back and forth. I drown out all the sounds and instead begin to picture my son and daughter in my mind's eye. I remember what they look like. I remember everything about them. Winter is no match for me. She never was and I doubt she's gotten stronger even with her wolf. Damien might prove to be more difficult but I can handle him if I need to. But it's Winter I want, Winter who I will take back with me. I don't care how long I have to wait to make my move, my daughter is coming back to the house, whether she likes it or not.