

Chapter 57 - The Heat (Part 1)

"Don't judge yourself by what others did to you." — C. Kennedy

{Content Warning: This chapter will have mentions of sexual abuse. Reader discretion is advised.}

Kiya

The Heat.

A dastardly condition that inflicts female wolves. During a she-wolf's heat, she had an uncontrollable desire to mate. She becomes an aggressive, horny machine desperate for sex. Her body heat rises exponentially to prepare for insemination. Her scent, now a thousand times more potent, becomes a seductive enchantment meant to seduce and lure. It sends a spellbinding message to unmated wolves, enticing their animalistic instincts. A she-wolf in heat is fertile, the chances of pregnancy taking place are extraordinarily high. However, in lycanthropes, the heat occurs when mates were close to each other weeks after their established bond.

I avoided the heat because of not only the rejected bond but being miles away from my bastard of a mate. Now, things were changing. The rejection was reversed, and I was closer to Neron than ever before. The heat finally caught up to me, combusting dozens of flames in my body. At twenty-two, I was going through my first heat.

And it **burns**!

My nails pierced the skin of my chest as more pain shot through, directly hitting my heart. One hand on the ground serves as my only support as I gasp for air. Behind my eyes, Artemis writhes and whimpers in pain.

The heat is pulling us further into a sea of scorching red. Behind me, Raina holds onto my shoulders, fear mixing with her scent. Her touch made me painfully aware of my increased sensitivity, the smallest of touches could erupt a volcano of agony underneath my flesh.

Because it wasn't the touch of my mate.

"Make it stop!" I cried, tears stinging my eyes. "Oh Goddess, make it stop!"

"I need to get you inside, sis," Raina's voice volume was ear-splitting, despite being a whisper. I wanted to be alone, away from everyone so the heat could go away. But I knew it wouldn't.

The key to crush the heat is for my mate to touch me. Him to be intimate with me. The pain would only disappear if we complete the overdue mating process. The very thought of having sex with Neron made me want to tear my hair out! I couldn't do that! I don't want that! That's a line I wasn't ready to cross!

With anyone!

Multiple growls erupted from behind us. I didn't need to look to know what was happening. My scent was drawing the unmated wolves in. In an instant, the heat turned me from a mighty Delta to an attractive chew toy. No unmated male could resist the scent of an unmated female in heat.

"Stay the hell away from my sister!" Raina shouted, scooping my smoldering body in her arms. I didn't have the strength to resist because all my energy is zapped from my limbs. From the slits of my eyelids, I spot about a dozen men advancing towards us, eyes murky, afire with desire. My sister clutched me closer to her chest, my nose forcibly inhaling her scent of lavender and chamomile.

Please, please don't let those men touch me!

Abruptly, a powerful growl resounded in the air and Jackie rushed in front of us. She used her tall body as a shield from the advancing beasts. “Control yourselves, men! If any of you touch her, I will gut you from where you stand!” She turned her head to us. “Go!”

Raina took off, the air whipping against my boiling flesh. It stung terribly, a whimper escaping my mouth. I opened my eyes more to see some men breaking from the group, running after us. They didn’t get far with Galen’s yellowish-gray wolf barreling into them, knocking them to the ground. Sapphire did her best to deter the other men away from us with Isaiah and Darien. Abigail opened the door to the packhouse, following us to my room.

As my sister placed me on my bed, I screamed. Too much pain! Too many sensations at once! My claws elongated, tearing at my armor and clothes, shedding them into useless strips of cloth.

“Kiya, no!” She grabbed my hands. “I-I know it’s bad, but I’m here to help you. We need to get your temperature down.”

“It hurts...” I sobbed. Like bullets, the pain whizzed from every nerve, merciless. My mind was hazy with pain and desire, infuriating the fire pooling in my core. Why did this have to happen now? Why did I have to be at the mercy of this developmental malfunction?

I don’t want sex. I don’t want to mate. My heat was punishing me!

Abigail placed a wet, cold towel on my forehead as I struggled against Raina’s grip. I needed the rest of my clothes off me! I could feel every damn thing down to the cotton fibers and it was driving me insane!

“Hey,” Raina tapped Abi’s arm. “Could you go to the kitchen and get the Omegas to bring bags of ice?”

“Are you thinking about making an ice bath?” My friend asked, arching an eyebrow. “Will it work?”

“No, but it will lessen the fire in her body. The only way to stop the heat completely is if Neron mates with her, but...”

“Oh, I get it. I’ll be right back!”

As soon as Abigail left, my sister sighed and released my hands. I did quick work to remove every article of shredded clothing off my body. I even tossed my selenite necklace away from me. Raina locked the door, hoping the wooden barrier would be enough to stop the men’s pursuit. I laid naked on my bed, the heat getting worse. Raina took off the wet towel and wiped the sweat off my face.

“Baby sis...” She whispered, kneeling on the floor. “I can’t stand to see you suffering like this.”

“Why...” I whispered, shutting my eyes. “W-why now?”

“I don’t know. The heat loves to creep up on us like a bug. You’re late in the game, so the heat is making up for the lost time.” She took my clammy hand and held it tight.

“Is the heat how you got pregnant with Adonis?” I asked, terrified.

She gave the answer I dreaded. Out of nowhere, I started weeping. Not just because of the pain, but all the implications that come with this insanity. The way I saw the men look at me, like I was a prize to claim for their dicks, brought back the revulsion I always felt with intimacy.

Their eyes were full of burning hunger and lust with the desire to claim and conquer me. The yearning to have me underneath their bodies, to plant their calamitous seeds in my womb. I couldn’t blame them for their wolfish instincts, but it was all too much for me.

How could my body be desirable for someone to mate with? I was tainted. I was dirty. Another man touched me before the one I was supposed to love. Another man took advantage of my vulnerability and

used my body to satisfy his dark needs. Another man hurt me more than the pack did.

That guard raped me in that cell when I was fourteen and it became routine for the next three years. It only stopped when I escaped. He took away my autonomy. He took away my control, forcing himself on me often.

That's my secret shame. No one knows about that part of my abuse except my therapist. I couldn't bring myself to admit that I was violated underneath the floors of this packhouse.

The violation killed me. It made me hate my body. No matter how beautiful I look or how strong I feel, whenever I look in the mirror, I could see the imprints of that guard's pedophilic hands on my flesh. A constant reminder that I was used goods. No amount of scrubbing could erase the phantom touches I feel occasionally.

"Please, Raina..." I begged, my eyes staring in hers. "Don't let anyone touch me! I-I can't...I don't want to be mated to anyone...not even Neron."

Raina's eyes softened with her hand cradling my cheek. For once, something different flashed in those chestnut eyes. It differed from the evil I remembered. This time, I saw the care of an older sister, the love she was supposed to give me long ago.

It was so strange. I don't know how to feel about it.

"I won't let anyone near you unless you ask me to, sis." She assured, her voice firm. "I'll protect you. I promise you that."

In the next fifteen minutes, Raina and my friends went to work on dousing my heat. The ice bath Raina set up helped, despite the ice cubes melting on contact with my skin. The Omegas brought in more bags of

ice to set in the bathroom for more ice baths. The heat lasts three days, so it was going to be three days of pure hell for me.

Sapphire cranked up my air conditioner to full blast, turning my bedroom into an icebox. I wish I could say it helped, but I still felt like an inferno with a light blanket covering my bare essentials. The heat zapped the energy out of me, so I laid on my bed with a wet towel on my head with my limbs weighing as heavy as steel.

“I want to help you, Kiki. But I can’t.” Darien whispered through the mind-link, saddened. *“I hope you understand why.”*

“I do. Don’t worry about it.” Darien is an unmated male, despite discovering his mate. He is just as susceptible to my heat scent like any other. He was distancing himself to keep me safe. I wish he was here to help, but I won’t forget his sacrifice.

“Here, Little Bit.” Galen slowly sat me up as he balanced a bowl of ice cream in his other hand. My eyes darted to the mate mark on his neck, deeming him safe to be around. I didn’t have the joy to celebrate the completion of his mate bond because my heat zapped all other emotions out of me. “I don’t know if this will work, but it works for human kids with fevers!”

I made a face of disgust. Vanilla ice cream? Not my favorite, but it’ll do. Like the mother hen he was, he began spoon-feeding me large helpings of the icy treat. Sugar was an amazing distraction.

“Why can’t we use the Anti-Spray to disguise Kiki’s scent?” Abigail asked Sapphire as she sat at the chair at my vanity.

“It won’t work. Her scent is a thousand times more potent now. I’ll need to make another solution for this occasion, but it could take several days.”

“What’s Anti-Spray?” Raina inquired while wiping the sweat off my bare back.

“It’s a spray we used to disguise our scents. Handy for patrols and missions. My family and I made it.” Sapphire answered, grinning with pride. “However, the original formula doesn’t take account for the potency of a she-wolf’s heat. Spraying it now is wasteful.”

“Great.” Jackie groaned, leaning against the bathroom door. “We’ll need to bat away every unmated male from her room or else they’ll catch a case.”

“Aren’t we forgetting something?” Galen fed me another helping of ice cream.

“What?”

“The Alpha. How are we going to keep Neron away?”

Out of nowhere, my bedroom door burst open to reveal a very disheveled Neron— unkempt hair, wrinkled clothing, and eyes blacker than sea trenches. I went still, staring at him like a deer caught in headlights. Everybody held their breaths, waiting for his next move. Some ice cream dribbled from the corner of my lips, dripping to my chin.

Neron’s blackened eyes squared on me, coal eyes afire with lust.

“MINE!”

All hell broke loose when Neron leaped towards me.

<i>Neron</i>	
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I need her! I want her!

Kiya is mine, and no one is going to stop me from having her!

The unfathomable rage when I saw Delta Galen feeding her ice cream surged through my veins, lengthening my claws. They ache to tear him apart for being near my mate in her heat. Only I should be near her! I'll kill that bastard!

"NO!" Two pairs of hands forced me backward, farther from Kiya in her bed. I growled and thrashed against Raina and Beta Jacqueline, angry that they tried to separate me from my other half.

"Control yourself, Alpha!" Jacqueline demanded.

"Mine!" I snarled, pushing the Beta women away from me. Kiya shot up from her bed, dressed in only a thin blanket outlining every perfect curve on her body, from her firm breasts to her wide hips. Her scent called to me, serving as an invitation to claim what was mine. It was a tempting seductress, pulling me deeper and farther into my pool of desire.

"Stay the hell away from me!" Kiya shouted, hiding behind Delta Galen. I growled, pissed that she'd seek the comfort of another man over me! I was her fucking mate! She should run to ME!

"Neron, chill out!" Two muscular arms looped under my own, forcibly pulling me back towards the door. Raina must have linked her husband for help because Valerian jerks me back with the force of a bulldozer. "Wake up, man! Look at what you're doing!"

"Let me go, Valerian," I snarled, my Alpha tone interlaced with that simple, yet authoritative command. Every wolf, Beta and below, cannot resist the command of their superior. Valerian recognizes this, and so does his wolf. With an angry sneer, my second-in-command released me. "Who the hell do you think you are telling me what to do?"

“You tried to bulldoze your way to your mate through my fucking wife!” He yelled at me, his own eyes flickering from green to black in anger. “You’re damn lucky nothing happened, but put my wife in danger again, and you and I are going to have a problem!”

“Hey Little Bit, are you okay?” My head snapped in the direction of Galen and my mate, too close for comfort. Onyx wanted that Delta’s head on a pike! His hands were on Kiya’s shoulders, a touch too far!

“Get the fuck away from her!” I commanded, ready to pounce. Galen twisted his head towards me, his darkened eyes glaring with the intensity of a tornado.

“First off, I don’t answer to you! You aren’t my damn Alpha! Second, if you cared about Kiya, you’d shut this shitshow down and realize how fucking terrified she is of you! Control your instincts and your damn wolf, Neron!”

I froze. My possessive, animalistic thoughts stopped in their tracks, retreating to the recesses of my mind. For a moment, my gaze flickered over to my Kiya, visibly shaking as she clutched her thin blanket like it was her lifeline. Worst of all, she was avoiding all eye contact with me. She was avoiding my eyes because I scared her that much.

My muscles went weak, my tall frame accidentally slumping against my Beta. With a grunt of effort, Valerian placed me against the wall as I continued to stare at my terrified mate.

What have I done? Did I push her farther away than before?

Did I break my promise to the Moon Goddess sooner than I realize?

“Kiya...I...”

“Out!” Kiya screeched, shuffling away from the crowd. “You all are making my damn head hurt! All of you, get the fuck out of my room!”

Her friends looked hurt but obeyed. Raina lingered in a vain attempt to talk but was pushed out. Valerian trailed behind her, but I stayed. I couldn't leave her alone, especially since she needed me. Even if she doesn't realize it herself.

But the look in her eyes told me the opposite. Deep brown swam with countless emotions, liquifying in a concoction strong enough to hurt my heart.

I see anger.

Terror.

Sadness.

And like that, another wall was put up between us. I couldn't reach her, no matter how hard I tried. Her eyes carried a silent message that I understood, she wanted me gone.

With a defeated sigh, I left her room, closing the door behind me. But not before hearing the faint sobs from the other side.

I cannot leave her alone. But how do I show that I won't hurt her?

How deep did her pain go?