

## CHAPTER 52

Damien POV

I woke up, my eyes feeling gritty and my throat parched. My whole body feels warm all over and there's a distinct ache that I can feel throughout all of my muscles. I can also feel my flesh burning as I open my eyes, seeing straight away that I'm restrained and shackled in the cell that poor Winter used to be punished in. Fuck. I'm in trouble.

What the hell was going on? Then I remember and suck in a shocked breath, still unable to believe it myself, but knowing that I had seen it with my very own eyes. I struggle against the restraints but am not surprised when they don't budge, the burning of the flesh making me howl.

"It's pointless," his voice says as he comes out from the shadows, a massive smirk on his damn face. I hiss and he just smiles wider, enjoying my predicament.

"You" I gasped, tugging on the restraints and cursing "how is this possible? I thought you were dead", I hissed and he laughed, the sound filling the silent room and sending chills down my spine. He's clearly enjoying himself right now.

"That's what I wanted all of you to believe. It took a while for me to recover and it served my purpose for everyone to think I had perished. It allowed me to plan my revenge and my next move" he almost purrs as I spit at him in defiance. I don't know why Thomas is here, but something tells me it's because of Winter and has nothing to do with me. Plus, he smells funny, like he's not just a shifter anymore. In fact, it's almost like he's a hybrid. But how is that possible?

"What did you do?" I breathed, feeling sick. "How is it possible you are here?"

He cocks his head at me. "Funny, I would have thought you'd know what a vampire smells like now. It's wonderful", he adds quietly, "my parents tracked down a vampire and had me drink their blood to stay alive. Now I'm a hybrid" he whispers as I shudder, "and I enjoy it. It was worth the months of pain as I went through the transition. You would have thought it would be quick and painless, but that's all a lie. Not to mention not everyone survives the process of becoming a hybrid, but I got lucky. Picture the speed I possess and the ability to heal even quicker. Sadly, I'm not a full vampire, but drinking the blood healed me far quicker than being a shifter would have. I guess money really can buy everything" he adds thoughtfully "I even have a perfume that will hide the vampire scent from other shifters. I just don't see the point of applying it right now. You're going to die anyway."

He holds up a silver dagger, his hands clad in leather gloves, and I gulp, eyeing it nervously. His grin grows wider.

"What do you want" I spit out, wishing I could lay my hands on him.

"Isn't it obvious" he growls, "I want to know where your sister Winter is, Damien, and you're going to tell me everything" he whispers threateningly.

So, I was right then, he wanted my sister and I was just a means of getting information to him. Bastard. As if I'm going to give my sister up after everything, he'd put her through. He's a monster.

"I don't know where she is" I hedged, not exactly lying. She could be freaking anywhere by now; it has been several months now after all.

He looks displeased and comes closer, touching the blade and waving it around. Without warning, he plunges it into my thigh and I give a loud howl, my skin burning, red-hot fire running through my veins. It hurts like

a bitch and I wriggle around, trying to dislodge the bloody thing, with no success. God, it hurts, it's excruciating and it takes all my self-control not to scream and give that bastard the satisfaction of hearing it.

He pulls it out and it makes a sickening slurping sound as it leaves my body. I slump in relief. But it's short-lived.

"Where's Winter" he breathes. "I've missed her, you know. Sweet little thing that she is."

I feel the bile rise up in my throat. After everything, he still wants her. He's out of his mind or delusional, or both. Either way, he's a serious threat to her.

"I don't know", I spit at him and he sighed.

"You're making this harder than it needs to be, Damien. You know it hurts me to have to do this to a close friend of mine, but you're leaving me no other choice."

He plunges the blade into my ribcage and pulls it down as I scream, my bones cracking as he pulls it out, blood trickling down my side and onto the floor. Fuck. I curse at him vehemently and he just stands there, his eyebrows raised, waiting for me to finish yelling obscenities at him.

"Fuck you", I yelled at him.

His eyes narrow and he glares at me. "This can all end now. Don't pretend you give a damn about your little sister after all this time, Damien. I can remember everything you did to her when you bullied her. Not to mention, this cell or cage was hardly made for you, was it? You put Winter in here, so don't act all high and mighty with me. You're just as much a monster as I am. The difference is, I can admit it."

Damn him for being right. He glances over at the nearby trolley of implements and puts the dagger down, grabbing a whip with silver studs instead, and examining it carefully.

"I bet you used all of these on Winter, didn't you," he whispered, "and I bet she screamed every time. Now tell me where she is" he snarled, and I shook my head.

Crack. I feel the whip as it hits me directly across the chest, the silver studs digging in and ripping flesh out as he pulls it back. It hurts like a bitch. I scream as he hits me over and over again, the whips leaving large gouges and scratches all over me, blood pouring out of all of the various wounds. I'm panting, trying to keep conscious and bitterly aware that, at this rate, I'm not going to be able to keep myself awake much longer.

He finally stops and I choke, spluttering and trying to get my breath back. I can feel myself weakening.

"I can do this all night if I have to," Thomas says pleasantly, as I flinch. He's not bluffing. Even I know that and there's no one who's going to check on me and find me down here. I'm literally fucked.

He brutally kicks me and I scream as I feel the bones break in my leg, cracking, the pain shooting upwards as I swear and scream, panting heavily as I glare at him. My whole body is in excruciating pain, I'm trembling against the wall and can't move a muscle, limp in my restraints now.

"Do I need to keep going?" Thomas asks, and I can't withstand the pain anymore. Call me a coward, but there's not much else I can do. If he continues, I'm going to die by his hands. Besides, Winter is most likely far out of his reach by now, or at least that's what I'm hoping.

"Stop" I heave "just stop."

He cocks his head at me and smiles smugly. The bastard knows he has me right where he wants me, his eyes are gleaming in satisfaction.

"Where is she," he demands, and I'm astonished that he has no idea that she's been gone for months. Had he literally come here, straight from his recovery? Or his hiding out and waiting for the right time to strike? Why

was he striking now? What had changed that made him go looking for her?

"Gone" I coughed out, blood spraying on the floor.

"What do you mean gone?" he asks, annoyed.

"She's been gone for months" I say miserably, "had enough of all the bullying and everything else and up and left."

He looks pissed. "Where would she go," he says irritably, and I stare down at the floor, everything going blurry now.

"I don't know. She wanted to find a pack to call home" I coughed out, "that's all I know."

He moves closer and leans in to whisper into my ear as I shudder, " You had better be telling the truth, Damien, because otherwise, I'm coming back to finish your sorry ass off and that's a promise."

"I'm not," I wheezed and apologized profusely to Winter in my mind. The second I get out of here, I'm going to be searching for Winter and, with luck, I'll get to her first. That's if I live to tell the tale, that is.

He kicks me in the gut as I cough blood, stepping back and sighing. "There's no point killing you, not when you'll just die down here on your own anyway," he says as I can barely look at him, the room beginning to spin.

He began to walk away, a thoughtful look on his face. "I bet she went south" he muttered to himself, "there are a lot more packs to travel to in that direction."

He turns and regards me from the bottom of the stairs. "Good luck", he smirks, "you're going to need it. At least I know you can't warn Winter. She was always too poor to have a cellphone, wasn't she," he grins.

I shakily give him the finger as he chuckles and begins to ascend the stairs, every footstep like a dagger in my heart. Soon enough, he's gone and I

finally close my eyes, my body hurting all over, and gratefully succumb to the darkness which surrounds me and embraces me.