

CLAIMED BY THE RIVAL ALPHA

Chapter 5

Kaell tried everything to get her out of my head but none of it worked.

By the time I returned to my chambers that night, irritation already sat heavily inside my chest. Rain still battered the castle windows while the mate bond pulsed endlessly beneath my skin like a curse I could not escape.

Selena. Even thinking her name annoyed me now.

I stripped off my soaked clothes and stepped beneath freezing water, hoping the cold would calm the restlessness clawing through me.

It did not. My wolf remained agitated and unsettled. Every instinct inside me demanded I go find her and make sure she was warm, well fed, and safe.

I slammed my fist against the stone wall beside the bathing area. "No." The growl escaped me before I could stop it.

This was exactly why mates were dangerous. They were distractions and weaknesses.

I finished washing quickly before heading toward the training grounds.

Bastien was already there. He raised a brow the moment he saw me. "You look murderous."

"Fight me."

His expression changed immediately. "That bad?"

"Now, Bastien." He sighed heavily before grabbing another blade and the spar began violently.

Steel clashed loudly beneath the torchlight while rain poured around us. Bastien attacked hard, knowing better than to hold back against me, but tonight I fought like a man possessed.

Every strike carried frustration. Every movement carried restraint barely hanging by a thread.

Selena's face kept appearing in my mind. The way she looked at me, the hurt in her eyes whenever I rejected the bond, her stubbornness and the fear she tried hiding.

"Your focus is terrible tonight," Bastien muttered after narrowly blocking another strike.

I attacked again harder. "And you talk too much."

"You're angry at yourself, not me."

I nearly drove him backward with the next hit.

Bastien cursed. "There it is."

We fought until sweat mixed with rain across my skin and exhaustion finally settled into my muscles.

Still, the bond remained. Still, my wolf wanted her.

By the time I returned to my chambers for another bath, I was beyond irritated. And worst of all—I knew exactly why I sent those clothes to her.

Not because she was useful, not because of the deal but because my wolf could not tolerate the idea of our mate lacking something.

"Pathetic!!!"

I dressed slowly afterward before pouring myself a drink. The liquor burned down my throat uselessly. "Nothing helps!!!" I growled in anger.

Finally, I looked toward the guard standing outside my chamber.

"You," I called.

The warrior straightened immediately. "My Alpha?"

"Bring me a woman."

The guard hesitated only briefly before nodding. "At once."

If my wolf wanted a female so badly, then fine. I would give it one just not Selena.

An hour later, a woman entered my chambers wearing a thin silk dress and a practiced smile. She approached me confidently. "My Alpha."

I sat silently while she climbed onto my lap, fingers immediately tracing across my chest.

Usually this worked. Usually physical distraction silenced instinct long enough for rational thought to return. But tonight— I could feel nothing.

The woman kissed my neck slowly and my wolf remained unmoved.

Her hands slid beneath my shirt and I still felt nothing.

I barely even looked at her face because another face kept appearing in my mind instead.

Those brown eyes, dark curls and soft looking lips. Frustration surged violently through me.

The woman pressed closer. "You seem distracted."

I grabbed her waist roughly. "Turn around."

She obeyed quickly. I yanked her silk dress up to reveal nothing underneath. "Slut..." I said through gritted teeth as I buried my cock inside her without patience or tenderness.

The woman gasped softly, gripping the bed tightly. But the moment I moved—
Revulsion slammed into me.

It felt wrong. Every instinct inside me screamed I'm betraying my mate.

The word echoed viciously through my head. I cursed violently and pulled
away immediately.

The woman blinked in confusion. "My Alpha?"

"Leave!"

Shock crossed her face. "Did I do something—"

"Just get the hell out!!!" I snapped and she hurried out quickly after that.

The moment the door shut, I dragged a hand through my hair in frustration.

"Unbelievable. I could not even touch another woman without my wolf revolting against it."

I poured another drink then another and eventually exhaustion forced me into bed despite the chaos in my mind.

But even sleep offered no escape. In the dream, I stood inside a dark room lit only by candlelight.

Music echoed softly somewhere around me then Selena appeared half naked making my entire body tightened instantly.

Thin silk clung dangerously to her curves while dark curly hair spilled over her bare shoulders. She moved slowly toward me with heated eyes that made my blood burn instantly.

"Kael," she whispered and my wolf surged forward violently.

She began dancing around me slowly, teasingly, every movement deliberate torture. Her fingers brushed my chest before sliding lower to my cock.

I grabbed her waist immediately and she smiled looking more like a Dangerous female.

"You keep pushing me away," she murmured while climbing onto my lap. Her breath touched my neck and heat exploded through me.

My hands roamed across bare skin instinctively while she kissed me deeply, slowly driving every rational thought from my mind.

'Mine!' The possessiveness inside me became unbearable.

Then suddenly—My eyes snapped open while my chest rose heavily with cold sweat covering my skin.

"Fuck!!!"

—

Morning could not come fast enough.

By sunrise, I buried myself inside work. Checking out trade reports, food rationing, healthcare supply routes, and military patrol updates.

At least numbers made sense, unlike mate bonds.

A knock sounded against my office door. "Enter."

Bastien stepped inside. "You requested the girl."

The girl. Right. "Send her in."

Moments later, Selena entered my office carefully. The moment she stepped inside, the bond stirred again.

I hated how instantly my body reacted to her presence.

She wore one of the dresses I sent. The dark green suited her annoyingly well.

Her eyes briefly met mine before she crossed her arms slightly. "You summoned me."

I leaned back in my chair calmly. "How is your new job?"

"I hate it."

"I didn't ask whether you liked it."

Her jaw tightened. "You made me clean the bathing rooms."

"You are alive and protected. That is what matters."

She scoffed softly. "Easy for you to say."

I ignored that. "Now," I continued, "it is your turn to honor your side of the agreement."

Her gaze sharpened slightly. "You want the information?"

"Obviously."

She remained silent for a moment before saying carefully, "Perhaps I'd feel more willing to help if I had a better position in this castle."

I stared at her flatly. "You are attempting negotiation?"

"I'm attempting fairness."

A humorless laugh escaped me. "Careful, Selena Vale."

She blinked slightly at the use of her real name.

I leaned forward slowly. "You are in my territory now. Protected because I allow it." My voice lowered dangerously. "Do not mistake that for weakness."

Something flickered in her eyes then finally, she sighed softly. "Nightbane's largest markets are located near the southern trading roads."

I remained silent while she continued.

"There are three major entry points." She walked closer toward the desk and pointed at one of the maps lying open. "Here. Here. And this one."

I studied the markings carefully. Useful. Very useful.

"The eastern route handles most imported weapons," she added. "The western route carries food supplies."

This information alone was valuable.

Selena folded her arms afterward. "If I become more comfortable here, perhaps I'll tell you more."

The manipulation irritated me instantly. Before she could react, I stood and crossed the room quickly then I pinned her against the wall making her gasp softly.

The mate bond exploded between us immediately.

My hand trapped her wrist above her head while my body pressed against hers just enough to feel the sudden hitch in her breathing.

"Do not play games with me," I warned darkly.

Her cheeks flushed instantly. But instead of fear—She looked affected and more tempting.

The realization nearly destroyed my restraint.

"You keep acting like you hate me," she whispered shakily. "Yet you touch me like this."

My grip tightened slightly. "Careful with your words."

"Or what?" She asked with a sly smirk playing on her lips.

The challenge in her voice sent heat through me immediately. Damn her!

"You're trembling," she murmured softly.

More like she was toying with me because my wolf initially wanted to claim her against that wall.

My gaze dropped briefly toward her lips And for one dangerous moment— I almost gave in then suddenly the office door burst open.

"My Alpha—" Bastien stopped mid sentence after taking in the scene.

I immediately stepped away from Selena. "What is it?" I snapped.

Bastien's expression darkened instantly. "There's trouble at the border."

Every trace of heat vanished from me immediately. "What kind of trouble?"

"A large Nightbane squad."

I watched Selena stiffen visibly while my eyes narrowed. What an interesting timing.

Bastien looked toward her briefly before asking the question already forming in my own mind.

"Does Alpha William know his daughter is here?"

Silence settled heavily between us all. There was only one way to find out.

"Is he there?" I asked.

Bastien's eyes glazed slightly from mindlinking the border warriors then he nodded. "Yes."

I grabbed my dagger immediately before strapping it to my side.

Selena looked suddenly nervous. "What's happening?"

I ignored the question and headed for the door. Bastien followed closely beside me as we moved quickly through the castle halls.

"If William brought that many warriors," Bastien muttered quietly, "then he came prepared for conflict."

"Or intimidation." I sneered.

"Both."

Outside, warriors already scrambled through the courtyard preparing horses and weapons.

I mounted mine smoothly. "Tell the warriors to hold position until I give orders," I commanded.

"Yes, my Alpha."

The ride toward the border was fast and tense. By the time we arrived, dozens of Blackbourne warriors already lined the territory edge facing Nightbane forces across the clearing.

And standing among them— Alpha William Vale.

I dismounted slowly, then I removed my dagger and handed it to Bastien.

"My Alpha?" Bastien frowned.

"I'll handle this myself." Without another word, I walked alone across the clearing toward enemy territory.

Nightbane warriors watched me carefully, hands resting near weapons.

But I kept walking until I stopped several feet away from Alpha William.

His expression remained unreadable as I met his gaze calmly. "You're far from home," I said.

His eyes hardened slightly. "Where is my daughter?"