

Pregnant and Rejected by My Alpha Mate Chapter 101

Pregnant and Rejected by My Alpha Mate

Chapter 101

#Chapter 101 Arabella Makes a Friend

Arabella

The Calypso Pack House is the most magnificent building I've ever seen.

It's at least three times the size of the Nova Pack House, and if it wasn't for the imposing fortifications surrounding the marble behemoth, it might be mistaken for a luxury resort. The mansion is built on a hill in the center of the capital city,

Tartarus.

Clearly the architect designed it so the Alpha can look down on all his subjects, never freeing them of his watchful gaze and never letting them forget their place beneath him.

Glorious. I think wistfully, finally, a true Alpha.

The entire city makes Elysium look like a third world slum. While the Novas seem content to remain living in the past – preserving ancient buildings, outdated traditions and muddy forests – Tartarus was built with only strength in mind.

The city's towering border walls keep out any undesirables, and the few that slip through the cracks are dealt with in short order. The poorest members of the pack are kept well out of sight and out of mind; living beneath the streets in the sprawling underground chambers which made up the civilizations of old – before the modern city was built overtop them, of course.

It really is much better this way. The aboveground is preserved for the shifters who've earned their place, who actually contribute something to society. After all, the aristocracy's taxes pay for almost everything. Why should they have to share the bounty of their wealth with those who won't even make an effort to better themselves.

So many of my problems would have been solved if Elysium was organized this way. Keeping the classes separate just makes everything so much cleaner and more tasteful. I swear, as soon as I get control of the Nova pack, I'm going to

recreate Elysium in the Calypsos' image.

I'd like to think I have a chance of winning over Blaise, convincing him to take me as his mate, but I'm not only doing this for power. Sure, I'll take it if I can get it, but I want revenge more. That means I can't commit to anything until I'm sure every bridge with Bastien has been burned. Worst case, I have to simply take Bastien's pack from him by force – but we aren't there yet.

I'm just glad my audience with Blaise Denizen has finally arrived. It's taken me two weeks to secure this meeting, and I've been trying to be patient, but it's not easy when all my plans are at stake. Bastien's cousin Frederic turned out to be such a disappointment, I'm ready to meet a real man, a worthy partner.

I'm wearing my best dress, at least the best one I threw into my suitcase when I fled Elysium. It's red and slinky, showing off all my best assets. This Alpha isn't going to know what hit him.

My eyes immediately lock on Blaise when I enter his audience chambers. He's seated in an ornate chair on a raised dais, dressed in all black and looking so powerful my knees go weak. He's a bit older than I'd like. His dark hair is streaked with grey and slight wrinkles gather at the corner of his eyes, but he's in excellent shape and Goddess knows he's younger than that gargoyle, Grigore.

I strut down the aisle, swinging my hips and shooting the dominant wolf my best "come hither" look. I can see his dark eyes glinting from across the room, and I know he likes what he sees. Then again, who wouldn't?

When I'm finally standing in front of him, I lower my gaze and curtsy, waiting for him to address me before speaking. I can feel his eyes raking over my body, lingering on my full breasts and the smooth swell of my hips.

"Tell me your name, my beauty." He orders, not giving me permission to stand.

"Arabella Winters, Alpha." I murmur, "I am of the Nova pack and have traveled very far to reach you today."

"I didn't ask you for your life story." He snaps, sending a shiver of fear through me, "But since you offered it, what brings you to my doorstep."

Nervously licking my lips, I say, "I have a proposition for you. An opportunity to spread your power to new territories."

I can see Blaise standing out of the corner of my eye, but I'm too anxious to risk looking up at him. "Do you believe I am not already powerful enough?" He hisses. "You Think if I did not want more power, I could not take it?"

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"No Alpha!" I exclaim, my heart racing. "That isn't what I meant. I'm simply looking for an ally. Your biggest competitor on the continent is the Nova pack, and they grow stronger every day, but I know how to beat them."

The Alpha is right in front of me now, his muscular body so close I can feel his heat. I can't bring myself to look him in the eye, but he solves that problem for me, latching his fist in my hair and yanking my head back. "And how do you know that?" Blaise demands, his eyes black as coal.

"Because, I was raised by Gabriel Durand." I explain huskily, "And I helped kill him."

Blaise's eyes widen imperceptibly, and I feel a small rush of confidence, "I know Bastien better than anyone else. I know what motivates him. I know his weaknesses." His hands aren't nearly so harsh now, and I raise my head, meeting his gaze head on. "If you want Elysium, you need only ask."

Frederic

My mother has always been a cold woman. Even when Dad was alive, she was never the doting matriarch so many families boast. No, she was cunning and calculated, the perfect match for my ambitious father.

When I was a boy I used to feel cheated. I saw the other pups getting hugged and kissed by their parents, and I would while away the hours imagining what such a life could be like. However I quickly learned the error of my ways. My mother explained to me that love never got anyone anywhere in life, and there was no place for it in our family's mission.

My father should have been the Nova Alpha, but he was born second, and trying to claim his rightful place got him killed. Still, I can't deny how love has interfered in our plans. Mom says I'm weak, and maybe I am, but I can't help it. I don't want to hurt Selene. I can't stand seeing her with that mongrel, Bastien.

I did everything I could to keep my mother at a distance, but after Selene and Lila returned to Elysium, she refused to stay away. Now I'm stuck with her hovering over me, criticizing my every plan.

"You've failed." She says, setting the dining room table. "How are you possibly going to challenge Bastien now?"

"We can still separate them." I insist, prodding the sauce I've been doctoring on the stovetop. "Selene is vulnerable, easy to manipulate."

"And this is the woman you've thrown everything away for?" Mom gripes, throwing down the napkins she's supposed to be folding.

"That isn't fair." I argue, "She was abused, mistreated. Her vulnerabilities are perfectly natural."

My mother snorts derisively as she returns to the kitchen. "Only weak women let hardship get the better of them." She pulls the wooden spoon from my hand, raising it to her lips and grimacing, "Too salty." Reaching into the cabinets for some citrus, she continues, "I don't care what happened to her. She's a fragile, silly little whore who doesn't have enough brains to recognize a true Alpha when he's standing right in front of her."

"Don't talk about her that way." | growl, ripping the spoon back out of her hands.

“Well, well.” Mom raises her brows, “it seems caring for her has grown you a backbone – if nothing else.”

“I have news for you mother.” I grouse, “; intend to take Selene as my mate once Bastien’s out of the way. You’d do well to get used to the idea of having her as a daughter-in-law.”

My mother’s lip curls up, and I brace myself for her ire. “You cannot take a mate who has already borne a pup to another

Alpha. You need someone pure- fresh.” She insists, “Unless of course you’re willing to get rid of her pup along with Bastien.”

“Why would I?” I demand, “Her pup is a girl, she’ll never rule.”

“And since they’ve been back together?” Mom presses, “Are you sure she isn’t already breeding again.”

“Well if she is, I’ll be the first to know.” I grumble. “Besides, it’s only been a few weeks.”

“You’re smarter than this, Frederic.” My mother shakes her head, “don’t let one foolish she-wolf undo all your hard work.”

“It isn’t that simple.” I counter, “I can’t change how I feel.”

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“Well you’d better.” Mom orders, or so help me I will finish the job for you – and I won’t spare the little halfling.”

“Enough!” I thunder, “I’m done listening to your insults and following your orders.” I exclaim, relishing the way my mother cringes away from me. “This is my plan, my quest. Your time is past. You can fall in line, or you can get out!”

For a long moment, I’m sure my mother will contradict me. I’m sure she’ll fight back. Instead, she quells. “Whatever you say, son.”

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#Chapter 102 Powers

Selene

“Bastien, you’re being ridiculous.”

He’s standing across from me in our sunlit kitchen, his arms crossed over his chest and a stubborn grimace on his handsome face. After the events of last night he’s been on high alert, not letting me out of his sight for one moment. I actually had to kick him out of the restroom this morning so I could have a bit of privacy, and now he’s refusing to go to work.

“Can you blame me?” He growls.

In all fairness, I know my husband is also exhausted. We didn’t go to sleep until around four this morning, and having a young pup means we didn’t get the luxury of sleeping in either. If I thought he wanted to stay home with us to catch up on his sleep, I might be more understanding – but that isn’t the case.

“We’ve got to figure out a way to get past this,” I sigh, feeling emotionally drained. “We can’t change what happened, but we can’t let it take over our lives either. You have to go to work, I’ve got to take Lila to her playdate and go grocery

shopping.”

And after I’ve got to start figuring out what on earth I’m going to do with my life. I add in my head, causing Luna to chortle softly.

“What playdate?” Bastien asks, narrowing his eyes.

“With Donovan’s niece, remember?” I prompt, “I told you about this yesterday. She needs to make some friends here.”

“They can have the playdate here.” He decides, “and there’s no reason for you to go to the store yourself.”

“I’m not going to let this person control my life, Bastien.” I insist. “I’ve spent too many years living in fear and I refuse to do it any longer. I’m not going to hide away because of one creep who is too cowardly to come out of the shadows and challenge you directly.”

I’m seriously regretting the way I fell apart last night. It couldn’t be helped in the moment, but my reaction has sent Bastien into an overprotective frenzy, and it’s making things very difficult. “Selene, you know that isn’t what I want.” He reasons coolly, “But until we know what we’re up against, laying low is imperative. It’s not weak, it’s smart.”

“That’s easy for you to say,” I counter, “but how long is it going to be until we know what we’re up against? You’ve been trying to find this person for years and you aren’t any closer to identifying them now than you were when your Father died.”

“Maybe not, but we haven’t had the full story until now.” Bastien reminds me, “I have a feeling you’re the key to all of this, the piece we’ve been missing.” His jaw twitches in agitation, “which is all the more reason for us to be cautious.”

“I’m not completely defenseless you know.” I mutter, thinking of my confrontation with the she-wolves in the ladies room. With everything that’s happened since, I completely forgot about the incident. The revelations about the safe house and the spy cameras completely overshadowed the strange new powers I channeled defending myself last night, but now that I think about it, I can’t believe it’s taken me this long to tell my mate. “Speaking of which, I forgot to tell you...”

Trailing off, I crinkle my nose in thought. How on earth can I explain this? Honey, I forgot to tell you I’m magic? Or, hey babe, you didn’t happen to hear about a bunch of unconscious women turning up in a restroom did you? My bad! Maybe, I know we can’t afford any bad press, but I decided to reintroduce myself to the pack’s she-wolves by knocking

a bunch of them out with my mind.

Definitely the first one. Luna quips.

Bastien’s brows knit together in concern as he watches my internal struggle, “What is it?”

“Something happened at the banquet. I think I somehow tapped into... some new powers or something.” | summarize feebly.

“What do you mean?” He presses, moving closer.

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“Well when you took Lila to the garden, I went to the ladies room and had a little run in with a few she-wolves.” I broach warily, “three of them came in and started being really horrid about me and Lila, and I sort of lost my temper.”

Bastien immediately zones in on the wrong part of the story. “Horrid how?”

“Just saying the same sort of ugly nonsense they always did.” Waving off the details, I continue, “but they went after Lila this time and I completely sunk to their level. I provoked the ringleader and she attacked -”

“She attacked you?!” Bastien thunders, grasping me by the shoulders. “Are you all right? Why didn’t you tell me sooner? Who was it? I want a name!”

“That’s not the point, Bastien!” I exclaim, shaking him off. “When she came at me something happened. I threw my arms out to protect myself and all of a sudden they just collapsed. I didn’t even touch them, but I felt this.... I don’t know, electricity inside me, and I pushed it outwards. I have no idea what it was or how I did it, but they went down as soon as it hit them.”

“Was it the same bitch who pushed you into the pool and almost killed you?” He rumbles.

“Bestien, focus. I’m trying to tell you something important.” Dragging a hand through my long hair, I theorize, “The only

explanation I can think of, is that it’s something to do with my blood. Something to do with being a Volana.”

Bastien is breathing heavily, standing with his hands on his hips and glaring out the window. I can see him trying to work through his anger, and I know he hasn’t completely conquered it when he turns back to me. “Okay, tell me again – in as much detail as you can. Don’t leave anything out.”

I do as he asks, relating every word, thought and feeling that passed through my mind during the confrontation. He doesn’t look any calmer when I finish, but I can see he’s thinking hard. “I’ve never heard of anything like what you’re describing.”

“You believe me... don’t you?” I ask hesitantly.

The next thing I know, my mate is looming over me, holding my face between his hands. “Of course I do, little wolf.”

“What do you think it means?” I wonder aloud.

“I think you’re probably right.” He shares, “this has to be your Volana blood coming through. Maybe finally shifting triggered something; allowed your powers to start manifesting, the same way it sent you into your first heat.”

“So really what you’re saying is this is all your fault.” I tease, after all I never would have shifted in the first place if you hadn’t found me.”

Bastien shoots me a wolfish grin, “I’ll gladly take credit.” He replies, only slightly smug. “I know it’s probably alarming, but the more defenses you have the better. If part of your bloodline gives you some sort of extra abilities, we should encourage them as much as possible.”

“Especially since Lila will have them too.” I agree, “only she’s going to have to deal with them a lot sooner than I did.”

Bastien frowns, looking suddenly perturbed. “I hadn’t even considered that.”

“We always knew there had to be a reason people talked about Volanas the way they do. I mean no one knows the blood secret, so it had to be something like this, right?” I’m not sure why I’m whispering, but it feels wrong to talk about these things at full volume. “The problem is that I don’t know how I’m supposed to encourage these powers when I don’t even know how I tapped into them in the first place.”

“We need to find someone who knows Volana lore.” Bastien poses, “There have to be books or histories, people who know more about the heritage than you and I.”

“Yes well, finding them without advertising why we’re looking is going to be a challenge.” I remark dryly.

Bastien rubs his jaw, “that’s a fair point. We’re going to have to be very careful! Do you remember anything your mother might have shared with you, any names or stories?”

“No.” | grimace, “I didn’t even know I’d have powers like this.”

“That’s okay.” Bastien assures me, pulling me into a hug. “We’ll figure it out. I promise.”

I relax instantly, breathing in his incredible scent and leaning my weight into his strong arms. The tension filling my body slowly unwinds, and even though nothing has been resolved, I feel calmer. “I still want to know the names of those she-wolves.” Bastien grumbles in my ear.

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His words flip a switch in my mind, and I lean back, looking up at him curiously. “What if there was another way?” | inquire slyly.

“What do you mean?” He asks.

“Well, we know the powers came out when I felt threatened right?” | state rhetorically, “so if we want to get them to come out again...”

“Tell me you aren’t suggesting what I think you are.” Bastien commands ominously.

Looking up at him from beneath my lashes, I purr, “How would you like to attack me?”

Bastien

“Go!” Selene calls, taking up a defensive stance,

"I can't." | growl, "this isn't right."

We're out in the garden, positioned on a wide swath of manicured lawn and standing about ten meters apart. Selene is dressed in workout garb and eyeing me with mild exasperation. Aiden and Donovan from the sidelines, wide grins on their faces even though nothing has happened yet.

"Attack me!" My mate insists, throwing her arms out in encouragement.

"Selene, I really don't think-

"Bastien you promised!" She reminds me. It hadn't been easy for her to convince me to try and test her powers this way, and to be honest I still think it's a bad idea. I know Axel and I would never intentionally hurt her, but accidents happen and even a fake attack can go wrong.

"This is dangerous." I gripe, "what if it doesn't work? What if I can't pull back in time?"

"That's why Aiden and Donavon are here." She reminds me firmly. When I still don't move she softens and bats her lashes. "Please, baby?"

Grumbling under my breath, I agree. "Okay, On my count." With a deep breath, I brace myself for the attack, "Three... two... one!" To my credit, I do manage to shift, but the moment Axel sees Selene everything comes to a stop. I'm not even halfway across the grass before my snarls become purrs, my charge becomes an excited lope, and the most aggressive feeling I can conjure is lust.

Selene throws her head back in frustration. "This is ridiculous Bastien. If you can't do it, then you need to let someone else!"

Shifting on the spot, I cross the garden and pull her flush against me. "No one else is going to attack you, mate." | rumble, "Do you know why?"

"Because you're so overprotective and possessive that you even feel territorial about threatening me?" She quips.

"Because fake or not, if I see another wolf showing aggression to my mate, I won't be able to control myself." | correct, skewering her with my gaze. "I will defend you as if the threat is completely real, and I'd rather not kill my Betas over an experiment."

My mate casts a sulky glance, "You can't think about this as if it's a true threat " She argues, "just remind yourself that this is all to help me. You're doing a good thing by attacking me, you're teaching me to defend myself."

Sighing heavily, I pry a few kisses from her soft lips. "Spoken like someone without a violent bone in her sweet little body

“What is that supposed to mean?” Seiene asks, her striking eyes narrowed with suspicion.

“It means you don’t understand the darkness that takes hold in these moments.” I explain ruefully, “And I hope you never do.”

“Bastien, I need this.” My mate murmurs urgently. “I need to know what’s happening with my own body.” She implores, “I know this isn’t easy for you and that I can’t understand the kind of malice you’re talking about. I know you might not be able to feel that towards me, but you spar with Aiden and Donavon all the time – why is this any different?”

“Because neither of them are my mate.” I explain passionately.

“Oh, so you can spank me but you can’t pretend to fight me?” Selene questions coyly.

Chuckling darkly I answer, “those are very different things.” My wife has mentioned her spanking so frequently I’m beginning to think she wants another. “You earned the spanking.” I remind her huskily. “You could never earn an

attack.”

Pouting, Selene shifts restlessly against me, tempting me to no end, “Please just give it one more try?” She begs, trailing

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#Chapter 103 Odette’s Library

her slender fingers down my chest.

Groaning, I steal one last kiss before returning to my starting position. Bracing myself for the imminent battle, I try to put myself into a mindset that will allow me to do what is necessary. You’re helping her, you’re helping her, you’re helping her. I think somewhat manically.

“Go!” Selene calls with absolute determination.

This time I'm finally able to lunge at her with true ferocity, growling and snapping like the wild animal I keep buried deep inside. However it seems I'm no longer the problem, because while I attack my mate with total commitment, she cannot seem to safeguard herself. Her defensive stance relaxes even as I charge forward, a beautiful smile stretching across her face as my wolf attacks.

It seems Selene is no more capable of fearing me, as I am of threatening her.

This is hopeless.

Odette

Things have been very uncertain since Selene returned. The entire city has been in an uproar every second of the day, and convincing the aristocracy to accept my daughter-in-law and granddaughter has been no small feat.

Needless to say, the last few weeks have been an emotional roller-coaster, but I'm convinced it's all for the best. Bastien has been a shadow of himself ever since Selene left – a condition I understand all too well. I'm beyond thrilled that his heart and spirit has been restored, and I want nothing more than peace for my family.

Still, when I enter the garden this afternoon and find my son in his wolf form, mid-way through an attack on his mate, can't help but pull up short. Granted, Selene doesn't seem the least bit bothered. In fact, she looks somewhat delighted to have her mate treating her so aggressively.

"What in the Goddess's name are you doing?" I question, glancing back and forth between them.

"I'm trying to get Bastien to attack me, but he's too chicken." Selene complains, her lovely eyes glittering with mirth.

My son growls, and Selene shivers with delight. For a moment I'm reminded so viscerally of Gabriel that my heart hurts. I remember that glorious tension between lust and fear so profoundly that I feel a loss even now, so many years after my mate died

"And why do you want him to attack you?" I ask skeptically.

Selene rolls her eyes as if her next words "Because, the other day someone tried to attack me -"

"What?" I interrupt, incapable of smothering my instinctive response. "Are you alright? What happened!"

"I'm fine, honestly, everyone is missing the point!" Selene exclaims, showing more defiance and backbone than I can ever recall seeing from her before. "Which is that I

was able to repel them without touching them.” Her two-toned eyes bore into mine, imploring me to understand, “It was like magic. I tapped into some sort of new power, and we’re trying to recreate the phenomenon.”

It’s a serious matter, but I cannot contain my amusement. Laughter bubbles from my chest in an irrepressible rush. “Well of course that won’t work!” I exclaim, “he’s your mate, you know he won’t hurt you.”

“What?” Selene murmurs softly

“It doesn’t matter how tough or threatening he acts,” I share, “you trust him on an intimate level, he’s never going to trigger the survival instincts you need

“That may be.” Bastien argues firmly “But I’m not letting anyone else attack her.”

“Honestly my darlings, it’s not as if violence is the only solution.” I state simply “Why don’t you come with me, Selene.”

“Come with you where? Bastien asks hesitantly. I swear, the man is so protective of his mate that even I’m not above suspicion

“To my library” I drawl, rolling my eyes. “I have a few books which might offer a bit more insight, and none of them will put your health or relationships at risk”

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Selene seems ready to come along without complaint, but Bastien catches her around the waist, whispering something in her ear so quiet that even my keen ears can’t hear. Selene flushes bright red, and I have a feeling that whatever her mate just said was deeply personal indeed.

When he finally leaves us alone, I ask, “How are you doing, my love, truly?”

“I keep waiting for the rug to get dragged out from under my feet.” Selene admits. “I mean, I know Bastien loves me. At least, I’m coming to realize that and trying to convince myself to trust it. Still, everything I’ve ever known has taught me the opposite. I don’t really know how to deal with it.”

“Understand.” I affirm gently, “It’s difficult to accept that other people love you when you’ve been conditioned to think you aren’t worthy of it.”

“Exactly.” Selene murmurs, “he’s so confident, so sure of his feelings and beliefs – when I’m just trying to keep my head

above water.”

“Do you think finding this new power will help even the playing field?” I ask. I know what it is to be an Alpha’s mate, to question your own strength alongside that of such a dominant wolf. I wish I could tell Selene she has nothing to worry about, but the truth is that these issues never go away.

“I don’t know.” She admits, “I just want my family to be safe. I want to know my pup won’t have to live in fear.”

“She won’t,” I promise, my own protective instincts rising to the forefront as I pull a volume from the packed shelves of my bookcases. I splay the text open for Selene, displaying the table of contents for the Volana history annals. Of all my books, this text offers my daughter-in-law and granddaughter all they could ever wish to know about their heritage.

“Because you’re going to learn to harness your power, and when Lila’s time comes, you’ll teach her too.” I affirm. “Together you’ll have the world at your fingertips, and that’s a strength no one can ever take away from you.”

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#Chapter 104 Volana History

Selene

I’m beginning to think my mother told me the wrong secret. Granted, she chose the most important – not to mention scariest – one, but talk about burying the lead! Sure, my blood can give eternal life, but that doesn’t help me while it’s still running in my veins. Learning that I can hypnotize people, on the other hand, could have really come in handy before now.

Odette’s history books aren’t exhaustive and half of their claims sound more like fairy tales than fact, but there’s enough empirical data included to persuade me regarding other matters. For example, I seriously doubt that any Volanas discovered how to become invisible the way one thirteenth century zealot insisted, but I believe the

hundreds of contemporary accounts describing the way Volana wolves could harness moonlight to increase their own powers.

I can't believe I never knew any of this. I marvel, scanning through ancient censuses listing the names of my ancestors.

I can. Luna rolls her eyes, I mean when would we have had the opportunity to learn this stuff? It's not like Garrick gave us library privileges.

I know, but mom never taught me any of this! I answer. I was too young to understand some of it, but not everything. Why wouldn't she have wanted me to know our own history?

We're an endangered species, Selene. My wolf reminds me. She probably thought you'd try to use your powers if you knew about them – and that could get you noticed.

Luna makes a fair point. Hundreds of years ago Volanas were required to register with their elder councils, as they were considered so powerful that they needed monitoring to ensure they posed no threat to their packs,

For the most part I think this was just a lot of small-minded men being intimidated by any woman who defied their expectations, but I have to admit their fears weren't entirely in vain. In one case, a Volana wolf overthrew her Alpha and went on to conquer an entire continent, becoming the first and last) woman Alpha in history,

Well, they certainly left that out of the textbooks. I snort, Admittedly, I missed out on half my education, but I worked very hard to make up for lost time after I escaped Garrick and I've never heard of half of the events detailed in these volumes

That's because history is written by men. Luna quips.

Continuing to read, I can feel my eyes growing wider and wider all on their own. If even half of this is true, I'm much more powerful than I ever imagined. The documented Volana abilities go far beyond power surges like the one triggered in the restroom, or even harnessing moonlight.

According to these books, I can not only hypnotize people with my eyes, but bend shadows to make them see things that aren't there, navigate the most starless night, summon light, give sleep, slow time and control the tides – in addition to simply being extremely hard to kill. I would probably find this more comforting if it weren't for the fact that these powers don't kick in until you're grown, which means Lila has a long way to go before any of this helps her.

Another problem is that knowing about the powers and using them are two very different things. I still have no idea how to tap into any of these abilities, or even how many of the

powers listed here are legitimate. I do know – at least I’m fairly certain – that all of this cycles with the moon itself. I’ll be strongest when it’s full, and weakest when it’s new.

Shaking my head, I turn the page, delving into an analysis about the bloodline’s decline as time passed.

“Mommy what are you reading?” Lila pipes up next to me. She’s been napping beside me for the better part of an hour, but now she’s sitting up, rubbing her eyes and looking so adorably sleepy I could eat her right up.

“I’m reading about our bloodline.” I explain gently. I haven’t ever talked to Lila about this subject before and I have no intention of getting into the details, but I don’t intend on hiding it from her either. While I understand my mother’s decision and desire to protect me, I can’t help but feel that keeping me in the dark about all this set me at a disadvantage.

It makes sense that knowing about the powers would encourage me to use them, but I’d rather use them and be able to defend myself, than not know they exist and remain helpless against threats that are inevitable either way.

“Our what?” Lila chirps.

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“Our bloodline.” I repeat slowly, brushing a lock of dark hair back from her face. “Our family history. My mother and her mother, and her mother’s mother, going back hundreds of years.”

“That’s long.” Lila assesses with raised brows.

“It is long.” I agree with a laugh, “but it’s also powerful. Everything we are, comes from our ancestors. It’s the reason your eyes are blue and violet, the reason you look so much like me.”

“What about Daddy?” Lila’s dark head cocks to the side.

“It’s the same for everyone.” I share, “We all have different histories, but everyone is shaped by the past – including Daddy.” The door opens behind us and I can hear Bastien coming inside, as if our conversation conjured him. “And you and I have a very special bloodline, one that means we have to be extra careful.”

Her little brow crinkles in confusion. “Why?”

“Because you two are the most important things in the world.” Bastien’s deep voice rumbles over our heads, and we both crane our necks back to look up at his smiling

face. “And when other people figure that out, they might want to take you for themselves.”

I want to roll my eyes. I’m doing my best to raise Lila with both of her feet firmly planted on the ground, and telling her the world revolves around her is absolutely not going to further that cause. Still, it’s hard to explain such complicated matters to a toddler, and Bastien’s words do hit the nail on the head. Besides, I know he’s speaking the truth – his truth,

at least.

To my immense surprise and amusement, Lila is rolling her eyes in my stead. “Daddy, you wouldn’t let ‘nyone take us.” She says, as if the suggestion is preposterous.

It takes all my will not to laugh, and I can see Bastien fighting the same impulse, “Is that so?” He asks her.

“Course!” She exclaims, standing on the couch cushions and raising her arms to him. “Wouldn’t you?”

He immediately plucks her from the sofa, kissing her soft cheeks one after the other. “I would never let anyone take you from me, Lila bean.” My daughter flips upside down, dissolving into a fit of giggles as Bastien leans over to kiss me hello, “Or my little wolf.”

“Daddy, why d’you call Mommy that?” Lila asks once she can breath again, “She’s not liddle.”

“She’s little to me.” Bastien reasons, carting her off towards the kitchen, “Now tell me all about your day. I want to hear everything.”

Bastien

“It even said I could harness moonlight.” Selene exclaims, so preoccupied with sharing her discoveries that she doesn’t ‘seem to notice me kissing a path down her flat tummy. Lila is finally asleep, and we’re safely ensconced in our bedroom. My wife is splayed over our bed like a beautiful feast, even if she seems unaware she’s about to be devoured.

“That’s great, baby.” I praise her, truly meaning it but not having the brainspace to focus on her powers at the moment. Instead I busy myself with stripping off her bra and panties, baring my stunning mate to my questing hands and mouth.

“The only problem is that it was all theoretica! – describing what Volanas can do, not how they ah, Bastien!” Selene arches off the bed, looking down at me with sudden need.

I chuckle darkly, pinning her hips to the mattress while I swipe my tongue up her center. “Yes my love?” I ask her with a cheshire grin, continuing to tease her plump, pink flesh.

Selene wines wordlessly, squirming beneath me, “I’m trying to tell you about the books.”

“So what’s stopping you?” | question, adding my fingers to the mix. Circling her swollen clit and delving my fingers around her soaked entrance, I relish her soft cries. “I’m listening.”

“You’re not playing fair.” She complains, tangling her fingers into my hair.

“I’m sorry, sweetheart.” | lie, sliding two long, thick fingers into her slick channel. “Do you want me to stop?”

Selene’s hips jerk, and she whimpers so sweetly I almost take mercy on her – almost. Instead I crook my fingers inside her, feeling a rush of pure fire when her eyes roll back in her head and her tight muscles clench around me

#Chapter 104 Volana History

“No.” She murmurs, “I’m just trying to tell you what I learned

“And I want to hear all about it.” I assure her, “as soon as I’m done with you.”

Selene flops down in exasperation. “Are you ever going to be done with me?”

I consider her question for one long moment before deciding. “No.” I announce firmly. “Never.” I

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Chapter 105

#Chapter 105 Sering

Selene

My husband is impossible.

I swear, it’s not even dark out and we’re already in bed. We don’t even have my heat to use as an excuse anymore. That ended days ago, but the way Bastien is acting, you’d

think we were a pair of teenagers trapped in a frenzy of hormones. Not that he's solely to blame, it seems like every time he touches me I dissolve into a puddle.

It may sound like I'm complaining, but I'm just overwhelmed by everything that's happened over the last few weeks. I'm not the least bit disappointed to have this incredible Alpha lavishing his affection on me, I'm simply at a loss for how to deal with all these changes.

Bastien is wrapped around me like the warmest of blankets, his big body cushioning every inch of me while his lips move over my soft skin. "Goddess, I love you." He murmurs, nuzzling my neck.

"I love you too." I whisper, smiling widely. "Even if you don't listen to me when I try to tell you about my powers."

Bastien's warm chuckle vibrates against my skin moments before his fingers flutter over my sides, tickling me mercilessly. Squealing with laughter and writhing in his arms, I try to escape the tortuous touches, but only end up winding myself tighter in his embrace.

"I was listening." He promises, nibbling my shoulder, "I simply had other things on my mind."

"Oh I know what you had on your mind." I answer wryly, cuddling closer. "But what do you think?"

"I think if even half of what you read is true, then we need to figure out how to help you access that part of yourself." He claims simply

"Really?" I ask, glancing over my shoulder and trying to glimpse his rugged face.

"Of course." Bastien confirms.

"You don't think it's..." I start with a shrug. "I don't know, dangerous or something?"

"I think you need to learn as much as you can," My mate assesses firmly. "The more able you are to defend yourself, the better."

"I want to be able to teach Lila, too." I confide, "when she's old enough."

"Mmm." Bastien purrs in confirmation, "We need to find you a teacher somehow. Someone who knows about these things – someone we can trust."

"Where on earth are we going to find someone like that?" I ask softly. "I've never even heard of any other Volanas, and the people who wrote those history books have been dead for years."

"I don't know." Bastien answers, sounding like his mind is a thousand miles away. "But I can't see another option. We've tried to bring the powers out on our own and it's not working. We need help."

Rolling over to face my husband, I tilt my face up for a kiss. My wish is granted almost immediately as his firm lips claim mine. Even as I dissolve into the moment, his words ring in my head, echoing through my thoughts as if holding some unspoken truth just out of reach.

He's right that we haven't been able to trigger my powers on our own, but I can't forget what Odette said about my inability to see my mate as a threat – no matter what he does. I know Bastien won't allow anyone else to attack me, but my instincts will never kick in unless I'm truly afraid.

Selene, Luna pipes up, rousing from her contented daze, the answer is obvious. We don't need to be attacked to be afraid, we just need to be in danger.

What are you talking about?" I complain. We were in danger with Martin and nothing happened.

I can almost see my wolf shaking her head. Lila was with us then, we were trying to shield her, not fight.

Well how do you expect us to fight if no one is attacking us? I scoff.

#Chapter 105 Searching

People aren't the only threats to us. Luna reminds me. In fact I can think of one threat that's right next door, one we can face without risking harm to anyone else.

Suddenly I know exactly what she means, Luna, that's insane. We have a child, and a mate who has already survived our death once. We're not going to risk killing ourselves and leaving them all alone, just to test a theory.

Don't you see? Luna implores. Lila and Bastien are precisely why we'll have to fight, she argues. They need us. Dying isn't an option.

No. I insist, at least, not without some sort of backup.

I can picture my sleek, white wolf nodding. I think it's time we pay another visit to Odette.

Bastien

Heads jerk up when I walk through the front doors of Elysium Memorial Hospital with Aiden and Donovan, doctors and nurses scanning our small group as if looking for signs

of illness or injury, then furrowing their brows when they find none. Reading my grim expression and determined stride, most drop their gazes once they realize we aren't here for an emergency or social call.

We march straight to the pathology lab, the falsified DNA tests safely clutched in my fist. When we arrive the lab supervisor does a double take, her eyes going wide when she suddenly finds her Alpha bearing down on her.

I flatten the results page on the counter, "What can you tell me about this?" I demand.

Hesitantly reaching for the page, she eventually latches onto the corners, forced to tug it out from beneath my palm and looking more and more nervous every second. Her dark eyes flit over the results page, before she looks back up at me with a frown. "This appears to be a negative paternity test."

My eyes narrow to slits, "Perhaps I should have been clearer. This test was run in your labs, and the results have since been proven false. So I'm trying to figure out whether your staff is simply incompetent, or criminal."

The blood drains from the woman's face. "Alpha, forgive me, this is the first I'm hearing of this." She stammers, "Can ... may I ask..." She trails off looking uncertain.

"I know they're false because my daughter has a starlight allergy which was recently triggered." I explain, "My blood was required for the antidote."

The supervisor's jaw tightens, "I see." Turning to a computer on her left, she quickly types in a rapid stream of information, presumably pulling up the electronic records. Gnawing on her lip as she reads the results, she glances at me uncertainly. "Everything in the system matches that print out."

"Which means what, exactly?" I interrogate.

"Well, either the sample was contaminated, or the wrong sample was run against your daughter's." She hedges. "Intentionally or accidentally."

"Could someone have edited the results once they were generated?" Aiden questions.

"I'd be able to see edits made after the fact." She explains. "If I had to guess I'd say the wrong sample was run. If you would be willing to provide me another, I could confirm this."

"Fine." I agree through a thick red haze. "Who ran the tests?"

She scrolls up to the top of the screen, her brow knitting together in confusion, "I don't... it's not... this doesn't make sense." Her words are running together in a rapid whirl.

“What’s wrong?” Donavon asks gently.

The supervisor stares up at me with pure trepidation, “It says I ran these... but I wasn’t even here that day!” She immediately squeaks, “I was on vacation, down at the coast with my family.”

“You can provide proof of this?” I question.

“Of course.” She promises, “and my colleagues can confirm it.”

“Who was covering for you?” Aiden wants to know.

Chapter 105 Searching

“My assistant Jane.” She straightens her shoulders a bit, “but she couldn’t have done this. The system requires our ID badges to swipe in and I leave mine at home when I’m not at work. It was exactly where I left it when we got back to the city.”

“So what are you saying, who could have done this?” I press, getting more and more frustrated by the minute.

Her mouth gapes wordlessly for one long moment, “I don’t know.” She finally answers feebly, “none of this makes any sense. The test was run after hours – the lab wasn’t even open when it happened.”

Donavon leans forward, resting his burly forearms on the counter, “Does everyone who enters the lab have to badge in?”

“Yes, I can pull the log!” She exclaims, latching onto the idea.

As soon as the screen populates, I know the effort was for naught. The supervisor looks completely dejected, “It says I swiped in just after midnight.” She whispers, “No one else was here.”

Aiden squeezes my shoulder, nodding towards the hallway. “They installed security cameras a few years ago. If someone entered the lab using her badge, we should be able to see them on the footage.”

Shaking my head I growl, “if it hasn’t been tampered with too.” I gripe, “how much do you want to bet the recordings from that night have been erased?”

My betas grimace, and suddenly Aiden’s voice appears in my head. You believe her?

Studying the supervisor bleakly, I-reply. Yes, unfortunately I think she’s telling the truth.

So where do we go from here? Donavon interjects.

First we check the security tapes, I decide, then we need to pay Dr Kane a visit.

Dr Kane? Aiden asks, to file a complaint?

It's a logical assumption, after all Kane's been the pack's chief physician since my father was alive. But that's not why want to see him now.

No, I counter. To ask him how he misidentified my mate's body after the fire.

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Chapter 106

#Chapter 106 Doctors and Damsels

Bastien

Dr Kane looks as if he's been expecting us.

After a thoroughly frustrating visit to the security offices, where we discovered nothing more than twelve hours of blacked out camera footage the night the paternity test was run, my betas and I navigated up to the chief physician's office on the tenth floor.

We now stand in the doorway of his corner suite, carefully watching the doctor's reaction to our sudden appearance and finding nothing but a blank slate.

He's seated behind his desk, his shiny loafers propped up on the sleek wooden surface and a takeout container splayed in his lap. It's been a long time since I've seen the man, and though he's only a few years older than myself, I can't help but think he's aged. His dark hair boasts a few streaks of gray, and the lines around his eyes and mouth are more pronounced than I remember.

"Alpha, to what do I owe the pleasure?" Dr Kane greets me, barely looking up from his lunch.

As far as Alpha's go, I've also considered myself on the more relaxed end of the spectrum. I don't expect my people to stand on constant ceremony, but it does strike me that most shifters still show a degree of deference out of respect. Dr Kane clearly does not. I can't decide whether or not it bothers me.

"Dr Kane." I reply curtly, "I have a few questions for you."

The doctor gestures to the chair opposite him, "Please have a seat." He encourages me with a warm smile, "It's been a while, I owe you much congratulations."

"Oh?" I prompt, sitting stiffly across from the familiar man.

"It's not every day a man becomes a father, or finds his long lost mate." Kane elaborates, as if this should have been obvious to me.

"No it isn't." I agree, feeling a sudden spike of anger. "especially when you told me with total confidence that my mate was dead."

Dr. Kane purses his lips, lowering his feet from his desk and setting his lunch aside. "You have my sincerest apologies Alpha, I've already launched an investigation into the matter."

"What investigation?" I demand, "aren't you the one who examined the body?"

His expression clouds, "Bastien, I delivered the report to you out of respect for your position and as a courtesy given our Yongstanding relationship. I reviewed every last detail of the case, but the medical examiner conducted the autopsy and ran all the tests, not me."

Anger simmers in my veins, this was absolutely not made clear at the time. "Where is the medical examiner now?"

"He left last year, took a job in a different territory." Dr Kane explains, "but I have always had the utmost respect for him. I can't imagine him making such a grave error"

"Oh I don't think it was an error." I growl.

The physician's eyes widen. "You mean, you think he changed the results on purpose?"

"I think someone wanted me to believe my mate was dead." I force the words out through clenched teeth, "Just as someone wanted me to believe her pup belonged to another wolf, and falsified yet another set of DNA results."

Kane leans forward now, confusion and concern lacing his movements, "What are you talking about."

Relating our discoveries from the pathology lab as quickly as I'm able, I pin the doctor with my fiercest gaze, "The way! see it, one of three things is happening here. Either you have some very incompetent staff here or more likely, we're dealing with some form of corruption. Whether it's coming from within the system, or someone has been paying your people off to falsify information, remains to be seen."

Dr Kane's features harden, "We take oaths in this hospital, Alpha – sacred oaths to do no harm. To suggest that anyone

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here would intentionally damage this pack's wellbeing is a very grave accusation."

"I'm aware of that." I rumble, "though it's curious that you should talk about the pack's wellbeing, rather than my own."

"You are an extension of the pack, are you not?" Dr Kane argues, "to harm you is to harm us all."

"Be that as it may, someone has been working against me." I assert coolly, "and they've used this hospital's resources to further those aims. Oaths can be broken, and it is your duty to discover who might have forsaken theirs."

Dr Kane nods in acknowledgement. "There's something else, Bastien."

"Go ahead." I allow.

"I think in your concern for your mate's misidentified body, you've overlooked a rather key detail." He announces confidently

Arching my brow, I state, "I presume you're referring to the question that, if the body in the fire wasn't Selene's, who did it belong to?"

Dr Kane nods, looking almost impressed that I caught the detail.

"Strange thing that," I acknowledge, unfurling to my full height. "No one else was reported missing before or after the fire." Moving towards the door, I gesture for my betas to follow, stopping just before we exit, "but I know one place someone could have easily found a corpse to use."

"And where's that?" Dr Kane asks, the very picture of curiosity.

I watch the man very closely when I reply, searching for any signs of emotion in his blank expression, and finding none. "The hospital morgue."

Selene

"Selene, I don't know about this." Odette frets, wringing her hands.

"Look, you're a strong swimmer, right?" I ask, stripping out of my clothes to reveal the simple black swimsuit I donned for my "hairbrained scheme" – as my mother-in-law so fondly put it.

“Yes but-“She begins, only to be cut off by my determined tongue.

“And you agree that I need to find a way to tap into my survival instincts, without endangering some poor guard’s life – assuming I could even convince one to attack me?” I press. Neither of us is worried my powers might be strong enough to harm an experienced fighter, the problem is Bastien. Fake or not, there’s a good chance he’d rip out the throat of any wolf daring enough to pretend attack me.

“Yes but-” Odette tries again.

“And you agree it can’t wait and Bastien will only overreact to the idea?” I continue. We discussed it for more than an hour, going round and round in circles before finally landing here. While I don’t think Bastien would oppose the idea completely, I doubt he would agree to let me try this unless he was with me – and then I’d feel too safe.

“Selene, all of this is true.” She sighs in exhaustion.

“Then what’s the problem?” I inquire impatiently, throwing up my hands.

The older wolf cuts her eyes to me, “I swear, you’re every bit as stubborn as my son is sometimes.”.

Offering her a smile, I tease. “Did you like me better when I was a timid little wallflower?”

Odette laughs, “oh just go drown yourself you impossible girl!”

“Yes ma’am!” I salute her, turning towards the water. Of course, no sooner have I set the pool in my sights, that I freeze in place.

Now that it’s staring me in the face, fear skitters down my spine. The crystalline surface looks so cool and welcoming – so serene – but I remember what it was like to be submerged in those depths, my lungs burning like fire. I can still feel the pressure bearing down on me, the way my limbs failed desperately through the eerie blue abyss in slow motion. It’s as if the darkness is already closing in again, and i’m trapped in those moments I was certain would be my last

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“You don’t have to do this, sweetheart.” Odette assures me, our earlier jokes a distant memory now..

Frowning, I return my gaze to the elegant she-wolf. “Do you know how many “last moments” I’ve had?” I ask solemnly, “How many times I’ve been so certain I was about to die; that I’ve seen my life flash before my eyes and said my final prayers?”

“I know my darling.” Odette’s eyes are full of sympathy, but no pity. “Even one time would be too many.”

“And every time, I’ve only been proven wrong through someone else’s benevolence.” I recall, “Bastien, Drake, Goddess knows who pulled me from the fire.” Shaking my head I proclaim, “I’ve spent my entire life being a victim. Every problem I’ve ever had has been solved for me by a man – and I can’t do it anymore.”

I implore my mother-in-law to understand, staring into her vibrant irises with a pleading gaze. After a moment Odette nods in solidarity, her lovely countenance so forlorn that I wonder if she hasn’t been in these same shoes at some point in her life.

“I’m done waiting for other people to rescue me.” I conclude, sighing heavily. “It’s time I learned to save myself.”

—

Before I can think about it for another moment, I leap, curling my body up into a little ball as I plummet towards the rippling water. Gulping in one final breath of precious air, I crash into the water with a tremendous splash, disappearing into the watery world that tried to kill me once before, and praying I will have the strength to survive again.

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Chapter 107

#Chapter 107 Drowning

Selene

This was a mistake.

I know it the moment I hit the water. I was a fool to attempt such a ridiculous plan. I plunge beneath the turquoise surface like a ton of bricks, sinking to the bottom of the pool and trying not to panic.

The pool is only about twenty feet deep, but even that shallow pressure seems crushing to me. I feel like I’m being flattened, like the entire world has come crashing down on top of me and I’ll never be able to get out from under it.

I'm running out of air quickly, but all I can think is how strange it is down here. Time is moving so slowly, and everything is fuzzy and blue. It might be beautiful if it wasn't so terrifying. I spread my arms out to my sides, trying to imagine a well of power trapped inside me, picturing myself reaching into it and pulling out my own salvation.

I can't hold in the air I've been storing in my cheeks any longer, breathing it out through my nose and watching the bubbles ascend to the glittering surface so far above. I feel some relief just letting that bit of weight go, but in my heart | know my window of opportunity is closing.

Clamping my eyes shut, I try to force my hidden strength into being. If I don't do something, I'm going to die. I think firmly, If I don't find a way out of this, I'll drown.

A tiny spark flickers to life in my chest, an odd sort of electricity that feels alien and familiar all at once. It's working. I've got too little air and I'm too deep for Odette to reach me in time. I tell myself grimly, pulling at that spark with all my strength.

The effort of resisting my instincts to breathe in is beginning to strain my lungs, I know I'll only take in water if I try to take a breath, but I can't hold out much longer. Bastien will have to relive your death. You'll be torturing your mate.

The spark grows, expanding like a miniature ball of light in my heart. That's it! Luna encourages, keep doing that!

The electricity is growing, flooding through my limbs little by little. The power is building, but in a wave of fresh panic realize I don't know what to do with it. I can feel it, but I don't know how to use it. What good is this light, this electricity? It can't give me oxygen.

At that moment my lungs finally give out, and I suck in a great gulp of water. The pain is instantaneous, salty fluid flooding my lungs, burning in my chest like a thousand needles. No! I think as the light dims. I grapple for the edges of the power, trying desperately to hold on to the nascent force as I sputter and cough, drowning for the second time in my short life.

Darkness closes in, encroaching around my vision in a dense black cloud. Pain, both physical and emotional, pierces my heart as I realize I've failed.

And just like that, the spark goes out.

Bastien

I knew something was wrong the moment I got back to the pack house. I can't explain why or how, only that my hackles raised and Axel went on high alert the second I stepped through the door. I immediately went up to our top floor apartment to check on Selene and Lila, but when I arrived, I found only half of my family.

Lila and Donavon's niece, Maeve, were happily playing in the living room, watched over by my Beta's sister. The poor woman looked so startled when I entered she jumped half a foot in the air. Before I could apologize to her, Lila was toddling to her feet and rushing forward to greet me. "Daddy!"

"Hello little one!" I knelt down to her level, sweeping her into a quick hug. "Where's Mommy?"

"With Gamma," Lila peeps, trying to climb into my arms even though I'm attempting to look her in the eye.

"With Grandma, where?" I press, glancing between my pup and her babysitter,

"Daddy, want up!" Lila pouts, squirming her way into the crook of my arm.

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Caving, I lift her as I stand and approach Donavon's sister, Anna. "Do you know where they went?"

"Is something wrong?" She asks anxiously, "They're just next door at Nova Hall."

"I'm not sure." I explain honestly, "Something feels off. Do you know what they're doing there?"

"I'm sorry, I don't." She shakes her head, reaching for Lila, "Here, you go. I'll watch her."

Lila immediately begins to whine when I hand her over, "Daddy, I want you stay."

"I'll be right back, angel." I promise. "I just want to check on Mommy."

"Take me wid you?" She begs, looking up at me with wide, puppy-dog eyes.

"Not this time, Lila bean." I answer apologetically, "be good for Anna."

My pup begins to cry as I stalk out of the room, the sounds and smell of her tears tugging at my heartstrings so powerfully I might have turned back if it wasn't for the terrible sense of dread eating away at my insides.

My unease is so great I almost shift, not trusting my human legs to carry me to the hall quickly enough. Instead I storm through the halls at top speed, Aiden and Donavon never leaving my side. "What is it Bastien?" Aiden presses.

"Something's wrong." I grit out, "I don't know what, but something's wrong."

"Do you think Selene's in danger?" Donavon questions.

"I don't know, it might just be bad memories." It doesn't escape my notice that the last time Selene went off with Mom, Arabella set fire to our family cabin and destroyed my happiness for three and a half long years.

Donavon shakes his head, already on the same wavelength. "You were feeling this before you knew she left with Odette."

Fuck. I think, breaking into a run, He's right.

By the time we reach the hall, a small contingent of guards trailing behind us, I can hear a commotion by the pool: splashing and Mom calling Selene's name, her voice strained with fear.

Goddess, surely she's not in the pool! I think desperately. Did she fall in? What the hell were they doing?

Pain rips through my chest so suddenly it stops me in my tracks, bending me double and making me gasp for air. Axel is howling desperately, calling for his mate and begging for her to reply. Aiden and the other men are gathered around me, anxious to help but unsure what to do.

But there's nothing to be done.

This pain can only mean one thing.

Selene is dying.

Selene

My last thought before the world goes black, is of Lila. I'll never see my pup again, and she'll be forced to grow up without me. I won't be there to protect her, I won't be there to teach her or guide her through life.

This ridiculous effort to figure out my powers so I can help her deal with her own one day, won't just be in vain, it will have made things a million times worse. She won't just be without a Volana teacher, she'll be without a mother.

I won't be there to kiss her hurts and wipe away her tears, I won't be there to watch her blossom into a woman. I know what it's like to lose your mother too soon, and though I know she'll never suffer as I did at Garrick's hands, that doesn't change the fact that I will have abandoned her to face the world without me.

I can't explain how so many thoughts went through my head in such a short burst of time, but that's the way of final moments. The world seems to slow to a standstill, making space for all the sorrow, fear and rage a heart can conjure at one's end

I can hear him. Luna moans suddenly, Bastien's wolf is calling for me.

Chapter 107 Drowning

Bastien, I think desperately, I only just got him back. Lila only just got two parents.

It wasn't intentional. I don't know how it happened, but one moment I was manically thinking Bastien, Lila, Bastien, Lila, and the next the spark had returned, more powerful and furious than before.

It consumes me completely.

My pain and fury at myself combine with an outpouring of love for my daughter and mate, exploding out of me in a brilliant ray of light. The electricity is building to a blinding crescendo that blocks out the rest of the world entirely...

I'm rising then, the same sort of power I managed to channel in the bathroom propelling me upward, carrying me out of the water and throwing me onto the cold tiles at the side of the pool. Immediately water spews from my lungs, as I cough and retch, bringing up everything in my stomach and moaning pitifully.

"Selene!" Odette exclaims, 'Thank the Goddess, I'd almost reached you and then-"

"Selene!" Bastien's roar blocks out his mother's next words, and before I know it he's there, bundling me into his lap. crying and kissing every inch of skin he can reach. "You scared the shit out of me." He growls.

Bastien is holding me so tightly I can't breathe, but I don't mind. I'm so relieved to be alive and in his arms that I'd let him strangle me unconscious. Tears pour from my eyes as he rocks me in his arms, his lips moving frantically against my ear, "What the hell happened, how did you end up in the pool?" —

He pulls back to look me over, "Are you alright, are you hurt..." My mate's silver eyes widen as he finally realizes I'm in a swimsuit, "what are you wearing?"

Woops.

Pregnant and Rejected by My Alpha Mate Chapter 108

Pregnant and Rejected by My Alpha Mate

Chapter 108

#Chapter 108 You Promised!

Selene

“Bastien, put me down!” I exclaim, squirming as he carts me through the pack house in his arms. “I can walk!”

“I know you can walk.” He growls, hitching me closer, “I’m carrying you because I don’t trust you not to run away and do something crazy if I leave you to your own devices.”

This isn’t good. Bastien has barely said a word to me since realizing that I must have intentionally jumped into the pool. Instead he scooped me up and stormed out of Nova Hall, refusing to speak to his mother or anyone else. He charged back over to the pack house so quickly I can scarcely believe he’s still in human form.

Now he’s stomping around in a silent rage, swinging me around like a sack of potatoes while steam billows from his ears.

Bastien charges up the stairs and pushes into the apartment without pausing, and the sounds of Lila’s tears immediately reach my ears. I twist around, trying to find my pup, but Bastien doesn’t let me move from his iron grip.

“Lila?” I call, listening with Bastien’s breath as her wails dissolve to sniffles, and then her tiny voice chirps, “Mommy?”

“I’m here, my love.” I promise, but to my surprise, when she appears in my periphery, I’m not the one she’s running towards.

“Daddy where you go?!” She exclaims sullenly, charging my mate’s legs.

*I’m sorry, Lila Bean.” Bastien professes gently, setting my feet on the ground and leaning down to catch her before she collides with his shins. “I’m here now, come here.”

My pup throws her arms around his neck, crying pitifully while he rubs her back and whispers soothing nonsense in her ear.

I’m not entirely sure what to do – this is a first. I’m always the one Lila turns to for comfort, I’ve never had to stand by and watch someone else care for my daughter this way. On one hand I think I should feel upset, but honestly I’m simply touched to know how quickly Lila has bonded to her father.

“Thank you Anna,” I say to Donovan’s sister, knowing that in a few minutes the last thing we’re going to need is an audience. “I appreciate your help this afternoon. What do I owe you?”

After paying Anna and seeing her to the door, I turn to find my husband glaring at me from a few feet away. For one panicked moment I contemplate running out the door behind the babysitter, but then my pup is looking me up and down with confusion. "Mommy, why're you wet?" Lila asks, crinkling up her tiny nose.

Before I can reply Bastien answers in a low growl, "Because Mommy has been very bad."

Shooting my husband a furibus glance I mouth, don't tell her that!

He arches a heavy brow, as if to ask if he should lie to her. Before I can react, Lila has another question on her tongue.

"Mommies can be bad?" She inquires with amazement, her two-toned eyes wide.

"Of course," my mate explains ominously, "anyone can be bad, and today your Mommy decided to try and go for a swim."

"But Mommy, you can't swim!" Lila reminds me.

"No, she can't." Bastien agrees darkly, looking me up and down. "She's lucky to be alive."

I don't appreciate him saying these things in front of my pup, but I also don't understand why he's dragging things out this way. I know how angry he is, it doesn't make any sense that he brought me back up here without first dealing with the matter at hand.

I know he's not going to fight with me in front of Lila, so why did he bring me back up here? Why is he dragging this out? Just what is he planning on doing with me?

Bastien

I'm working very hard to stay calm. I'd like to say I brought Selene back to the apartment so quickly out of concern for my pup, but the truth is I needed time to cool down. I knew that seeing Lila would help me reign in my temper, even if my mate is the one

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#Chapter 108 You Promised!

responsible for her current upset.

Comforting my daughter put my wolf in a caring mindset, rather than a furious one. It's a good thing too: if I'd attempted to talk to my mate about her little pool adventure before, I would have completely lost control, and that wouldn't be good for anyone.

"You can't leave like dat, Daddy." Lila scolds me, her little face twisted up into an adorable glower. "If Mommy in twubble, I wanna come."

*If Mommy is in trouble, the last place I want you to be is anywhere near her." I answer sternly, squeezing the grumpy bundle in my arms. "It's very important for you to be a good girl and do what you're told in those moments. In fact the times when it feels hardest to obey Mommy and Daddy are the ones when it's most important you do so."

Lila doesn't look convinced, so I continue, "I don't like leaving you anymore than you like being left, but I promise I will always come back."

Movement flashes in the corner of my eye, and I realize Selene is trying to slink off to our bedroom. "Hold it right there!"

Selene freezes in place, her little body overflowing with guilty energy. If I weren't so livid I might find it tempting. She's standing there in a sleek black bikini, her dark hair wet and disheveled, her fair skin flushed with excitement and anxiety. A very pretty picture – if only she hadn't just risked her beautiful neck diving into a death trap.

"I think you owe Lila an apology." I announce, prompting my little wolf to wrap her arms self-consciously around her body.

"Bastien, I think we should discuss this in private." She remarks coolly.

"Believe me, we will." I promise menacingly, "but first, you owe our daughter an apology."

Her stunning eyes flash, and for a minute I'm certain she's going to argue with me, but then her sullen gaze slips from my disapproving glare to Lila's confused expression, and she softens. Moving forward, she pulls the pup from my arms and cuddles her close, "I'm sorry, angel."

"Why Mommy?" Lila asks, returning her mother's affection even though she doesn't understand it. Her plump arms are wrapped around my mate's shoulders, her face buried in the curve of her neck.

"Because I wasn't as careful as I should have been." Selene murmurs, causing Axel to snarl in protest. Both she-wolves start in surprise, but my wife doesn't amend her words. She offers me a defiant stare, and my palm begins to itch.

I'm suddenly very glad she sent Anna away, this way we won't be able to speak until Lila goes to bed this evening. I certainly need the time to calm down, and I'm pleased to know my mate will be forced to stew in apprehension.

By the time night actually falls, Selene is practically twitching with worry, her earlier bravado fading the closer we come to her inevitable reckoning.

After putting Lila to bed, I take Selene by the hand and guide her into our bedroom, sitting on the edge of the bed and standing her between my legs. "Well little wolf," I begin gruffly, what do you have to say for yourself?"

Selene sighs in exasperation, her lovely pink lips parting on my name, "Bastien-

"And don't you dare try to excuse your actions." I caution her.

*Please don't be mad." She beseeches, sounding more frustrated than sincere.

"It's too late for that." I confess gravely, "but I'll do my best not to get any angrier." Just when she's beginning to look relieved I add, "assuming you don't give me any reason to."

Selene squirms restlessly, shifting into her feet and avoiding my gaze. "I needed a way to test my strength without having you as a safety net."

*Are you telling me that you planned this?" I demand. "You left our daughter with a babysitter and went to intentionally try drowning yourself while I was too far away to reach you?"

"You make it sound a lot worse than it was." Selene argues. "I brought Odette with me in case anything went wrong, and I knew my powers would save me anyway."

"No you hoped your powers would save you!" I explode, forcing myself to lower my voice when she flinches. "And you were very nearly wrong! I felt you dying, Selene. Do you have any idea what that was like? How painful it was?"

"I'm sorry." Selene's brow knits together in concern, "truly Bastien, I didn't mean to distress you. But I knew I'd never be able to

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*Chapter 108 You Promised!

LV1

feel enough fear to trigger my powers if you were with me.”

“What were you thinking?” Keeping my hands braced on her hips, I have to resist the urge to curl my fingers into fists. “You could have been killed – you have a child, Selene. And a mate! This didn’t just effect you!”

*But I wasn’t killed, because I was right! I was right about my powers! They kicked in right when I needed them to and I’m truly sorry it hurt you, but I had to do this.” Selene insists, “For Lila’s sake as well as my own!”

“If you thought it was such a good idea why didn’t you tell me about it?” I inquire bitterly.

“Because you never would have let me do it!” She exclaims.

“Damn straight I wouldn’t!” I retort fiercely, “I’m glad you tapped into your powers, but not at the cost of almost losing you. I mean how are you planning on reaching them again? Do you intend on trying to kill yourself every time you want to practice?”

“Bastien can you please just acknowledge that I made a huge breakthrough, today?” She requests, pressing her palms to my chest.

“Don’t avoid the question, Selene.” I admonish.

“I don’t know what to say,” my mate admits, looking determined. “You promised me it wouldn’t be like last time! You promised you wouldn’t coddle me!”

* Coddle you?” I repeat, an edge of pure steel entering my deep voice. Before she knows what’s happening. I tip her facedown over my lap, raising her round bottom into the air and landing the first of many hard spanks on her rear end. “How’s this for coddling, baby?”

Pregnant and Rejected by My Alpha Mate Chapter 109

Pregnant and Rejected by My Alpha Mate

Chapter 109

#Chapter 109 Not Again

Lv.1

Selene

Not again!

Suddenly I'm staring at the floor, bent over my mate's lap and flailing my arms to protect my, now bare, behind.

How did he do that so fast? Luna bemoans at the same time I think, I've got to stop wearing dresses – it makes my body far too easy for him to access. My hands are immediately trapped behind my back, while my furiously kicking legs quickly become caged by Bastien's powerful thighs. Unlike last time, I don't weakly squeal or beg for explanations. No, this time I kick up as much of a fuss as I can, absolutely furious to find myself back in this situation.

I can't believe Bastien is doing this to me again. It seems like the incident in the cafe opened an entire can of worms. Is this how he's going to respond every time I do something of which he disapproves?

I suppose I shouldn't have provoked him, but I can't bring myself to regret it either. I know in my heart that I'm right about this.

Still, it isn't fair. After all, it's not like I'm strong enough to escape him. I don't have any choice but to simply endure my mate's punishment or do I? I'm much more powerful than I knew even a week ago, maybe defending myself from mortal peril isn't my only skill. Maybe this is the exception to the rule about not seeing Bastien as a credible threat – because this is certainly credible, and I certainly want it to stop.

Reaching deep down into my soul, into that deep well of power I managed to find at the bottom of the pool, I strain to take hold of my newfound strength. I can feel it. I can feel the currents of electricity dancing at my fingertips- but I can't seem to wrap my hands around it or bring it forward.

Fire courses over my bottom, radiating from Bastien's massive palm and spreading across my punished skin in a crimson flush. He spreads his swats evenly over my cheeks and upper thighs, seeming to know exactly when one patch of flesh starts to feel relief, then stealing it away before I can feel comforted.

Again I strive to take hold of my power, to bring it to the surface and project it towards my mate. Again I fail, fruitlessly grasping for the unnamed force only to have it slip through my fingers at the last moment.

Suddenly Bastien's rumbling laugh is vibrating against my side, I know what you're doing, baby." He purrs, gently massaging my aching behind and making me whimper pitifully. Tears are streaming down my face, but Goddess help me, my sex is also swollen and throbbing with need.

“Would you like to know why it’s not working?” My mate continues, sounding far too smug as his fingers dip between my legs, dragging an embarrassed moan from my lips when they meet the pooling wetness at their center.

Suddenly I’m surging upward, Bastien tipping me back onto his lap and holding me still with a possessive paw on the back of my neck. I wince when my backside meets his leg, sniffing as he arranges me in his arms.

“It’s because you know this is right.” He growls, petting my thighs as he skewers me with his gaze. “You need this. You’ve been testing your limits ever since we came home, and you certainly hit them today, little wolf.” His lips descend to my neck, where he lovingly nibbles his mark, “you could repel me if you wanted. But you don’t want to, do you Selene?”

“That’s ridiculous.” I argue weakly, shifting my weight to try to find a comfortable position and finding none.

“Is it?” Bastien asks, arching a brow, “We both know this isn’t like the other times. When I pretended to attack you, your power stayed completely closed off didn’t it? But that’s not the case now.” He claims with more confidence than should be allowed. “You can reach it, you just can’t bring yourself to use it.”

“And how do you know that?” I grumble, swiping at my cheeks indignantly.

“The stronger our connection grows, the less we can hide from one another.” He declares, his silver eyes glinting hungrily. “I can feel your intentions, your desires – and I can feel when your power is welling. I felt a surge at the banquet, but I didn’t know what it was. It wasn’t until this afternoon that I understood, when you escaped the pool I felt a burst of pure light.” He shares, “like you were glowing through the bond.”

#Chapter 109 Not Again

“And now?” I gulp.

A wide grin splits Bastien’s cheeks, “you’re pulsing like a little strobe light. Delving into the power, but not using it.” His nimble fingers slip between my legs again, rubbing my sensitive clit and coming away glistening with moisture. And then there’s this.” He reminds me, sliding his fingers into his mouth and licking off all my honey.

“That doesn’t mean anything.” I insist, flushing scarlet.

“Don’t worry, sweetheart.” He teases, massaging my nape. “You’re going to have plenty of time to keep trying. The next thing! know I’m upside down again, a surprised cry on my lips as Bastien’s gravelly voice sounds from somewhere above me. “Because I am nowhere near being finished with you.” .

On Tuesday I wake up with a throbbing behind and a sour stomach. I make it to the bathroom just in time, retching miserably and wishing my mate was there to comfort me,

Bastien got up first thing this morning to spend some time with Lila before starting his work day, so the house is completely empty. When my stomach is finally empty I drag my sore body into the kitchen with a groan, putting on a kettle of tea and wondering if using my powers would always make me feel so wretched, or if this was just the after effects of almost drowning to death,

Thankfully by the time Bastien and Lila return I almost feel human again. The last thing I need is to end up bedridden today. Not only did I promise Lila to show her where I grew up—a prospect which I'm sure did nothing to help my stomach, but tomorrow is a lunar eclipse, which means the entire city is in a frenzy throwing together a lavish moon festival.

“Mommy!” Lila collides with my legs, hugging my knees while I laugh and stroke her hair. “Daddy push me on da swings for hours!”

“He did!” I exclaim, grinning as Bastien enters the kitchen. My husband crosses the room and wraps me in a hug, planting a deep kiss on my lips.

“Good morning, my love.” He greets me, sliding his hand down my spine to squeeze my tender bottom and chuckling when I whine and squirm against him.

“What do you two have planned for today?” He asks when we part, still smirking while I glare up at him mutinously.

Pausing to get Lila settled at the table with a plate of sliced fruit, I avert my gaze before answering. “I’m going to take Lila bean to see where I grew up.” I share, trying to keep my voice neutral.

I can’t see Bastien’s face, but I can feel his sudden tension as if it’s my own. “You’re taking her to Garrick’s?”

“It was my childhood home before my mother died.” I explain evenly, “not all my memories of it are bad. And it’s not as if there’s any danger to be had now.”

“I’m not concerned about danger.” Bastien answers simply, studying me carefully. “Are you sure you want to do this?”

“Lila has asked me about ten times since we arrived.” I whisper, transferring the cutting board to the sink. “I promised her.”

“Why don’t you wait until I can go with you?” He suggests, sliding his arms around my waist from behind. “Just in case.”

“It’ll be fine.” I assure him, wishing I could feel as confident as I sound.

Bastien huffs a disgruntled sigh, his warm breath fluttering my hair. “I don’t like this.”

Turning to face him, I catch his angular jaw between my hands, “We’ll be fine.” I repeat, gazing into his silver eyes.

“And you’ll call me if you start to feel even a little bit uneasy?” He presses, looking anxious.

“Of course.” I vow. “But it won’t be necessary.”

—

—

A few hours later, I’m eating my words, wishing I’d caved to Bastien’s pressure and allowed my mate to join us.

We barely made it past noon before the day took a turn for the worse, and to my immense surprise, it’s not even my PTSD causing the problem. It’s not ghosts of my past, nightmares or bad memories. No – it’s a very real, very present threat.

#Chapter 109 Not Again

Lv.1

With the world spinning around me and fear pulsing in my veins, I scramble for my cell phone, staring at my beautiful pup with a rush of guilt. This was such a foolish idea. I should have known better.

The shrill dial tone rings for only half a second. “Baby, is everything okay?” Bastien answers immediately.

“No,” I breathe nervously. “Bastien, I think we’re being followed.”

Pregnant and Rejected by My Alpha Mate Chapter 110

Pregnant and Rejected by My Alpha Mate

Chapter 110

#Chapter 110 Followed

Selene

When Lila and I reached New Town, the streets rearranged themselves before my very eyes. All of a sudden the world around me transformed: the cars and modern advertisements faded, reverting to styles and campaigns from the forgotten past. New restaurants and shops disappeared, replaced by businesses which have long since closed.

Everything appears as it did fifteen years ago – the last time I truly spent time here – the last time I walked these streets before my mother died and Garrick took me prisoner. After I escaped I rarely came here. I avoided this neighborhood like the plague. But here I am again, ten years old and about to lose everything I ever knew and loved.

“This is it, Mommy?” Lila’s tiny hand squeezes mine, her beloved voice jolting me out of my reverie.

“This is it.” I confirm. “I grew up in that very house.” And lost everything there too. Luna adds.

– Hush. I tell my outspoken wolf.

“Can we go inside?” Lila asks eagerly.

“Okay.” I agree hesitantly.

Walking through the unlocked front door feels like stepping straight into the past. It’s even worse than being out of the street. In

this familiar foyer, I feel like I’m no taller or wiser than my pup. The house has been emptied, but the lingering scent of my childhood remains.

It’s not all bad. I was right when I told Bastien there were some happy memories here. I remember coming home from school to find my mother pulling freshly baked cookies out of the oven, or building blanket forts with her in the middle of the living room.

I can still see her smile, I can even imagine I smell her perfume. Being here evokes sensations I never thought I’d feel again, feelings I want to hold onto and never let go. However the moment I look at the heavy basement door, I see only darkness.

I turn away from the door with determination, watching Lila wander the deserted space. “Mommy, dere’s no furniture.”

“There was when I lived here.” I explain. “There was furniture and artwork and all the sorts of things we have at home.”

“Where’d everything go?” Lila asks curiously.

“Well,” I explain, gathering her into my arms. “My mother died when I was still just a girl. So after I met your Daddy, I went to live with him. There wasn’t a reason to keep anything here.”

Her little head cocks to the side, “what bout your Daddy?”

A heavy weight settles in the pit of my stomach. I’ve never talked to Lila about Garrick, and I don’t plan on doing so until she’s much older – if ever. “I never knew my Daddy.” I state calmly, sticking to the truth without revealing more than I have to

“The way I didn’t?” She reasons.

“That’s right, of course your Daddy found us, so now you’ll always know him.” I smile, trying to force the unwelcome memories of Garrick from my mind.

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#Chapter 110 Followed

IV

“I sorry, Mama.” Lila squeezes her arms around my neck, “I wish your Daddy foun you too.”

Returning my pup’s hug, I almost want to cry. She’s so innocent, so pure. The thought of anyone doing to her what Garrick did to me makes my newfound power surge to life, rising inside me like a tidal wave of protectiveness. Suddenly my fury towards Blaise Denizen hits a fever pitch, and I have to smother the energy pulse fighting to burst out of me.

– It seems now that I’ve unlocked my power, controlling it is going to be the true challenge. It’s enough to give me emotional

whiplash. This time last week I couldn’t summon my strength for anything in the world, now it pulses like a wild thing inside of me, but I can neither harness it when I desire, nor hold it in when it’s not needed.

It’s better this way. Luna assures me, Better to my out of control than completely helpless.

I have to agree, though it does worry me to have this kind of force at my disposal when my precious pup is so nearby. “What do you think, angel?” I ask Lila, “Have you seen enough.”

My pup nods eagerly, “can we get i’ scream?”

Giggling at the way my daughter pronounces “ice cream,” I decide nothing has ever sounded more appetizing. “You bet.” | promise.

As we step out of the house I notice that the same black SUV which was driving behind us when we first arrived, is now parked a few spaces down from our car. The windows are tinted, but I can just decipher the outline of the driver, who still sits inside – waiting.

A spike of unease pulses through my nerves, but I remind myself that there could be a perfectly reasonable explanation. I buckle Lila into her carseat, then slide behind the wheel and turn the car towards the ice cream parlor.

I barely remember the drive. I don’t think I looked forward for more than one second at a time through the entire route. Instead my eyes were glued to the rear view mirror, watching the black SUV crawling along behind us. It’s definitely following us, I’m certain now.

When I park in front of the ice cream shop, the SUV stops too. I yank Lila out of the car and stride into the parlor as quickly as I can, pulling out my phone while my toddler presses her nose to the glass case holding the cold treat, oohing and aahing in delight.

The shrill dial tone rings for only half a second. “Baby, is everything okay?” Bastien answers immediately.

“No,” I breathe nervously. “Bastien, I think we’re being followed.”

“Are you sure?” He asks, instantly on edge.

“Yes,” I insist, “someone has been following us since before we got to New Town. We left a while ago and went for ice cream, and they’re parked outside right now.”

I don’t have the first clue why, but somehow Bastien sounds more relaxed now, “what do they look like?”

“I’m not sure. It’s a black SUV.” I report. “I can’t see their face- and I can’t scent them. But it’s a man, he looks pretty big. Wearing dark glasses and a dark hoodie.”

As we speak, movement flashes inside the car, and I’m able to see my stalker raising a phone to his ear.

“Is he taking a phone call?” My mate asks with psychic precision.

“Yes,” Drawing out the word suspiciously, I add, “how did you know that?”

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#Chapter 110 Followed

Lv.1

“Alright, it’s okay.” Bastien sighs with relief. “It’s just Jerome.”

“What do you mean it’s just Jerome?” I demand. “Who the hell is Jerome?”

“He’s the sentey I assigned to guard you two.” My husband explains, as if this was the most obvious thing in the world.

“What?” I question

“With everything that’s going on, I didn’t feel comfortable with you and Lila running around the city without protection.” Bastien rumbles.

“When did you do this?” I question sharply, “before or after I told you our plans for the day?”

“Before.” He answers easily, but trust me I was very glad of it this morning. How did it go?”

“Oh no, don’t you go changing the subject on me, mister.” I object, “maybe I’ll consider telling you about our visit – after you explain yourself.”

“Baby, I’m not going to apologize for looking out for you and our daughter.” Bastien proclaims coldly.

“The problem isn’t the protection.” I complain in exasperation, “it’s the fact that you didn’t tell me about it!”

“Sweetheart– Bastien begins in a placating tone.

“He scared the hell out of me, Bastien. Did you not consider that having someone dressed like a complete creep trailing after me would be alarming?” The teenagers working behind the ice cream counter shoot me a few curious glances, and I lower my voice, “hold on a second.”

Crouching down to Lila’s level, I tickle her round belly, “do you know what you want munchkin?”

“Can I has a sundae?” She requests with big eyes, practically bouncing up and down.

My supernatural hearing picks up on Bastien’s voice through the receiver, not before lunch! Nonetheless, I ignore him, “you can have whatever you want, angel.”

While my pup gives her order to the grinning girl on the other side of the counter, I return my phone to my ear. I know you heard me, little wolf.” Bastien gripes.

I snort, rolling my eyes into the back of my head. “Hey if you get to make security decisions about my pup

“Our pup.” Bastien interjects.

“Our pup,” I amend, digging in my bag for my wallet, “without consulting me, then I get to make food decisions about her without consulting you.”

“Selene, I’m sorry Jerome startled you.” Bastien exhales heavily, “the idea was that you would never know he was there. I thought it might make you more afraid to think you needed a bodyguard, rather than comforted.”

“Bastien Durand.” I hiss, managing to hold onto my temper even as the waitress hands a humongous banana split to Lila. “it doesn’t matter how I might react or feel about the situation. I have a right to know either way. We’re supposed to be partners, you can’t keep excluding me from decisions about our family.”

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#Chapter 110 Followed

Lv.1

“If you recall the last time I tried to exclude you from something and you forced your way in, you came to regret it.” He retorts, referring to the revelations about the safe house.

“Well you know what?” i lash out, feeling irrationally angry for reasons I don’t even understand, “much more of this and I’m going to begin regretting coming back at all.”