

Pregnant and Rejected by My Alpha Mate Chapter 111

Pregnant and Rejected by My Alpha Mate

Chapter 111

#Chapter 111 Eclipse

Sophie

“It’s almost time.* Hugo is standing in the doorway, watching me with a sort of detached curiosity that makes my skin flush red. ‘It’s as if I’m some sort of strange new oddity, a creature he thought he understood but now realizes he misjudged. A lot of people

in the Pack House have been eyeing me this way lately- and it makes my skin crawl every time.

I drag my gaze from the Beta, returning it to the full length mirror on the far wall. Of course, my reflection mocks me like all the rest. Here I am, standing in the most stunning dress I’ve ever seen, looking like a completely different person than I did mere months ago – but still it’s not enough.

It feels very strange to envy someone who has had such a difficult life, but Goddess help me, I can’t help but wish I was Selene. She is beautiful in a way I will never be. She has this air of mystery, this unknowable quality that enchants every man who meets her. Where her tragedy has left her with an irresistible air of dark romance, my own has left me with naught but sadness,

My looks are decent enough, with my long rose gold hair and hazel eyes that shift between gold and green depending on the light, but whatever beauty I might have possessed has been buried beneath my sorrow. My Cupid’s bow lips are always trapped in a frown, and my lithe figure has been deprived of its curves by stress and privation.

I haven’t the faintest idea why Drake asked me to be his date to the Eclipse ball. Actually that isn’t true- I know exactly why he did it: pity.

If the Alpha was actually free to invite the she-wolf of his choice, I expect it would be someone much closer to his beloved Selene, Someone graceful and lovely, charming and gorgeous without even trying. Instead his guilty conscience forced him to settle for me. He found me this dress, provided every luxury to help me get ready, but I’m still going to be a disappointment. No amount of professional makeup or hair styling can erase the haunted expression I seem doomed to wear for the rest of my life.

Hugo is going to escort me to Drake's office in a few minutes, where I know my unrequited love is probably working himself into the ground trying to track down Selene's enemies. He's been working day and night, constantly on the phone with Bastien and using every moment not dedicated to governing the pack, to their hunt.

I don't know everything that has happened since Selene left Asphodel, but it's clear Drake wishes he was in Elysium with her. It still amazes me how my heart can feel so much pain, when it's completely broken. After all, it's lying in absolute tatters; it shouldn't be able to long, love, or grieve. It shouldn't be able to feel anything at all – yet somehow it does. Perhaps Drake has not yet broken it enough.

Tears burn in my eyes as I contemplate how the Alpha could possibly trample my bleeding heart any further, but I force them down, looking up to Hugo with a gravel smile, "I'm ready."

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"You look incredible." Drake's words warm me from the inside out, and I actually want to smile. At least, I do until I remember he's only saying it to be polite.

"You don't have to say that." I demure, flushing out of embarrassment rather than flattery.

"Oh yes I do." Drake replies fiercely, green fire blazing in his eyes. He strides forward and catches my waist, gently applying pressure so that I'll spin in place and give him the full effect. "Incredible." He repeats once I come to a stop.

The truth is that if anyone looks incredible, it's Drake. His raven hair is slicked back, and his strong jaw is clean shaven for once. He smells like oakmoss and sea salt, and he fills out his velvet-lined dinner jacket so completely I worry the seams might burst.

My deep green gown seems to belong next to his sleek black suit, only the wrong person is in it. Seeing us side by side in the reflective windows of Drake's office makes me want to erase my body from the image, leaving only the silhouette of the elegant frock. It wasn't made for someone like me; I don't deserve to wear it, and I don't deserve to accompany the Alpha to such a fancy event.

Just as I'm about to conjure some excuse to get out of the evening, Drake stops me. "Are you ready to go?" He asks.

"As I'll ever be." I answer nervously, smoothing my skirts.

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#Chapter 111 Eclipse

Lv.1

A few hours later my head is light from too much champagne and my heart is heavy from watching Drake captivate the pack, going through his duties with unfathomable ease. I can't understand how he does it, how he bears the weight of all their scrutiny and dominates them without ever second guessing himself.

For most of the night we've danced and celebrated like all the others, me simply going through the motions and praying no one will see through my act, while Drake lives and breathes the event. He really is a good Alpha, and I feel like an absolute fraud standing next to him.

I've watched an endless parade of stunning she-wolves prance around in front of the Alpha, all hoping to catch his attention and shooting daggers at me when they fail. Drake seems completely oblivious, grinning at me with that devil-may-care charm and sweeping me around the dance floor with predatory grace.

"What are you thinking about?" His jaw, already sprinkled with fresh scruff, grazes my cheek as his warm breath flutters over my ear.

The eclipse has already begun, and while most of the pack is out lining the docks as floating bonfires glitter on the water, Drake and I are standing alone at the center of the ballroom's sprawling terrace.

"Nothing." I lie, keeping my face turned up to the quickly disappearing moon.

"Come on, little lamb." Muscular arms slide around my waist, causing butterflies to explode in my belly. "Talk to me."

"Why do you call me that?" I question grumpily, trying and failing to shrug out of his hold.

"Because when I look at you, I see the sweetest creature I can imagine." His lips trail across my cheek, and suddenly I feel like I want to cry

“You mean helpless.” I correct him bitterly.

“No, I mean sweet.” Drake retorts sternly.

“You shouldn’t.” I insist stubbornly, “You don’t call anyone else that sort of thing. It’ll give people the wrong idea.”

* And what idea is that?” He purrs, pulling me more tightly against his hard body.

“You know!” I snap, and you shouldn’t touch me that way either.”

Though I try to pull away from him again, he doesn’t let me. “Sophie, what’s going on?” He asks me abruptly.

“What do you mean?” I counter defensively.

“I mean, what’s going on?” He repeats severely. “Why are you acting this way?”

“Nothing’s going on.” I say again, barely resisting the urge to stomp my foot, “I’m just tired of this.”

“Stop.” Drake orders, his voice full of raw authority. “I’m not asking as your friend anymore, I’m asking as your.” Alpha.”

Why did he pause that way? Rose wonders in my head.

I don’t know, and I don’t really care. It isn’t fair of him to torment me this way. I answer.

“Well as my Alpha you can kindly leave me alone.” I inform him, sounding almost haughty.

“No I can’t.” Drake replies, forcing me to turn in his arms and cupping my cheek in one large hand. “There’s something I need to talk to you about.”

“What? You mean other than interrogating me?” I hiss, squirming against him. “I’m entitled to my own thoughts, you know. I should at least be allowed some privacy.”

Drake’s brow furrows in befuddlement. “What has gotten into you?”

I know what he means. I feel like I’m spinning out of control. I’m so overwhelmed and off-kilter after everything that’s happened recently. The kidnapping, Martin’s death, watching Drake slip away from me a little more every day. Still, I can’t help it. My wolf wants nothing more than to lash out with all this turbulent emotion, even if it is at my oldest friend and deeper love.

“Stop treating me like a child.” I demand, knowing full well that I’m acting like one. “Nothing has gotten into me, I’m sorry if I don’t feel happy every second of every day, but I can’t help having feelings.”

“What feeling are we talking about, Sophie?” Drake inquires huskily, his emerald eyes glimmering.

“It’s not important,” I redirect immediately, “what did you want to talk to me about?”

Looking suddenly like he wants to eat me for dinner, the Alpha replies, “You’re in luck baby.” The palm he’s been resting so gently on my cheek slides into my hair, undoubtedly ruining my updo as he buries his fingers in the silky tresses. “Because feelings are exactly what I want to talk to you about.”

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#Chapter 112 – Not Like This

Drake

Sophie freezes like a deer in headlights, her gold-flecked eyes going wide. “What do you mean?” I can feel her unease as if it is my own, and I can imagine what she’s thinking. Before Bastien turned up, there were a few occasions when I thought Selene might have picked up on my feelings for her. Every time was a trial. The anxiety was excruciating, a sudden vulnerability so overpowering it made my knees go weak.

Poor little mate, my wolf thinks fondly. She’s absolutely beside herself.

I almost feel guilty, for while Sophie frets, I’m filled with assurance. I don’t have to worry about my love being returned this time; I know how deeply she cares. I know we are fated.

I meant to give Sophie more time to recover from the turbulent events of last month. She clearly isn’t ready to reveal her feelings to me, but I’m starting to think giving her space is doing more harm than good.

In a matter of weeks Sophie has gone from someone controlling her entire life, to complete freedom. I didn’t want to do to her . what Bastien did to Selene, and trade her cage or iron for one of gold – taking care of her so completely she never learned to do it

for herself. However I'm starting to see the answer wasn't leaving her entirely to her own devices, but finding some sort of middle ground.

"Sophie, I know everything in your life is uncertain right now," I begin gently. "And this probably isn't the right time to make any major life decisions – but I can't take this any longer."

"Can't take what?" She murmurs, peeking up at me from beneath her lashes.

Sighing I answer, "Pretending like there are only platonic feelings between us."

Some unknown emotion flickers in Sophie's wary countenance. "I don't know what you're talking about." She lies, crossing her slender arms protectively over her chest.

"Careful little lamb, I don't appreciate being lied to." I growl, pinning her with a disapproving gaze. "Especially over matters of such significance."

My mate stares at the ground, shifting her weight from one small foot to the other and looking very guilty indeed.

"Is there anything you'd like to tell me?" I press.

To my surprise, a mutinous expression comes over her face, "you seem to have all the answers, Drake." She mutters, "why do you even bother asking?"

"Come on, Soph." I encourage, giving her tiny waist a squeeze. "Don't be like that."

"Like what!" She snaps, her plump bottom lip quivering.

"You could start by telling me why you're so upset with me." I suggest, letting her pull free of my grip and watching her start to pace across the stone floor.

For a few long moments that's all she does, working herself up into a lather and shooting me adorable glares while she tries to decide what to do.

"What do you want me to say?" She finally bursts out, her skin flushed bright pink. "That I'm in love with you? That I have been since we were children and not being with you is tearing me to absolute pieces?" Sophie demands, throwing her arms up in exasperation. "Is that what you wanted? Was it everything you hoped, was it really worth destroying our friendship?!"

"Absolutely it is!" I bite back, and her eyes well with tears. Because we'll be trading it in for something so much better!"

"What are you talking about?" Sophie cries.

"We're meant to be together, Sophie." I proclaim, catching her wrists before she can dance back out of my reach, and pulling her flush against me. "I'm sorry I didn't see it sooner, but I do now."

Sophie shakes her head in disbelief, a rogue tear sliding down her cheek, "what, so you're making fun of me now?"

#Chapter 112 – Not Like This

Lv.1

My brow knits together in confusion, how could she think such a thing. "Of course not!" I correct her fiercely. "Sophie I'm trying to tell you I'm in love with you too."

Before I can say another word, my mate raises her sweet voice to a near shout, "Don't!" She objects, trying to push me away with all her strength and getting nowhere. "This isn't I don't want that, not like this!"

"Why not?" i interrogate, holding her tight.

"Because it's cruel, Drake!" She exclaims, her voice so shaky she can barely get the words out.

"How?" I question desperately.

"I've spent the last four years living in Selene Durand's shadow, and I refuse to do it for the rest of my life." She hiccups, "I'm never going to be Selene, and you know it!"

"Baby, I don't want you to be Selene." My wolf is close to the surface now, and I have to force the words out through clenched fangs.

I'm not the only one, Sophie's brilliant eyes are glowing, her muscles wound tight as a spring. "Who's lying now?" She hisses, "you can't have the woman of your dreams so you're settling for some cheap imitation.

"Don't call yourself that!" I rumble furiously.

"Why not?" She counters, "it's the truth! You have a type Drake. You like broken women, ones you think you can save." Sophie lobs the accusation like a verbal grenade. "You had the perfect damsel in Selene, but she already had a mate, so you looked around and found the first mistreated she-wolf you could find and decided she'd have to do, right?"

"Wrong!" I snarl, softening my hold on her lithe wrists when she flinches in pain, "I was never in love with Selene-"

“Stop lying!” Sophie explodes, “I heard you professing your feelings for her the day after Bastien claimed her, I saw you try to kiss her!”

“Yes, you did,” I concede, “but I was wrong. I thought I loved her, but only until I learned you were in danger. The moment I realized I might lose you, I realized how wrong I was about Selene. I didn’t know what love was before, but I do now.”

“Do you even hear what you’re saying?” She scowls, “you just admitted you didn’t want me until you thought I needed saving.”

My hands are shaking with anger now, but thankfully Sophie is too worked up to notice. “Enough!” I thunder, grasping her nape and dipping my head until our lips are nearly touching, staring into her bloodshot eyes so intensely she freezes in place. “Would you like me to tell you the difference between you and Selene, Sophie?”

“I already know!” She tries to say, “She’s beautiful and experienced -“

“Selene isn’t the one who takes my breath away when she smiles at me.” I correct her harshly, barely resisting the urge to give her a shake. “Selene isn’t the one whose scent makes me dizzy with the need to claim her. Selene isn’t the one who makes me want to neglect all my responsibilities so I can spend all day and night by her side.”

Sophie is staring up at me in abject shock, appearing so lost I want to cuddle her close and wipe away all her tears. But not yet, “And Selene isn’t the one who makes me feel like my heart has leapt right out of my chest and now beats in her tiny hands.” || conclude. “Selene isn’t my mate, you are!”

For the first time, it seems like my words have broken through her stubborn little head. “I am?” She peeps uncertainly.

“You are.” I confirm, and if I have to spend every day for the rest of our lives proving it to you, I gladly will.” I vow, finally softening my possessive grip. “But we will be mated whether you’re convinced or not. You will be my wife.”

To my surprise, Sophie looks away from me, forcing her hand between our bodies so she can pinch her left arm. I yank the little pincers free when she winces. “What are you doing?”

“I think I’m dreaming.” She explains, her voice barely louder than a whisper.

For the first time since this conversation began, a wide smile stretches over my face. “You should have said so,” I tease, dropping a kiss to her cheek, “I have a much better way of testing that out.”

“You do?” Sophie wonders aloud, her long lashes fluttering when I place a matching kiss on her other cheek.

“Oh yes.” I grin, trailing my lips over her jaw, “not nearly as painful, and much-much-more fun.”

“How do you do it?” She asks breathlessly, her soft form melting against me.

“Like this.” I explain, tenderly kissing her damp eyelids one after the other, “And this,” I add, depositing another kiss on the tip of her nose.

When I finally move to claim her luscious mouth, Sophie already looks as if she’s in a daze. Hmm, my wolf assesses thoughtfully, we might have to repeat this lesson a lot. Just to make sure it sinks in.

I couldn’t agree more. I think back, catching my mate’s mouth in the first of a lifetime of kisses.

As soon as our lips connect, I feel like a missing puzzle piece has finally fallen into place. Sophie moans, her lips parting in invitation, and all I can think is that nothing has ever felt so right.

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Chapter 113

Chapter 113 – Making Up

Bastien

(actually think this chapter should be 111, so that it happens before the Drake and Sophie scenes-if not, it can be presented as a memory)

“Much more of this, and I’m going to regret coming back at all!”

I can’t stop hearing Selene say those awful words over and over in my head. They circle round and round, tormenting me every time my mind drifts from my work.

We haven’t spoken since that phone call. When I got back to the apartment last night Selene was already asleep, and this morning she took Lila to the park before I was even awake. It’s clear she doesn’t want to talk to me, and if our situation were any less dire ! wouldn’t permit such avoidance, but the investigation is keeping me busy day and night.

Luckily the eclipse festival will force us into the same room tonight, and I won't let us go to bed angry again. We'll talk all this out and keep at it until things are resolved, we can't go back to bottling up our feelings and I can't fail Selene again. I won't.

The only blessing we've had since returning is Selene's good press, and even my own has improved greatly since those first tense days back. Still, nothing is simple. I'm putting out fires left and right, and the more dead ends I reach searching for our enemies, the more stressed I become.

I can only pray that nothing goes wrong at the festival tonight-whether in my marriage, or the pack.

Selene

"Careful sweetheart." I caution Lila, "the oven is very hot."

We're in the kitchen baking cookies, and in all her excitement to see the gooey chocolate confections come out of the oven, my pup is hovering right behind me as I extract the tray.

"How soon we eat dem?" She asks hopefully.

*They have to cool first." I remind her, "but it won't be too long."

"One mint?" She chirps.

"More like fifteen minutes," I correct.

"Mommy dat's forever!" She exclaims.

"Better forever than a burnt tongue, my love." I laugh.

As I get started on the dishes, Lila sets up camp in front of the cooling rack, hungrily watching the cookies as if she's worried one might jump off and roll away. In fact she's so intent, I'm surprised to hear her small voice after only a few moments. "Mommy?"

"Hmm?" I hum in reply, already preparing to tell her 'not yet'.

However, Lila does ask me if the cookies are cool yet. Instead she inquires, "Are you 'n' Daddy fighting?"

Shit. I think. "We're not fighting, angel." I qualify, "just disagreeing. Sometimes grown ups disagree with each other and it can sound or feel like fighting, but it's not anything for you to worry about."

"Well I don' like it." She announces.

Huffing a silent chuckle, I reply. "I don't like it either."

*Then why you do it?" Lila questions, sounding as if she thinks I'm very irrational.

"Because disagreeing is natural and even healthy. It's how you learn new things and grow." I explain, choosing my words very carefully. Besides it's important to share what you're feeling with the people you love, even when those feelings aren't good. Otherwise, you can never fix it."

#Chapter 113 – Making Up

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The irony of my advice doesn't escape me. I avoided Bastien last night and this morning, more out of guilt for lashing out at him than anything else.

"Why can' you fix it?" My daughter presses. I'm beginning to think children this age aren't capable of hearing anything without asking 'why.' "Because when we keep unhappy feelings locked up inside of us, then they stay there and get bigger and bigger." I say slowly sensing my own unhappy feelings growing even as I speak. "You have to let them out. You just have to be very careful how you do it, how you express them."

"Like when I tell Daddy I no like him?" She chirps.

"That's right." I confirm. Or when foolish mommies tell their mates they regret reconciling with them.

"So you 'n' Daddy make up?" My pup continues.

"Not yet, Lila bean." I confess. "Sometimes you have to take a little bit of time or space to calm down or figure out what you're feeling – so you don't say things you don't mean." Or when you're a big scaredy-cat who can't face the bad things you already said. "Like when you're very upset and I have you lie down in your room until you're ready to talk."

"So how long it take?" Lila wants to know.

"For me and Daddy?" I clarify.

"Yes." She peeps.

"Hopefully not much longer." I answer truthfully. I'm not sure why I'm feeling so moody, but I really don't want to fight with Bastien. I just have to find the courage to face what I said, and hope my husband will forgive me.

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Bastien

My mother brings Lila down to my study just before seven to say goodnight, as we all decided she was too young to stay up for the festival. My pup toddles in, her adorable little face unusually serious as she crosses the room.

When I pull her into my lap, she snuggles in deep- the exact way Selene always does. Sometimes they're so alike my heart aches. "There's my sweet pup, how was your day Lila bean?"

She looks up at me with the same sober expression, "Daddy, I don' wan' you 'n' Mommy to disagree nymore."

Her words catch me off guard. Selene warned me how pups pick up on everything, but I wasn't prepared for her to be so tuned in when she hasn't even seen us together. "I don't want us to either." I respond simply.

Lila throws her arms up in exasperation. "So make up!"

"It's not that simple, little orle." I sigh, kissing her hair.

"Yes'tis." Lila insists, "just say sowwy."

I start to chuckle softly, wishing everything truly was as black and white as they seem in children's minds. However, when Lila hears the rolling rumble in my chest, she frowns. "Is not funny, Daddy."

"I know, sweetheart, I'm sorry." Hugging her close, I promise, "I'll talk to Mommy tonight. You have my word."

"Good." She nods firmly, scrambling down from my lap now that the mission is accomplished.

"Hey!" I call after her, "I don't get a goodnight kiss?"

Lila turns back with a radiant smile and giggle, running back over to me and throwing her arms around my neck, “goodnight Daddy!”

Squeezing her tight, I reply. “Goodnight Lila. I love you.”

When Selene appears, I’m standing in front of the wide, floor to ceiling mirror in my closet, decked out in a black suit and wrangling my cuff links into my sleeves. She leans in the doorway, looking so stunning my heart skips a beat.

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#Chapter 113 – Making Up

(Lv.1

She’s wearing a long black dress embroidered with gold, silver and bronze threads, making it appear as if she’s wrapped in the night sky itself. It flows around her like a cascading shadow, complimented by her smokey eyes and onyx jewelry.

I only wish she looked as happy as she is lovely, instead her beautiful features are positively forlorn. Turning to face her directly, I fall into the bottomless pools of her eyes and Axel sits up in concern. I don’t care what we have to say, as long as it takes that look of her face.

Before I can open my mouth to do as my wolf suggests, Selene beats me to the punch. “I didn’t mean it.” She murmurs sorrowfully.

Her words lift some of the weight from my heart, but far too much remains as her guilt pulses through our bond. “Baby-“

“I don’t know why I said it.” She interrupts. “I feel terrible. Two weeks ago I was scolding Lila for taking her anger out on others and I just did the same thing to you.”

“Come here, little wolf.” I order, opening my arms to my poor mate.

She doesn’t listen. “I don’t know why I said it.” Selene repeats, “I just feel so out of sorts. Everything is such a mess.” Tears well in her eyes as she emphatically shakes her head.

Striding over to her, I don’t stop until our bodies are mere centimeters apart. “Selene, look at me.” I instruct, taking her chin when she still does not obey.

“I’m sorry too,” i profess, brushing away an escaped tear, “you were right. And I never want to make you feel that way – not ever.”

“But I don’t!” She insists, “I don’t regret coming back. I’m so much happier than I’ve been the last few years – even with all the disasters.”

“I am too.” I share, leaning down to kiss her. She dodged my lips, and Axel growls from somewhere inside me.

“I’m not just sorry for saying those things.” Selene says, ignoring my wolf’s warning. “I’m sorry I avoided you, I’m sorry I didn’t talk to you. I’ve been acting like a child.”

“Listen to me right now, mate.” I command, “you’ve got to stop beating yourself up for this. I know you’re sorry, I know how overwhelmed you must be feeling and I understand.”

“I feel like I haven’t done anything but hurt you since you found me.” She whispers.

“Well that’s where you’re wrong.” I correct her, “it hasn’t been easy, but I’ve done my fair share of hurting too.”

“But-”

“You’ve given me so much more good than I ever dreamed.” I interrupt. “And even if you hadn’t, I’d rather spend every day being hurt by you than live without you.”

Selene hiccups a laugh, “that’s really twisted. But I know what you mean.”

“Can we kiss and make up now?” I ask with a grin.

Selene slides her arms around my middle and presses herself flush against me, “just kiss?” “For now,” I concede, claiming her lips. “But later? Later you’re all mine.”

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Chapter 114

#Chapter 114 – Honeymoon

Lv.1

Bastien

The Eclipse Festival sprawls before us, a whirlwind of lights and colors so overwhelming I can feel my mate leaning close to me for comfort. It's not only the size of the event and deafening noise around us unsettling her, it's also the attention. We're still in the VIP section, and wherever Selene and I walk people turn to stare, and I can't help but notice how different things are from the past.

Four years ago these aristocrats would have been whispering behind their hands and curiously eyeing Selene's unmarked neck. Tonight there's a sense of reverence in their attention, an admiration and respect my sweet mate is still struggling to get used to. Even though it's the proper response, I can't help but feel angry it took my pack this long to see Selene for the treasure she is. They should have been bowing down to her from day one.

"How are you doing, little wolf?" I murmur as we enter a shining pavilion, pausing to nibble her earlobe and relishing the blush that bursts across her cheeks. —,

She peeks up at me from beneath her lashes, "I could use a distraction."

"Oh?" I reply, moving my tongue to the soft spot behind her ear, "What kind of distraction?"

"This is working fairly well." She admits, turning to face me completely and closing her eyes as I continue to taste her. "I can almost forget they're all watching."

"It's just a little while longer." I promise, glancing up at the moon. It's almost completely obscured now, a huge red orb rimmed with a crescent of pearly light. As soon as the eclipse is complete we'll go out to the main festival stage and kick off the fireworks. I'll make a short speech, and then we'll be free to go.

Just then a chirping noise sounds from the vicinity of Selene's hip, followed by a soft vibration.

She pulls her phone from a hidden compartment in her gown, flipping open the notification center and scanning the contents. Then Selene looks up at me with a brilliant, contagious smile. "Drake finally told Sophie!"

"And?" I ask, grinning back at her.

Her smile widens, a mischievous glimmer appearing in her lovely eyes. "Let's just say he's going to be incommunicado for the foreseeable future."

Sliding my hands around my mate's waist, I pull her close again, not liking the slight distance her text message imposed on us. "Mhmm, I know what that's like." Lowering my lips to her throat, I trail kisses over my mark, you know, you and I never had a real honeymoon."

“Well you certainly did your best to make up for it.” Selene quips, reminding me of all the hours we’ve spent locked away in our bedroom. “It’s not like we had time, let alone the opportunity.”

Shaking my head in disapproval, I decide, “When things calm down, we’re going to have one.”

“Oh really?” Selene asks, arching her brow curiously.

“Yes.” I confirm, “Just you and me. We can go to the islands, take Lila and spend a few days playing at the beach. Then you and I can sneak away to our own private bungalow and make up for lost time.”

“What, and leave Lila by herself?” Selene remarks, hire some sea turtles to babysit and hope they don’t slack off?”

Cutting my eyes to her, I scold, “You know what I mean. We’ll figure something out.”

Selene giggles, rising up on her tiptoes to kiss me. I catch the back of her head and keep her mouth locked against mine, drawing kiss after kiss from her lips until we’re both breathless. When we part, I can feel all the ogling shifters around us, but my attention remains on Selene.

My mate’s smile flickers, a shadow of what it was a few moments ago. “When things calm down.” She repeats, “Do you really believe such a time will come?”

Flattening my mouth into a hard line, I vow, “Selene, I’m going to make this right. I’m going to make our family safe.”

#Chapter 114 – Honeymoon

Lv.1

“How?” She asks forlornly. “It’s not that I don’t believe in you, baby.” She assures me needlessly. “I just.— this all feels so much bigger than us – so far out of our control.”

“I know.” I admit, cuddling her close and glaring at the people around us until the whole lot turns away and pretends they aren’t still watching out of the corners of their eyes. “I know it feels like that, but we can’t believe it. When we do, that’s when they’ve won.” I explain soberly, “We’re taking it step by step; searching the area around the cell tower, looking into the DNA, going through all the evidence from my father’s murder and the fire and I’m going to deal with Blaise.” I promise, “I will not rest until the threats to us are neutralized.”

“Deal with Blaise?” Selene parrots, looking up at me uncertainly, “how?”

“I don’t know yet, sweetheart.” I admit, sighing heavily.

This isn’t entirely true. The more time that passes, the more I’m convinced my family will never be safe as long as the Calypso Alpha lives. However, taking out the most powerful Alpha on the continent is no simple matter, especially because challenging him would mean taking responsibility for his pack if I won. I’m not even sure I could win, and losing would mean abandoning Selene and Lila to his mercy

“But I will.” I swear to Selene. I don’t think of it as a lie, because I have to figure out how to deal with Blaise. I don’t have any other choice, and so I’ll find a way. “I will.”

Selene

After Bastien gives his speech and we move back towards the VIP pavilions, one of the elder councilors approaches us and pulls my mate away with a promise to return shortly. I’m left standing at the mouth of a market tent, one whose contents could easily fill a museum. Everywhere I look there are priceless jewels and artworks I’d feel too afraid of damaging to ever wear or display.

Frankly I would rather Bastien have left me among the throngs of shifters watching the fireworks. He wasn’t lying when he said the common people were much fonder of me than the nobles. Most people seem to have come around anyway, but I know my enemies are most likely members of this crowd – the ones who stroll through the tent’s riches dropping inordinate sums of gold left and right.

Right on cue, a familiar flash of red hair appears in the distance. Of course. I think grumpily. This woman must have some sort of special radar for knowing when I’m alone. In the past I would have run from her, but not today. I’m done being afraid of silly, vindictive she-wolves whose entire identity is constructed around being some wealthy man’s arm-candy.

I know she sees me too, she’s walking straight towards me and I can almost feel the spite radiating from the black hole in her chest. I can’t believe I’ve never learned this she-wolve’s name. She tried to kill me once, and attacked me twice – I suppose I felt like spending any time finding out who she is would be feeding into her power over me.

“You.” Red hisses, and for once she’s not surrounded by a flock of minions. “What did you do to us in that bathroom, you freak?”

Crossing my arms over my chest, I arch a skeptical brow. “Was it not enough to teach you your lesson?” I inquire coolly. “I mean how dumb are you? The Alpha doesn’t scare you, me knocking you out without even needing to dirty my hands touching you, doesn’t scare you. So what will it take?”

“It’s not about me.” She spits, eyes glowing. “It’s not about what you say or do to try and intimidate me. It’s about what is right.” The woman continues fiercely. “You don’t

deserve Bastien, you never have and you never will. I don't care what you do to me, am never going to let you off the hook."

I let her hateful words wash over me, feeling my power begin to stir deep inside. Still, I don't bring it forward. Cocking my head to the side, I consider the bitter creature in front of me. How sad her life must be, if this is the story she has to tell herself, if she feels the need to attack others for getting things she wanted. "I feel sorry for you." I announce, watching pure outrage consume her features.

"Excuse me!" She barks.

"1." I repeat slowly, "Feel sorry for you." Red tries to move towards me, and this time I do reach for my power, sending out a pulse strong enough to knock her off her feet, but small enough to keep her conscious. Moving to stand over her, I keep her pinned to the ground with my foot, pressing my shiny gold stiletto into her belly. "Your life must be fucking miserable..." I reason coldly. "mean, you must really hate yourself."

Dark emotion flickers in her eyes, and I know I'm hitting close to home. "I know what that's like. But it doesn't mean I'm going to let you bring me down." Pressing my heel into her flesh enough to pinch, but not break the skin, I add. "I used to believe it when

#Chapter 114 – Honeymoon

Lv.1

bitches like you told me I don't deserve Bastien. I used to believe I was worthless."

I can feel Bastien coming closer now, and I have a feeling he's going to appear behind me at any moment. "But guess what?" I continue, "The Goddess created us for one another. And I'm not the weak little girl you knew back then. I know my worth, and I know how to deal with trash like you." My power swirls through my blood, rising up like a tidal wave. "The next time I see you in my path, you better disappear before you can cross it. You only get three strikes – I won't give you a fourth."

With that I send out another energy pulse, knocking her clean unconscious and stepping back from her prone body with a sense of true pride. Bastien's oversized hand lands on my waist, and I look up to find him gazing at me with pure pride, and raw desire. Before I can speak, he glances pointedly to my left, and I realize he wasn't the only person who witnessed my confrontation.

Dozens of aristocrats and elders circle us, their mouths slack-jawed with surprise and respect – even fear.

I guess Bastien was right. We really aren't the same people we used to be – and now the entire pack knows it.

Pregnant and Rejected by My Alpha Mate Chapter 115

Pregnant and Rejected by My Alpha Mate

Chapter 115

#Chapter 115 – Odette Sees a Ghost

Lv.1

Odette

“Woah! Slow down little one,” I call as Lila races down a steep hill. We’re in the park for our daily tea-time, which we agreed should always be a picnic on sunny days. While I’m laying out the blanket and unpacking the basket, my granddaughter is racing around the grassy meadow, burning off all her youthful energy. I don’t mind her tiring herself out, but i’d also prefer to return Selene’s pup to her in one piece.

My daughter-in-law has gone to look into buying the Full Moon Cafe, the city’s most popular bistro. Everyone knew the owners were getting on in years, but it was still a shock when the restaurant went up for sale last week. Devoted patrons across Elysium immediately went up in arms, arguing about who should take over and ensuring the beloved menu is carried over to the new owners.

It just so happens that Selene has been trying to figure out what to do with her spare time here and greatly misses the cafe she had in Asphodel, so it seems fortuitous she should take over. There is a small chance the owners won’t want to sell to her, but I think it’s more likely they’ll jump at the chance. Selene is the richest woman in the city, and she’ll take the responsibility seriously. When Selene is finished with her meeting she’ll join us for tea, but until then I get to soak up some one-on-one time with Lila.

“Gamma watch me!” Lila exclaims, doing a somersault and grinning with pride.

*Very nice,” I praise warmly, extending my arms to her. “Now come here rolly polly, don’t you want some sandwiches?”

The tiny wolf toddles over happily, “With cucumbs?!”

“Yes with cucumbers,” I answer, carefully pronouncing the word so it will sink into her beautiful little head. Until two weeks ago my granddaughter had never heard of a tea sandwich, now they’re all she wants to eat, but she hasn’t quite figured out the pronunciations yet.

For a while we eat and chat in ease, me telling stories about when Bastien was little, and Lila giggling in delight over her father's exploits. Part of me worries about putting ideas in her head, but then again, it would serve Bastien right to experience some of the chaos he put me through as a boy.

"Daddy really paint da cat?" Lila chirps happily.

"He did." I confirm. "Bright blue – the poor thing wouldn't go near him for weeks afterwards."

"What was deir name?" She asks curiously.

"Mr Whisk-" I begin, only to be interrupted a moment later.

"Gamma, wha's dat?" Lila asks suddenly, pointing across the park to a group of people gathered around a street performer.

"It looks like a musician." I explain, scanning the crowd. "He's playing a violin, do you know... My voice dies in my throat. There, just off to the side of the small audience, is a woman I would recognize anywhere.

"It can't be." I mutter under my breath. It's been years since I saw Odile, but she looks exactly the same. She's dressed in all black, as if she's still in mourning after all this time. Her once blonde hair is now silvery gray, and though her eyes are covered by sunglasses, I remember their opulent green shade perfectly.

It's not possible. My wolf says, She was exiled, she has no business here.

It shouldn't be possible – but there's no mistake. I counter. I would know Odile anywhere. It's not just her appearance, it's the way she holds herself – her posture and way of moving. I've never met another woman who could appear simultaneously rigid and fluid all at once. It's as if she's made of pure stone, so impossibly still when standing in place, but as soon as she moves it's with the easy grace of a summer's breeze.

"Gamma, wha's wong?" Lila's little voice sounds on my right, and the next thing I know the sweet pup is crawling into my lap.

I look down to find Selene's two-toned eyes staring up at me in concern, and offer my granddaughter a soft smile. "Nothing sweet girl," I lie, petting her tiny cheek, "I just thought I saw somebody I knew once."

Lila leans into my breast with a tea sandwich clasped in each plump hand, settling in and making it clear she has no intention of moving. Stroking her hair while she takes alternating nibbles of her lunch – first the sandwich in her right hand, then the one in her

15:54

#Chapter 115 – Odette Sees a Ghost

(Lv. 1

left and back again – I look back to the street musician.

Odile is gone.

The distinguished widow is nowhere in sight, but I'm certain it was her. I may be aging, my mind is as sharp as ever and if there was ever a face I will never forget, it's my enemy's. Just then I scent Selene, and a moment later my daughter-in-law is crossing the meadow in front of us, barefoot and carrying her heels in one hand,

. She's grinning at Lila, who is still happily munching away in my lap. "Are you so comfy that you're not even going to come say hello to me Lila Bean?" She teases.

"Uh huh." Lila nods mischievously, sending us all into a fit of laughter.

"She's a fickle little thing." I chuckle.

Selene leans down and kisses her daughter's hair, "Not fickle." She reasons warmly, "Just a cuddle bug."

"She gets that from you." I share, gazing lovingly at the pup, "when Bastien was little I could never get him to sit still. But give this one a snuggle and she'll be on you like glue."

When I look up Selene is watching me closely, as if she can read my unease through my smile. She cocks her head to the side in question, and I shake my head, mouthing: later.

She nods in understanding, and I change the subject, "How did your meeting go?"

Selene's smile is like pure sunshine, and I can scarcely believe this is the same she-wolf Bastien rescued from Garrick all those years ago. It's even hard to believe she's the same guarded woman I met two months ago in Asphodel. Marriage and motherhood agree with her, and now that she has her wolf back and her powers are growing, she's finally becoming the woman she was always meant to be.

"It's not official yet." Selene explains, "But I made an offer and they accepted."

"Oh sweetheart, that's wonderful!" I congratulate her. "I suppose that means you'll be needing someone to wrangle this munchkin on a regular basis then?" I ask, referring to the child in my arms.

On

“Yes,” Selene confirms, “but don’t worry, we can find a nanny if you don’t want to-”

“Over my dead body.” I growl, prompting another laugh.

“Well then,” Selene quips, reaching over to brush a few crumbs from Lila’s cheek, “I suppose that’s that.”

Bastien

I know something is wrong the moment my mother walks into my study. She’s pale and gaunt, as if she’s seen a ghost. I’m on my feet instantly. “Mom, what’s wrong? Is it Selene? Lila?”

“No, no.” She promises, waving me off. “It’s...” She trails off, sounding uncertain, “Bastien, it’s Odile.”

“What?” I repeat in astonishment.

“I saw her in the park. It was at a distance, but I’m sure it was her.” Mom asserts firmly, “You remember how distinctive she was.”

I don’t know how to respond to this. A thousand thoughts are swirling through my mind. “Tell me everything.”

As my mother recounts the tale, my mind races. Odile was once my aunt by marriage. She married my traitorous uncle and birthed his heir Frederic, and though my father never uncovered any evidence that Odile was involved in my uncle’s attempted coup, we always expected she was an active player in the scheme.

“I believe you.” I tell Mom after she insists she’s not crazy for the dozenth time. “The question is why. Why would she come here? Why now?”

“It can’t be a coincidence.” Mom surmises. “Not with everything that’s gone wrong the last few years.”

Her words hit me like a slap across the face. All this time I’ve been struggling to understand the motive of our enemies, attributing everything to a hunger for power. However, this has always felt more personal than that. “I can’t believe I never considered this before.”

15:55 L

#Chapter 115 – Odette Sees a Ghost

Lv.1

Mom nods in agreement. "If you ask me, Arabella isn't the only one who wanted revenge."

Again I freeze, "What?"

"For Flynn." Mom clarifies, as if the answer was obvious.

"Are you saying you think she targeted Selene and I because she blames me for Flynn's death?" I question dumbly.

"Well of course," She replies, "what did you think it was about?"

Slowly lowering myself into my chair, I bury my head in my hands. "Goddess, I've been so blind." Rubbing my eyes I wonder aloud, "But if Arabella wanted revenge, why focus so much on marrying me?"

Mom purses her lips, "I think the question is what she was planning after you were mated. Who's to say she planned on keeping you alive?"

Taking a series of deep breaths, Selene suspected she wasn't working alone. And we know she allied with Grigore... do you think it's possible she also allied with Frederic and Odile?"

"I think it's probably." Mom confirms sadly. "They've all been exiled now, and while Arabella is too well known here to show her face, Frederic certainly is not."

"He was just a child during the coup." I recall.

"He could have been here for years and we'd never have known." Mom agrees, "And even if he wasn't, I'm sure he is now. Odile wouldn't be here otherwise."

Staring at my mother in shock and horror, I say, "What the hell are we going to do?"

Pregnant and Rejected by My Alpha Mate Chapter 116

Pregnant and Rejected by My Alpha Mate

Chapter 116

#Chapter 116 – Midnight Snack

Bastien

Learning that my cousin may be responsible for all my problems over the last few years has sent me through a loop. I've been searching for a motive beyond power and bloodlust since this all began, but it seems I didn't learn my lesson after my uncle's coup. Problems don't disappear after they've been exiled, and blood is no guarantee of loyalty.

When I came home tonight I held my mate and pup close, feeling even more protective of them than usual. I think Selene sensed something was wrong, but thankfully she passed out even earlier than Lila did. She's been tired lately, taking a lot of naps and going to bed so early I have to fight the urge to wake her up for adult playtime when I'm finally ready to go to sleep myself.

Tonight I didn't have any such problems. Sex was the last thing on my mind, and it was hours before I could relax enough to go to sleep. I lay awake late into the night, staring at the ceiling and wondering how everything could have possibly gotten so mixed up. The worst part of all this is that my family's past drama may be endangering the life of my wife and child. Selene and Lila had nothing to do with any of this, yet their proximity to me has put them in the line of fire. The guilt could eat me alive.

I comfort myself by wrapping my body around Selene's so tightly that I know no one could possibly get to her without going through me first. After drifting off in fitful bursts, I wake around three AM, immediately aware I'm alone in bed. I glance at the bathroom door, but it stands ajar and the lights are off. Sliding out of bed, I pad to the bedroom door, tracking my mate's scent out into the main apartment.

A soft white light emanates from the kitchen, and I follow the gentle glow, rounding the marble island to find Selene standing in front of the open refrigerator. She's still wearing the silky negligee I wrangled her unconscious limbs into when I put her to bed, and her thick, dark hair is an artfully disheveled mess.

Her back is to me, and I can hear her soft munching noises indicating a late night snack, but I'm so on edge I have to ask, "Baby," I greet her sleepily, "are you okay?"

Selene jumps half a foot into the air, spinning around and whipping her hands behind her back with a dismissive shrug. "I missed dinner."

"I know you did." I commiserate, eyeing her tense posture. "I'm sorry sweetheart, I would have woken you but you were really out. I thought you must need the rest."

"It's okay," she assures me, "I just woke up hungry."

"I can imagine. Why don't you let me make you something." I suggest, rounding the island and reaching for her.

“No! That’s okay!” She exclaims, shrinking away from me. “I already found something.”

Tilting my head to the side and knitting my brow, I remark, “I’m glad to hear it, would you like to tell me why you’re trying to hide

Appearing very sullen, Selene huffs, “I’m not hiding anything.”

I reach for her again, and again she dances out of my grasp. “What’s going on little wolf, what are you eating?”

“Nothing.” Selene insists defensively.

“Which is it, mate?” I demand, my amusement growing with every minute that passes, “have you found something or are you eating nothing?”

Looking as if she’s admitting a terrible secret, Selene slowly brings her hands forward, revealing a jar of pickles in one hand, and a jar of chocolate spread in the other. Unable to hold back a chuckle, I say, “chocolate covered pickles?”

“It’s good!” Selene exclaims stubbornly.

Alright.” I agree in my most soothing tone, slipping an arm around her while simultaneously extracting the ingredients from her hands. With hesitation, I dip a pickle in the chocolate and sample a bite.

Axel immediately starts making retching noises, and I burst into laughter, “Goddess Selene, that’s revolting.”

Selene moans, her eyes welling with tears and her lower lip quivering dangerously. I can see a storm coming, and guilt immediately washes over me, “Hey, no – it’s okay.”

#Chapter 116 – Midnight Snack

Lv. 1

“N-no i-it’s n-not.” Selene chokes, salty rivulets sliding down her fair cheeks. “Y-you said I w-was revolt-ting!”

“Selene, baby,” I profess, framing her face in my hands, “I said the pickles were revolting, not you!”

“Yeah but I’m eating them, so I’m disgusting!” She cries, breaking down completely.

Absolutely beside myself and baffled about how a midnight snack turned into such a minefield, I pull her into my arms, rocking her as I ask, “Sweetheart where is this coming from?”

“I just wanted a snack!” Selene wails pitifully, sobbing into her pickle.

If I had a death wish, I might ask my mate if it’s her time of the month. I know she was unafflicted yesterday, but we haven’t been intimate today and she must be due. We’ve made love just about every day since reuniting and she hasn’t had her period yet. Of course... the logic slowly works out in my brain, that was two months ago.

All of a sudden, our conversation in the cafe comes back to me. You’re probably breeding already, you’re the most fertile you’ll ever be and we’ve had unprotected sex dozens of times.

Looking at Selene sharply, I lower my face to her neck, inhaling deeply and feeling a rush of euphoria when her altered scent reaches my nose. A joyous laugh escapes me, and my poor little mate cries harder, “Stop laughing at me!”

I can’t even explain my discovery or correct her misunderstanding, I’m too thrilled. Overjoyed and kissing Selene everywhere I can reach, I lift her into my arms and spin her around.

“What are you doing?” Selene hiccups, clutching me for support.

“Selene,” I say her name like a prayer, exalting my perfect mate and setting her down so I can look into her beautiful face. “You’re pregnant.” I explain, kissing her lips, nose and eyelids. Kissing all the way down her neck to my mark, then back up again.

“What?” Selene sniffs in confusion.

“Your scent is only just starting to change.” I share, “But it’s there. And it all fits – the exhaustion, the cravings, the mood swings.”

“Mood swings?” Selene repeats, thoroughly affronted.

“Sweetheart,” I say, trying to pull her attention to the matter at hand. “We’re going to have a pup!”

My words slowly sink in, and Selene’s eyes grow so wide I fear they might burst. “Are you sure?”

“Yes baby.” I insist, sliding my hand to her flat tummy and trying to feel the tiny being within. “I’m sure.”

Selene thinks about this for a long moment, the gears visibly turning in her mind as she tries to process the news. Eventually she looks back up at me and bursts into fresh tears, throwing her arms around my neck. “Selene, why are you crying?” I inquire in concern, holding her close.

“Because I’m happy!” She balls, pressing her tear-stained face to my neck.

Gathering her up into my arms, I vow, “It’s going to be different this time. I’m going to be with you every step of the way. You won’t have to do it alone.”

Selene whimpers, and at first I don’t think she’s going to share her thoughts, but eventually she gazes up at me, “You have no idea how much I wanted you with me.” She weeps, “I was begging for you in the delivery room, I was begging for you from the moment we parted.”

“You don’t ever have to go through that again.” I promise, caressing her hair. “You proved you could do it without me, but you won’t have to now. We’ll be together, we’ll do it all together.”

“Bastien, I was really sick last time.” Selene admits. “That’s why I ended up in the hospital that time. It wasn’t just morning sickness, but a severe nausea condition that lasted the entire pregnancy. I was hospitalized more than once in Asphodel.”

A stab of fear pierces my heart. “You never told me that.”

“We still have a lot to catch up on.” Selene hiccups, “A lot has happened over the last three years.”

“And we will catch up.” I insist. “I’ll take care of you, I’ll do everything I can to support you.”

“Lila’s going to be a big sister.” My mate realizes with a gentle smile. “She’s not going to like having to share the spotlight.”

“But she’ll love having someone to boss around.” I proclaim, still rocking the precious bundle in my arms. “Do you need more

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#Chapter 116 – Midnight Snack

snacks or can we go back to bed?” I murmur, kissing her velvety lips.

Selene’s tears have slowed, and she grins up at me, “can I bring the chocolate to bed?”

Throwing my head back and laughing without restraint, I confirm, “Baby you can bring whatever you want, as long as you promise to share.”

With a sullen glance from beneath her lashes, Selene replies, "I'll share the chocolate, but not the pickles."

Feeling as if the sun is burning inside my very chest and threatening to burst out, I agree. "Deal."

Pregnant and Rejected by My Alpha Mate Chapter 117

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Chapter 117

#Chapter 117 – Travel Plans

Selene

Bastien is watching me when I wake up. Propped on his elbow and tracing patterns across my bare belly with a goofy grin on his face. Shivering in the cool morning air, and less than amused to have my covers stolen from me, I roll towards my mate, "Bastien I'm cold." I whine.

"I'm sorry little wolf," He chuckles, snuggling me close, "I couldn't help myself." "You know it's very creepy to watch someone sleep." I grumble sleepily.

"I'm the Alpha, I can do whatever I want." He counters smugly, "even if it's creepy."

Breathing in his familiar scent, I try to calm my stomach. Suddenly my late night snack is seeming like a very bad mistake. My insides are roiling with sour acid, and I can feel my gorge rising in my throat. For a moment, I think I might be able to ease the sickness, but I quickly realize it is not hope. Rolling out of Bastien's arms, I dart for the bathroom, my hand clasped over my mouth.

I can hear Bastien following on my heel, and though I try to close the door behind me, he forces his way through anyway. Slamming the toilet seat up and miserably emptying my stomach into the porcelain bowl, I drop to my knees on the cold tiles. My mate's large, warm hands pull my hair back from my face and rub up and down my back. Bastien makes soothing, sympathetic noises, and as much as I appreciate his affection, I can't help but think he's going to have to get used to this.

Closing the lid and resting my forehead on my arm, I glance up at the concerned wolf, "This is nothing." I moan. "Just wait."

"Poor baby." Bastien croons, stroking my hair. "Is there anything I can do to help?"

“Just keep doing that.” I murmur pitifully.

“We need to get you in to see a doctor.” He muses, surely they can prescribe you something.”

I nod, “I’ll make an appointment.”

In the distance I hear Lila calling me, and Bastien’s lips graze my temple, “I’ll go.” He assures me, “Do you think you can stomach any breakfast?”

Before I can answer, another wave of nausea rolls over me, and my head is already back in the toilet.

When I finally make it out into the living room, Lila is helping Bastien make pancakes. She’s sitting on the counter next to the bowl, stirring while he pours flour into the mix. I move towards her, but the moment the scent of sizzling bacon hits my nose, I turn green and retreat.

“Mommy, where you going?” my pup inquires, squirming on the marble surface like she wants to get down but can’t figure out how. Wiping his hands, Bastien lifts her down, and Lila runs to hug me good morning.

“I’m sorry, angel.” I hum, kissing her sweet-smelling head. “Mommy’s tummy is upset.”

We’re still standing there huddled in the living room when Aiden enters a moment later. “You’re late, Bastien!” He announces, pushing through the door without knocking. The beta turns to face Lila and I, a wide grin splitting his cheeks. “Good morning, my lovelies.”

The next thing I know, a vicious snarl sounds from the kitchen, and in the blink of an eye Bastien is in front of us. His claws are extended and his fangs bared, eyes aglow with rage as he glares at his best friend. “Bastien what are you doing?” i exclaim.

Aiden’s palms raise, and though surprised, he doesn’t seem alarmed. “Easy brother, I’m not going to touch them.”

While Bastien heaves in deep breaths like a wild beast, Aiden glances at me and scents the air, sudden understanding washing over his features. “I see.” He smiles, “feeling a bit extra protective, buddy?”

“Daddy why’re you grumpy?” Lila pipes up, reading her father’s threatening behavior as little more than a bad mood.

“Your Daddy’s wolf is just a little on edge.” Aiden explains in a low, even tone, he just needs a minute to calm down.”

“Bastien, it’s only Aiden.” I add, reaching for his hand. His silver eyes jerk down to me, swirling with savage ire. “We’re safe.” Slowly the red haze clouding his vision ebbs away, and his rigid muscles relax.

Looking back to his second in command, Bastien sighs, “I’m sorry Aiden, I don’t know what came over me.”

“I do.” Aiden laughs, tentatively stepping forward to give his friend a hug, “It seems congratulations are in order.”

Bastien returns the embrace, looking far more lighthearted now, “Thank you. We’re very excited.”

“Excited about what?” Lila chirps curiously, obviously feeling left out of these strange events.

Aiden looks like he wants to hug me too, but seems to think it’s too soon to attempt such close proximity. Instead he turns to my pup, “*excited that your Mommy bought a new cafe!” He lies smoothly.

Bastien and I both shoot him appreciative looks, we are definitely not ready to explain this to Lila yet. “But we ready knew dat.” Lila exclaims, as if we’ve all lost our minds.

“Well Aiden didn’t.” I correct her warmly. “This is the first time we’ve seen him since it happened.”

Rising to my feet and carrying the pup with me, I push Lila into Bastien’s arms, forcing him to calm down further. Before I can think of moving away, he snakes his free arm around me, sandwiching himself between our bodies.

Aiden is watching us with obvious amusement, but then his face twists up into a grimace as he peers towards the kitchen. “I think your bacon is burning.”

Bastien

“You know you’ll have to go now.” Aiden says grimly once we’re alone in my office.

I don’t need him to explain, I know he’s talking about the Calypso pack. I’ve been thinking about going for a while now, and now it’s more important than ever to deal with these threats. At the same time, I can’t stomach the idea of leaving Selene when she’s so vulnerable. “I can’t leave my pregnant mate alone, especially not when we still have enemies here.” I’ve already filled my Betas in about my mom seeing Odile, and Donavon has been scouring the city since.

“Bastien, if it’s another girl…” Aiden scrubs a tired hand over his face, “you don’t have a choice.”

“I know that!” I snap, lashing out at him and instantly regretting it. “I’m sorry,” I sigh, “It’s not just the danger, or the need to protect Selene. She was really sick last time, and I wasn’t there to take care of her. She did it all alone.” I don’t want to admit my other fears, but they spill out of me anyway. And I missed it. I missed seeing her perform a miracle, I missed seeing my daughter grow into being and enter the world.”

As much as I hate to admit it, I’m not sure what bothers me more, not being here to protect my family, or missing out on these experiences. The knowledge fills me with guilt and shame, what kind of wolf am I? What kind of Alpha puts their own selfish desires over the safety of their loved ones?

“You’re doing this to protect them.” Aiden reminds me, as if reading my thoughts. “So that the next pup that comes won’t have to worry about any of this. So that you can be there for every second of the journey. Selene is only 24, she has a lot of breeding years ahead of her still. As long as she has a future, you’ll have more chances... but she has to have a future, Bastien.”

He’s right. I know he’s right. “How am I even supposed to leave again when the pack is still angry at me for chasing Selene to Asphodel?”

“Because you won’t be leaving everything to the council this time. Odette, Donavon, Selene and I will still be here to take care of business. Between the four of us, we’ll keep the trains running.” My beta reasons.

As much as I want Selene to feel empowered as my mate and get involved with governing the pack, the plans we’ve drawn up for my hypothetical trip didn’t account for her being pregnant. Now not only is she going to be starting a new business and wrangling a toddler, she’s going to be sick as a dog.

“You’re going to have to watch Selene very carefully. All of you.” I tell Aiden, “she’ll work herself into the ground if you let her.”

“We’ll take care of her.” Aiden promises, “And Lila. We’ll be in constant contact, and it won’t be that long.”

“Why do you say that?” I ask.

“Because it can’t be.” He responds stonily, “We can get by without you-keep people placated – for maybe a month. Any more than that and... I don’t know what would happen.”

The prospect of my mission is seeming more and more impossible. I’ve got to infiltrate the Calypso territory, somehow get close to Blaise without him finding out who I am, and either convince him to give up his hunt for Volana wolves, or make it impossible for it to continue. And now I only have a month to do it.

“One month,” I nod in agreement.

“Have you told Selene?” Aiden wonders aloud.

“She knows I’ve thought about it, but she doesn’t realize how serious I was.” I exhale, dragging a hand through my hair. “How the hell am I going to tell her?”

Pregnant and Rejected by My Alpha Mate Chapter 118

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Chapter 118

#Chapter 118 – Dr’s Appointment

Selene

Frowning at my reflection, I try to focus my attention inward, reaching deep to try and access the well of my powers. I’ve been working at it every day, wanting to learn how to do more than send out a few random energy bursts. I want to figure out how to do all the things I read about in Odette’s books, and Bastien has been encouraging me to practice as much as possible – so long as stay far away from the pool.

I’ve turned the lights down low, staring determinedly at the shadows and begging them to bend to my will. Of course they don’t budge one bit, they remain stubbornly fixed in the nooks and corners of our walk in closet.

Grumbling with frustration, I try to take a few deep breaths and reset, but Bastien rounds the corner before I can, no doubt summoned by my disgruntled noises. “What’s wrong, little wolf?” He asks, not stopping until I’m completely wrapped in his arms.

“I’m trying to bend the stupid shadows and it’s not working. It seems like everything I try today is just bound to fail.” I complain.

I’m expecting a speech offering support and encouragement, instead I find my husband’s brow furrowed in worry. “Sweetheart, I think you should hold off practicing your powers for a while.”

“What?” I question in surprise. “What happened to, the more you’re able to defend yourself, the better?”

“We don’t know how any of this might affect the baby.” Bastien answers simply. “I don’t think we should risk it.”

I hadn't thought of that. I admit to Luna, suddenly awash with anxiety.

I'm sure it's fine. My wolf answers. The powers are a part of us. So is the pup. Surely they can't harm it.

I'd like to think that too. I agree, but I know so little about all this... Bastien's probably right.

"We can ask the doctor." I decide, rubbing a hand over my cloth-covered belly. My appointment is later this afternoon, and Bastien cleared his schedule so he could come along. I had been looking forward to getting my first ultrasound, now I'm overflowing with eagerness to find out if I can continue training.

"No." Bastien replies sharply, bursting my bubble. "I don't want anyone outside of the family to know about your powers, Selene."

"Then how else am I going to find out whether it's safe?" I argue.

"We'll keep researching and just feel things out as we go along." He states, as if we've had a long discussion on the matter and landed at this decision together.

"Oh really?" I reply, "That's what we're going to do?"

"That's what I think we should do." My mate amends gently. "We can't risk the information getting out, and we can't risk you or the baby."

"Bastien I knocked out a she-wolf in full public view last week." I remind him sardonically, "I think people are going to find out about my powers one way or another."

"They don't know what they saw at the festival." Bastien claims, and I don't mind them knowing once you have full control over them, but until then you're vulnerable... until Blaise is dealt with, we have to keep them quiet."

"Why do you keep saying that?" I ask, a knot forming in my stomach, "What are you planning to do about Blaise, how are you going to deal with him?"

"We can talk about that later." My husband promises, not comforting me one bit. "For now let's just enjoy this moment. In a few hours we're going to have our first picture of the baby." He reminds me excitedly.

"Alright." I concede, "just promise me we will talk about it?"

Bastien's face falls, and my apprehension grows. "I promise. Before the week is out."

At the hospital, a thoughtful nurse sweeps us into a private room before anyone can see us in the OBGYN's waiting room. Soon enough the media will get their hands on the

story anyway, Selene's scent announces the news wherever she goes, but I want to keep it quiet for as long as possible. While Selene changes and patiently submits to the nurse's vital tests, I stroll around the strange office, studying all the diagrams and anatomical models depicting the various stages of pregnancy. It's not until a familiar scent reaches my nose that I draw my attention away.

When Dr Kane enters the room, Selene offers him a wide smile. "Dr Kane, it's so good to see you!"

"You too." He exclaims, "Especially since we all thought you were dead."

"Right." Selene flushes, "well, luckily I'm not." "Very luckily." The doctor grins, "And I see congratulations are in order! You're going to be parents – again." "I'm sorry, Dr Kane." I interrupt, confused as to why the man is here. "You're not an obstetrician."

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"No, but I am the family doctor." He reminds me genially, "And I was Selene's doctor during her first pregnancy – at least the portion of it which took place in Elysium." The doctor looks back to my mate, "How are you feeling Selene, is the nausea any better this time?"

"Wait a minute," I interject again, directing my attention to Selene. "He was your doctor before you left?"

"Yes." She replies, shooting me a baffled look.

"Dr Kane is the one who helped you cover your scent?" I growl, growing more suspicious, not to mention more angry by the minute.

"Yes." Selene repeats, more gently this time, as if she can sense the direction of my thoughts.

"And you knew she was pregnant when she supposedly died?" I demand of Dr Kane, "And you said nothing?"

"I didn't think the information would do anything but cause you more grief." Dr Kane sighs, looking regretful.

My wife crinkles her nose, "Am I missing something?" "Dr Kane is the one who confirmed the DNA on the body from the fire." I share gruffly.

"You mean the fake me was pregnant too?!" She inquires in horror.

For a moment I don't understand what on earth she's talking about, and it takes a good bit of footwork to catch up to her train of thought. An anonymous medical examiner couldn't have known Selene was pregnant and would have easily missed the discrepancy between bodies. But Kane knew about the baby, so either the unfortunate soul who was used to impersonate my mate was also pregnant, or he knew it wasn't Selene and lied.

My existing suspicions about the man begin to spread like wildfire, but then the doctor calmly explains. "We never checked for that detail. The corpse was so burnt we couldn't even tell if it was male or female, and once the DNA came back a match... honestly it never occurred to me to check for a fetus."

"Oh of course." Selene grimaces, "I wasn't thinking."

"Nonsense." He waves off her self-depreciation, "Now tell me honestly, how are you feeling."

I spend the rest of the appointment, not reveling in the joy of our new pup's arrival, but stewing in anger. Now that my ire has been sparked, I can't seem to quell it. That fetus he's talking about is Lila. My daughter very nearly died before ever being born. If Selene hadn't been pulled from the fire she would have been gone before I even knew she existed, and this man who has vowed to serve my family helped keep that secret from me.

I'm not sure whether I believe Dr. Kane's words or not. He seems to have a reasonable explanation for every clue that points his way, but the clues continue to pile up. I can't imagine how he could have become mixed up in my family's drama, but he's growing more suspicious by the minute.

When the appointment is over and Selene is changing back into her regular clothes, I call Aiden. "How'd it go?" He greets me.

"Listen," I jump in without delay. "Is the hospital within the range of the cell tower that transmitted the safe house footage?"

There's a pause as my beta checks the map, followed by a slow but firm, "No."

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#Chapter 118 – Dr's Appointment

"And what about Dr Kane's house?" I press, "Is it within range?"

Another long pause builds as my friend looks up the address. Only this time, he sighs, "Yes."

Drawing in a deep, steadying breath I snarl, “I want a full background on that man, right now.” I order. “I want to know everywhere he’s been over the last decade. Everything he’s done, everyone he’s ever spoken to.”

“You think he might be behind all this?” Aiden asks.

“I think he’s involved somehow or another.” I theorize, “he may just be corrupt and taking payments for helping whoever really is. responsible, or he may be involved more substantially. But too many coincidences have happened now, too many clues point in his direction.” Quickly sharing the revelations I discovered during the appointment, I wait for my friend to tell me I’m overreacting again.

“Bastien,” He broaches instead, “Kane was also the one who examined your father’s body. He was at the crime scene and we were never able to identify the scent of his attacker. We thought they just covered it up but what if it was somebody we already knew, someone who was there right after?”

When Selene walks out a few minutes later, I take her face in my hands, “We’re finding you another doctor.”

Pregnant and Rejected by My Alpha Mate Chapter 119

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Chapter 119

#Chapter 119 – Big Sister

Lv.1

Bastien

“I’m not sure we should do this today.” Selene frets, watching Lila nibble on a slice of apple. It’s just before lunchtime on Saturday, and we’ve agreed to tell our pup about the new addition to our family before night falls.

“Everyone is going to know before too long.” I remind her, “she should hear it from us, not from whispers on the street.”

“She wouldn’t know what they meant even if she did hear them.” Selene argues, “she’s too young. We should wait.” Only we can’t wait, because I need to know everything is alright before I leave for the Calypso pack. I need to make sure my family is on solid

footing, that Selene and Lila can thrive without me. “The more time she has to get used to the idea, the better.” I remind my mate.

“Yes but “r” Selene trails off, cradling her belly, “Bastien nothing is certain until we’ve made it past the first trimester. If something goes wrong. I don’t want to have to explain that to her on top of everything else.”

“Is that what you’re worried about?” I question, striding towards her. “You’re afraid you might lose the baby?” The idea hadn’t even occurred to me, I’ve been so worried about Blaise Denizen and Selene’s health, that I never dreamed such a tragedy might occur amidst all our other problems.

“Not afraid so much as cautious.” She answers, “It’s a lot more common than you think.” “That’s not going to happen.” I insist, holding her tightly.

“You don’t know that.” Selene whispers sadly, “And you can’t control this. We don’t have the power here – only the Goddess does.”

“Selene.” I breathe, “this baby is going to arrive healthy and whole, in her own time and at her own pace.” I can’t explain why I think the child will be another girl, it’s just a feeling deep in my bones.

Selene is convinced it’s a boy, but we’ve agreed to leave it a mystery until the baby arrives.

“Stop saying that!” My wife exclaims, “You’ll jinx us.”

“Baby, it’ll be okay.” I promise, kissing her deeply, “now let’s tell Lila and help her get used to the idea, rather than courting disaster.”

“Fine,” She grumbles, “But she’s going to have a lot of questions, and since this is your idea, you get to be the one to answer them.”

“That’s alright by me.” I answer simply, internally baffled at how I’m going to explain where babies come from to a three year old, but unwilling to cave to Selene’s pressure.

Together we cross the kitchen to our pup, plastering smiles on our faces. They start out just for show, to help encourage the toddler to be excited, but it doesn’t take long for our genuine joy to shine through the facade.

“Lila,” Selene begins, drawing her miniature’s attention. We have some exciting news to tell you.”

“What news?” Lila asks easily, bouncing up and down in her chair, “Are we going on an adventure?”

“Sort of,” my mate grins, squeezing my hand. “Our family is about to get bigger, and that’s always an adventure. Daddy and ... well, that is to say: You’re going to be a big sister!”

The pup’s tiny face falls, scrunching up into an indignant pout, “What?”

“Mommy is going to have a baby.” I explain gently. “In a few months you’ll have a little sister.”

“Or brother.” Selene corrects me in exasperation, swatting at my arm.

Catching her little hand and tugging her under my arm, I turn my attention back to our daughter. A little sister or brother.”

Lila thinks about this for a long moment, looking back and forth between our expectant faces before deciding. “No, tank you.”

“Honey, it’s not really a choice. It’s going to happen.” I clarify.

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#Chapter 119 – Big Sister

“But I don’t want a baby” Lila answers pointedly, as if I’m being much too slow on the uptake.

“Well Lila bean, I’m afraid you’re going to get one anyway.” Selene informs her softly.

“But why?” The pup inquires indignantly.

“Because the baby is already inside me, already growing.”

Selene shares, stroking a hand over her belly.

“So take it out.” Lila suggests going back to her apple as if this solves everything.

Smothering a smile, I inform her, “That’s not possible, little one.” Giving Selene a reassuring squeeze, I gloss over the possible complications. Once a baby is there, it won’t come out until it’s ready to be born.”

The toddler’s head jerks up in alarm. I can see the thoughts whirring behind her wide eyes, and she eventually huffs, “But how’d it get dere?”

“Daddy put it there.” Selene explains, petting Lila’s cheek, “Just like he once put you there.”

Lila's head cocks to the side, confusion clear on her face. "What?"

"You were inside me once too." Selene tells the pup, leaning her elbows on the counter so that they're eye to eye. "I grew you like a little bean, until you grew big and strong enough to come out into the world."

You've seen mommies carrying babies in their tummies before, remember?"

"Yeah, but your tummy s'not big like deirs." The pup reasons.

"It will be." Selene declares, "It's going to get bigger and bigger over the next few months, until it's so big I can't even see my own feet."

The image puts a beaming smile on my face; I can't wait to see my mate round and swollen with my pup. Needing to touch the walking miracle in front of me, I slide my palm over Selene's hip, gently kneading the small of her back in a way that makes her arch and stretch like a contented housecat.

"But.." Lila gnaws her lower lip in "How'd Daddy put da baby in dere?" Selene glances over her shoulder, arching an expectant brow in my direction.

Flashing her a wolfish grin as she continues to purr beneath my ministrations, I improvise, "Well, when mommies and daddies want to make a baby, they do a special kind of... dance."

"A dance?" Lila repeats skeptically.

"Yes," I continue, feeling suddenly inspired. "They hold each other very close and pour all their love for each other into the steps. Then, when they're ready, they make a wish with all their hearts – and if they're lucky, a tiny seed will get planted, and then it grows and grows."

The pup considers my words, before a hopeful expression comes over her face. "Can I see da dance?" Selene chokes on a laugh, and I squeeze her side, barely able to contain my own amusement. "No angel," she recovers, "It has to be done in private, or the wish won't come true."

A new thought seems to occur to Lila then, and she looks back and forth between Selene and I, her sweet countenance full of doubt.

"Why'd you wish it t'all? We don' need a baby."

"We wished it because we love you so very much, that we wanted another pup every bit as wonderful as you are." I answer solemnly. "You brought so much happiness to our lives, and this new baby is going to do the same."

“But you ready have me!” She exclaims, her bottom lip trembling dangerously. Suddenly I realize that, to Lila, all my pretty placations have sounded like she isn’t enough for us. Panic slices through me as I scramble to figure out how I can fix this.

Fortunately I don’t need to. As usual, Selene knows just what to say. “I’m going to tell you a secret, Lila.” She murmurs, gathering up our daughter’s small hands and bringing them to her lips. And it’s very important you remember this, okay?” My mate waits until the pup nods in agreement before pressing on. “Love is infinite – do you know what that word means?”

Lila shakes her head in denial.

“It means that it doesn’t have any limits.” Selene summarizes. “It never ends, it doesn’t have a bottom or a top and if you let it, it will just get bigger and bigger and never stop growing. Nothing can stop it, nothing can contain it. You can keep adding to it forever and never run out. So getting a brother or sister doesn’t mean we’re going to love you any less, and it doesn’t mean you haven’t given us enough happiness to satisfy us. It just means that we all get more.

More love, more happiness, more fun and adventures – for you as well as us...

Do you understand?”

Nodding but still looking disgruntled, Lila sighs.

“D’we have ta keep it?”

“Yes, my darling.” Selene kindly dashes the toddler’s hopes, “We do. But you know what? You’re going to like being a big sister so, so much. You two will be such great friends. They’re going to love you and look up to you, you’ll always have someone to play with and talk to. It’s going to be so fun!”

Lila looks up at us from beneath her lashes. “You pwomise?”

Selene and I share a tender smile before pledging our vow to the beloved creature in front of us, “We promise.”

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Chapter 120

#Chapter 120 – Telling Selene

Bastien

Selene's silken voice is floating out of Lila's bedroom in a steady stream, weaving fairy tales from thin air to carry our pup off to sleep. It's already dark out, the winds of autumn ushering in the night earlier and earlier as we near the equinox, and confusing my young daughter's internal clock to no end.

Moving to lean in the doorway, I spy my mate stretched out on Lila's twin bed, our pup snuggled beside her with heavy eyelids. Her little mouth stretches wide with frequent yawns and I know it won't be long before she passes out completely.

Pure longing consumes me as I watch the beautiful pair: Selene's gentle hands caressing Lila's dark hair as she spins her fantasy, the sweet pup's soft cooing sounds as she's lulled into dreamland.

I could stand here gazing at them forever. I'm continually astonished at how my love for them continues to grow, even after I'm convinced it could not be any greater. These precious beings disprove that assumption over and over again, and I have no doubt the new baby will do the same.

As painful as the pangs evoked by the thought of leaving them are, this very sight is exactly what I need to send me off on my journey. I will carry this image with me through every day I'm gone as a reminder of what's truly important, and why I must take this risk.

Sensing my observance, Selene's head turns toward me, an incandescent smile stretching across her perfect features when she catches me spying. We share a long look before Selene turns back to check on Lila, finding her conked out in deep sleep. Leaning down to kiss my daughter goodnight, I help untangle my mate from the bed, and guide her out of the room.

No sooner has the door closed behind us that I pin Selene against the wall, claiming her full lips in a string of long, luxurious kisses that leave us both breathless. I only intended to steal a few moments of affection, but now that I've started I can't seem to stop. Selene arches into my questing hands, moaning in contentment.

"I love you so much." I profess fervently, staring deep into her eyes.

"I love you too." She replies huskily, pressing closer and nibbling my ear. Groaning and growing hard as her small hands slide across my chest, I try to hang on to my sanity. I can't let myself be distracted from the matter at hand, no matter how pleasant the distraction.

Capturing Selene's face between my hands, I suggest, "Let's go for a run."

“What?” She blinks in surprise, clearly expecting us to engage in a very different activity.
“Now?”

“Yes,” I confirm with a new sense of urgency. If we stay here I won’t be able to stop myself from making love to her, and she won’t appreciate me breaking the news to her afterwards, “Right now.”

Frowning, Selene tries to put some distance between us, but I don’t let her. “Bastien, is everything all right?”

“Yes. I just want to go for a run with my gorgeous mate, is that so wrong?” I answer, tugging her towards the door. Looking unconvinced, Selene reluctantly follows, letting me lead her down the stairs and out of the house.

At the edge of the forest we strip off our clothes, shifting into our wolf forms and disappearing

into the trees.

It’s almost pitch black in the dense woodland. A thick layer of charcoal clouds is blocking out the waning moon’s pearlescent glow, leaving not a single star in sight.

Nonetheless, our keen eyes guide us forward as we bound through the crisp air at high speed, fallen leaves crunching beneath our paws with every step. Playfully nipping at Selene’s heels, we pounce and play until finally arriving at the high cliffs overlooking the Elysian Valley

Curling my furry body around my little mate’s, I breathe in the fresh air and Selene’s own unique fragrance – softened and sweetened by the presence of our growing pup. Sighing and pillowing my head on her snowy coat, I try to work up the strength to tell her what I must.

#Chapter 120 – Telling Selene

In the end I don’t need to muster the right words, because Selene can already sense something is wrong. What’s going on Bastien? She questions, her lyrical voice chiming in my head.

Nudging and licking her muzzle, as if affection might soften the blow of my departure, I explain, This

baby changes things, Selene I know. She replies with apprehension, things already seem crazy now, but this is nothing compared to what it will be like with a newborn in the house.

That's not what I meant. I correct gently. It was bad enough having you and Lila at risk, but now. I can't put this off any longer. Put off what? My mate asks, her body tensing up.

I have to deal with Blaise, I announce firmly, hardening myself to her inevitable objections. I have to make you safe. Selene twists around so she can see my face, her blue and violet eyes wide. What are you talking about? Deal with him how?

I have to go East. I explain, I have to try whatever I can to make him give up his hunt for Volanas.

But we haven't even figured out what's happening in Elysium yet. She argues, agitated energy pulsing off her small form in waves.

I know. I admit with resignation. But we don't have a choice.

You promised! Selene bursts out, pulling away from me and clambering to her feet, you said you'd be here with me for this pregnancy. You said we'd do it all together!

And we will, but I can't let another pup be born in danger, Selene. I growl, more harshly than

intended. When she flinches I try to soften my tone, standing and nuzzling her downy fur. If I go now, I can be back before you start showing.

You don't know that! My mate correctly insists, You can't know how long you'll be away. Besides, how do you possibly plan to make Blaise give up? He's a monster, a psychopath. You think you're going to change his mind about obtaining immortality.

I have to try Selene. I grind out, I can't just stand by and let the danger continue to grow.

Listen to me Bastien. Selene begs, he'll die before he lets go of his ambition.

Are you prepared to challenge him? He's the most powerful Alpha on the continent!

I know that. I counter gruffly, But you're only making my point for me.

Blaise will never stop unless we stop him.

Then wait for me, She implores, wait until we can try to stop him together

No! I snarl, my protective instincts flaring at the mere idea of her being anywhere near the Calypso

Alpha. Selene reels back as if I've struck her, and I follow closely, I'm sorry baby, but no. I repeat.

We can't risk you. If something happens to me, you'll be all the pups have left. One of us has to stay safe for them, and they need you more than they need me.

But I need you too! Selene cries, tugging at my heartstrings. I'd never survive it if something happened to you.

Yes you would. I reply easily, you are so much stronger than you give yourself credit for, little wolf.

And we'll be stronger together than apart, Selene advocates, My powers

Selene, I'm begging you. I beseech, cutting her off before she can make her case. Please don't make this harder than it is.

No, I'm going to make it as hard as I possibly can. She combats, emotion thick in her voice. I don't want you to go.

Do you think I want to go? I demand hotly. Do you believe I want to miss a minute of this pregnancy, so you think I want to spend a single minute away from you? From Lila?

No, Selene exhales, sounding forlorn. I just... She trails off, struggling to find the words to express her feelings and coming up empty.

I know, baby. I assure her, feeling her pain so keenly through our bond I want to rip myself to shreds for making her feel this way. But I have to do this. I have to make you and our pups safe.

You don't have to do anything. Selene sniffs. You're choosing this. You're choosing to leave us when we need you most.

Don't you ever accuse me of not caring about this family's needs or failing to take care of you! I rumble before I can stop myself. Her words stabbed straight into the sorest spot in my heart, and I can't help but respond instinctively.

This is a sacrifice, Selene. I'm doing this for us! Besides, I'm not the one of us who walks out on my mate, you are.

I regret the words as soon as they leave my head, but it's too late. The damage has already been done. Tears well in Selene's luminous eyes, and she drops her head in shame. Before I can say another word, she turns on her heel and flees, sprinting away into the night.