

Pregnant and Rejected by My Alpha Mate Chapter 121

Pregnant and Rejected by My Alpha Mate

Chapter 121

#Chapter 121 – Goodbye

Selene

Thunder crashes overhead, jarring me straight to the bone. Terror lances through me as lightning streaks through the sky, pushing me to run faster, even as I hear Bastien howling for me in the distance. The rain begins soon after, fat droplets bursting onto the forest floor and transforming dirt and leaf litter to thick, sticky mud.

Annoyance flits through my mind. The rain might help cover my scent, but the quickly coalescing muck will save my footprints in a perfect trail. It will be only too easy for Bastien to follow me, and I do not wish to be caught.

The worst part about my mate's hurtful words is that we both know they're undeniably true. I deserve to feel this pain, I deserve to suffer the consequences of my past cruelty.

Tears stream from my eyes as I run, the steady pounding of my heart punctuating every loping stride I take. I don't want Bastien to leave, I'm terrified that if he goes to the Calypso territory he'll never come back. I'd rather live with him in danger for the rest of our lives, than live safely without him.

I want my pups to be safe too, what mother wouldn't? I hate the idea of anyone wanting to hurt my babies and I want Blaise gone every bit as much as Bastien does, I just can't stand the idea of losing him, even to such a noble cause.

As the heavens open above me, releasing a torrent of rain so powerful fear the earth might flood, I wonder if I'm being irrational. Bastien is trying to do the right thing and keep my children safe, how can I begrudge him thus when I want the same exact thing?

Perhaps it's because he intends to do it all without me. He made the decision without me, he informed me rather than consulting me, and now he's going to go across the continent and leave me behind to agonize about whether or not he's dead in a ditch somewhere.

Pushing myself harder and feeling mud splash over my legs and belly, dirtying my pristine white coat, I channel all my fear and frustration into the run. Bastien's howls are sounding farther and farther away now, but I don't feel relieved. The deeper I run into

the storm, the closer I come to the haunting memories of my past, which now include all the years I spent separated from the man I love.

I've never been surrounded by more love than I am now. Between Bastien, Lila, Odette, the new baby and the suddenly and shockingly supportive pack, I've never been more supported. So how is it that I've never felt more alone than I do in this moment?

Bastien

When the storm begins my fury with myself detonates into a blazing inferno. How could I be so thoughtless, how could I be so cruel.

I sent my pregnant mate running off into the night crying, and now she'll be facing the traumas of her past all alone.

I'm still on her trail, my sense of smell and her muddy footprints guiding my way even through the heavy downpour. Still, I know she's far ahead, and I hate the idea of her spending even one moment alone in this state.

As I crash through the undergrowth and howl into the darkness, I slowly begin to recognize the path my wayward wife has taken. At first I think I'm mistaken, but the closer I draw, the more certain I am that I know where Selene is headed. And it's the very last place I'd expect her to go.

The scorched shell of the family cabin Arabella burned down almost four years ago lays exactly as we left it. I never had it rebuilt, never had the hollow structure demolished. I left it standing as a sort of macabre monument to my lost mate.

I used to come here when I felt like punishing myself, on the days I started to feel too good about myself and needed to be reminded of my past failures.

This is the first time I've been here since Selene returned, and certainly the first time I've visited since learning it was not the site of her demise. I still hate it, especially when I see my beautiful mate huddled in the wreckage, naked and shivering, with tears streaming down her face.

0.00%

#Chapter 121 – Goodbye

Lv.1

When she hears me approaching behind her, Selene turns, her glowing eyes landing on my solemn expression as she hugs her arms around her body.

Baby what are you doing here?" I croon, pulling her into my arms.

"T-this is where I left you." She weeps. "This is where I rejected you."

"Sweetheart, I'm so sorry for what I said. It was horrible and unfair, I never should have said it." I explain desperately.

"It was t-true." Selene hiccups. "I did leave you, I gave up on you."

"You ran for your life, you did the best you could with the information you had." I correct. "I'm sorry. You have every right to be upset that I'm leaving when there's still so much to worry about here, when you're going to have to go through another hard pregnancy and I can't promise

I'll be here to support you through the worst." She shakes her head. "I know you're only leaving to protect us... I'm just scared." Selene admits. "I thought we would be together this time and... What if something happens to you?"

"We will be together." I vow, hoping to the Goddess this is a promise I can keep. "I'll be back before you know it. I'll deal with Blaise. I'll make our family safe. And then I'll come home to you and we can

start our future once and for all."

"What about the pack?" My mate snuffles, "What about the threats here?"

"Aiden and Donovan will take care of the investigation and keep the trains running with the elder council." I explain, "We've already got a plan in place to cover all our bases. And Mom will help where she's needed."

"I can help too." Selene states, pulling back and swiping at the salty liquid staining her cheeks.

Shaking my head, I adopt my sternest tone. "I just want you to focus on taking care of yourself, Lila and this baby."

"What?" She pouts, looking so adorably disgruntled I have to smother the urge to smile. "So you get to risk your life to help our family and I'm just supposed to sit here and let other people fix all my

problems?"

"That isn't what I said." I reply ruefully.

"Maybe not, but it's what you meant." Selene insists.

In essence that may be true, but I have every reason to feel this way. Carrying the new baby is already sapping my mate's strength, painting dark circles beneath her eyes and

hollowing her cheeks. "I just want you to be healthy." I murmur, "You've got enough to deal with wrangling Lila

and coping with the pregnancy."

"I don't want to go through life having other people fight my battles for me, Bastien." She informs me coolly.

"That's not what this is." I assure her, trailing my hand over her rain-slicked belly. "This is just a different kind of battle. No one else can cope with the sickness for you. No one else can give our pup a home while she grows."

"He." Selene corrects me with the barest hint of a smile.

"Either way," I grin, kissing the tip of her nose.

"You've created another miracle. Safeguarding it – and our first – is the most important thing you can do. I'll be protecting our family from afar, you'll be protecting it at home. That's all."

Just promise you'll come back." Selene implores, "If you can't figure out how to make Blaise give up, just come home. Don't kill yourself playing the hero."

"I promise I will do everything in my power to come back to you." I profess sincerely. "But you have to promise me that no matter what happens, you won't come after me. If I don't return, don't come looking for me. You can't ever set foot in Calypso territory."

She instantly balks. "But what if you're in trouble? What if you need help?"

"Then I'll do my best to get out of it, but if I'm to die on this journey, you have to let me go, baby." I instruct.

"No!" Selene stubbornly retorts, "You'd never simply stay put if something happened to me. You'd exhaust every last possibility before ever accepting I wasn't coming home."

"Maybe not." I agree. "But I wouldn't be in mortal danger just setting foot into the territory."

"It wouldn't matter if you were, the danger wouldn't stop you." Selene claims hotly.

"But this is about so much more than just you or me!" I remind her. "This is about Lila. It's about this baby. If you're in danger, so are they, and I can't have that." I growl. "You have to promise me, for their sake if nothing else, that you'll let me go."

"Pups need a father every bit as much as they need a mother." Selene whispers weakly.

“They need a parent who loves them.” I agree, “And if I’m gone, then you’re the only one they have left. Don’t risk making them orphans on the off chance that I might be saved.”

I can see Selene wants to continue fighting: she doesn’t want to agree to my conditions even though she sees the logic of my words. She’s not going to give up.

With a stab of regret, I pour all my Alpha authority into my next words, “Promise me, Selene.”

She struggles against the order, her wolf railing for control and her heart rebelling against her instincts. Eventually, shooting me a sullen glare that tells me she knows exactly what I’ve done, my mate agrees.

“I promise.”

Pregnant and Rejected by My Alpha Mate Chapter 122

Pregnant and Rejected by My Alpha Mate

Chapter 122

#Chapter 122 – Contingencies

Lv. 1

Bastien

“Daddy do you have ta go?” My pup’s tiny voice cuts me right to the core.

Has there ever been a worse feeling than this? Than leaving my family and not knowing if I’ll ever see them again? Than knowing that if I can’t fix things with Blaise, their lives might be forfeit, and I won’t be around to protect them?

“I wouldn’t be going unless I absolutely had to, Lila bean.” I explain earnestly, cupping her tiny cheek in my hand.

“When you come back?” Lila questions mournfully, reaching towards me with both arms open.

“As soon as I can.” I promise, pulling her out of Selene’s arm and into my own.

“Next week?” She asks, her adorable face so hopeful I want to cancel my mission just to make her happy. I can’t believe how deeply I love this little being after so short a time. I’m touched at how attached we’ve become despite our brief acquaintance, and yet part of me wishes we had not formed this bond. Leaving would be so much easier.

“No little one, probably not next week.” I answer gently. “But I promise I won’t stay away a moment longer than I have to.”

Lila’s face is turning pink, and I can already see the tears coming on. Axelwhines in my head, Selene is already softly crying and the salty scent is driving me up the wall. Squeezing my daughter tight, I reach out and pull Selene into my embrace as well, holding my family close

Sure enough, Lila is crying within moments, pitifully weeping against my neck as I kiss my mate goodbye. I have to fight the instinct to claim Selene one last time before I go. We made love twice this morning already, but the taste of her honeyed lips beneath mine is only too tempting. “I’ll be back before you know it.” I swear huskily, staring into Selene’s red-rimmed eyes.

She nods, tenderly extracting Lila from my grasp and making soft shushing noises when the toddler objects with whines and wails. The last thing I see before sliding into the car is Selene gently bouncing our pup in her arms while the child sobs my name. “Daddy! She’s squirming to escape my wife’s grasp, undoubtedly wanting to run after me, and Selene finally turns to carry her away into the house, the sounds of her own, muted tears tormenting my supernatural ears.

Aiden slides into the passenger seat, offering me a sympathetic frown, “They’ll be okay.” He promises. “Donavon and I will take care of them.”

“I know.” I breathe, “thank you, brother.” My beta is going to accompany me to the border, and his face grows more drawn and serious as we pull out of the drive. “Everything is in place, we’ll keep you updated with every new development here.”

“Have you found out anything more about Odile?” I prompt, all the possible misfortunes facing my family tormenting my already

“No. We’ve been searching everywhere.” Aiden replies with a swift shake of the head.

“If anyone has seen her, they aren’t talking. But I don’t doubt your mother’s word. If ODette says she saw Odile, I believe her. She’s here somewhere, we just aren’t looking in the right place.”

“You ought to visit Grigore, if Odile’s got any connections remaining in the city, she’ll know he’s primed to ally against us.” I suggest firmly, wondering if it was a mistake to treat the former elder councilor so harshly.

“And the doctor?” Aiden questions.

*Just keep an eye on him.” I instruct tensely. “I know your investigation didn’t uncover any evidence of wrongdoing, but finding nothing doesn’t mean there’s nothing to find. We’ve always known our enemy was talented. As far as I’m concerned, Dr Kane is a suspect until proven otherwise.”

My Beta nods in agreement. “I think you’re right. There have been too many coincidences with his involvement, either someone is using him as a pawn, or he’s helping to pull the strings.”

As we pull onto the main road out of the city, my mind drifts to our other unanswered question. “Any word on Arabella?”

#Chapter 122 – Contingencies

*Only that she went East after her exile.” Aiden explains, shooting me a meaningful look.

“East?”

I repeat. “You don’t think...?”

“I don’t know,” my friend grumbles. “But I wouldn’t put anything past the bitch.”

“Well said.” I remark dryly, pulling the car over just before we cross the border into rogue territory. We both exit the car, and I circle around to my second in command. “Take care of my girls.” I implore him, knowing I need not ask.”

“I’ll guard them with my life.” He vows, “You just worry about getting back in one piece. If you die and force me to become Alpha, I’ll kick your ghost ass.”

“I’ll do my best.” I chuckle, giving him a forceful hug and patting his back.

“Goddess speed, Alpha.” He salutes me when we part. The next thing I know he’s transformed, shifting into a huge gray wolf and disappearing into the trees. I return to the car, pointing it towards the Calypso territory and praying this won’t be the last time I see my home.

Drake

The steady thrum of the shower emanates through the open bathroom door, an endless stream of water splattering against the tiles. As I near the doorway I realize the sound is slightly off, broken and scattered, as if the shower head has been removed from its cradle and redirected from its usual downward spray.

The water's clean scent is muddled by the familiar perfume of Sophie's shower gel and her own unique fragrance. As I inhale her lovely aroma I realize it's changing, deepening and growing even

sweeter than before-heightened by arousal and the primal hormones triggered by meeting one's mate.

A muffled whimper punctuates the rain-like pitter-patter, and I realize why the water sounds so strange, and why my little lamb's scent is so especially irresistible at the moment.

"Just what do you think you are doing?" I demand playfully, peeking my head into the shower stall.

Sophie jumps almost a foot in the air, a bright red flush coloring her cheeks as she jerks the shower head away from her swollen clit. Drake! What? |... It isn't..."

She stammers hopelessly, wrapping her arms around her body to hide her nakedness from view.

My mark is still rosey red against my mate's fair skin, the swollen indentation of my fangs blazing at the juncture of her neck and shoulder. Though I couldn't stop myself from marking her, I haven't yet claimed her body, wanting to give her time to get used to the idea of being mated before introducing sex into the equation. Apparently I've waited too long.

"Yes, my love?" I tease, stripping off my clothes and joining her under the shower's spray. Sophie's eyes widen in surprise, and she determinedly keeps her attention above my waist.

Her pink tongue darts out to lick her lips as she gazes warily up at me, "I don't know what's gotten into me." She admits nervously.

"I do." I rumble warmly, pulling her taut body flush against mine. "You're going into heat."

If I thought Sophie had been red before, she's positively scarlet now. "I am?" She squeaks, unconsciously clenching her thighs to relieve the ache at their center.

"You are." I confirm with a predatory grin, but that's no excuse for taking matters into your own hands."

but I don't understand."

"I'm your mate. Your pleasure belongs to me and me alone." I explain sternly, grasping her nape so she'll look me in the eye.

42299

#Chapter 122 – Contingencies

Lv.1

Squirming with need, Sophie frowns in confusion, “My pleasure?”

Belatedly I realize nobody was ever around to explain the ways of men and women to my sweet mate. The only person who might have borne the responsibility was Martin, and I’m extremely glad he didn’t. “Why were you using the shower head that way, little lamb?” I inquire.

Her golden eyes drop to the ground. “I don’t know.”

“Yes you do, baby.” I encourage, petting her in slow soothing patterns.

Her voice is so quiet I almost don’t hear her reply. “Because it felt good.”

“Mhmm,” I purr, “And what do you think might have happened if I hadn’t interrupted you?”

“I don’t know.” She says again, her anxious movements rubbing her naked flesh against mine in a way that is only too distracting.

“Would you like to find out?” I tease, dropping my head to trail kisses along her throat.

“Drake,” she whimpers, leaning into me. “I feel so strange, I need...” “Yes?” I prompt when she trails off in uncertainty, “what do you need, my love?”

Before Sophie can get another word out my phone begins to ring, blaring the ringtone I reserve for serious pack business. Cursing under my breath, I step out of the shower and lean down to retrieve the device from my abandoned clothes. Bastien Durand’s name flashes across the screen, and I whip it up to my ear. “This had better be good.” I greet the Nova Alpha gruffly.

Deep laughter meets my ears. “I know that tone.” Bastien jokes, “Am I interrupting play time, Drake?”

“What do you need, Bastien?” I question sharply, not in the mood for his jests.

“I need to ask you a favor.” He replies, sounding so sober my annoyance wanes.

“Has something happened?” I ask, my heart pounding a bit faster.

“Not yet.” Bastien sighs, “But I have a bad feeling it will. I need your help.”

Pregnant and Rejected by My Alpha Mate Chapter 123

Pregnant and Rejected by My Alpha Mate

Chapter 123

#Chapter 123 – Favors

Drake

“What’s going on, Bastien.” I inquire urgently, eyeing Sophie where she huddles in the shower. Lowering the phone for a moment, I lean over and press a kiss to her cheek, “We’ll finish this later.” I promise, hoping she knows I’m not cutting our conversation short because of any lingering feelings for Selene.

Sophie nods, looking far too serious and gnawing her plump lip.

“I love you.” I remind her, relaxing slightly when a wide smile stretches across her lovely countenance, “And no more playing without me.” I order huskily.

Leaving my blushing mate, I stride out into my bedroom. “Go ahead.” I say into the phone.

The other man’s low voice sounds in my ear. “I’m on my way to the Calypso territory,” he explains, “I’ve left Selene and Lila behind, but things are far from resolved in Elysium.” “Then why are you going?” I challenge.

“I don’t have a choice.” He exhales heavily, sounding both ecstatic and overwhelmed with concern all at once. “Selene is with pup.”

Happiness for my friend washes over me, “Congratulations!” I tell him, truly meaning it.

“I can’t say I’m surprised the way you two were going at it, but I’m happy for you.”

“Thank you.” Bastien rumbles. “I don’t like leaving her at all, but especially not in this condition.”

“And especially not when you haven’t yet identified your enemies at home.” I reason aloud.

“Exactly.” He grumbles.

“What can I do to help?” I ask, amazed at how easy it can be to work together with my former adversary now that we’re both happily mated.

“I was wondering if you might be willing to visit Elysium while I’m away. Help keep an eye on things.” There’s a pregnant pause, and I can almost hear the grim gears turning in Bastien’s mind, “And if anything happens to me...”

“Is it that serious?” I press, the horrible image of Selene and Lila mourning the Alpha’s death forcing its way into my unwilling mind.

“I’m afraid it is.” Bastien admits.

“Of course I’ll visit.” I offer immediately, “And of course, I’ll take care of them if the worst happens, you needn’t even ask.”

“Thank you, Drake.” The relief in his voice is evident. “They should be okay for a couple of weeks. And don’t get me wrong, I trust my Betas’. I just can’t stand the idea of leaving them this way. Having another Alpha around who loves them will set my mind at ease.”

“I understand completely.” I confess. If I were in his shoes and Sophie was alone, pregnant and vulnerable, i’d be going out of my mind. I’m actually incredibly impressed he has the strength to take his eyes off of them at all, given all the threats they face. Only the most powerful of Alpha’s could deny their instincts this way, even if it is the best thing he can do for his family,

“And please, don’t tell Selene I’ve asked this of you.” Bastien continues, “she’s upset enough as it is.”

“You have my word.” I agree, “Sophie and I will make the trip at the end of next week. We’ll keep them safe for you. “Thank you, my friend.” Bastien replies sincerely. “I owe you one.”

After I hang up, I turn to find Sophie approaching, her dripping body wrapped in a fluffy towel. She has a wary expression on her pretty face, and I have a bad feeling she overheard at least part of my call. “What’s going on?” She asks quietly.

“How would you like to visit Elysium in a few weeks?” I counter, not truly answering her question.

My mate stiffens, Why?

“Bastien has gone to confront Blaise Denizen, but there are still threats in the Nova pack.” I explain. Reading her persisting unease, I add. “I agreed only as a favor to him. He well, he doesn’t want Selene to be alone if the worst happens.”

Sophie's entire bearing changes, going from tense and suspicious to soft and supple in seconds. "Of course I'll go."

"Thank you, sweetheart." Offering her a tender smile, I say, "You know I only have eyes for you, don't you?"

Her lip twitches, and suddenly she's seeming to find it very difficult to look me in the eye. "So you've said."

"Oh-ho," I grin, "Have I not proven it well enough, little lamb?"

"That isn't what I meant." She flushes, looking like she wants to say more.

"Yes?" I coax, closing the distance between us.

"I'm curious." She admits, peeking up at me from beneath her lashes, "what I was doing in the shower..."

0004

14-07

#Chapter 123 – Favors

"Go on." I encourage, pulling her towel away before she can stop me and sliding my hands over her body. "What would have happened if you hadn't interrupted me?" Sophie wonders, her rising heat clearly getting her more worked up with every moment that passes.

"You've never tried that before?" I clarify, her innocence making my wolf rise to the surface so suddenly I have to use all my strength to reign the beast in

"You've never touched yourself just to feel good?"

Shyly shaking her head, Sophie confides, I've never felt this way before, it's like my entire body is on fire."

*Poor little lamb. I croon, capturing her lips in a deep kiss. "Let me help you with that..."

Blaise

"You're telling me Durand is that strong?" I snap fiercely.

The insufferable blonde she-wolf in front of me is batting her lashes like a mindless leming. She's a pretty enough piece of ass, but I prefer my woman with more spirit. After all, what's the fun of forcing a bitch to submit if she's not going to fight back?

"He's not nearly as strong as you, my lord." Arabella fawns, "But Bastien is not to be underestimated. His cousin and I spent years trying to bring him down, and every time he found a way to thwart us."

Annoyance thrums in my veins. The woman's nasal voice grates at my nerves and I swear, her shameless flirtation is so over the top i'd like to throw her out like yesterday's garbage. Still, she has useful information to offer.

I've been so busy with my vital quest these last few years that I've been too lax watching my own back. I've dominated the continent so long that I now fear I've become complacent. If there truly is another Alpha capable of challenging me for power, I cannot afford to lower my guard for one moment.

Arabella is busy arguing that Bastien Durand's preoccupation with his personal life is creating an opening for me to expand my power. "He's distracted, too busy chasing his pitiful little mate around the country to actually give the pack the attention it deserves." She informs me, overflowing with smugness.

However while she seems to delight in tearing him down, trying to convince me his reputation has been wildly overblown, all I'm hearing is the opposite. If the man is powerful enough to fend off years of sabotage from Frederic and Odile Durand – two of the most cunning wolves I've ever encountered, as well as govern his pack from afar while members of his own elder council work to undermine him, he is an undeniable threat.

Not just anyone could do what Arabella is suggesting, and the fact that he's now back in Elysium ruling alongside his mate bodes nothing but trouble. He's in control and growing his family, how long will it take before he decides to grow his territory as well? What ambitious young Alpha wouldn't seek to grow as powerful as possible?

Arabella may be too stupid to realize it, but I'm not-it's only a matter of time before Durand sets his sights on me.

I need to start preparing, and now more than ever, I need to find Corinne's daughter.

I may be strong enough to oust someone like Durand now, but I won't always be.

The only true insurance I can obtain to stay in power forever is the blood of a Volana.

When I first learned about the magic of their lineage, I was blessed enough to have one such she-wolf living in my own pack. And when she got away. I didn't stress overly

much about finding another. I assumed there were still plenty of wolves bearing the hallowed bloodline to meet my needs.

I know better now

I've been searching for almost a quarter of a century, suffering dozens of false reports and mistaken sightings, putting down countless money-hungry shifters desperate to garner the reward through deceit. My experience has convinced me that Corinne was among the last of her kind.

I gave up hope of finding Corinne herself long ago. I doubt she survived long after I killed her mate and even if she didn't the blood of an old, heartbroken woman is nothing compared to the life force of a young she-wolf at the height of her power. I don't want Corinne. I want the child she carried, the one her doctor assured me was a girl.

Whoever and wherever she is, she's the last Volana on earth.

I'll do whatever it takes to find her. I'll drain her body of every last drop of the crimson gold running through her veins, I'll kill Bastien Druand before he can come for my empire, and then there will be no one left to stand in my way.

I will rule this continent for the rest of time.

Pregnant and Rejected by My Alpha Mate Chapter 124

Pregnant and Rejected by My Alpha Mate

Chapter 124

#Chapter 124 – Frederic Has an idea

Arabella

Looking around my opulent suite in the Calypso pack house, I decide that a girl could get used to this kind of pampering. The rooms are ten times nicer than my apartment back in Elysium, and even bigger than the private apartment Bastien renovated when he married the halfling,

Blaise must like me very much indeed to afford me such an honor, though I am a bit disappointed he hasn't invited me to share his bed yet.

Either way, I have to revel in the knowledge that I'm living better here in Tartarus than Bastien ever will in Elysium. In fact, if Flynn's memory wasn't driving me forward, I'm so content here that I might consider abandoning my mission.

Blaise can offer me more wealth and power than I ever dreamed of possessing, but no amount of luxury can avenge my brother's death.

Still, it's tempting to give in to the creature comforts surrounding me and call off my vendetta. I've been fighting this shadow war for more than a decade, and I'm no closer to destroying the Durand family than I was when I started. It's exhausting work, plotting all this subterfuge, scheming and deceiving everyone around me. I hardly ever have time for the things I truly enjoy – it's been months since I set foot on my yacht or went to the spa.

The good news is that things are going extremely well here; I've got Blaise wrapped around my little finger. The big Alpha doesn't know what hit him. I catch him staring at me all the time, and as tough as he acts, I'm certain it's only a matter of time before he makes his move. I want to tell him to hurry up and get on with it, but I know better than to push an Alpha.

I learned the hard way with Bastien – Blaise has to think our relationship is his idea. If I come on to him, he'll see it as a challenge to his dominance. Men are so foolish. Do they really think that the only kind of power is overt? Don't they realize how much of what they do is by a woman's design? I suppose Alpha's like Blaise assume we're all spineless wretches like Selene, too weak to stand on our own two feet.

Rolling my eyes, I stride to my closet and peruse my options for the day. I only managed to bring one suitcase of my favorite designer frocks when I fled Elysium, but Blaise has been only too generous helping me replenish my wardrobe. It's true he looked like he wanted to slap me when I suggested he come shopping with me, but he gave me the money anyway.

It's a good thing too. I need to look perfect tonight. I think I've persuaded Blaise to take on Bastien, but I've yet to secure my position in his pack. The wealthiest and most beautiful she-wolves in Tartarus will be present at this evening's state dinner, and I need to outshine them all.

First I'll conquer Blaise, then I'll conquer Elysium. Nothing can stop me now,

Frederic

"You were sighted!" I roar, slamming my fist down on the kitchen counter, "What the hell were you thinking? I told you to stay in the house!"

My mother cowers away from me, lowering her gaze in submission, “They can’t be sure it was me. You said yourself they found nothing when they searched, there’s no evidence to back up Odette’s word. Bastien will have to assume she imagined it.”

“Unlike you, Odette is no fool.” I snap. “They won’t discount her word so easily.”

“I’m sorry, Frederic.” Defiance flashes in my mother’s eye, sparking a fresh burst of anger. She would never have dared to speak to my father this way. Does she think she is permitted to condescend to me simply because she raised me? “But you can’t expect me to stay cooped up in the house all day long.”

“I can and I do.” I growl, catching her chin in my hand. “I did not ask you to come here, you did that on your own and you can sure as hell pay the consequences for your short-sightedness. You should have known better.”

“I’m still your mother.” She bites back, *don’t speak to me as if I’m that exiled whore.”

“That whore was of more use to me than you’ll ever be.” I thunder, “You might have a few good ideas, but you’re useless when it comes to putting my plans in place.

I need someone who can move through the city without causing suspicion.”

“So what do you plan on doing now?” She questions sulkily.

Scowling down at the she-wolf, I ask, “Do you remember what you said to me after Dad died?” Bending down and glaring into her green eyes, I continue, “When I wanted to know how we were going to make Gabriel and Bastien pay for his death?”

Looking wary now, Mom answers, “No.”

“You told me to sit down, shut up and just do what I was told.” I remind me, “now it’s your turn. I don’t owe you any explanations, especially not when you almost ruined everything.”

“That isn’t fair!” My mother argues hotly.

Fury pulses through my body, and before I can stop myself, I lash out with the back of my hand, catching her square in the face. Mom yelps and crumples to the ground, but I don’t feel guilty. She earned her punishment with her insolence,

14.08 H

=Chapter 124 – Frederic Has an Idea

“I am your Alpha.” A trickle of blood trails from the corner of her mouth, the scent triggering my prey drive. “I don’t owe you fairness. I don’t owe you anything at all. Now you can fall in line or you can get out of my city.”

Staring at the ground, she nods meekly, and I storm out without another word. Honestly, I think in exasperation. The nerve of that woman. It wasn’t so very long ago that I revered my mother, thinking she was the ideal Luna. Now I see her for the vain, impudent woman she is. Without my father around to keep her in line, she clearly forgot her place.

I should have taken charge a long time ago, but I suppose I needed a push to finally get out from under her heel. Of course once I did, I realized just how brazen she’d become: manipulating me, trying to tell me what to do long after I reached maturity – it was as if she thought she could rule by using me as a puppet. The idea is preposterous, there’s a reason women aren’t permitted to rule. They possess neither the brains nor the brawn required to lead.

Heading for my office, I try to calm my raging temper, thinking of my own future Luna. Selene would never dream of being so disrespectful. She would never talk back, never defy my orders or undermine me.

She is too sweet, so perfectly submissive I can’t help but fantasize about all the ways I’ll have her serve me when I finally claim her as my own

Bastien’s departure is nothing short of a blessing. Now that he’s gone, I’ll have unlimited access to Selene. I can continue wreaking havoc in the pack and woo her at the same time. The best part is that my cousin doesn’t suspect a thing.

Even when he figures out some piece of my past schemes, by the time he catches up it’s too late. I’m always five steps ahead, and that means I can keep him looking in all the wrong places for as long as I wish.

Though I must admit, his sudden absence is making me question my current strategy. I’d wanted to destroy Bastien in person, to steal all his power and take away everything he loves, ensuring he knows I am the one responsible for his downfall. I wanted to see the pain in his eyes, I wanted him to suffer as have all these years.

Of course, that was before he thwarted my efforts so easily – before I wasted years running down dead end roads and lost my closest ally, before he found Selene and became stronger than ever. I’d be a fool not to consider taking advantage of the opportunity his travel provides

Bastien is alone and out of sight, I could hire a pack of rogues to kill him in neutral territory and no one would be any the wiser. It would take a large number of shifters to bring him down, but everyone knows how dangerous the lands between protected territories are. It would never be traced back to me.

If the Alpha doesn't return to the pack, I'd be free to challenge his current Betas for the position without ever raising anyone's suspicions. Selene would mourn for a while, but I'm ideally situated to offer her a shoulder to cry on. She would be blessedly vulnerable to my advances: lonely and hurting, in need of a new, powerful protector.

The more I think about it, the better the idea sounds. It would be so much faster than the gradual fall from grace I'm currently trying to engineer. Besides, I can always request that the men I hire deliver a message from me before landing the killing blow. I can make sure he knows who is responsible for his death, after all – dead men can't talk.

I snatch up my phone, deciding in a split second that this inspired idea is truly the best course of action. Goddess, by this time next week I could have the entire pack kneeling at my feet, and Selene naked in my bed.

Dialing one of the mercenaries I hired to set up the safe house outside of Asphodel, I impatiently listen to the line's steady ring, willing him to answer. A moment later a click signals his answer, and a gruff voice says, "Yes?"

Triumph surges through my veins. "I have a job for you."

Pregnant and Rejected by My Alpha Mate Chapter 125

Pregnant and Rejected by My Alpha Mate

Chapter 125

#Chapter 125 – Murder for Hire

Bastien

The attack comes just before I reach the edge of the Calypso territory

I left the car at the edge of the woods when night fell, wanting to do a bit of reconnaissance before deciding how my quest should proceed. There's a chance that when all is said and done I'll retrieve the car and enter Tartarus without further deception, driving right up to the front door and introducing myself to Blaise Denizen under a diplomatic front,

However, I think it's far more likely that I'm going to need to hide my presence here at all costs. I suspect that if I do approach Denizen in person, it will not be under my true identity. However I can't decide which tact to choose before I've been the Calypso pack for myself. I want to find out what the common people know about their Alpha's quest to

find Volana wolves, and I need to get my bearings and plan contingencies including escape routes in case things take a turn for the worse.

The Eastern mountains aren't nearly as tall as those surrounding Elysium, but they do seem to have been carved from pure granite. Dense trees are broken up by massive boulders and rockfaces my paws scabble over without croco, and I actually consider shifting back into human form to climb up some of the trickier inclines. Still, the night is cool and quiet, with the waning moon shining bright overhead,

Following my nose towards the city and enjoying the freedom to stretch my legs after so many hours of being cramped in the car, I tackle the steep slopes and unfamiliar terrain with increasing vigor. The closer I draw to my destination, the more my curiosity grows. I also can't help but think that the sooner my mission is complete, the sooner I can return home to my family. I already miss Selene and Lila, though it's barely been two days since I left them. I'm still picturing their beautiful faces when I hear quiet footsteps moving through the woods a few hundred meters to the south. Pretending I don't hear whoever is on my trail, I scent the air. Unfortunately they're downwind, so I can scarcely smell them. However I can tell there are at least a dozen shifters, and they aren't all wolves. There's at least two felines and one bear, which frankly doesn't bode well for me,

I've been so focused on the threat posed by Blaise Denizen that I didn't give much thought to rogues and bandits in the borderlands, but now I'm kicking myself for the oversight. Hopefully when they see I'm in wolf form and not carrying anything of value they'll pass by without incident, but one can never be too careful.

They're moving faster now, doubtless trying to reach me before I can cross over into Calypso territory, where Blaise will undoubtedly have sentries patrolling the forest. If I were so inclined, I could break into a run and probably reach safety before they can catch up. But it's not in my nature to run from a fight, and if I'm wrong and they do follow me across the border, I'll have wasted my energy in the chase.

Instead I turn to face them head on, watching as seven gray wolves, two foxes, three bobcats and a black bear come slinking through the trees around me, their eyes glowing in the pitch darkness. Three of the wolves are females, but they're all clearly rogues. Their shabby appearances and plentiful battle scars combine to emit an undeniable aura of menace.

If you've come looking for an easy mark, I'm afraid you're going to be disappointed. I tell them, sending out a wave of Alpha authority that visibly startles the group. A few of the shifters exchange surprised glances, and I continue, I don't have any money or valuables on me, you might as well move along.

The largest wolf among the ragtag pack steps forward, and I clock a long scar through one of his golden eyes. He bares her fangs, growling low and deep, We aren't here to steal from you, Durand.

My heart sinks when I hear my name. This is not good. The only silver lining is that I made the right decision by not running, these shifters have only one goal in mind attack. So you know who I am, I snarl, not letting my agitation show. But you clearly didn't warn your pack who they'd be dealing with. I know! wouldn't appreciate being kept out of the loop, especially since you're putting their necks on the line.

An ripple of unease passes through the other shifters, and I know I've hit a nerve. Still, the leader ignores my words, you leave my people to me.

Of course, if they want to follow a bastard who doesn't give a damn about their lives, that's their choice. I counter, hoping at least one or two of my attackers will abandon the fight before it begins. I desperately need to thin

the herd if I'm going to win

Not going to offer to pay us off, Durand? The leader questions, almost seeming as though

I'm letting him down.

No. I inform them stonily. They've clearly been hired to come after me, even if I was cowardly enough to try and buy my safety, it wouldn't do any good.

They'd only slit my throat after I paid them, in order to take what's mine and still collect their fee. If you want my money you'll have to find it yourself, assuring you survive that is

You're awfully cocky for being so outnumbered Alpha. The wolf taunts.

I've survived worse odds. I announce coldly, and I have a hell of a lot more to fight for now than I did in the past.

So I've heard. The man snirks, sending a river of ice through my veins, I have a message for you. He proclaims, salutations from my benefactor.

And who might that be? I demand.

The rightful heir to the Nova pack. The rogue explains, his eyes glittering with predatory glee, Frederic wants you to know that you've had this coming for a long time.

0.00%

140

#Chapter 125 – Murder for Hire

My cousin's name bounces around my brain with painful reverberations. We've considered the possibility of my late uncle's surviving family being behind all our troubles ever since Mom saw Odile, but this confirms it. Belatedly I realize my assailant is still speaking, pulling me out of my thoughts.

You should have sided with your uncle when he tried to claim his rightful place in the pack. The wolf recites, clearly having memorized his little murder speech. Your father has already paid the price for his mistake, and now it's your turn.

If my uncle had been strong enough to lead the Nova pack, then he would be. I argue, my hackles raised as I keep a sharp eye on all the shifters closing in. Though I have to admire Frederic learning

from his father's mistakes. Clearly he knew he couldn't defeat me in single combat. Does it worry you that he felt the need to hire so many of you to try and bring me down? Do you truly enjoy doing a coward's bidding so much that you're willing to risk me killing you the way my father killed his – in one bite?

I'm not finished. The wolf interjects, sounding no less confident even though his compatriots are looking increasingly nervous. Frederic says not to worry about Selene. He plans on taking very good care of her, if you know what I mean.

A savage, thundering growl bursts from my chest, and half the assembled rogues visibly shiver. Without another word, I lunge for the cocky wolf, moving so quickly he doesn't have time to even register my attack before my jaws are locked around his throat. Sinking my fangs in deep, I rip his flesh from his bones, killing him in one vicious strike and letting his bloody corpse fall to the ground at my feet.

I can see wolves lunging in my periphery, but I also notice the foxes and bobcats taking off at a run, clearly seeing reason and deciding not to take on a predator twice their size. Fangs slice into my haunches, but I throw off my attacker, flinging their body into the rocks so forcefully they pass out cold.

I dispatch the other wolves one by one, but then the bear is running towards me, roaring like a wild beast. Calculations race through my mind. I've never fought such a large opponent, though while he might be bigger, I know I'm faster. I wait until his slobbering fangs are only a foot away from my face, before diving beneath him and dragging my razor sharp claws down his torso, gutting him like a fish,

The remaining rogues take one look at my blood drenched body and rabid expression and turn tail, fleeing as fast as their terrified feet can carry them. Howling into the darkness with triumph and rage, I take off back towards the car.

I have to warn Selene!

Pregnant and Rejected by My Alpha Mate

Chapter 126

#Chapter 126 – Get Out of the House

Bastien

The dial tone drags on and on, and my heart sinks deeper into my stomach with every moment that passes. Pick up, pick up, pick up ! :

Finally the line clicks open, only it isn't Selene's voice which answers. "Mommy's phone!" Lila chirps happily.

"Lila?" My eyes fall shut as I revel in the sound of her sweet little voice. She's safe. I tell myself firmly, if nothing else, I know my pup is safe.

"Daddy!" She squeals in excitement. "Is that you?"

"Hello angel." I greet her warmly.

"Daddy, I miss you so much!" She exclaims.

"I miss you too, little one." I reply earnestly, wishing I could see her lovely face, but knowing a video call is impossible when my own appearance is so disturbing at the moment. "I desperately want to talk to you, but I need to speak to Mommy first." I explain, "Is she there?"

"She's in da kitchen with Gamma." Lila explains, sounding a bit disappointed not to have my full attention.

"Okay sweetheart can you put her on the phone?" I press, trying to keep my tone light even though Axel is going crazy with worry inside me.

"Daddy is something wong?" She questions,

Before I can reply, I hear my mate's voice in the background, and thank the Goddess for the beautiful sound, even distant as it is.

"Who are you talking to, Lila Bean?"

"It's Daddy." Lila peeps happily.

A few odd muffles travel through the line, but a moment later Selene's voice sounds in my ear, strong and sure. "Bastien?"

Relief washes over me in a tidal wave. I know from her relaxed tone that all is well, but still I have to ask, "Baby, are you okay?"

"Of course, we're just fine." She answers, a flicker of unease entering her lyrical tone, "why, what's wrong?"

"You need to get out of the house, right now." I advise her sternly, "All of you."

A pregnant pause extends between us before my mate answers, and I hate the fear in her voice. "Bastien, you're scaring me." She murmurs.

"Good." I reply gruffly, "This is serious, little wolf. You have to get to a safe location as soon as you can."

"What's going on?" Selene inquires, more demanding this time.

"Someone just tried to kill me." I admit reluctantly. "I'm not even in the Calypso territory yet. It seems we were right about my uncle's family being involved in all our troubles. My cousin Frederic sent a team of hired assassins after me.

He won't know that I survived yet, but he knows all the secret tunnels into the house."

"What?" Selene squeaks.

"He's still family." I explain grimly, "He knows the hidden passages. It's how he killed my father. I can't believe we didn't see this before."

"If that's true," Selene begins shakily. "How do we, where are we supposed to go, Bastien? Where will we be safe?"

*Aiden and Donovan have plans in place for this kind of emergency. Go tell them what's going on get Lila and Mom out of the house, and then call me once you're safe." I instruct.

"Okay." she agrees. "Are you okay, are

are you injured?"

"I'm fine." I promise. And I will be as long as you and the pups are safe. Now go, baby. We'll talk soon."

"Okay." Selene breathes, "I love you."

"I love you too, Selene," I profess, "And I love you, Lila!" I call into the receiver, loudly enough for the pint-sized pup to hear.

"I love you too Daddy!" She calls back, filling my heart with more joy and relief than I imagined possible five minutes ago.

They're safe. I continue to manically repeat the same words in my head long after we've hung up. Thankful that I was in wolf form when the rogues attacked, I use a bottle of water and one of the towels I packed to wash the blood and gore from my body, before changing into clean clothes,

#Chapter 126 – Get Out of the House

Retreating from the border, I drive high into the mountains to a secluded cliffside and wait for Selene to call me back.

I can't keep my thoughts quiet, all the terrible possibilities of what might have happened are still racing through my mind, followed closely by the tragedies that could still befall us. Did my cousin threaten Selene to torment me, or because he truly wants her for himself? What are his plans for Lila? Does he hope to kill my mother too?

I was a fool for leaving, it was too soon. They'll be okay. Axel insists. Blaise is still the bigger threat. We can deal with Frederic.

How? I demand, How are we supposed to deal with him from another territory?

Aiden and Donavon will keep the family safe, Drake can come sooner than we planned

and Selene can go back to practicing her powers.

What about the baby? I hiss.

The baby will be fine. My wolf says confidently.

How can you be sure? I counter.

I simply am. He replies unhelpfully.

Grumbling low in my chest, I decide that not all of my wolf's advice is overconfident optimism. He did make a few good points. Following his train of thought. I dial Drake and hope Selene won't call

while I'm on the phone.

His familiar voice answers in a low growl, "You better have a damn good reason for calling this late." ;

In the background I can hear the soft moans of a she-wolf in heat, and I have a good idea about why the other Alpha is greeting me with such hostility. "I'm sorry." I say sincerely, "I truly hate to interrupt your evening, but this could wait."

Sophie's whimpers quiet, and Drake's voice shifts from annoyed to concerned. "What happened."

Quickly recounting the night's events, I pray the man will agree about the urgency of the situation. "The timing isn't ideal, but I have to ask. Can you go to Elysium now?"

On the other end of the line, I hear distant footsteps, and I suspect the Eros leader is retreating from his mate. "Under the circumstances I won't risk bringing Sophie with me, but yes, I can be there in two days time."

"Thank you." I breathe, wishing I could express the depth of my gratitude. "You're a lifesaver. Truly, I can't thank you enough."

"You've got that right." He drawls, "Do you have any idea what I'm walking away from?"

.

Recalling the image of my own mate in the delicious throws of her first heat, I adopt a sympathetic tone, "Better than anyone." He laughs, and I suggest, "If I were you I'd make the most of tonight. Please give Sophie my apologies."

"Will do." Drake promises. "Be safe, Bastien."

"You too." I reply sincerely, feeling eternally blessed to know this man-whom I once considered my enemy.

Within a quarter of an hour my phone is ringing again, and I whip it up to my ear, "Selene."

"I'm here." Her silken voice floats to me across hundreds of miles, "We're safe. Aiden and Donavon got us out."

*Thank the Goddess." I exalt. "How are you coping?"

"Lila is confused and I got carsick the moment we started moving, but otherwise we're holding it together." Selene shares good-naturedly.

"Poor baby." I sympathize, "how is our new little bean?"

"If my morning sickness is any indication, he's strong as a bear." Selene moans.

"She," I tease, unsure of how to process this information. On one hand I want to be glad the baby is growing strong, on the other, the thought of my mate being so ill when I'm not there to take care of her fills me with fear and guilt.

"Please don't push yourself too hard, my love." i implore.

"I won't." She agrees, "Do you want to talk to Lila?"

"Of course." I purr, "I'd rather talk to you two than anyone else."

"Hey!" I hear my mother call in the distance.

17 2104

12.00

=Chapter 126 – Get Out of the House

"You too, Mom!" I amend quickly.

After an extended conversation with my young daughter, explaining our dire situation in the gentlest terms I can, I ask to speak with my Betas, directing Aiden and Donovan to move out of hearing distance of the women.

"Listen," I explain once they've assured me they're alone. "Drake is coming within 48 hours to provide extra protection, but the danger is far from passed."

"What did the assassins say to you exactly?" Donovan inquires.

I repeat Frederic's message as accurately as I can, cringing when I reach the part about Selene. "I don't know what he plans for her, but I know it's not good. You have to keep an extra close watch on her." We'd already discussed this in terms of the baby. I remember how dehydrated and delirious she became when she was so sick carrying Lila and thoroughly briefed my men on looking out for her. But this is different. This is far more serious.

"You have to watch the people around her like a hawk. I don't know what Frederic plans to do with Lila, but it's clear she's not the one he wants. He wants Selene. You have to do whatever is in your power to keep her safe."

"You have our word." Donovan vows.

"We'll die before Frederic gets his hands on Selene." Aiden confirms.

Pregnant and Rejected by My Alpha Mate Chapter 127

Pregnant and Rejected by My Alpha Mate

Chapter 127

#Chapter 127 – Selene Goes to the Doctor

Selene

In the days since Bastien's urgent call to get out of the house, my life has been turned completely upside down. After the sentries swept the house and cordoned off all the escape passages, we were finally allowed to return, but no amount of bodyguards or security measures can erase the knowledge that somebody wants to hurt my family

The thought of Bastien traveling alone in the Calypso territory with assassins lurking around every corner makes my skin crawl. I would always rather be overcautious and

secure than under cautious and suffer for it, but I can't help but think my mate is focusing on the wrong threat. He's the one out there putting his life on the line.

His cousin can have no use for Lila and I – the only threat would be if my pup does turn out to be a boy. After all, he knows better than anyone how far a scorned son will go to avenge their father.

Still, there's no convincing Bastien that he should worry more for himself. It is not in his nature to prioritize his own wellbeing over that of others. Even now, when he charges head first into danger, he always makes time to call Lila and me each morning and each night before bed. His calls are a blessing where my daughter is concerned.

This transition has been harder on Lila than on anyone, and she's acting out more and more every day. At this moment the poor pup is in time out, after throwing a tantrum over the contents of her breakfast. Not only did she refuse to eat the waffles I prepared by her request, but she actually threw

them onto the floor and smashed them beneath her little feet.

I'm currently explaining the debacle to Odette while I get ready for a doctor's appointment.

"Don't let her give you any cheek. She misses Bastien and she's upset about the baby, but she has to get used to the idea."

"I won't." Odette agrees, "She's testing her limits, Bastien was the same way."

"It's more than that." I try to find the right words to express my thoughts without affronting my mother-in-law. "When Bastien was this age he wasn't under the kind of stress Lila is. She's spiraling a little bit," I explain, so confident in my assessment because I'm feeling exactly the same way. "It's really difficult to stay firm knowing how she's struggling with all this."

"Trust me sweetheart." Odette assures me, "our struggles may have been different, but Bastien had his fair share of meltdowns. I've got everything under control."

"Thank you." I breathe, wishing I didn't have to leave my baby. Turning to the pouting pup in the corner, I call, "Mommy's leaving Lila bean, please be good for Gamma."

"Lila whips around, looking horrified. "Where you going?"

"I have a doctor's appointment." I explain gently. "I won't be gone long."

The next thing I know Lila is crying and running towards me, "Take me wit' you!"

“Not this time, angel.” I sigh, wrapping her in a hug. “But I promise we’ll spend some time together this afternoon, just us.”

“No!” Lila wails, clinging to me desperately. “I d-don’ w-wan’ you to go!” “I have to, my darling.” I frown, rubbing her back and kissing her wet cheeks, “Please don’t be sad. You’ll have fun with Gamma and I’ll be back before you know it.”

By the time I finally hand my daughter over to Odette, the sound of her cries have grown ear-splitting. I rush downstairs as quickly as I can, knowing the faster I leave the faster we’ll both recover, but I can’t stop the tears streaming from my eyes as I drive.

When Lila is upset this way it makes me feel like my heart is being ripped right out of my chest.

When I reach the unfamiliar offices of Dr. Ryan Chase, I find a much less welcoming staff than those at Dr Kane’s practice.

Everyone is professional and attentive, offering me the same privacy protections we received at the hospital, but no one possesses the warmth of my usual physician. Still, I agreed to switch doctors for Bastien, and friendliness isn’t as important as expertise.

I keep repeating these same sentiments, right up until the young doctor enters my exam room and begins speaking to me without looking up from the chart in his hands. “Mrs. Durand, I don’t like your

weight.”

I was about to tell the man to call me Selene and extend my hand in greeting, when his words register in my mind. “I’m sorry?”

He glances up at me, wearing an expression that tells me he thinks my low weight is both intentional and frivolous. “You’re growing a child, you have to take better care of yourself.”

“Dr. I’ve been trying to put on weight as best as I can,” I explain, resting a protective hand over my womb “but I have a severe nausea condition. I can’t keep any food down.”

14:10

#Chapter 127 – Selene Goes to the Doctor

The man snorts dismissively, provoking my temper. “All women have tummy troubles in the first trimester, there’s no need to be dramatic.”

Feeling thoroughly incensed, I argue, "It's not drama – it's what my previous doctors diagnosed. Dr Kane as well as multiple in Asphodel. I spend hours vomiting every day and keeping myself hydrated is a full-time job. I need anti-nausea medicine, not condescension."

The doctor rolls his eyes. "Mrs. Durand I see women like you all the time, wealthy socialites who would rather maintain their dress size than give their children the nutrients they need to survive." My hands curl into fists at my sides as I fight the urge to punch the man right in the nose. "I'm not saying it's your fault, our society has put too much pressure on she-wolves to look a certain way, but this is about your baby's life, not fashion."

"I would rather die than harm my child." I growl. "So would most mothers, and the ones who do fit your description are unwell – not superficial." Getting to my feet, I gather my jacket and purse,

"Furthermore, I am not just any 'wealthy socialite,' I am the Alpha's mate and you would have been wise to show me the respect I'm owed."

"Let's not get hysterical now, Mrs Durand." Dr. Chase grumbles.

"Hysterical?" I hiss, "I'll show you hysterical, you pompous blowhard. I'm going to tell every she-wolf in Elysium to avoid your practice like the plague. I don't know how you've managed to stay in business this long already, but I assure you that you won't be for much longer."

His eyes widen, and he finally gives me his full attention. "Mrs Du-"

"Not another word!" I interrupt. "You had your chance, and you blew it. Now get out of my way."

An hour later I'm storming into Dr. Kane's office, "You won't believe what just happened to me!"

Frowning in concern, Thomas rises from his chair and gestures for me to take a seat, "Are you alright?"

Recounting my dreadful experience with Dr. Chase, I exclaim, "How does somebody like that become an OBGYN? Why work with women if you have such a low opinion of them?"

"We all know doctors who went into the business for nothing but money." Dr. Kane shakes his head in disapproval. "I'm so sorry, I had no idea he was like that or I never would have referred you there. He has an excellent reputation in the field."

*Among other doctors maybe,” I grouse, “I bet if you talk to his patients you’d hear very different feedback.”

“I’m sorry Selene, truly.” He repeats, pacifying my indignant anger. “What he said to you was unconscionable, you have every right to be upset.” He squeezes my hand, “I can recommend someone else, I know an excellent she-wolf run practice nearby.”

“No.” I answer firmly. “I want to stay with you.” Bastien won’t like it, but I don’t hold the same grudge he does. From my perspective Dr. Kane went above and beyond to help me, trusting that I knew what was in my own best interests.

Of course, to my mate, the only thing that matters is that the man helped hide my pregnancy from him. I understand why he doesn’t like Thomas, but the Dr was only doing what I asked.

“I thought you wanted a specialist, given your condition.” Dr Kane clarifies, repeating the lie Bastien told him after our last appointment.

“That was Bastien.” I admit, “I was always happy to stay with you and after meeting Dr. Chase, well – let’s just say I’ll be calling the shots from here on out.”

“I understand.” Dr Kane smiles softly, “it’s natural for men to worry about protecting their mates more than the pup before it’s born – we don’t have the same connection to the pup you do at this stage.”

This is precisely why I love Dr Kane so much, he not only tries to understand, but he always empathizes even though he’ll never know what it’s like to go through a pregnancy.

“Where is the Alpha today?” He continues.

“He’s away on business.” I explain with a sheepish smile.

“Ah,” Thomas grins, “so he doesn’t know you’ve decided to overthrow him yet?”

“I’ll tell him when he calls tonight.” I confide, that way he’ll have some time to get used to the idea before he returns.

“Well I hope he returns soon,” Dr Kane shares, “I’m sure he’d hate to miss a moment of this journey.”

“Thank you.” I smile, “Now, please tell me you can prescribe me some of the good stuff?”

Post navigation

Pregnant and Rejected by My Alpha Mate Chapter 128

Pregnant and Rejected by My Alpha Mate

Chapter 128

Chapter 128-Bastien Arrives in Tartarus

Selene

Lila is crying again when I get home, and as soon as I enter the apartment my mother-in-law shoots me a look of abject relief. My pup is running towards me before I can even close the door behind me, her tiny feet drumming a rapid pitter patter across the wood floors.

“Mommy!”

“Hello sweet pup.” I croon, gathering her in my arms and rocking her gently from left to right. “What’s the matter?”

“Gamma wouldn’t let me have cookie!” She cries pitifully.

“I said not before you eat your lunch,” Odette reminds her kindly, dropping a kiss to my cheek and whispering in my ear, “You’ve definitely got your hands full. I’m sorry I dismissed you earlier.”

“Don’t be silly, I didn’t take it that way.” I assure her, turning to Lila. “I’ll tell you what, little bean. I’m starving, why don’t we have lunch together and then afterwards we’ll go share a big cookie from the bakery?”

Lila’s tears slow, but she snuffles when she looks up at me. “I don’t wanna share.”

“Well I hate to break it to you angel, but you’re going to have to get used to it.” I inform her, instantly sensing a fresh wave of defiance and continuing, “but the fun part of sharing is that it means we’re together. When you share something, you’re never alone.”

My daughter doesn’t look convinced, but she’s placated enough to hug Odette goodbye and sit down for lunch. We spend the rest of the afternoon together, playing and talking about all the big changes happening in our lives. I wish I could say it was enough, but there’s no way to explain to a three year old why their entire world has turned upside down.

Tomorrow she'll have the same questions, the same fears, and we'll do it all over again.

"Lila's having a really hard time." I tell Bastien over the phone that night, "I've never known her to act out so much. Some of it is just age but..."

"But it's also the move, and the new baby, and me being gone." He sighs.

"Yes." I confess, not wanting to make him feel guilty, yet needing to share my feelings with my mate. Part of me wonders if that's selfish. With everything Bastien is risking for our family, is it fair of me to further burden him with my troubles? After all, I'm well equipped to handle Lila's tantrums, I've been their sole manager all these years.

"I'm sorry, sweetheart. I'll try to talk to her." He promises.

She's not the only one who wants you home. I think, stopping myself from speaking the words aloud. *Thank you." I say instead. "She misses you. We both do."

"I know baby, I miss you too." He professes, his deep voice low and gravelly. "How was your appointment with Dr Chase?"

"Not great," I admit, "he yelled at me for being too thin and called me dramatic when I told him I have a nausea condition."

"He what?" My mate snarls.

"Don't worry, I told him I was going to make sure no other she-wolves went to his practice and walked out." I share with a grin.

"Good girl." He praises, sending a warm shiver down my spine, "It would serve the bastard right to lose his business."

"Agreed." I laugh, "needless to say I'll be looking for a different doctor."

This afternoon I thought long and hard about telling Bastien I've gone back Dr. Kane, and in the end I decided I simply couldn't. I know my husband will only worry if I tell him now, and I don't want to distract him even further than he is already.

I'll tell him when he gets back to Elysium. I might get in trouble for the lie, but I have to do what's best for the baby and that means having the best doctor for us both.

"Hopefully you can find someone fast." He replies, full of sympathy, "How are you feeling?"

He asks me this every day, and every day I tell him the same lie. "I'm hanging in there." In reality I want to curl up in a little ball and die. My first pregnancy could afford to simply sulk and feel sorry for myself, this time is very different. I have too much responsibility

“When will you arrive in Tartarus?” I ask, needing to change the subject.

“Tonight.” Bastien answers, sounding tense.

“I’ve cleared the woods around the city’s entire perimeter and checked my point of entry three times today alone. Either word of his failure hasn’t gotten back to Frederic yet, or his replacement team is too far behind me to pick up my trail.”

“Thank the Goddess.” I breathe. “You’re going to be careful, aren’t you?”

“Of course.” He vows. “My days of running in and playing the hero are long gone. I would never risk my life now that I have a family to care for – not unless have no other choice.”

0.00%

14:10

Chapter 128 – Bastien Arrives in Tartarus

“Just make sure you don’t land in a situation where you lose those choices, Bastien.” I plead. “If it comes down to returning home to us or killing Blaise, just come home.”

Silence stretches between us, and I can already sense his refusal. “I can’t make that promise, little wolf.”

“Yes you can.” I argue..

“I will take every precaution,” He promises instead. “I won’t risk anything I do not have to, but I can’t make any guarantees, Selene. You know I can’t.”

The horrible thing is that I do know, we talked about this extensively before he left, but apparently it wasn’t enough. I’m beginning to feel as moody as Lila. I want my mate and I don’t care what has to happen for him to come back to me, as long as he does. Another man might lie to me for the sake of my hormones and feelings, but not Bastien. “I’ll never forgive you if you die.” I inform him petulantly,

My mate’s reply leaves no room for argument, he’s as ruthless as he is stern. “And I’ll never forgive myself if I don’t do everything in my power to protect you and our children.”

Sophie

“Do we really have to?” I ask Drake, feeling about as mature as a five year old. I know I’m being silly, I know we came to Elysium because Selene and Lila are in danger, but I can’t help but feel some lingering envy for the glamorous she-wolf.

“We’re already here, sweetheart.” Drake replies, pressing his lips to my throat,

“Let’s just make the most of it.”

“Fine.” I grumble sullenly.

Drake chuckles and pulls me closer, “There’s no need to be jealous, little lamb. Don’t you know I only have eyes for you?”

My mate – it’s still so strange to think of Drake that way – has certainly gone above and beyond lavishing his affection on me. In fact, since my heat began I’ve been so overwhelmed with pleasures I never knew existed that it’s difficult to even string two thoughts together. Still, every time I do regain the cognizance to ponder my situation, I can’t believe it’s real.

Every time I have to wonder why such an incredible man would want me, and every time Martin’s voice sounds in my head to tell me he doesn’t. Drake can I want me, I’m not worth it.

“Whatever you’re thinking.” Drake warns in an ominous tone, his warm breath fluttering over my ear, “stop it right now.”

Glancing up at him from beneath my lashes, I say. “What if I was thinking about how much I love you?”

You weren’t.” He rumbles affectionately, capturing my mouth in a kiss. “You were thinking something bad about yourself, and that’s not allowed.”

“Only an Alpha would think he can dictate someone else’s thoughts.” I complain.

“Maybe an Alpha can’t, but your mate certainly can.” He teases, squeezing me close.

Tilting my chin up for another kiss, I melt into the powerful shifter when he obliges, only to have our intimate moment cut short by the sound of a gleeful squeal,

“Uncle Rake!!!

“Lila bean!” Drake exclaims, releasing me and kneeling to meet Lila. The toddler flies into his arms, and I look beyond her to find Selene standing at the end of the hallway with wide eyes,

“Drake? Sophie?” Selene gapes, “What are you doing here?”

“Bastien called me.” Drake explains, extending an arm to give Selene a half-hug. “It sounded like you could use some backup.”

Hugging and kissing me hello, Selene looks as if she's unsure how to feel. "I admit having another familiar face around for this little monster will probably be a goddess-send." She reasons, squeezing her daughter's foot. "But you didn't have to come all this way!"

Drake and I both know her husband disagrees, but my mate simply says, "nonsense, we wanted to come!"

*Thank you." Selene murmurs, tears suddenly shining in her eyes. I'm just starting to feel concerned when she stomps her foot and swipes at her cheeks, "I'm sorry, I'm not upset, it's just the baby. Yesterday I cried because we ran out of pickles."

Lila leans forward conspiratorially, whispering to Drake. "Mommy ate da pickles."

#Chapter 128 – Bastien Arrives in Tartarus

"Tattle tale!" Selene hiccups a laugh, and extracts her pup from Drake's arms, "Come on, I'll have some rooms made up for you."

Drake tucks me under his arm as we set off up the stairs. "Well I hate to say it, Selene. But it's obvious you're breeding. You look terrible."

"Drake!" I exclaim, smacking his chest.

"It's okay Sophie, I know it's true." Selene sighs.

Even I have to admit that the stunning Volana looks worse for wear. In fact, for the first time since we met, I don't feel inadequate standing beside her.

Finally!

Pregnant and Rejected by My Alpha Mate Chapter 129

Pregnant and Rejected by My Alpha Mate

Chapter 129

#Chapter 129 – Bastien Runs Into An Old Friend

Selene

Having Drake here is an absolute Goddess-send.

Not only is he precisely the kind of familiar and loving face I needed to help soothe Lila's overwhelmed nerves, but he was with me throughout my first pregnancy and knows exactly how to make me feel better.

When I crave something sweet, the Eros Alpha knows what brand of cookies to buy. When I turn green and make a run for the bathroom, he knows to turn up the air conditioning and pour me a glass of ice water. When I start to cry over nothing, he knows which jokes to tell in order to make me laugh.

Still, as relieved as I am to have my friend close by, his sudden appearance makes me uneasy. "I don't understand." I admit once the initial excitement has died down, "when did Bastien call you?"

Lila and I are seated on the edge of the bed in the guest suite, watching Drake and Sophie unpack. It's sort of strange to see them together, but both look happier than I can ever remember seeing them. I grin every time Drake catches Sophie's eye and a bright red flush works its way up her cheeks. In fact, they're so preoccupied with each other, Drake almost misses my question.

"In truth he called me before he left." The Alpha admits, "we were going to come in a couple of weeks, but then..." He trails off, glancing at Lila.

"Then he met his welcoming party and asked you to come sooner?" I surmise, censoring my words for the sake of my pup.

"You guessed it." Drake agrees, pausing to ruffle Lila's hair. "But that was fine by me, I wasn't sure I'd survive another week without seeing my favorite little bean."

"Uncle Rake, I've so much to show you!" My daughter replied eagerly. "We have to go to da forest, and Mommy's new cafe and da museum."

"We'll go to all those places and more, munchkin." He promises, pausing when he sees the exasperated look I shoot him. "Assuming your Mommy agrees its safe."

"Why wouldn' be safe?" Lila inquires, cocking her head to the side, "dis is Daddy's city."

"Yes angel, but Daddy's not here right now." I sigh, "So we have to be a little extra careful. That's all."

"I don' understand." Lila confesses, looking confused.

Sophie offers me a sympathetic look. "Well maybe you can help your Mommy teach me some recipes." She suggests, "I have no idea what I'm doing at the cafe and I could use all the help you can give – assuming you have time." She adds, speaking directly to me now.

“Of course!” I leap at the offer, it’s the perfect activity to keep Lila both entertained and safe in the house. “I’d be delighted to help you Sophie.” Just then a wave of nausea rolls through my belly, as if the baby heard me speaking and decided to remind me that these things are no longer up to me,

“Though I have to warn you that some dishes will have to be off limits.”

“I completely get it.” She assures me warmly, seeming more confident than I can ever remember seeing her before. “We’ll take it one at a time.*

I slip out of the room a little while later, taking Drake up on his offer to babysit Lila while I take a nap. However instead of going upstairs and climbing into bed like I so desperately want to, I make a B-line for Bastien’s office, where I know Aiden and Donovan are busy reviewing their plans for our security

I knock softly and walk inside without waiting for a signal to enter, embracing my own newfound confidence. The Betas are seated on the couches in the corner, a pile of papers littering the coffee table in front of them.

Selene,” Donovan says, rising to his feet, “Is everything.”

“How bad is it?” I interrupt, crossing my arms over my chest.

The men exchange a wary glance, “How bad is what?”

“The situation with Frederic.” I clarify, starting down the powerful wolves, “I know Bastien didn’t tell me everything. You two have been hovering over Lila and I like a pair of gargoyles and now Drake turns up out of the blue because Bastien didn’t seem to think your protection was enough.”

“That isn’t the reason.” Donovan sighs, “He just thought having a friend nearby would help take some of the weight off your shoulders.”

“Don’t.” I growl, “I don’t want any more well-intentioned lies told to protect my feelings. This is my pup we’re talking about. I have a right to know how much danger she’s in.”

“Selene, we have everything under control, there’s nothing you need to worry about.” Aiden tries to appease me.

“Stop it. I know you think you’re helping but being kept in the dark is only adding to my stress, not reducing it.” I exclaim, my overwhelming frustration growing larger by the minute,

Silence stretches between us, and Donovan and Aiden seem to be having some sort of telepathic argument. I can’t tell what’s being said or who’s winning. Only that both Betas seem very reluctant to grant my request.

#Chapter 129 – Bastien Runs Into An Old Friend

“Are you going to stare at each other all day, or are you going to treat me like a goddess-damned adult and tell me what’s going on?” I finally burst.

Donovan emits a heavy sigh, raising his dark eyes to mine with grim determination.

“It’s not Lila, Selene.” He tells me gently. “It’s you.”

“What?” I repeat, feeling both baffled and relieved. It’s not Lila. I think over and over again. It’s

not Lila. But what does he mean when he says it’s me?

“Frederic didn’t just send assassins for Bastien, he also sent him a message.” Donovan continues, ignoring Aiden’s disapproving look. Clearly the younger man’s opinion about sharing this information was overruled.

“He plans on taking over the pack. And then he plans on claiming you for himself.”

Bastien

This city is a nightmare.

I crossed into Tartarus late last night, and though the city seemed bleak and dim in the darkness, I told myself things would probably look better in the light of day. Oh how wrong I was. It turns out the night’s shadowy cover obscured the sprawling metropolis’s worst blemishes, rather than exaggerating them.

The rogues and criminals who lurked in the maze of underground passageways beneath the city only multiplied in the cold morning air, terrorizing the impoverished inhabitants of the Calypso pack’s capital. Packs of hungry orphans form bands of pickpockets roaming the filthy tunnels, and the scent of fear fills the air wherever I turn.

I can feel curious eyes on me as I move through the barren slums, and for once I make no effort to conceal my power. Usually I try to keep a lid on my dominant energy unless I need to unleash it, but now I let it pour out of me in waves, pleased to see shady figures scattering when I draw near.

It’s in these living catacombs that I discover the posters advertising Blaise’s reward on Volana wolves. Like in Asphodel and every other city I’ve visited across the continent’s northern territories, these ads are reserved for the seedy underbelly of society, rather than the mainstream populace.

The difference here is that the vast majority of the Calypso wolves have been relegated to this harsh existence, with only the wealthiest members of the pack actually permitted to live in the exclusive districts built atop the subterranean ghetto.

Only after I've explored the entirety of Tartarus's underworld do I finally emerge into the fresh air of the aboveground city, the autumn sun blinding me with its harsh rays. The lavish excess of the city proper does nothing to erase the images of squalor and suffering from my mind.

If anything this false dreamscape makes the depravity of the municipality's crowded understories even starker, and I'd honestly like to kill Blaise on principle alone. What kind of Alpha does this to his people? This is a new low, even for a homicidal narcissist like Denizen.

Now that I'm out among the nobility I do leash in my power, not wanting any of these pompous aristocrats to run tattling to their leader. I don't know how Blaise keeps the population so divided, but I can only imagine it's through extremely harsh deterrence. Only the most stringent enforcement and severe punishments could keep people so desperate from breaking the rules and traveling outside of their designated spheres.

Whatever the implications, there are no threats to mitigate now. Quite the opposite, showing people how dangerous I am in these parts will only get me into trouble.

Exploring the opulent neighborhoods in concentric circles which carry me closer and closer to Blaise's over the top residence in the center of the city, absorb every last detail of my surroundings. As expected there are no reward posters or signs of discord here, only empty beauty and extravagant wealth.

I'm almost at the Pack House's front door when a familiar scent meets my nose, one which makes my blood positively boil. Following my nose to a designer boutique, I catch sight of a tall, blonde woman happily chatting with a clerk while posing in front of a floor-to-ceiling mirror – looking right at home.

I'd know her anywhere : Arabella.

Pregnant and Rejected by My Alpha Mate Chapter 130

Pregnant and Rejected by My Alpha Mate

Chapter 130

#Chapter 130 – Odile Learns a Secret

Selene

“What do you mean, Frederic wants to claim me for himself?” I ask nervously, glancing back and forth between the two betas.

“The message he sent Bastien made it very clear, Selene.* Donovan sighs. “He plans on taking you for his mate, whether you agree or not.”

That doesn't make any sense. I think uselessly.

Why not? Luna asks. You're the Alpha's mate, you have his child and the pack loves you both. Who better to convince them to accept Frederic as their new leader than you?

Ignoring my wolf, I press, “Why? Just to spite Bastien?”

The men exchange a look that sends my stomach lurching up into my throat. “That's possible.” Aiden admits.

“But?” I prompt, knowing there has to be more to this.

“But we think-” Donovan begins, only to have Aiden cut him off.

“No, we promised Bastien.” The younger man argues.

“You promised.” Donovan corrects, “I think she has a right to know.” Pursing his lips and eyeing me with staid resolve, he continues. “We it's highly likely Frederic has been posing as someone you know.

He probably doesn't just want you on principle... there's a strong chance he's truly interested in you.. romantically.”

“How is that possible?” I ask. “How could he be in the city without being recognized?”

“He was only a boy when his father was killed, and he hasn't lived here since.” Aiden sighs, “Besides, he could be in disguise for all we know. It's clear he's very clever.”

“And I suppose Bastien intended to keep all this from me?” I demand, indignant anger rising up inside my chest. Suddenly I don't feel nearly so bad about lying to my mate about Dr. Kane. The nerve of the man: forbidding me from keeping secrets, then turning around and keeping a thousand of his own.

“He wanted to protect you.” Donovan sighs. After what happened with the safe house-”

“You know I'm getting really tired of people trying to protect me by keeping me in the dark.” I snap, cutting him off before he can remind me how badly I wished I'd stayed in the dark about the spy cameras in Asphodel.

Pressing my palm to my belly. “And what about the baby? What about Lila? Did Frederic say anything about them?”

“As far as we know, he didn’t mention Lila, but she’s a girl, she wouldn’t be a threat to him anyway.” Aiden relates.

“And the baby?” I repeat stiffly. I can’t stand the way the betas are looking at me, their eyes full of pity, as if there’s no hope for us.

“As far as we know he doesn’t have any idea you’re breeding.” Donovan admits, “And we need to keep it that way as long as humanly possible.”

Frederic

“Selene is breeding.” My mother announces, striding into the kitchen.

Turning to face her, I note the thick layer of makeup caking her bruised cheek. “Excuse me?”

She averts her gaze in submission. “it’s all over the city. The Alpha’s mate is carrying his second child – almost guaranteed to be a male heir, or so they say.”

Grinding my teeth in frustration, I hiss, “How can they possibly know that?”

“She’s far enough along that her scent has changed.” Mom explains, “There’s no doubt. She’s pregnant.”

“Idle gossip.” | growl. “Let me know when they see a damned sonogram.”

“I heard it from one of the alpha’s sentries.” My mother informs me coolly, “Trust me, he knows what’s going on inside the pack house better than you do.”

Anger sparks at her words, how dare she think a lowly guard could be more in tuned with pack happenings than I am? “What the hell were you doing talking to one of the sentries?” I snarl.

“I didn’t!”

She insisted, the scent of her fear spiking between us, “I was eavesdropping, he never knew I was there.”

Goddess damn it. This is all going wrong. As if it wasn’t bad enough that Bastien marked Selene and started rutting her day and night for all to see. Now I’m not only going to be stuck with my mother, but probably another one of his brats.

It's not a death sentence. My wolf asserts grumpily. It's only a problem if the pup is a boy. If it's another girl it won't make a difference, you can send her off to boarding school with Lila after you claim Selene.

"We need to move faster." I tell Mom. "We need to make sure people know he's left the city again. We need to make sure they don't forgive him this time."

"How are you going to do that?" She asks, "We don't have an insider on the council anymore."

"We don't need one." I proclaim, "I have an inside track with the Novan press, and you know as well as I do that there are some offenses which can't be forgiven. This time he can't march back into town with some romantic saga to excuse his negligence."

"If you tell me what you're planning, I can help." My mother insists stubbornly.

"I don't want your help." I hiss. "I want you to sit down, shut up and do what you're told." Raising my hand, I move to tower over her, or do I need to give you another lesson on who's in charge."

"No Frederic." She immediately quells. "I'm sorry."

Bastien

What is she doing here? I think irately.

Who cares? Axel counters, surging forward with a vicious growl. Let's get her.

I can't deny the idea is appealing. I want nothing more than to charge into the shop and take the woman I once considered a surrogate sister into custody. Almost as quickly as the impulse strikes me, fear rises up alongside it. Arabella knows Selene is a Volana, by now she might even know about Lila.

If Arabella has met Blaise she might now know about the reward, and she wouldn't hesitate to turn my mate in even if there wasn't money up for grabs.

This is very, very bad. I think in agitation.

What do we do? Axel presses, some of his anger fading amidst our shared concern for our mate and pup.

We've got to find out how much she knows, —

I decide, hating the idea of cozying up to the would-be murderess, but unable to see another option. And if she's spent time with Blaise, we've got to discover what she's told him.

I wait for her to exit the shop, slipping around the corner and watching the entrance until I hear the strident ring of the entrance bell. Arabella struts out of the boutique, sashaying down the street in the opposite direction. It only takes me a moment to circle around through one of the alleyways, and within seconds I'm standing at the mouth of a narrow side street, waiting for the traitorous she-wolf to walk into my trap.

When her footsteps near I reach out and grab her by the collar, pulling her into the alcove and slamming her up against the wall. Her brown eyes go wide as dinner plates, and undiluted fear washes over her countenance. "Bastien?"

"Give me one reason, one, why I shouldn't kill you where you stand." I command, forcing the words out through bared fangs. Axel is aching for the chance to make good on my threat, and I'll be damned if I don't want to let him.

"Please," Arabella begs, "please just hear me out."

"Hear you out?" I thunder, lowering my voice when I realize passers-by might overhear me,

"hear out how you tried to murder my pregnant mate. How you undermined me every moment you were in Elysium, how you allied with my enemies to ruin my life?"

"You don't understand. She whines, "Frederic made me."

"Frederic?" I demand, my worst fears coming true. Of course I'd entertained the idea that they might have been working together, but I'd hoped against hope I was wrong. "I was talking about

Grigore."

The blood drains from Arabella's face. "It's not what you think."

"Then what is it?" I bark, "you wanted the chance to explain, now explain!"

"He's a monster. She mewls, tears sparkling in her eyes. "He forced me to work for him. I didn't want to. you have to believe me. He's mad with his plans for revenge, and so cruel you have no idea what I've been through."

"Oh give it up. Arabella." Shaking her roughly, I continue, "I'm not an idiot, and I know you came back to Elysium with your own agenda in mind. Don't pretend like you're a victim in all this."

"You're wrong." She squeaks, "I didn't ever want to come back, I always dreamed of coming here. But I met Frederic in the Gemini territory and he took me prisoner."

My rage growing more violent with every minute that passes, I go in for the kill. “You know he is the reason Flynn is dead.”

I dig my claws into the papery skin above her carotid artery. “Not me. If Frederic and his father hadn’t tried to stage a coup, your brother would still be here.”

That was all it took. Arabella suddenly went from begging and pleading to being positively crimson with righteous fury. She drops her act, and for the first time in years, I’m actually looking at the woman beneath the mask.

“No!” She spits, “I was there! I saw what happened! I know the truth, Bastien! My brother is dead because of you!”