

Pregnant and Rejected by My Alpha Mate Chapter 166

Pregnant and Rejected by My Alpha Mate

Chapter 166

Chapter 166 – Saying Goodbye

Arabella

“What fresh hell is this?” I mutter, staring at the news coverage from Elysium in horror. I can’t believe what I’m seeing. Frederic, who is by far the most conniving wolf I’ve ever met, is on screen getting tricked into admitting his crimes by that little W***e, Selene. The worst part is that she drags me into it too, and he doesn’t deny a single word.

My mouth falls wider and wider open with every word that passes between them. The cunning b***h clearly knows they’re being watched, and she eggs him on for the cameras. A dozen questions flood my mind as their conversation escalates. How on earth did this happen? How did she even find out the truth? She isn’t smart enough to figure it out on her own.

I gasp when Frederic raises his hand to strike Selene, clamping my own hand over my mouth and knowing the answers aren’t important. The only question that matters now is how in the hell I’m going to hide this from Bastien. This is going to be at the top of the news cycle all week long – at a minimum. I can’t keep breaking the cable and making fake newspapers. Making a few edits to one or two articles is one thing, but I simply don’t have the time to do it every day.

Not to mention Bastien is already getting too impatient to return to Elysium. Even if I can find a way to cover this up, he’s going to keep pressuring me to stop stalling and return home. He already sent the annulment papers to Selene, as far as he’s concerned every moment we delay is another day for her and Frederic to make a head start.

Even now, I can hear him stirring in the other room. I have to think fast, I have to find a way to delay him and hide the news at once. Desperation takes hold of me as Bastien appears in the doorway, and I slam my finger down on the remote’s power button.

His handsome brow furrows as he looks between me and the television.” What was that?”

“Nothing!” I exclaim, much too quickly. “Just more of the same nonsense they’re always spinning. You’re a monster, Selene’s a goddess – you know.”

“I know you hate it, Bella.” Bastien sighs, coming forward and reaching for the remote. “But it’s important I keep up with everything happening in Elysium, even if it’s infuriating.”

He pries the black rectangle out of my fingers, and I panic, turning and

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grabbing the vase of flowers sitting on the coffee table. The screen comes to life and a reporter sitting behind a news desk only has time to say, “the shocking video-” before I bring down the heavy glass on the back of Bastien’s head with all my strength.

He crumples to the ground, unconscious, and I pull out my phone, dialing swiftly. The man who made me Bastien’s memory potion gave me his number on my last visit, a gesture I’m now eternally grateful for – especially considering the fact that I don’t want to risk Blaise’s fury by returning to the undercity again.

The line only rings twice before a gruff voice answers, filling me with instant relief despite his hostile tone. “I told you only to use this number in case of emergency.”

“This is an emergency.” I breathe nervously, “I need help.” I wouldn’t normally trust an underworld potion maker with anything so sensitive, but I don’t have anyone

else to turn to. “I’ve got an unconscious man who needs to be moved, and I need a strong sleeping potion- something that can be injected.”

“That will cost you.” The slimy shifter tells me, sounding annoyed and excited for such a profitable opportunity at once.

“I’ll pay any price.” I answer foolishly, wincing after the words are out of my mouth. That was stupid.

“Any price?” He repeats gleefully. “Well then, I’ll be right over.”

Selene

“I don’t know if I can do this.”

My reflection stares back at me in the bathroom mirror, both thoroughly familiar, yet strange. Helene concocted a potion that would disguise my eyes after a few drops have been applied directly to my cornea, and we’re testing it out for the first time. Now instead of the ethereal combination of blue and violet I’m used to seeing, both of my eyes are an unremarkable shade of brown.

Of course, as surreal as it is to see myself this way, my altered image is not the cause of my unease. We're supposed to leave within the hour, and while I'm still confident that this is the right thing to do, leaving feels much harder now that the time is upon us.

Drake and Sophie are taking Lila to Asphodel as soon as Helene and I leave, and they're taking Bastien's bodyguard with them. Still the prospect of being separated from her while everything is still so uncertain makes me so agitated I can barely breathe.

It's true that Frederic has been exposed to the pack now thanks to his attempted

intervention, but I've learned the hard way that a wounded animal is the most dangerous by far. He'll feel he has nothing to lose now, especially with the constant news coverage. In a matter of 24 hours he's gone from a potential alpha to the most reviled man in the territory, and I wouldn't put it past him to do something desperate.

Aiden and Donovan immediately put out a warrant for his arrest, but of course by the time the enforcers arrived at his apartment, he was gone. I hate knowing he's out there somewhere probably plotting his revenge, and I pray that if he's watching us he'll choose to follow me and not Lila.

"None of that, my darling." Helene murmurs, rubbing my arms. "This is not the time for doubts. You need your confidence now more than ever."

"It's not doubts." I admit weakly, feeling tears burn in my eyes. "It's fear. I'm afraid of leaving Lila like this, I'm afraid that I won't come back... I know what it's like to grow up without a mother – I don't want that for her."

"That is exactly why you'll fight so hard to return." Helene reminds me. "You have something to live for, something that Blaise never will."

"Blaise has himself." I reason, "He's incapable of loving another person, he doesn't need anyone other than himself to keep going."

"Selene, if you weren't afraid you'd be a fool." Helene says. Her words were probably meant to be reassuring, yet they only make me worry harder. "A little fear is good, it drives you to survive at all costs, but you can't let it consume you. Just think:

if you hadn't been afraid of what Garrick would do to you, you never would have fought him off, but if you'd let the fear control you, you never would have found the strength to escape either."

Blinking in surprise I whisper, "I never told you that."

She rolls her eyes, "When are you going to learn, silly girl? You don't have to tell me for me to know." Continuing she reminds me, "You found the strength then, when

you only had yourself to live for. Now you have three other lives to fight for – don't forget it. You are capable of so much more than you think."

"Thank you, Helene." I sniffle, "I wish you'd been there to give me these pep talks when I was younger. I might have avoided some terrible mistakes."

"And you never would have learned your own lessons." She smiles wanly, "Now, finish getting ready so we can make our goodbyes, the longer you put them off, the worse they'll be."

In the end they're horrible no matter the delay. Saying goodbye to Odette, Drake and Sophie was torment enough, their warm hugs and words of support had me crying before I could even contemplate the pain of missing them. I was even feeling

so sentimental that I actually enjoyed Aiden and Donovan's final lectures about safety. I hugged and kissed the big worrywarts and promised to be as careful as if they were standing over my shoulder.

However the worst was parting with my pup – not that this was any surprise. Just like when we left Asphodel, reality didn't seem to sink in for Lila until the moment of truth was upon us. She cried and screamed and broke my heart to absolute pieces, wailing for me not to go so loudly that I could hear her even as Helene drove us away from the house.

As soon as we were in the car I let go and sobbed, covering my ears in a futile attempt to drown out the sounds of her misery. Helene crooned and rubbed my back, promising that Lila would be alright and the sooner we got to Tartarus and found Bastien, the sooner I could return home to her. Her words filled me with determination, and after a while I was able to dry my tears and focus on what lies ahead. In two days time we'll be in Tartarus. I'm not going to let anything get in my way now – I don't care what I have to do, or who I have to defeat to bring my mate home. It's only a matter of time.

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Chapter 167

Chapter 167 – Bastien Dreams

Knocking on the door of the bedroom my father assigned Selene, I hear a dull thump and a sudden scampering sound within. Pushing the door open I scan the space, noticing a photo book splayed haphazardly on the bed as if it had been dropped there in hurry, and a pair of abandoned slippers on the floor by the headboard. However, I don't see hide nor hair of the *woman* I came to find.

Stepping inside, I call, "Selene?"

Her sweet scent floats to my nose, muddled with a distinct tinge of acrid fear. Despite my *sympathy* for her plight, my sweet mate unwittingly placed a hunt under my nose, and no wolf worth his salt can resist such a tempting *offer*. "*Come out, come out wherever you are, little wolf.*"

I hear a muted whimper in the direction of the bed. Furrowing my brow, I realize it had sounded awfully *low* to the ground, and after a moment I understand. The poor thing was so frightened she'd actually crawled under the bed to hide *from* me. Slowly striding forward, I close the distance between us, trying to wipe the smile from my face. The last thing she needs is to know how adorable I find her behavior.

Kneeling down at the foot of the bed, I duck my head low enough to see the cowering she wolf. She's flat on her belly, her *eyes wide* as dinner plates as she stares back at me, positively trembling with fear. "*You going to make me come all the way down there to get you, baby?*"

She doesn't answer, instead sidling closer to the wall and turning her face away from me. Resolved to *retrieve* her, I lower myself to the ground, at which point I discover that she's both out of my reach, and I'm too *broad* to fit into the narrow space myself. Clever little mate.

I could move the bed, but I decide to try and coax her out instead. Mimicking her position, I settle in for a chat. "Okay sweetheart, let's just talk." I begin, grinning wolfishly when she looks at me in surprise. "We need to get to know each other if we're going to be married after all."

Selene still doesn't answer, but the scent of her fear isn't as strong as it was before, so I continue. "You should know that Garrick is dead." I share, hoping that this information will help her trust me. "He denied everything, but I saw -" my voice trails off as I remember my visit to their house, to the basement he'd used as her prison cell. It was too horrible to contemplate keeping a child down in such desperate conditions for so long. "I saw where he was keeping you, and I found his Wolfsbane supply."

She curls in on herself a little, as if reliving the pain of the potion. "We destroyed all of it. You don't ever have to worry about anyone hurting you ever again, Selene. *You're* under my protection now." Her stomach growls in reply, and the corner of my mouth tilts up. "I wish you'd come out and talk to me." I tell her. "If you did, we could have some lunch together."

She's so thin that her eyes look too large in her beautiful face, giving the impression of a puppy dog expression when she finally asks, "Will you let me eat if I don't?"

Axel growls fiercely in my head, and I'm just barely able to stop from letting the same sound escape me. I wish I could kill Garrick all over again, and I know then that as long as she's out of reach, she's never going to trust me. "Of course I will." I promise, fighting to keep my tone gentle, "but you might have to share it with that spider."

Selene's gaze follows mine, landing on the huge arachnid curiously approaching her. It was a bit of a gambit. After all, eight years in a basement had to have acquainted her with all kinds of *creepy crawlies*, but that could either immunize or hyper sensitize her to them. Luckily for me, it's the latter. With a terrified squeak she rapidly crawls out of the narrow space, yelping when she hits her head in her rush, and then again when I catch her beneath the arms and pull her into my arms.

Selene flails against me, trying to escape at the same time as she struggles to wrap her head around how I managed to get to her so quickly. Unfortunately she's so frail that it takes very little effort for me to trap her wriggling limbs, "Easy, sweetheart, you're all right. You're safe."

The squirming bundle whines in protest as I snuggle her to my chest, settling on the edge of her bed and rocking back and forth. "I promise I won't hurt you, Selene." I vow, rubbing a soothing hand up and down her spine the same way I might a skittish horse. "That's it. Encourage when she begins to settle, "Just let me take care of you."

Apparently attempting a hail mary pass to escape me, Selene makes one final thrash. A pair of sharp little fangs dig into my arm, and I surprise her with my purr. The innocent she wolf has no idea how badly I want to bite her myself – or how intimate the gesture is between men and women. We only bite our mates; her instincts clearly recognize me even if she does not.

In the end it seems my lack of rebuke convinces her I can be trusted, and she stills completely, pouting but cuddling closer when I continue purring my approval. "Good girl." I praise, carefully tilting her head forward so I can examine the quickly swelling goose-eye

where she hit her head. Tsking softly, I press my lips to the tender spot once, twice, three times.

"Is he really dead?" Selene asks in a small voice. "Dead and burned." I assure her, "I did it myself."

I let that information sit with her for a moment, hoping that it won't frighten her too much. He wasn't the first man I'd ever killed. but he was the one I'd found the most pleasure in destroying. "Are we really going to be married?" Selene whispers after a moment.

"Yes," I confirm, "Does that scare you?"

She thinks about my question for a long moment, before hesitantly shaking her head no. "I'm sorry i bit you."

I want to kiss her more than I've ever wanted to kiss anyone, but I know she's not ready for that yet, so I simply lower my cheek to her hair and breathe in her incredible scent. "I'm not."

The images slowly fade, the bedroom dissolving around us until it's replace with a new scene. I'm waking up alone in my bed a few weeks later, worry lancing through me when I instinctively reach for Selene but find her missing. As tortuous as it is for me to lie beside her every night without touching her the way my wolf aches to, her nightmares are so persistent that she'd never sleep at all without me. Rising from bed, the steady drumbeat of rain fills the air, and I've barely made it a step before thunder and lightning crash in near perfect synchrony, the sound shaking the walls as light shatters the darkness through the windows.

A muffled cry from the living room sends me running, and when I reach the communal space, I find Selene in the middle of a complete breakdown. In the back of my mind I recall there was a storm the night she escaped Garrick, but I haven't been able to convince her to tell me exactly what happened that day.

Approaching her warily, Selene scrambles away as if I'm the devil himself. I stop in my tracks, sighing, "Oh Baby, I thought we'd gotten past this." It's true, after our first couple of weeks together Selene had gone from fearing me to viewing me as her only safe space. She was still incredibly skittish, but by now I'd become accustomed to her running to me – not away.

My words fell on deaf ears, in fact it seems like she can't hear me at all. She's staring at me as if she doesn't even recognize me, sobbing and pleading for me not to hurt her. "Please no!" Selene weeps, sounding absolutely petrified, "It's not right, Garrick!"

That stops me dead in my tracks, as two things become very clear. First, my mate is in the middle of a pull blown PTSD episode and has no idea where she is or who I am. Second, Garrick clearly did more than beat and poison her. Acting instinctively, I shift into my wolf form, not bothering to remove my clothes first. They fall in tatters around me, and Selene's panicked breathing eases slightly.

The sound of her agony has me flattening my ears to my head as a low whine sounds in my chest, and to my relief my mate seems completely unafraid of the giant predator bearing down on her. She reaches toward me as I draw near, and I wrap my furry body around her, gladly offering her the only comfort she can accept at the moment.

The dream changes again, Selene's voice echoing in my head much stronger than it had been at the time, "You coddled me!"

"If I coddled you it's because I love you!" I hear myself replying. I don't remember this conversation, but I can't help thinking that I've never seen anyone in more need of coddling than my traumatized mate in the early months of our relationship.

"I never learned how to fend for myself!" She answers fiercely.

The strange thing is that I can't see her, I can hear her, but I have no other context to place the moment. It doesn't even make any sense, we haven't known each other long enough to 'ever or never' do anything. My consciousness rolls around uncomfortably, and the surreal sensation of dreaming washes over me. This isn't real. I realize. I'm only dreaming. Straining to leave the fantasy world and return to reality, I urge myself to wake up. Except I can't seem to break free of this strange sleep. It's like I'm trapped, walking through memories and things that haven't happened yet.

What in the hell is going on?

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Chapter 168

Chapter 168 – Arriving in Ta... #Chapter 168 – Arriving in Tartarus

Arabella

I have to admit, I like life much better with Bastien unconscious. It's so much less stressful not having to play pretend every second of every day, especially with the constant news stories about Selene and Frederic. Part of me feels vindicated that Frederic exposed himself through utter overconfidence and stupidity – after all the times he called me names and criticized my mistakes, it feels good to see him get his comeuppance.

Still, there's no denying it's inconvenient. Not to mention I very nearly slipped up with the memory potion. It hadn't occurred to me that if Bastien wasn't awake to drink the potion, its effects might have worn off by the time things have finally settled down enough for him to rejoin the waking world. It wasn't until he started muttering Selene's name in his sleep that I realized my oversight, and I very quickly called in another favor from my underworld contact.

The injections won't take away the memories of his dreams, but they'll certainly ensure he doesn't recall the distant past. If I wanted to start this entire process over again and have him forget all the progress I'd made with him in the past few weeks I could have

arranged for a different concoction, but in the end I decided dreams are always so strange and mystical that it will be easy to convince him whatever truths they showed him were just his imagination.

After a week of planning my wedding in blissful silence without any interference from bossy Alphas or having to worry about counterfeiting newspapers, I finally let Bastien wake. Selene and Frederic are still frequently in the news, but at least they've stopped playing the videos of their confrontation on loop. There's a chance that Bastien might catch some coverage about it, but if it comes to it! should be able to convince him that Selene betrayed Frederic in order to take over the pack on her own. As long as he doesn't see Frederic admitting to his crimes, my plans can still move forward.

When he emerges from the bedroom the morning after I cease giving him the sedative injections, he looks drowsy and confused. "You're finally awake!" I cry, throwing my arms around him.

"How long was I out, I feel... Goddess I'm starving."

"I bet," I nod in understanding, moving into the kitchen to prepare some food. I wouldn't normally cook for anyone, but I need to stay on his good side right now. "You've been really sick."

His brow furrows in confusion. "I don't get sick."

"Well you've slept the week away with a fever." I inform him wryly, "if that's not sick I don't know what is."

"That must be it." He mutters to himself, elaborating when he sees my confusion. "I had the strangest dreams. They must have been from my fever – only they didn't seem like nightmares... they were more like memories."

I freeze in place, "Oh? What kind of memories?" "All kinds of things." He answers vaguely, "Flynn when we were little, my father teaching me to run the pack."

"Is that all?" I press nervously, slowly chopping up some vegetables to throw in an omelet.

"Yeah." He sighs, scrubbing a hand over his face. "There were a few more recent ones, but they didn't make any sense."

He sounds dangerously conflicted, and I decide to face the issue head on. "I heard you say Selene's name a few times." I tell him, drawing his rapt attention. "You have to remember what a good actress she is, Bastien. I can see that you're confused, but know whatever you saw was probably her manipulation."

He frowns deeply, "Maybe my head is playing tricks on me, if what I saw was an act..."

“Remember she’s a Volana.” I caution, “She has powers you and I cannot fathom. I’m sure it’s how she fooled you all these years. She’s practically a witch.”

“The woman I saw didn’t even have a wolf – she was so helpless.” He argues.

“Of course she was, helpless people never raise suspicions.” I remind him. “She needed you to underestimate her at every turn so you’d never view her as a threat.”

He thinks about it for a long moment before nodding, “if you say so.”

“I do.”

Selene

“How are we going to find them?” I ask Helene as we near the border. “Tartarus is a huge city, they could be anywhere.”

“We should be able to narrow down a radius easily enough.” My mentor answers. “How much do you know about the Calypso

pack?”

nu that my parents were Calypsos and that it’s another mountain pack – that and their Alpha is a major piece of work.” I answer

dryly.

“Well, that piece of work has a very interesting way of segregating his city.” Helene explains, “in fact he and your step-father had a few things in common.”

“What do you mean?” I inquire, smothering a shiver.

“Only the wealthiest wolves and nobility are allowed to actually roam the city freely, everyone else: the poor, other shifter species, his political opponents, they’re forced to live underground. You see Tartarus was rebuilt over and over again over the centuries, but instead of expanding outward, they just kept building on top of what former civilizations left behind. The subterranean city is ancient-it goes very deep and it’s just about the most miserable place on the continent.”

Now I really am shivering, “And that helps us because?”

“Wellis Arabella the type of she-wolf to associate with the masses, or would she force her way into the most elite circle she could manage?” Helene prompts.

“Clearly you already know the answer to that.” I chuckle.

“So you see, already we’ve eliminated three quarters of the city.” The old woman smiles. “My suggestion is that we head for the center city and wander around a bit, that way we can get our bearings while also seeing if we can pick up either of their scents.”

“And if we can’t?” I fret.

“Always so pessimistic.” Helene clucks, “if we can’t find them then tonight we’ll start practicing some of your other skills in earnest.”

“Respectfully Helene, sometimes I think you speak in riddles just to toy with me.” I remark pointedly.

“You know I thought the young were supposed to be more fun.” She quips in return, “Take my advice darling, we’re headed into the most difficult challenge of your life, you have to try and find the light where you can, and that includes humoring an old bat’s riddles.”

Her wry words sober me completely, “You think it’s going to be that bad?”

She frowns at me. “Lesson number two, Selene. Challenging does not mean bad. Nothing worth having in life is easily won, and it will be all the more rewarding when you overcome it.”

Fear gnaws at my insides. That’s certainly easy for her to say, after 150 successful years in our world. But my life is just getting started. Thave a child to worry about and another on the way. I have a mate to save. I can’t afford to be so philosophical about my future. “Can you promise I will?” i counter, “Overcome it, I mean.”

“That is up to you and you alone, little mother.” She replies, making me grit my teeth in frustration. “I can tell you that you are capable of overcoming it, but I cannot give you the drive to do what you must or promise circumstances will be favorable. I can only tell *you* that there is reason to hope.”

“Reason to hope.” I repeat bleakly. “And exactly what powers that I haven’t even begun to practice are supposed to help me find my husband in the chaos you’re describing?”

“Selene.” I can tell from her tone that Helene is genuinely becoming frustrated by my bleak outlook. “Stop assuming the worst and use your head. He’s your fated mate isn’t he?”

“Of course.” I confirm.

“And who fated you?” She encourages. “The moon Goddess.” I answer automatically.

“Okay, so what power can help you find him?” She’s laying a trail of cookie crumbs with the demeanor of someone speaking to a toddler. Granted, I’m less than a toddler to her when I think about our age difference.

of a sudden, the answer comes to me and a wide smile takes over my features. “Moonlight.” I supply, preening under her approving

grin,

“That’s my girl!” She praises, patting my shoulders as I drive through the winding mountains. We’re just rounding a bend of thick forest when something catches my eye, a strange glimmering in the distance. I squint towards the object, realizing that it’s not one object but many. The closer we draw the clearer it becomes: A shimmering gold city sprawls across the horizon, glinting towers of metal stretching as far as the eye can see.

Helene confirms what I already suspect. “We’re here.” Her hand slides from my body as we both take in the daunting sight, scarcely believing the size of the metropolis. “Welcome to Tartarus.”

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Chapter 169

Chapter 169-Odile Breaks... #Chapter 169- Odile Breaks Free

Frederic

I’ve been on the road for hours, following Selene’s trail East and wondering if she’s truly on her way to the Calypso pack. It seems like the only possible destination for the route she and her witchy mentor are taking, but I can’t imagine she’s actually headed someplace where she might be killed just for being a Volana.

If I’m right there’s only one possibility: for one reason or another, she must think that Bastien is there. If I’m lucky, I might be able to catch up to her before she finds him. I know if she would just give me another chance and listen with an open mind, I could convince her to stay with me.

Tregret our fight on the street, especially since it ruined more than ten years of undercover work and exposed me to the pack, but I also regret raising my hand against her. Still, I’m sure I can make her understand what Alpha doesn’t lose his temper every now and then? Shifters are very physical beings – Selene must know that I’ll apologize

and make her understand that if she hadn't been so insolent and disrespectful towards me, I never would have dreamed of hitting her. She simply needs to learn his place. She's a reasonable she-wolf, she'll understand everything once I explain.

Getting tired of the silence, I flip the radio on and turn it to the Novan News Network. I know I'm probably not going to like what I hear, but I have to stay tuned in if I'm ever going to figure out a new plan. Unfortunately, I couldn't have predicted just how unpleasant the news would be. I listen in horror as the reporter's fuzzy voice relates the day's latest developments:

Frederic Durand's mother Odile turned herself into the Elysian enforcers today, claiming that she escaped from the basement of a house in Old Town after being imprisoned by her son. Frederic, who has been living under the assumed identity of Dr Thomas Kane for the last decade, was nowhere to be found when the enforcers went to the address Odile provided. Despite the disgraced wolf's absence, they were able to verify his mother's account, describing the basement where he was holding her as being in "deplorable condition."

In a statement to the Novan Press Corps this afternoon, Odile said that she had supported her son from the day he was born and she'd long assisted him in his efforts to become pack Alpha. However their relationship soured when his luck turned for the worse, revealing a cruel streak she'd never before witnessed from her only child. Claiming he struck her on more than one occasion, she displayed bruises and clear signs of abuse, apparently inflicted when she "talked back" to Frederic.

These developments are the most recent in a disturbing trend we first witnessed last week, when Selene Durand exposed her Cousin-in-law on camera, and almost became a victim of the man's temper herself – despite being pregnant. Enforcers have vowed that tracking down Frederic is their top priority, with Beta Aiden stating that the safety of all Novan's would be at risk as long as he remains at large.

Slamming the dial off in a fresh fit of rage, I slam my fist against the steering wheel and bellow with fury. Can this week get any worse?

Selene

Moonlight bathes Helene and I in a warm glow. It had taken us a long time to decide on a place to try and practice this ability, but in the end we were left with no choice. We couldn't catch a whiff of Bastien or Arabella's scent anywhere around the city center, and neither of us wanted to risk questioning strangers about the pair.

After seeing the kind of city that Blaise runs from the horrifying underground caverns to the suspiciously clean top level and painfully uptight locals – we agreed that he probably had spies everywhere. A tyrant like him was bound to have secret enforcers scouring the territory for dissenters, and if the downtrodden expressions on the faces of the lower

caste were any indication, he didn't leave any room for ambiguity. It was either obey or suffer, and even obeying wouldn't help if you weren't wealthy.

I want to tear down every glittering brick of Blaise's capital – nowhere so wretched should be allowed to be so beautiful. Even now, when Helene and I are reveling at the way the golden buildings shine beneath the Goddess's light, I can't help but resent them. We chose a spot at the edge of the main park, leaving us with numerous escape paths if we were forced to run.

"I don't think it's working." I tell Helene, after my sixth attempt to channel the moon's power.

"Nonsense, this is like all the other skills – trial error. We don't know exactly what's going to work, you just have to keep trying." She advises.

Trusting her guidance, which has yet to fail me despite the fact that she's basically been making all of this up as we go, trying to adapt her witchcraft to my mysterious powers. I try again..

Focusing on Bastien, on my need to be with him again, I direct all my energy at the huge autumn moon. I try to pull in its power the same way I do the shadows, but it doesn't do any good. I'm not even sure what's supposed to happen. Is the magic something I'll just feel, or will it be something we can see?

Changing tactics, I begin to meditate, trying to recreate the sensation I've begun to feel in our hypnosis lessons. It took us a while to figure out, but eventually Helene suggested that I try to reach a zen state not unlike the one I would be trying to put my target in. That seems to help, increasing the moon's glow over our patch of grass, but other than that it doesn't seem to have much effect.

"Any ideas?" I ask Helene.

"Hmm." She's circling me like a very friendly vulture, rubbing her chin in thought.

"Alright, how about this: Keep thinking about Bastien, but instead of trying to pull the moon's power to you, try sending your feelings out to it."

"You mean like, send my love to the moon?" I snort.

"Snort not little mother, the best magic isn't fancy, or even original." She scolds good-humoredly. "It's simply true." "Alright, alright." I laugh, doing as she instructs.

"And take it seriously!" She admonishes.

"Yes, ma'am." I agree, pausing only long enough to salute her. As I begin trying to send my feelings outward, I can hear Helene muttering something about sassy pups beneath

her breath, but after a moment i completely forget about her, because I realize I'm beginning to glow.

Staring down at my shining chest in surprise, I try to latch onto the technique, seeing the light waver with my shock and immediately doubling down on the emotions. The more I focus, the stronger the light glows, not the gaudy gold of the city, but pure white moonlight. I can hear Helene encouraging me in the background, and I eagerly continue. After a few minutes of intense effort, the light flows out of me, leaving my body and forming a shining strand suspended in the air and extending into the distance.

I began walking in the direction of the light, looking around nervously in fear that someone will see this stunning magic. Luckily the streets seem fairly deserted after dark, which is both a relief and somewhat disturbing. Part of me worries that the absence of people is some sort of omen, or a sign of some rule Helene and I don't know – like a curfew. Still, now that the moonlight is leading me *somewhere*, I have to follow. If there's even a small chance it will lead me to information about where to find Bastien, or help me in some other way on this quest, I don't have a choice.

Helene and I trail along behind the floating string of pearly light, blindly following it deeper into the city. It twists around *comers* and jumps over the bridge-covered river, and with every step we take I feel a little stronger. Not only stronger, I feel strangely *warmer* happier.

We're close to something now, I know it. I speed up as we cross an intersection and begin down a new block, feeling my heart race

with excitement. Pressing my hand to the slight swell of my stomach, I silently encourage my baby, just a little farther.

The next thing I know, I feel a sharp tug on my jacket as I'm yanked into an alleyway. Yelping, my back is forced up against a brick wall and I reach deep down to send out an energy pulse at my attacker, but for some reason it won't work. A second later I realize why, when my favorite scent in the world fills my senses. Gasping, I open my eyes to look up at the shifter in front of me, finding a huge, furious Alpha wolf glaring at me with pure hatred: Bastien,

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Pregnant and Rejected by My Alpha Mate

Chapter 170

Chapter 170 – Not so happy... #Chapter 170 – Not so happy reunion

Bastien

I was getting ready for bed when I felt it. The strangest sensation deep in my chest, like something was tethered to my ribcage and dragging me forward. I was helpless to resist it, following the pull even though it could have been leading me anywhere.

Arabella shouted after me that I couldn't leave. We couldn't afford for me to be seen, and even if no one connected us, there was a curfew. She tried to stop me, begging me to tell her what was going on and not to go, but I simply shook her off. I don't know what came over me – it was like I was in a trance.

When I made it out onto the street I had enough of my senses intact to evade the sentries patrolling the block, but I didn't care about anything else. All I knew was that I had to find the source of this eerie power. Axel urged me on at every turn, showing no fear or doubt whatsoever.

I knew very little of the city, but my early investigations told me I was headed towards the park. As I neared, a bewitching scent met my sharp nose – like honeysuckle and freshly fallen snow. It was the most incredible thing I'd ever smelled in my life, and as soon as it entered my head Axel began clawing at the surface of my skin, begging to be let out.

Go faster. He'd begged, We can't let it get away.

Only it wasn't fading into the distance, it was getting stronger with every step I took. Instinctively I understood that if I found the source of the scent, I'd also found the force that drew me from the apartment. Scanning my surroundings for more sentries, I broke into a jog, speeding up when I saw a flash of light in the distance.

The moon was so bright overhead that I saw her long before she saw me. The pearlescent sheen surrounded her, seemed to be extending from her body and reaching towards mine. I recognized her immediately, though she was a thousand times more beautiful than she'd been in my dreams or her photos.

It was Selene. She was the being who smelled so irresistible, and she was the one who'd managed to lure him from his hiding place. Axel was eagerly purring Mate, in my head, and I had to admit that the desire to rush forward and take her in my arms was so powerful it made me nearly shake with need.

I forced down those instincts, knowing they were only the effects of the mating bond. It seemed that – at least – had not been a lie. They truly were mates, there was no doubting it now. I made myself focus on the other truths I've learned in recent weeks: the deception, betrayals and crimes. I couldn't allow myself to be distracted by my feelings or her beauty.

Still, it seemed hard to believe such a magnificent creature was capable of doing the things Arabella told me, she looked like an angel floating towards me. Although, that was probably how she'd tricked me so completely in the first place. Her act was so convincing that I'd been incapable of seeing past it.

But she doesn't even know you're here. Axel mused, So who is she acting for now?

She might not see me but she's obviously searching for me, why else would she have cast this spell? I didn't quite believe Arabella's accusations that Selene was a witch until now, but I can't think of another explanation for the light she's following or my own trancelike foray into the night.

Maybe the Goddess is doing this, not her.

Start thinking with what's between your ears instead of what's between your legs. I admonish my wolf, earning a growl in reply. You've seen the news coverage. She's not to be trusted.

I ducked into an alleyway, waiting for her to come near enough to ambush and finding it harder and harder to stay still the stronger her fragrance became.

Lashing out the moment she passed by the mouth of the alley, I snatched her up and pressed her up against the wall, lifting her small feet off the ground. Selene emitted a startled yelp that tugged at my heart strings, looking as though she was aching to fight but couldn't figure out how. After a moment her eyes widened in surprise – only, they were the wrong color. Instead of the two-tone shade of blue and violet I'd seen in my dream, they were as dark brown as Arabella's.

"What have you done to your eyes?" It was the very last thing I wanted, needed, or intended to say. Nonetheless, those were the words my useless mouth uttered.

Selene's expression had gone from frightened to overjoyed, lighting up every bit as brightly as the moonlight she'd harnessed a moment before. Shocking me, she threw her arms around my neck and pressed her soft body close, "Bastien!" She cried in a voice like

rough silk, "thank the Goddess."

I was so surprised I actually returned her embrace for a moment before realizing what I was doing. I was just about to harshly push her away when her slender arms tightened around me, "Please – I know you have to yell at me, but please just give me a moment." She whimpered, "I've missed you so much, I didn't realize how frightened I was until I actually saw you! I'm so glad you're all right."

If I hadn't known any better, I would have believed her every word, "You can't fool me with this sweeter than sugar act." I rumbled, forcing her back. Still, I was more gentle

than I would have been a moment before. The woman truly was dangerous. "What are you doing

here?"

Selene blinked away tears, "I came to find you." This was clear enough, but it also didn't make any sense. Why would she come after

me when I'd threatened her, unless it was a last ditch effort to rescue her scheme?

"When I told you to leave I didn't mean for you to come here!" I growl, reminding her of my letter.

She shook her head tearfully, still holding on to me though she was supposed to be my prisoner, "You have to come home Bastien." This request was as confusing as the last, surely it was easier for her to make trouble when I wasn't in Elysium watching her every

move.

"Where's Frederic?" I demanded, trying to throw her off as completely as she was throwing me.

Her lovely brow furrowed, "Haven't you seen the news?"

"Oh I've seen the news." I informed her coldly, "I've seen him challenging me for control of the pack, parading around in disguise, I've seen the lies you two are spinning about me!"

"Bastien that happened weeks ago." She informed me, "Frederic's real identity was outed to the pack on Monday and he's had to flee into hiding."

Just then an elderly crone rounded, the mouth of the alley, catching sight of us with a deep frown. "If I were you I'd put her down." She advised coolly.

Selene barely offered the woman a glance, "it's okay Helene, he won't hurt me."

Growling low in my chest, I realized she was right. The idea of harming my mate was impossible, no matter how badly she deserved it. "Who are you?"

"I'm her mentor, I've been teaching her to use her powers." She answered simply.

"Powers?" I repeated grimly, "Like the ones that led me here tonight?"

"That's right." Selene admitted easily. The two women's behavior was wrinkling my brain, why acknowledge it so openly. Wasn't her witchcraft supposed to be a secret?

“Bastien, please listen to me,” Selene beseeched, pulling my focus back to her face, “I don’t know what Arabella has told you, but I only want to talk.” I didn’t answer, inviting her to continue and hoping she might get carried away and reveal some of her secrets.” Please hear me out, I got your letter and I swear to you nothing is as she’s made it seem. I love you so much and I’m sorry *you* ever had to come here for my sake -”

“For your sake?” | parroted, completely baffled. Arabella had told me I’d come to the territory to find her after learning her whereabouts.

“Bastien,” Selene grimaced, studying me closely. “Do you remember why you came here?” “I came to find Arabella.” I replied swiftly. “Is that what you remember?” Helene questioned shrewdly, “Or is that what she told you?”

My head was beginning to ache painfully, I couldn’t make sense of all these riddles, I couldn’t believe she was really in front of me. I also couldn’t think straight with her damnable aroma filling my senses, so fresh and pure but... suddenly I looked down at Selene sharply, my gaze traveling from her worried countenance to the tightly wrapped waist of her coat. Using the wall to support her weight, I uncinched the garment and stared at the ever so slight curve of her belly. “You’re breeding