

Sienna

After the initial explosion of pain, it kind of subsided. I was still lying on the floor in the fetal position, still rocking back and forth, but now there wasn't a needle of sharpness stabbing through my belly. No, now it was just a dull ache.

"We have to take you *somewhere*," Aiden argued, pacing right beside me.

"I just want Jocelyn," I murmured.



"She's MIA, Sienna! And we can't wait for her to reappear. We need someone to check on you *now*."

"Fine." I sat up slowly, and Aiden scurried over to help me onto my feet.

"Slowly," he instructed as I took my first few steps. "Are you okay? Can I carry you?"

"I'm fine. It's better now."

"Okay."

We walked out of the house, got into the car, and Aiden drove us across town. When we pulled into the plaza, I looked at him. "Here?"

“The pack house receptionist has mentioned this place a bunch of times. She says she comes here a lot. For her kids, for herself.”

I closed my eyes. If it couldn't be Jocelyn, it really didn't matter who it was. “Fine,” I said. “Fine.”

Aiden helped me out of the car, and then he slid an arm around my waist, helping me walk into the Healing Center.

The Healing Center that was in a goddamn plaza, next to a popcorn store, but a Healing Center nonetheless.

“We need to see someone. Urgently,” Aiden told the receptionist as soon as we were at the check-in desk.

“The wait's about a half-our—”



“*No*,” he interrupted. “You don't understand. She's pregnant, and she had a massive pain—”

“You can tell this to the healer.”

“I am the goddamn ALPHA!” Aiden thundered. I looked at him. I'd never seen him use his title like this before, to get special treatment. Usually, he was extremely humble about his authority.

But seeing him like this, so protective over me, so

But seeing him like this, so protective over me, so willing to do anything to help me—and the baby inside me—I welled with pride. That was *my* mate. That was the father of *my* unborn child.

“Oh—oh, Alpha. Alpha Norwood. Of course,” the receptionist stuttered, eyes scanning the notebook in front of her. “Room Three is open. You go on ahead and wait in there. The healer will be right in.”

“Thank you,” I said gently, smiling at her. Aiden gave her a tight smile and, grabbing me with a sturdy arm again, walked us over to Room Three.

The second we turned inside I felt queasy.



It wasn't that it was dirty or gross or anything; the room was sterile. Everything was white or grey, the medical instruments on the counter were silver, and it smelled like disinfectant.

Aiden saw my face contort. “What’s wrong? Does it hurt?” he asked as he sat me down on the chair, crouching to meet my eyes.

“No, it’s just... this doesn’t feel right, Aiden,” I got out, my eyes filling with tears.

I knew I was overreacting, and I didn’t want to sound like some spoiled Alpha’s mate, but our baby deserved better than this cookie-cutter center!

Our baby deserved Jocelyn.

Aiden sighed. “I know, but this is the best we can do right now. Until we find Jocelyn—”

“Where *is she?*” I whined. “It doesn’t make sense that she’d just... disappear.”

“I know, and we’ll find her. But for right now—”

“Hello and good morning, ladies and gents!” a short, stumpy man, probably in his 60s, exclaimed as he walked through the door. “I’m Healer Persnippy, but you can just call me Healer P. What’s the deal? How is everyone?”



I tore my eyes away from the massive smile on Healer P’s face to look at my mate. But he was avoiding my gaze.

“Sienna, she’s almost two months pregnant. And about an hour ago she had this crippling pain in her stomach, she was on the floor for at least fifteen minutes, and we just want to make sure everything’s okay,” Aiden explained.

The healer approached me, and immediately, I felt my body put walls up. I didn’t know what it was about this man, but I did not like him.

Not one bit.

“All right, Serena, is that right? Can you lift up your shirt for me?”

“What? It’s Sienna,” I snapped.

“Sienna! Jeez, long morning, you get it. Right, so lift up your shirt, darling, and we’ll see if we can’t get to the bottom of this little nuisance.” He grinned at me.

The back of my throat tingled like my body wanted to vomit, and I didn’t blame it.



Everything from Healer P’s splotchy skin to the belly hanging over his pants made me nauseous. But Aiden was nodding at me, encouraging me to get it over with, so I lifted the hem of my shirt over my stomach.

Healer P didn’t waste a second. He put his freezing cold hands on either side of my belly button, stepping as close as he could get to me without our bellies bumping.

He looked more pregnant than I did.

“Take a deep breath,” he instructed me, and I stopped myself from rolling my eyes as I inhaled. When I let the air out, he pressed harder on my stomach, increasing the ache still present. I winced, but I didn’t complain.



“Ah,” he said, his eyebrows scrunched together. “Ahh,” he said again like he was learning something useful. I turned to look at Aiden, who looked just as confused.

“What is it? Do you sense something?” I asked the healer.

“Shh!” he snapped at me, his eyes still closed as he continued to touch my skin. I was seething, but I let him continue to feel me for another minute.

When he let out another “Ahhh,” however, that was the final straw. I pushed his hands off me.

“WHAT is so interesting? WHAT ARE YOU FINDING OUT?” I bellowed, not caring if the whole Healing Center heard me.



But Healer P just chuckled, turning to Aiden. “You got a feisty one there, don’t you?”

“If you don’t mind *speaking to me*,” I snapped, “I’d really like to know what you’ve sensed about the baby *inside me*.”

“Well, before I get into details, Serena—”

“*Sienna!*”

“I’d like to go over some basic guidelines. You know pregnant women are not allowed to drink

alcohol, to engage in any overly aggressive activities, and to shift, right? You haven't been indulging in any of those—”

“*NO!*” I shouted, losing every ounce of patience.

“Good, because even just one glass of wine or shifting for a couple minutes could ruin the unborn child.”



“She’s already told you she hasn’t done any of those things, okay? Can you just tell us what you sensed?” Aiden asked, his patience wearing thin too.

Healer P nodded, looking right at Aiden. “Alpha, if I could see you in the hall for a minute?”

My eyes widened. My jaw dropped to the floor.

Has this asshole just asked to tell my mate what he found out from my body, PRIVATELY?!

Oh. Hell. No.

“Excuse me?!” I thundered.

“We’ll just be a moment, darling.” Healer P smiled at me as he walked out of the door. Aiden shot a look back at me, and he shrugged, in a *who knows?* kinda way.

“AIDEN!” I whisper-screamed. But he was already out the door.

I stood up, rolling my shirt back down and trying to control my breathing.

In.

Out.



In.

Out—*no*. Fuck this.

I didn't have to control my breathing for any goddamn reason. This was my baby. It was my body! I had every right to every piece of information, to every idea or sense that anybody goddamn felt from it!

So I stormed out of the room.

There the men were, leaning against the wall, speaking in low voices. I couldn't fucking believe it. This wasn't some old boys' club—it was my goddamn pregnancy!

I groaned loudly, and then I stomped back to the check-in area, pushing the front door open and storming out of the center altogether.

I was on the sidewalk outside when I heard the

door open again and Aiden call my name.

“Sienna!”



I stopped walking, but I didn't turn around to face him. I couldn't remember the last time I'd been so angry—so *shocked*.

There was no way that was any type of normal healing practice. That healer was so backward—disgusting, unprofessional, and straight-up rude.

“I'm sorry,” Aiden said softly from right behind me.

“Sorry about *what?*” I snapped, spinning around. “For taking me to some goddamn creep of a healer? For leaving me *alone in the room so he could tell you what is wrong with the baby inside of my body!?*”

I wasn't finished. I was going to keep tearing into him. But before I could continue, someone walked right up to us.

“STOP!” Aiden's mother, wearing her signature designer sunglasses, commanded from my right. “There is *no* need for my son and his mate to be screaming at each other in public, for all the pack to see!”

What? Where did she come from?



“Why are you—”



“Here?” she asked, finishing Aiden’s sentence.
“Well, I was in the area, and I saw your little lovers’ quarrel from over there.”

“You were in the area? This is a plaza.” It was more than clear that Charlotte Norwood did not do plazas.

“Fine. I came by your house this morning to invite you two to breakfast and saw you leaving in a hurry. So I followed you.”

“You *followed* us?!”

“LOWER YOUR VOICE,” she demanded. “I WILL NOT HAVE ANY CHILDREN OF MINE MAKING A SCENE IN PUBLIC. DO YOU UNDERSTAND?!”

Michelle

After I convinced Josh that I was coming along for the vampyre hunt, no matter what, we packed the car, slid into our seats, and took off. He was driving, like always, but I was in charge of music and snacks.

God, I loved a road trip.

“I’m so excited!” I squealed from the passenger

seat, reaching over to pinch Josh's cheek. "Aren't you excited? You, me, open road, fast food—"

"This isn't some gap-year road trip, Michelle!" Josh scorned. "This is serious. We're on a mission."



"Oh, right." I nodded, faux-seriously. "*A mission.*"

He turned to me, smirking. "You gonna keep that attitude up the whole drive?" he asked, bringing his hand to my thigh and squeezing.

I was about to respond with an excellent comeback when—electricity ripped through my body.

And not the soft fire of the haze's electricity.

No, I'm talking the burning, tingling, every cell inside my body exploding kind of electricity.

All of my muscles tightened at once, and every inch of my skin became hyper-aware of what was touching it.

But it needed more.

I needed more.

I needed sex.

I needed primal, urgent, dangerous sex.

I looked at Josh, knowing my face was contorted into a ravenous, lust-driven mess. But his looked the exact same.

I could see it in his eyes, in his mouth.



He was just as consumed by the need.

“NOW,” I got out, not being able to form any more words. Josh pulled into the gas station up ahead.

I leaped out of the car, sprinting to the bathroom inside. If Josh wasn't in here in the next three seconds, I'd take care of myself. Now.

In fact—*fuck it*. I'll take care of myself.

I ripped my jeans down and plunged my fingers inside me.

Instantly, my body collapsed onto the floor, my legs unable to hold me. But it didn't matter. I didn't care. My fingers just kept moving.

The bathroom door opened.

The idea of locking it hadn't even crossed my mind.



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And there was Josh, looking sexy as hell, watching me drive myself crazy.

Well, I thought. This must be the prize.

Next Chapter