

Chapter 0307

"Me?" I question pointing at myself, looking around again.

"Yeah, you." He smiles. "You're new to campus right."

I nod. "Yep." I can feel my heart rate rising. I don't talk to guys on my own. Mina is usually here with me and she does the flirting and pretending to be interested and all of that stuff for the both of us.

"Don't tell me you're shy. Not after the way you were drilling the professor just a little bit ago. Man, you are tiny aren't you?" He asks no one in particular as he steps right up to me, completely invading my personal space.

"The forest doesn't make me shy, people do." I shrug and move to turn around and find Mina. If they choose to follow she can at least help steer the conversation.

"Wait! We won't bite, I promise." He gives me a grin that must work on most people. He sounds like the kind of guy who knows he's handsome and usually gets his way because of his charm.

I turn back towards them and cock and eyebrow. "I have to meet up with my sister." I point a thumb over my shoulder.

"We'll walk with you then. It's not often we see pack members here. This is like a neutral territory for several

packs, but no one comes here voluntarily.” He says as he starts forward like we always walk together.

I didn’t expect him to just come out and imply he’s a rogue, that’s new. I just tilt my head and say nothing, just keep walking.

“Is your sister in the same pack?”

“Yes.” Kind of. We come across as pack members because of the warrior brand we both have. Most pack members can tell their own versus a member from another pack. I guess rogues would have the same ability to sense another rogue versus a pack wolf.

“You are so full of questions, but not really answers aren’t you?” He asks playfully, not really sounding offended, more like he is enjoying the challenge.

“The best way to get answers is to listen, not to talk.” I shrug.

“Okay, so you look twelve, are roughly the size of a large toddler, but you sound like a sixty year old seasoned teacher. Who are you?” He sounds amazed and incredulous at the same time.

I am saved from answering as Mina approaches shouting my name.

“Sky! How was your first day?!” She wraps me in a big hug. When she pulls back, she looks over my shoulder. “You made some friends, what’s up guys?”

"Are you ever not flanked by hot guys?" She asks over the link.

I just roll my eyes at her and turn around, at least with her here the conversation will be way less awkward.

"These guys are in my Ecology class." I wave a hand behind me cause that's all I've got, I didn't actually catch any of their names.

"Tyler," The charming one sticks out his hand to her and she shakes it. "This is Mike and Robbie." He points over his shoulder to the two guys who have said nothing during this whole interaction, choosing like me, to let their friend do all the talking.

"It's nice to meet you Tyler, I'm Mina, Sky's sister."

"Sky?! I like that." He looks right at me again.

"You're in class with her, followed her out to the parking lot and didn't know her name?" Mina laughs. He at least looks sheepish.

"I was working on that, Sky is a bit single worded when it comes to small talk in conversations." He looks at me again even though he's talking to her.

I shrug again. "I still like listening better."



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"Well, listen to this." He smiles that big cheeky grin that tells me he is trouble on legs. "None of us have class Friday morning, so we all go out on Thursday nights and do a bonfire when the weather stops being sh*tty, so we blend in a little better with the humans. It keeps us out of the way of the regular Friday night partiers. We run and then hang out, if you are interested I can give you my number and get you all the details." He smiles that smile again and before I know what is happening, Mina has swiped my phone from my back pocket, unlocked it and handed it over to him.

"What the hell!?"

"Umm, he's hot and he's flirting with you and he has a connection to the rogues. Did I mention he's hot and flirting hard? This is the kind of boy you practice with."

I roll my eyes at her and scoff, but I must have made the sound out loud, cause Tyler stops typing on my phone and looks up at me.

"Is this okay? I don't have to give you my number." Why is he shy all of a sudden?

"I'm not a big fan of my sister meddling, that's all." I force a smile to him and it must be enough. He smiles and winks at Mina and keeps typing. "Is your full name a novel? What are you putting in my phone?" I go to reach for it, but he holds it

over his head out of my reach, laughing.

"You'll just have to wait and see."

"You're asking for it now." Mina mumbles under her breath and Mike and Robbie both laugh like my tiny little wrath is nothing.

I take a breath and let it out slowly then lunge forward grabbing Tyler's extended arm and launch myself under it, behind his back and hook a leg over his shoulder from behind ripping my phone from his hand. I pat him on the head before swinging my leg over his shoulder and jumping down like I was getting out of a saddle and landing on my two feet looking at my phone like I didn't do anything.

"Oh sh*t! Mike says. "You can straddle me any time."

"No way, d*ckhead! I talked to her first, get in line."

Mina and I are full on laughing now. "There's no line guys, so quit while you're ahead."

"That sounds like a challenge, is that a challenge Sky?"

Tyler asks, tilting his head to the side. For sure flirting and it's cute, for someone else. I am just not affected by it at all. Maybe it's the warrior brand, but somehow I don't think so.

"Uh, no. Just not interested. I'm here, with special permission in the early college program, for class and I need to focus. Whatever you guys have in mind does not fall in

the category of staying focused.”

“So strong and smart, I might actually be in love.” Mike taps his heart and pretends to swoon. “Marry me?”

“Uh no, my mate probably won’t like me being married to someone else when I can actually find him. I appreciate your effort though.” I am laughing again.

“You are seriously looking for your mate? Mates are overrated.” Robbie speaks up for the first time and doesn’t look pleased at my confession.

“Not from what I’ve seen, and I figure I should be the judge of that when I actually meet my mate. Not just base my decision on others opinions on the topic.” I shrug back at him. “I’ve seen great mates and terrible ones

“What if you fall in love with someone while you are waiting for this so-called mate. What then?”

“I don’t know. Love hasn’t happened to me and I have a few years before my mate can even find me, so it’s a moot point until then.” I shrug.

“Damn! A few years, How old are you, Sky?” Mike asks.

“Young enough to still be considered a minor.” I raise my eyebrows and keep it vague.

Chapter 0309

"So what about Thursday?" Tyler brings the conversation back to the main topic.

"We need to ask. Can I let you know in the next couple days?"

"Sure, text me anytime." That charming smile is back on his face and I can't help but return it. He winks and then turns to walk away, Mike and Robbie following.

"Well, that was productive wasn't it? You're better than I thought at this. I'm going to have to leave you alone more often."

"What are you talking about?"

"I have been in classes with some of these guys for a little over a month and have just started talking to them. You come in, late night I add, and you have three of them falling all over themselves to talk to you. How do you do that?"

"I don't do anything, I swear. I didn't ask for them to talk to me and I wasn't looking to gain their attention. I was just asking the professor questions. Like you said I'm late to the party so I wanted to get any info I can while I can still play the 'new kid' card."

"That's gotta be it!" She got excited. "You don't give them

the time of day and you don't play dumb either. They know you neither want or need them." She's laughing now. "You basically emasculated them and that somehow made you the forbidden fruit."

"Gross." I laugh back at her. "Why do you have to make everything sound so s*xual? You've been around Sierra too long. I'm just new, that's the only reason they are interested. They will find out I'm 15 and back off like I have the plague. None of them strike me as cradle robbers." 2

We are both still laughing as we get to Nickolas' SUV.

"What has you two so giddy?" He gives us a half smile, but I can see something is wrong.

"Sky's been in class for a day and already has guys asking for her number, well stealing it really, and inviting her to run and a bonfire on Thursday." Mina is getting settled in the back seat, but hasn't looked at him yet.

"What's wrong?" I ask him and her head snaps up.

"Gentry never made it back to her coven. It's not unusual for her to go off on her own, especially after a big cast like the bond she did for you two. She will go into the woods for a couple weeks and 'recharge.'" He air quotes. "She contacted her coven before she left us, but it's been two, almost three months since they have had contact from her." 1

He takes a deep breath and rubs his face.



"You think they got her, don't you?" I ask, but it's not really a question.

She is powerful, even I could feel how powerful when she gave us our brands. How would someone sneak up on her and then subdue her? She would have taken precautions for things like that. If this rogue group took her then they are using magic to mask what they are doing and where they are.

"They made a mistake though. She was expected, not off on her own. They have to know we will come looking for her. Alpha Reggie's warriors and her coven will be on the hunt now. Why would they do that when they have gone under the radar for so long?" He's talking to himself, more than us, but something is still off. I can feel the rage rolling off of him, but he's doing a great job containing it. If I didn't know him I wouldn't notice the small twitches of his jaw or the slight flex of his fingers as he talks about her.

"Nickolas? Who is Gentry to you?" I ask as gently as I can.

He doesn't answer right away, just takes another deep breath and scrubs his face.

"She is my mate."

"Oh, damn!" Mina exclaims. "Why doesn't she have your mark? Why are you a branded warrior? What the hell is going on?"



Chapter 0310

"It's a long story, well more complicated really. She is a coven leader and they have certain requirements, I guess it's the best way to put it. They have traditions and expectations and a wolf mate is not a part of any of that. She is expected to marry a warlock and produce one of the next coven leaders." Mina gasps. "She hasn't gone through with anything and refuses to be with anyone else, but I have a feeling someone is going to give her an ultimatum and make her choose. It's why I took the warrior oath. I don't want anyone but her, but I also will not come between her and her coven. So we are stuck here in this limbo."

"Do you think they took her because she's a powerful witch or because she's mated to a wolf?" I ask before I can even think the question through.

Nickolas looks up at me and his face goes pale. "I didn't even think about that. She's a powerful witch and she's one of their most knowledgeable casters. It didn't even cross my mind that someone might see her mate bond as something to use as a weapon."

He peels out of the parking lot and I can tell he's mindlinking, aggressively, with someone. We got back to our house in under ten minutes and he flew out of the car without even closing the door. Osiston walks out our front door and meets him on the porch. Nickolas snarls and pulls

his arm back for a punch, but Osiston is calm and sees the wild fury for the grief that it is and counters him easily. Osiston leads him down the steps and into the yard where they grapple, Nickolas pouring all his rage into each punch and kick, but not being able to make a good connection while he is letting his emotions rule his movements. Osiston is too far away to take any real hits, but close enough to remain Nickolas' sole target.

This goes on for the better part of twenty minutes. Osiston is breathing heavily and finally gets Nickolas into a submissive pose on his knees, and then Nickolas just goes limp and crumples to the ground.

Mina and I just stood by and watched. There was nothing else to do. That helpless feeling of being out of control while someone you care about is in danger is the worst. I have destroyed a gym and passed out because of that level of anger. That seems like a lifetime ago.

"Okay." Osiston says. "We have some information that we can share, but we are going to need you two to fill in the blanks." He looks at Mina and I. We both nod, then walk over to Nickolas.

I squat down in front of him and place my hands on either side of his face, bringing his eyes up to look into mine. He doesn't fight me, but his gaze is lost, like he's looking right through me.

"We are going to fix this, alright? We are going to make this

right. It's personal now."

"You can promise that." He whispers, still not focusing on me. 2

"Yes, I can. I can promise my full attention and my full effort. I can promise that you have never seen me stubborn and on a mission before. Alpha Reggie told you I'm special. I'm really not, I just have a bloodline that affords me some bonus features. Let me help. No one messes with my family." 1

"Can you really just metabolize silver?" He asks, sounding almost drunk.

"Yes. I can't explain it though, that's a Doc Ganon question.

"I need her back, Sky." This time he focuses right into my soul. I don't know how his emotional connection works with the brand on, but I'm not going to deny him anything at this moment. 1

"We will get her, that I can promise you." He nods and gets up slowly, wrapping an arm around both Mina and I as we walk into the house.

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