



## Chapter 0504

"Yes, Happy Birthday Mateo. I hope your mate is strong enough to put up with you and smart enough to team up with your sister against you." Mina laughs and Mateo smiles, then she looks back at me. "So what is this I hear about Robbie dropping off random people?"

I groan a little at her. "That is it, literally. He got our attention, by carrying Gentry in like a dead body and then he told me to keep her and the dozen extra people he brought. He told us to figure out how to free them from the binding spell, then just left." 1

"That is not all he did." Dakota growls. "He was way too comfortable with you, and if he ever gets in your face like that again, I will rip his head off."

"Stop, he wasn't in my face. He just got close enough to tell me something he didn't want anyone else to hear."

"What did he say to you?" Mina asks suspiciously. "He wasn't overly talkative."

"Nothing relevant to this situation." I know this conversation is not over by a long shot.

"What I want to know is why did he bring those captives to you? How did he know you would take them in?" Mateo asks.

“Once they had me with Jena, they spent a lot of time figuring out who and how powerful we were. They found out I was a Beta’s kid, so Robbie probably thought I had some pull in the pack to bring in outsiders. He helped get us out and as a former captive, he probably assumed I would help others.” I shrug.

“So it’s safe to assume he’ll be coming back then?” Oliver sounds irritated now. I need these boys to find their mates and give me a break already. 3

“Nope, we are not doing the pissing match thing again. There is no interest there and yes if he asks for my help and we know the request is legit, I will help. I’m not dumb enough to think this is one hundred percent innocent, but like so many times before, you guys weren’t there, so you don’t get to be angry on my behalf for the situation now.” 3

“That’s not fair and you know it. Had you kept any kind of communication going and told us what the plan was, none of us would have let you...” Cameron stops, closes his eyes and takes a breath. “This is not about you being weak and not being able to handle hard situations. Clearly you can, you’ve apparently been designed specifically for them.” He opens his eyes. “This is about you putting yourself in harm’s way and how gut wrenching it is to witness. Or to hear about after the fact and not being able to do what we’re designed for, to protect our pack members. Which you are one of huge importance.”

I roll my eyes, but let it go. He had a decent save catching his misogynistic comment. I am tired and just want to hang with my friends a little longer in this kind of comfort. 1

Jena stands next to me, "I'm going to grab one more, do you want one?" She looks at me then Lil.

"I'll take one." Lil says as I shake my head. I never really got the appeal of beer.

Jena grabs both of our bottles and starts to head between Mateo and Oliver's chairs. Somehow she manages to trip, toss the bottles onto the grass behind them and land with a hand on each of their shoulders.

Mateo's growl rips through the backyard. "DO NOT TOUCH MY MATE!"

"What are you..." She starts, but then grabs her arm. "SKYLAR! IT BURNS!" She turns to me, shaking her arm.

"Oh sh\*t! Sierra, it's just like Mina! Do you remember what your mom did? Wyatt, go get Elena, we need help. Her brand is burning off." I run for Jena and kind of throw her in Mateo's lap. As far as I'm concerned that's the best place for her. He should be calm-ish and his presence will help her.

"What do you mean burning off?" Mateo yells at me, but wraps an arm around her waist and the other is tilting her head back to his shoulder, stroking her hair.

“This is what happened to Mina when she felt her bond to Xander and Oscar.”

“Yeah, but I passed out.” That garnered another growl from Mateo.

“You have two mates, double the sensation. Jena, breathe for me okay. I’m right here, Mateo is here. At least Mina was right,” I try to joke, “Mateo got a mate who would side with me in a fight.”

She smiles a small smile and then her whole face falls and she tries to get up, but her body breaks out into shivers and she’s sweating as she shakes her head. Mateo’s grip tightens.

“I don’t want a mate. I can’t be someone’s mate. You know I can’t, this isn’t fair to him.” She’s looking at me, pleading, like we are the only two people here. I know what she’s talking about, we have had this conversation so many times. It’s her biggest fear after everything she went through with Mike.

“Yes, you can, breathe.” She takes a deep breath in and I know my brother’s scent is helping her as Elena walks out.

“Well, you and your friends certainly have no idea of what downtime means do you? Let me see.” She pulls Jena’s arm towards her and she whispers a few words I don’t understand and then Jena’s body is calm, but she is still very upset.



She covers her face and I know she is crying, but it's silent. Mateo buries his face in her hair. She has been so afraid of finding her mate and she probably thought the warrior brand would give her more time.

"I'm sure I speak for everyone when I say what the hell was that?" Oliver asks. I didn't realize they had all gotten up to surround us.

"We have partial brands. They were only designed to last until the end of this summer. That was the deal I made with Osiston when he let me have mine. Mina and Jena were the same. The Warrior leaders wanted us branded for missions, but we hadn't completed training yet. Mina's broke the night of the Alpha Games and she was basically in a coma for almost three days. We all have thoughts on why, but they've never done partial branding before or anything like that so it's only theories." I shrug.

I look at Elena. "Will she be okay now?"

"She should stick close to her mate until the brand wound heals completely, but yes."

I nod. "Jena, I'm going to head up. Mateo will take care of you okay. Get some rest."

"No! I don't want this. You know why I don't want this." She's angry and sad all at the same time.

"This is out of my control. Give it the night, sleep on it and

we can talk in the morning." I look around for any kind of help and I see that I have been left alone with my brother and his reluctant mate. Bunch of traitors. 1

"I will just reject..." Mateo claps his hand over her mouth.

"Stop talking, mate. You will not be rejecting anything, I won't accept it. You are mine." He growls, and I see the fire in my friend's eye reignite. 2

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