

## Chapter 0569

\*\*\*"Whoa! Elena. You can mindlink now?"

\*\*\*"Apparently so, being your father's mate and accepted by the leadership of this pack has allowed my magic to connect to the magic of your wolves. That is also a subject that we will have to navigate at some point in the future Little One. I have heard many different versions of your upbringing. I would like to hear your point of view, but for now you have more pressing matters. Like mates who are at their wits end from sharing you all day."\*\*\*

\*\*\*"All day?! What do you mean 'all day?'"\*\*\*

\*\*\*"It took a significant amount of energy and time for you to undo each spell that was attached to your flame. But it is 'your' flame now. I think you could even touch it if you still feel so inclined."\*\*\*

I blink a few times and feel the haze around my vision clear. I didn't realize how hard I was staring at the flames while my wolf and I were releasing it from its own shackles. The sun has just started to set behind the forest. I have been here all day, breaking spell after spell. I'm sure I've had help. There's no way I did any of this on my own. I was glad my wolf was able to tell me what the colors and the spells meant. She has clearly tapped into our connection with Elena more than I thought. Maybe she was doing that while we were stuck in the tornado figuring out our feelings. Who knows. I have so many questions for so many people that will probably not get answered any time soon. But after today I feel more sure of my magic now than I ever have. I'm not drained and exhausted like I usually am either, which is a strange feeling. I actually feel light and energized. Maybe I was what the fire was tied to after Lucas passed, since I set

him free, and it was burning away at my energy stores maintaining all of those spells. Just another question for the list.

I am just about to open my mouth to ask when I am lifted off the ground by my armpits, tossed in a half turn and caught around the hips by Dakota.

"Don't even think about it Smalls. You are done working for the day. I thought it was tough getting Cam to clock out, but I think you are going to be worse." He leans in to give me a kiss and I smile wrapping my arms and legs around him and he groans when I pull away to look for my two other mates.

"Right here." Reading my mind, Oliver grabs me in the same way and kisses me then passes me to Cam, who kisses me while walking into the house. He doesn't take me upstairs though, he takes me into the dining room where a whole bunch of food has been laid out on the massive table.

"You all have been working so hard today, well for many days if we're being honest. We are going to get back to a few normal things since the world seems to be conspiring against our pack at the moment. I want to try to get everyone together at least once a week like we used to. I know you are all adults now, but I miss having you kids all here all together." Ava is on the verge of tears.

I slide down off of Cam and walk over to her, wrapping her in a hug. So many things have happened to all of us in just the last couple months and we all have our different ways of processing. She is in 'mom mode' right now. It's her way of doing a head count like we are all her little ducks. She can see us and know that we are at the very least alive and accounted for. Since that is about as good as any of us can give right now. None of us are okay, not really. And it's going to take some time after the dust

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We all move to sit with her. None of us want to sit at the head of the table, it still feels wrong somehow. Cam and Kota sit on one side of the head of the table and Oliver and I sit across from them. Mateo and Jena sit next to the twins, while Sam and Sierra sit on our side. Lil sits next to Jena and Wyatt and Nathaniel divy up the middle of the table. The adults start to file in, filling up the second half of the table.

"Umm, I know we aren't supposed to be 'working,' I air quote, "But, I am not tired at all and I really want to train a little before it gets too late. Are there people in all the training arenas?" I look down to Kyle and Nickolas who have been handling all of the people we have taken in, but can't really trust to help us in the fight yet.

"The small arena is still open, Sky. If you want it, it's yours." Kyle says without any hesitation.

"Seriously?! You're going to give her permission to go out and train? Tonight?!" Dakota asks incredulously.

Kyle smiles, and I see where Sam got his mischievous look. I bet he was just as big of a handful at our age. "Are you telling me, that you are going to look at your mate, who can, not only beat you physically with her eyes closed, but can also now light your ass on fire, literally,

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that she can't do the thing she wants to do? After she has been siphoning and filtering magic in ways you and I will never comprehend in order to save the whole pack. And since when has anyone, ever, given her permission to do anything? The minute someone says 'no' she finds the workaround. I dare you to tell her 'no' and see what happens."

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I want to say that I'm sitting right here, but this is way too much fun to watch. Dakota turns to look at me and under the table he rubs the inside of my foot with his. 1

"I was kind of hoping we could hang out tonight, just the four of us." He tries to sound sweet. "We finally have you after waiting forever for confirmation that you're our mate and now it just feels like everything is dividing our attention. I figured we could just be for the couple hours, hopefully, all the drama gives us a breather, that's all."

I can tell Oliver and Cam are both listening intently, but they are both better at the poker face than Dakota. I bet they chose him to plead their case. They chose wisely, he's very good at this, but I have a feeling they will gang up on me a lot if I give in too easily now.

"What if we compromise? I actually feel really good right now. Better than ever, actually. I think the magic tied itself to me after Lucas passed, since I set him free and I think it has been draining me slowly. I think I was the source of the forever flame." I look between Elena and Gentry for confirmation.

"I was thinking the same thing, Little One. The fire seems to be of a friendly, helpful nature now." Gentry says calmly. "It is yours to wield now. Elena and I will begin working on adding to your grimoire so you can study and connect with it like you do your wolf to protect your pack."

\*\*\*"It's like another wolf in here. It's so crazy to have a voice in my head."\*\*\*

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\*\*\*"Now you know how I feel."\*\*\* I laugh at my wolf.

\*\*\*"You have to understand I am used to being the voice inside the head. But, I can communicate with the fire. Like, right now it is content to burn in the backyard, by itself, now that it is a part of your pack as opposed to being the spy."\*\*\*

\*\*\*"What do you mean 'spy?'"\*\*\*

\*\*\*"It was gaging the power in the pack and communicating with someone, but it doesn't know who was pulling the knowledge, just that someone was using it to see into the pack. It doesn't think it was Adrielle though."\*\*\*

\*\*\*"How can you talk to it, but I can't? I feel left out of the multiple personality session in my head."\*\*\* I joke with her.

\*\*\*"I have only been able to talk to it since you set it free, so maybe in time you will too. It is a part of you just as much as I am. Give it time to warm up."\*\*\* She laughs at her own joke and I internally roll my eyes at her.

"Hey, babe. Where did you go?" Oliver squeezes my thigh and I can't stop the gasp and the rush of heat that surges over my whole body.

"My wolf has been able to talk to the fire, like it's another voice in my head, but I can't talk to it yet." I shrug like this is all normal, Like I am normal. I give him a smile.

"Do you really want to train?" He sounds concerned almost, whispering to me even though I know the twins can hear him and I'm sure the rest of our team.

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"Yeah, kind of. It's like my whole body is buzzing. Like it just woke up from hibernation. Does that make sense? For the first time in, I don't even know how long, I want to train like we used to, at the training grounds, sparring, trying to best each other. I'm too amped up to just go upstairs. I'm sorry." I look from him to Cam and Kota. Worried I might hurt their feelings or make them feel like I don't want them. It's the exact opposite, but I can feel my head spinning all over the place, like I can't keep a thought straight. I know that not being mated is really bothering them, and it's going to take time since it will be my first time and there are three of them, but I just want to move for a little while with our whole team. The new team that we have pulled together, naturally. The new family we are creating through all of this hardship and heartache. "Please? Just a little while. I will even leave when you ask." I look at Cam, he's going to be the hardest sell. "An hour?" I question. I can already feel Dakota give in and I know Oliver won't stop me. He will just get me through what I need as fast as possible.

"Seriously, we are so f\*cked." He scrubs his face with his hands like he's frustrated, but I can only smile.

"Yes!" The adults at the other end just laugh at us. I almost forgot they were here.

"Yes, kiddo. You are f\*cked. But, she will be worth the effort." Brett winks at Cam. "Your mate always is."