

Chapter 0649

His rumbling laugh shook my whole body. “According to everyone else it was obvious. Apparently I was only good at hiding it from you. I thought you might be mated to the twins, that match seemed pretty cut and dry. So I figured when I found my mate it wouldn’t be a problem because that part of my focus would belong to her. Turns out the Moon Goddess likes me a little and gave me to you along with the twins.” He wrapped his big arms around my waist, holding me close.

“When did you know you had feelings for me?” It’s been years and he never said a thing. I guess I understand why, kind of.

“We all thought that maybe the attraction was because you were the only other female in our group since Sam and Sierra hit it off immediately. You were one of us, it wasn’t about status for you. Then the trials came and that was seriously the second worst experience of my life. I broke one of the chair handles in the Alpha’s box.”

“What?! What do you mean?”

He laughed again. “Yeah, none of us did well watching you go through trials even though we knew what was going to happen. Lucas gave us a heads up right before the trial started. Now, I think it was to keep us in our seats and not to try and jump in to save you. Then the threat came and you

had that scare in Ava's room. I knew the moment I kissed you I was f*cked. There was going to be no other girl for me." His stormy eyes swirled with emotion, looking at me but not seeing me. "Then the night of the mating ball happened. That was the absolute worst moment for me, for all of us really, but I got to you first." He took another deep slow breath and it shuddered out, but didn't look away from me. "You couldn't open your eyes and there was blood everywhere and you told me... told me to ... to just let you die..." tears rolled out of his eyes as he took a shuddering breath under me. "I almost didn't get to you in time." He squeezed my hips and pressed me tighter to him, like he was back in that moment and couldn't let me go.

I sat up quickly, straddling his torso. Cupping both of his cheeks in my hands, I forced him to look at me. "What was your response to that?" I raised my eyebrows.

"Never." It was almost a whisper.

"You did get to me in time and you are the reason I am still here." I give him a gentle kiss putting all of my feelings for him into it. But I don't linger, he needs to process this too.

He growls low, pulls me back in, and he deepens the kiss, but it isn't hurried or dominating like usual. I want him to feel what I feel for him through this kiss. I have no idea how he feels my emotions, but I think about opening that pathway and my wolf is reaching out to his, strengthening their bond. Soon

the kiss turns from sweet to needy.

My hands rake through his thick hair as his hands run under my shirt up my back. I gasp and pull away. I can't help it. My scars are a part of me. I'm not ashamed of them anymore, but something about them being touched pulls me out of whatever moment I am in. Then a thought dawns on me.

"Why did you never know what Kaley was doing to me? Since you seem to be in tune with my more extreme emotions." He doesn't pull away or drop his hands. He actually starts to trace them more.

"Actually, I did, but I didn't know what was going on at the time. Do you know why I started getting tattoos in the first place?"

I hesitate. "No."

"Shortly after we shifted for the first time, I got these. I never knew why. I think I do now."

"What are you talking about?" He takes my hand and places it on his bicep where an ornate tribal tattoo wraps around. He continues to glide his other hand up and down my back.

"This one," He moves my finger so it traces over a triangular shaped scar toward the back of his arm, while he finds a similar pattern on my back. "Came first. Then this one," He traces two identical lines that have a slight curve, both with my hand on his arm and his other hand on my back. "Showed up a few days later. And then these were the last." Six

little jagged slashes about two inches long each. I remember this one, because it felt like they used a barbed tip on the end of the whip that time.

How is it possible you have these and I never noticed before?"

"I covered them with tattoos almost immediately and the silver in the tattoo ink can leave some small scarring giving me the excuse I needed. I thought they were some kind of result of shifting and that maybe something went wrong or it was a sign that I was a gamma. But, just like the asthma attack I got when you were in Lucas' office hearing about going to warrior training or when you stopped breathing when Ava told you about the threat made to the pack, it was a sign that you needed me and I wasn't where I needed to be." His eyes start to fill up again. He keeps tracing my scars. "If I had paid better attention to the gifts the Goddess gave me, maybe you wouldn't have gone through the things you did." He closes his eyes and lets the tears fall.

"Hey, hey. Look at me." I keep my voice gentle, but it's a fight. Even dead, Kaley is causing me problems with my mate. "Stop. Now. You were exactly where you were supposed to be, just like me. As much as it sucked and I would never wish to go through it again, had I not, I never would have ended up here with you now. We all had to go through everything we did so we could take out Adrielle and Vincent. There was no way around the life experience that we had to have to do that and

we all had to walk our own paths. You are perfect for me, just like this.”

I let go of him to take off my shirt. I have stopped wearing underwear and bras when I am here. I'm tired of them getting ripped off by them being too in a hurry to do it right. His throat closes audibly and he chokes for a second. "All of this is just for you and Cameron and Dakota. There is no other way we would be all together. Now kiss me before I slap you silly.”

He does not hesitate to follow instructions.