



Chapter 0046

"What did you get? Anything special for a special person, maybe?" She points to the very feminine shopping bags the twins held then clasps her hands in front of her twisting back and forth at the waist like an excited little kid. Maybe she thinks it's cute and innocent looking. She really just looks a little unhinged.

"Just some birthday gifts, no big deal." Cam says again trying to turn. She grabs his elbow, she seems to only touch him. At least when I see them interact. Interesting.

"But my birthday was months ago, silly..." She pats his arm and reaches for Dakota, but he moves away. Giving me a direct line of sight to her. She trails off finally noticing Sierra and I behind him. "WHAT THE HELL IS SHE DOING HERE WITH YOU?" Her fakely sweet voice changes to one of angry menace in a flash. Her manicured claws fly to her hips. Her perfectly shaped eyebrows looked strange, smashed down in a scowl, her whole face going red.

The guys all move faster than I thought possible surrounding me, which to an outsider might look strange with all of the bags they are holding. Cam and Kota are in front, between Kaley and the rest of the group. Oliver stands directly in front of me, Sierra stays at my side, her arm still linked with mine, and Mateo is on the other. Sam steps behind me sandwiching me between him and Oliver giving me only

inches of space to breathe.

On instinct I place the palm of my free hand lightly on Oliver's back at the same time Sam places his on my right shoulder and Mateo touches my left shoulder and I instantly relax. I feel the taught muscles in Oliver's back do the same with the contact.

It took me a minute to realize what they did, though and I don't know how I feel about it. I can protect myself and fight, but at the same time she is a different kind of threat. We all recognized it and they naturally went into a protection stance. What I find interesting was there was no hesitation on whether it was me or Sierra that Kaley referred to. That is something Sierra and I will have to talk about later. Now I have to focus. I'm too short to see around them, but I don't miss the rest of the conversation.

"She has no business being anywhere with the two of you, I am your girlfriend. I demand that you leave with me, you are just embarrassing yourselves with her." Kaley screams. Does she not understand she is the one causing a scene all by herself right now? This mall is not just werewolves, it has humans too and they don't know about us, what the hell is she thinking having her meltdown here? I hope she can't shift yet, we will be in trouble if she does out in public with humans,

"Understand this. You do not demand anything from us, are we clear?" Dakota asks with a hard edge to his voice, clearly a warning. That was a new sound to me. His usually jovial

voice is only outdone by Sam's.

"But—"

"No! What we do is our business. Who we choose to spend time with is our business. And where we choose to spend time is our business, not yours. You are not our girlfriend. Change your tone and watch how you address all of us. Disrespect will not be tolerated." Cameron finished, the same harsh demand in his voice. "Let's go." He commands our group, I assume, I still can't see sh*t. Wow, Sierra was right, being around the guys has made my language more colorful. She spins me around, keeping me in the center of the group and I notice the guys don't break formation around me although they at least spread out enough for me to move comfortably, Sam leading us out. Sierra still has my arm though, playing with all of the straps of my new bracelets absentmindedly. It must make her relaxed.

Chapter 0047

"You got her?" Cam asks from behind me. It's the first time any of them have spoken on the ten minute walk back to the truck. Before I can ask what he means, someone steps close to me.

"Yep." Oliver slides an arm around my waist from the back and pulls me close to him. My back is touching his stomach and I'm leaning against one of his legs. It's kind of weird and personal, but oddly it doesn't feel romantic and I don't feel uncomfortable either. Just another thing to unpack with Sierra later.

At least his arm around me was some kind of signal that everyone could move away from me. The bags were loaded in the back. Sam, Mateo and Sierra jumped in the third row. Oliver opened my door, lifted me and placed me in my seat. When he closed my door Dakota stood by it until Oliver got in on his side. The twins got in last, all while looking around as if there was a threat lurking in the shadows. It was natural movement from all five of them, like a well oiled machine that has done this thousands of times before. I wonder if this is something they do at whatever summer training they attend each year. It was fascinating if you sat back, really broke it down and analyzed it. It's the first time I noticed them all acting like the leaders they were supposed to be, not the teenage boys they are. A flutter of butterflies

erupted in my stomach at the idea that they turned this machine one because of a threat to me.

We drove in silence, but I think the guys were talking over the mindlink. Oliver wasn't looking at me, but he was turned in my direction and had his extremely long leg stretched out across the center of the truck and his calf touched my shin. I tried to move to give him more space, but his leg followed my movements keeping contact. I could see him making eye contact with Dakota, but I think they were trying to be subtle. I wish Sierra was in the pack and could link with me. I have so many questions about the guy's behavior today and I don't think we would get away with texting right now. My thoughts are cut short as we pull into the packhouse garage and start unloading all the bags from today.

"Thank you for today. It was so much fun. Sierra, will you help me get these to my room?" I wanted to get her alone so we could talk. This seemed like the best excuse.

"Oh, we aren't even close to being done Shorty." My brother grabs my hand and starts dragging me into the packhouse following the twins, the rest of the crew behind us leaving all the shopping behind. Once we take off our shoes at the front door, we head straight for the kitchen where I can hear and smell the most delicious food cooking.

"The day must end with a tradition." Sam begins walking up next to me. "We always celebrate birthdays with a poolside barbeque, no matter the time of year. Now that you are one of us, you must adhere to the tradition. No complaining or

whining allowed." His loud voice echoes off the long cream colored hallway. The Luna has it decorated beautifully. Family pictures going back generations hung, galley style, on the walls. Little side tables had vases with fresh flowers that smelled amazing and were understated, not too perfumeey and overwhelming. She always has fresh flowers everywhere.

"But, you already did breakfast and shopping with me." I start to argue, but Dakota turns and puts his finger on my lips to stop me from talking. Another weird gesture. They have all been very touchy today.

He keeps his finger there and walks backwards, while Sam pushes me forward. "Breakfast is also a part of the tradition, now don't break the rules, protesting falls under the category of complaining." He smiles a devilish smile at me as he turns around and I can't force my smile to go away.

Sierra is openly laughing at me. "Did you know about all of this?" I waved my hand in the air looking at her like the secret keeping traitor I know she is.

"Of course. It isn't a surprise if you are told what is going to happen." She links her arm in mine again as Mateo lets me go, but Sam stays just behind me with his hand on my lower back. Come to think of it, someone had had physical contact with me since Kaley showed up. Man, my list of 'needs explaining' is getting dangerously long.