

Chapter 0343

Wednesday I woke up to a text from Tyler.

Tyler Hot Ecology Guy: Good Morning Beautiful

Tyler Hot Ecology Guy: Can I still work out with you?

Me: No normal person is up at this time.

Tyler Hot Ecology Guy: You're up...

Me: Like I said no normal person is up at this time

Me: People usually yell at me for getting up this early

Tyler Hot Ecology Guy: I couldn't sleep

Me: Why?

Tyler Hot Ecology Guy: I thought you talking to me might have been a dream

Tyler Hot Ecology Guy: I needed to check, and you never answered the question

Me: Sure, I'll be there in about 10 min

Tyler Hot Ecology Guy: Can I pick you up?

Me: I usually run, I like getting my warm-up in before I get there

Tyler Hot Ecology Guy: Can I run with you?

Me: Sure, how long will it take you to get here?

Tyler Hot Ecology Guy: I'm outside

I hop out of bed and start rushing to get ready, what the hell is he already doing here? I throw on sweats over my sports bra and shorts, grab my bag so I can actually shower this time and race down the stairs and open the door to Tyler's smiling face. The look is cocky and smug. He could hear me racing around to get ready. Well, at least he thinks I want to see him really badly.

"What are you doing here?"

"I thought I was picking you up so we could run over to the gym? I thought you said I could join you. Was I mistaken?" He's trying to be playful, but there is a look of uneasiness that crosses his eyes briefly. He's not as confident as he's pretending to be. Good.

"I mean why are you here now? How long have you been outside my house?"

"Would it make me sound crazy if I said all night?" He shoves his hands in his pockets and looks at the ground, kicking invisible dirt around.

"How long have you been camping out at my house all night?"

"Since your birthday. I stayed far enough away so I wouldn't make you or your uncle uncomfortable, but being too far for

too long was terrible. There is definitely something about you that makes me calm."

"Huh." I raise an eyebrow letting him know I very much think that is a line. "So what do you want to talk about first, the flirting like I am your mate when you told me yourself you know I'm not or what you and your buddies actually get up to in the woods, cause it's not just to run?"

His head shoots up at me and I raise both of my eyebrows at him, daring him to lie to me. He opens his mouth. Closes it. Opens it again and then looks at the sky blowing out a huge breath.

"Seriously, you are too perfect and observant for your own good. This was not supposed to be this hard."

"That is going to require another explanation, but I will let you get your thoughts in order." I swing my small one shoulder backpack over my head and signal for him to follow me.

We don't talk at all and are in no hurry to get to the gym. It takes about fifteen minutes and neither of us have broken a sweat, but move right into training, both avoiding topics we don't want to or can't discuss, but I'm pretty sure he implied that he wasn't supposed to get involved with me which can mean so many things.



When we are done, we both head to the locker rooms to shower and change. I still have classes this morning, so I

don't have a ton of time.

We head to the diner and grab what has become our usual booth in the back corner.

"Alright, why don't you start with the easiest topic. What is this about you already meeting your mate?" I don't even hesitate to ask right after we place our order. "And just to clarify, I'm not mad or jealous." I gave him a look. "I am genuinely curious because you and Mike and mostly Robbie seem to have this big issue with mates being a stupid or ridiculous concept, yet you know who yours is, or I guess maybe 'was' is a possibility."

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He takes a deep breath and closes his eyes. "Is' would be correct. She chose differently and rejected me, but not without making sure that I felt the pain of her being with someone else."

"Oh sh*t! That's awful. Why would she do that?"

"Because the person she chose decided that I needed to be put in my place. He was the Beta of my pack before it was attacked. I was an Omega training to be a warrior, but to him my rank made me unworthy and she believed him. He was just as power hungry as the Elders, I wouldn't be surprised if he had something to do with our pack getting attacked. Anyway, she chose him and rejected me, but I wasn't allowed to accept it. I had the pain of the rejection and then the pain of feeling them being together, Every. Single. Time. I can still feel it, so I know she's still alive. So like you figured out I do not have a high opinion of fated mates, neither do Mike or Robbie. Their stories are different from mine, but we aren't fans. I don't have anything against the Moon Goddess making us stronger through our mates, but I do have a problem with mates still having the choice to reject without any good reason. She wanted to hurt me and even if you don't love your mate you shouldn't have the desire to harm them on purpose."

Our food comes which gives us a break from the deep

discussion. Neither of us really look up from our food, but don't eat with the same gusto as the first time we were here together.

"Tyler, I'm sorry she did that to you." I set my fork down and look right at him. "She doesn't deserve you if she couldn't see the kind of guy you are and appreciate it." I can at least understand him a bit better. I don't know what I would do if my mate rejected me.

"Maybe she was right. Maybe she knew me better than I knew myself. She knew what kind of person I would become."

"Stop! Don't do that. You don't know what was going through her head at the time. Maybe she was being held against her will and forced to reject you. You never know and you can't ask her about it right now." I really don't enjoy comforting him, when I think he is a coward for the way that he treated me over a birthday gift. "I have to go to class, but I have been doing an evening jog around campus after classes if you want to join me. Just text me." I got up to leave and he called me back.

"Sky, thanks for this. You really are going to be a great Luna someday."

"You keep saying that, but have no idea if my mate will be an Alpha or not."

"I do know, I just hope we can still be friends after you find



your mate.”

“You’re asking to stay friends with me after I find my mate even though you threw a tantrum about the exact same thing a month ago and we weren’t even a thing.” I cocked an eyebrow up and his cheeks turned a shade of pink.

“That is exactly right and if your Alpha loses his temper about it all I have to say is I knew her first.” He winks at me and gives me that charming panty melting smile of his and I just shake my head and walk away.

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I walked to class going over what Tyler had told me about his mate. She chose a higher rank and then allowed him to suffer for it. The question is, is the story true or something for him to use to try and relate to what I told him on my birthday? He's had plenty of time to come up with something to make me feel bad for him.

This is what Sam and some of the trainers were talking about. I am young when it comes to so much of this stuff. But I don't know if any of them would see through a lie if they were in my shoes either. What I need to do is catch him running off somewhere looking suspicious. Make him take me with him in a spur of the moment situation. So far all of our meet-ups have been mostly controlled by him, even our first encounter at the gym could have been orchestrated by him to get closer to me.

The rest of the day is kind of a blur. I go to class and take notes and talk to people, kind of. But my focus is going through every conversation I have had with Tyler, Mike and Robbie. Robbie was easy, he says about 3 words to me. Not sure why he doesn't like anyone outside his very small circle, and I don't really care, but it makes it hard to know his motivations. Mike is about the same as Tyler, just not as flirty.

"Sky!" Someone pulls me out of my round and round

thoughts as I am walking home. "Sky, wait up." I turn and see Robbie jogging up to me and he looks mad.

"Hey Robbie, what's up." I slow but don't stop walking. I want to have forward momentum to get away if I need to.

"I thought you weren't talking to Tyler anymore, what's this I hear you're coming on the run Thursday?" He doesn't sound angry, but the look on his face says he wants nothing to do with me being there.

"Not that it's really any of your business, but I am planning on being at the run." I go to move away from him, but he grabs my arm. "Guys whoever is nearest to me, I might have a situation with Robbie, stand by." I turn to face him. "For whatever reason, you don't like me and want nothing to do with me, so just avoid me. There are a lot of people on this campus, go find someone else to bother."

"You're dating my best friend, kind of hard to avoid."

"We aren't dating, again, not that it's any of your business. We are just friends and if I want to run with my friends I will. If I want to avoid the world for a month then I will."

"It's not safe, the run isn't safe, Tyler isn't safe for you. Why can't you see that?"

"If he's so unsafe, why is he your best friend?" I'm still walking, but I have slowed down. Now we're getting somewhere.


“It’s not unsafe for me, I have no other choices, this is my life. But, you do not belong here, you don’t belong with us. I was hoping you figured that out after the way your birthday ended. Just go back to wherever it is you came from. You are a distraction and you are going to get hurt and get others hurt protecting you.”

I never knew someone’s eyebrows could connect so closely in the middle of their face, but he is trying to squish them into nonexistence.

“I am confident in my ability to not get myself or someone else hurt, but thank you for your concern, I think. If you don’t want to see me on the run, you can avoid it, but I will be there.”

“Sky, just think it through is all I’m saying.” He looks like he wants to say more, but he lets out a grunt and just turns and runs off.

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