

Chapter 0499

It took a week to get the packhouse ready for my team. We had to adjust and move warriors from the packhouse into our house on the border to make space for us. Moving one person at a time was painfully slow, but necessary. We had to get Nathaniel here and set up first so there was only hours of downtime from surveillance, not days.

After several arguments, I also gave up my room on the third floor. I rarely used it when I was here and I'm not interested in falling back into old habits of all the guys in my personal space all the time. My winning argument was that the whole leadership team needed to be moved into the packhouse. The twins could go back to sharing a room, someone could take the spare, the media room could be turned into a room and then one of them could have my room. They are the leadership and all the guys are transitioning into their roles right along with the twins, they aren't just here to hangout and sleep on whatever flat surface is available. It's real life now.

Thankfully having Mateo and Sam on my side helped. The twins don't care about Oliver's opinion at the moment and he and Sam think it's hilarious. Mateo is better at hiding his amusement.

My whole team has taken the second floor. Jena, Lil and I are sharing a room as usual and Wyatt and Nathaniel are

sharing which leaves the largest room for Alpha Reggie and Luna Anne when they get here, a room for Xander, Mina and Oscar and two rooms for their warriors.

Just organizing all the people in this house has been exhausting and we still can't get a read on the pentagram with our technology, which means we are going to have to do it the old fashioned way and search each and every house and building in the territory. At least Jena and I have a real idea of the size and scale so we can strategically choose places to look. We set warriors on the hunt as a part of their patrol duties. We divided the entire pack territory into a grid system on a map hanging in our mak-shift war room. Wyatt is leading that project. 3

Nathaniel is basically at everyone's beck and call, but he is focusing on Kevin, who is still missing, and anything happening outside the pack borders. Alpha Reggie should be arriving tonight so he is using this opportunity to make sure that we can still actually see outside our borders, not just what is shown to use by the magic from the pentagram.

It's been two days since we have moved back in and I haven't seen Ava at all. I didn't expect her to be hosting and throwing parties after losing Lucas, but I am worried about her. Jena, Lil and I were talking about her last night and wondering if the mate bond break was worse than she let on at the hospital. I haven't seen Brett either, so I assume or hope that he's with her, helping her process all of this.

I have never witnessed a matebond break, so I don't know what to look for or how to help and it makes me feel terrible for her, but I also can't focus on that. I have to trust that Brett has her and focus on the Mike and Kevin and Kaley problems. 2

We know there is no way Kevin just vanished. But if he's using magic, he could be hiding in plain sight. Kaley has been less hidden, but she at least took my threat seriously, for now. She walks by the packhouse regularly now, but without her little minions, or really any pack members, she just looks ridiculous. Everyone who is still here is a warrior, all of our Omegas, pups and elderly who shouldn't be fighting were taken by boat two hours down the coast and then driven the long way around to Alpha Reggie's territory. Lenny stayed with a couple other Omegas to work the kitchens for us, but they are all well trained and can protect themselves. 2

Kaley, quite literally, has nothing to do. No one is at the school and she doesn't fight so we didn't even pretend to put her on a patrol. She would just get someone hurt protecting her. Although, all the warriors are aware of her homing beacon stunt and I don't think any of them would try to protect her after that level of betrayal.

Jena, Lil and I walk into the kitchen where a buffet style breakfast awaits us. When I look around and don't see her, I say, "I hope Lenny is getting some rest, she has been going

at this nonstop for days.”

“I know. She mentioned Mateo’s birthday tomorrow and Sam’s is in a couple days too.” Lil says filling a plate.

“I feel bad. Turning eighteen is supposed to be fun and exciting and none of these guys will get that experience because of this war.” Jena follows behind.

“The problem is, if it wasn’t our pack, it would have been someone else’s and they might not have fared as well as we have so far. I just hope Sierra is able to come for Sam’s birthday. I still haven’t heard from her since she left and that freaks me out a little. My tornado friend is not one to go dark. I would expect that from either of you, but not her. I just hope these guys can find their mates soon with all of this sh*t, they need their partners.” 3

“Even the twins?” Lil raises an eyebrow at me.

I look away from her. I’m still processing the info Ava and Lucas gave me and I don’t know if I believe it or not. Part of me wants them to find a mate, just to prove everyone wrong so I can move on. Another part of me rages at the idea of anyone else filling that role. 2

I avoid her question and ask my own. “Should we do something on Sam’s birthday? Xander, Mina and Oscar will be here and we can celebrate Oliver and Mateo too.”

“What about Cameron and Dakota?”

“What about them?”

“You are really so angry with them, that you would celebrate the rest of the guys’ birthdays and not theirs?” Jena scoffs.

“Yes. No. Maybe. But I figure now that they are Alpha’s, it would probably be a whole pack thing anyway.” I shrug. No I don’t think anyone deserves to have their birthday completely looked over and avoided. It was done to me for far too long that I couldn’t inflict that on anyone, not even the twins. But, I am sure as hell NOT going to be the one to suggest or plan anything. That, they don’t deserve.

We head out to the patio to eat. It’s really weird to actually have time together. Not running patrols and training is just strange. We still have a full day though. We decided that the school is going to be our next area to search since Kevin had unlimited access and there is plenty of space to easily hide something the size of the pentagram.

Just as we were washing up there was a bang at the front door. We all jumped and ran.

“Honey, I’m home!!!”

“SIERRA!” I ran straight into her arms.

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Chapter 0500

"Sam is going to lose his mind when he sees you!! Where have you been?!" I slap her on the shoulder.

"That is a long story that requires drinks, but I think I have something that will help you." She steps aside and I feel the air change in temperature.

"Elena!" I walk straight into her calming embrace. She just has a way of making me feel like everything is right in the world, even when everything around me is starting to resemble a dumpster fire.

"Finally, girly. It has been too long and I'm afraid you have suffered." She holds me at arms length and takes a full perusal of me. "You have overexerted yourself, that is for sure, which is to be expected when doing magic without guidance. First things first, do you have a bracelet for Sierra here?"

I nod. I made one for her with a yellow strand from the bracelet she got me with the guys. I have actually carried hers with me everyday, like a talisman, waiting for the day I could give it to her, because it would mean she was here with me. I fish it out of my cargo pocket.

"Excellent, let's take this outside." Sierra, Lil, Jena and I all turn to go out onto the patio behind the kitchen. We set up facing each other and I slip the bracelet on her wrist and

hold her hand.

This time when I work the spell, there is no anxiety surrounding it. The spell is actually comfortable and warm. I don't know if that is because it's Sierra, and that is just what she has always been for me, or if it's because Elena is here with me. The biggest difference is the closing of the spell. Sierra repeats the incantation back to me, but Elena added some words that I've never heard or read before. Anam Cara. She doesn't explain, just watches as the tattoo forms on our wrists. It's a thin double band around her wrist which frames the moon cycle tattoos from the boys. She's my outer layer, the first line of protection right next to Sam.

"I am curious how you managed to make the spell permanent on your skin, though, that is an interesting touch and I fully approve. It's a nice backup if your bracelets break."

"I was kinda hoping you could tell me about that. It only happened with my pack members and Sierra. I thought it was a pack thing until right now. Like maybe the warrior brand was the equivalent for my team."

"Really? Nothing happened with your team members?"

"No, or any of the other Elite warriors I have been able to get bracelets on. The spell doesn't exhaust me, but I am tired after doing four or five of them in a row. So it's taking time getting them all done."

"I told you magic has its cost, most of the time it is your energy. So you must really think through your spells and choose carefully and wisely. Jena, let me see your warrior brand, please." She holds her hand out expectantly.

Jena walks forward and holds her wrist out. The little crescent shape on the inside of her wrist looks just like it always did to me. The opening of the shape towards her elbow and the tribal looking markings filling the center are softer than the ones in mine. Then I noticed it.

"Why does yours look angry? It has a red tint around all the edges, like the tattoos is fresh." I step forward and touch her brand. I don't remember them having any color before. Lil, let me see yours. Lil shows me hers and it also has the red tint. "What the hell is that?" I look at Elena. 2

"I have a theory, but let's give it a couple days and see what comes of it. Next line of business will be this barrier that is up, but I think you should go greet your king, he just arrived."

I didn't even hesitate. I pushed past the girls and rushed back through the house and to the front door. Alpha Reggie was barely out of the truck when I jumped at him, wrapping my arms around his neck and making a poor attempt to wrap my short legs around his waist.

"Umpf! Hello to you too, Little One, I have missed you." He hugs me back and then sets me down so I can hug Luna Anne.

"What, no jumping hug for me too?"

I laugh. "Give me a couple seconds to run to the porch and I can fix that."

"Nope, I'm good just like this. Thank you very much. How are you? Really?"

"Not great, but there isn't a whole lot in my control right now, which sucks the most."

"Little One!"

A second oversized SUV pulls up with Nickolas and Osiston in the front seats. I don't know if I have smiled this much ever. I am so excited to see all of them, I might actually cry. I walk to each of them, though, letting them pick me up and hug me like a little doll. With them it's the only time I don't mind feeling like a little girl being protected and I don't know why, but it feels so great, I don't care.

The back doors open and Mina climbs out and my eyes almost pop out of my head. "No way!!! Are you serious!?" I walk up to her very small but obvious baby bump. She nods and gives me a hug.

"Don't be mad, but we are only here for Lucas' celebration and then Xander and Oscar want me back at the castle for obvious reasons."

"Oh Goddess, NO! I could not be mad about that. This is so great, I'm going to be an auntie!" I clap my hands and

bounce up and down with her. 1

"Hey, stop stirring up our kid!" Xander walks around the truck

"Oh, shut up." I reach up to hug him too, then Oscar. "Okay come inside we need to get everyone set up and then my team has work to do. The guys are all out working on things, but they should all be back for dinner. I haven't seen Ava since the hospital." I look over my shoulder at Luna Anne. "I think Brett is with her, we haven't seen him either, but Lenny assures me she's been taking them food. Things have changed a bit since you all were here last. Alpha Reggie you and Luna Anne will be in the same room as last time. Xander, Oscar and Mina will be in Xander's room from last time. Nickolas and Osiston you can have the last two rooms on the second floor and the rest of the warriors with you can stay at the house at the end of the block. If that's okay with you Alpha Reggie."

I look over my shoulder, just now realizing I gave instructions to people who are authorities over me. 1

"I like your plan, Little One." He chuckles. "When we get settled would you have time to show me your war room and we can get started filling you in on our own adventures."

"Of course."