

Chapter 0517

As if my body knew I needed to get up and away from the guys for a bit. I woke up before dawn and slipped out of bed. I turned to look at them before I left and like always when they are sleeping, they actually look young and at peace. Each tangled up under their own sheet, chest bare, leaving the big fluffy comforter for me. They are both so handsome, it's kind of ridiculous. And they have been giving me my space while staying close. It's a start I guess.

I should talk to them about that night and figure out what they were actually thinking, but it still hurts too bad knowing they took her side over listening to reason and having the evidence shoved up their nose. I'm not ready, I'm still angry, no matter how much they draw me in, I am just still angry and for the first time in my life I am making sure people know when they hurt me. I'm not just going to brush it under the rug and take it. They need to realize that they can't shield me from a fight literally coming for me. They can't force me to do anything and there is something very powerful in that knowledge. So I strode down the stairs and into the room I share with Lil to find her already dressed and waiting. 9

"I wasn't sure how early you wanted to train and I figured with the other half of our girls band occupied with their mates you would go alone, and I couldn't have that. That is

the one thing I agree on with these guys." She laughs at me.

"Did you check the door before you came in?" I ask gathering things to change.

"Of course I did. I'm done being cursed, but that seems to be an occupational hazard being teamed up with you. Did you check it?"

"No actually. I could smell your scent all over the door so I knew I didn't have to." I winked at her. She stuck her tongue out at me and I just rolled my eyes and changed. There's no use taking a shower, we are just going to get disgusting.

We ran downstairs and grabbed quick protein bars from the kitchen. I don't know why I just really wanted to get out of the house before any of the guys figured out we left. There is something so satisfying about that thought. We jogged over to the training grounds. There is a small group of warriors training. A few waved, but most just let us pass and do our thing. The wreckage of the obstacle course is still there. There's no need to waste energy on it right now with the pups and teens gone. The pack is actually so quiet right now without all the hustle and bustle of life everywhere. I hope they're all okay, I miss the pups the most. That was a huge motivation for getting back home eventually and now they aren't even here.

Lil and I get started not wanting to waste any time. It only took about a half hour for them to join us at the training grounds, but they didn't interrupt us. In fact they didn't talk

to us at all, just got to their own training. Mateo, Jena, Sierra and Sam are still notably absent this morning, but I don't blame them. We are about to be attacked and they just found their mates. I would probably do the same knowing the possibility of losing them is very high right now.

It felt so good to really train for once and after getting actual sleep. My body feels good, my mind is clear. I really want to work with Gentry and Elena to figure out this pentagram thing. As we were walking back to the packhouse, the guys actually didn't bring the truck for once, we were stopped by Ava and Brett. I haven't seen her since the ceremony yesterday. I know she was mingling with some of the warriors at the packhouse after, but I lost sight of her about an hour in.

"Hey boys." She hugs each of the twins and then Oliver. Then she hugs me. "My sweet girl, Lil. How are you all?" She gives Lil a side squeeze.

"We're good mom, how are you doing?" Cam asks.

"I'm actually better now that the ceremony is done and your father is back with the Moon Goddess. I feel like a weight is lifted, but it still hurts." She absently rubs her mark on her neck, which I'm just now noticing is faded.

Is that what happens when your mate dies? You start to lose all traces of their connection to you. That sounds awful. I lean in to hug her again. I wish I could take her pain away.

"I actually wanted to find you boys, I have something to show you." She links her arms with Cam and Kota and starts to lead them to the packhouse. Brett, Oliver, Lil and I all follow. We head in the front door and she leads them to the elevator. She hasn't looked back at us once, so I know this is something she wants to share with just her and the boys. I head on towards the kitchen with Lil. Brett and Oliver are following. I think this is the first time Brett has left her side since Lucas passed. I wonder if it's hard for him to give up his position as her Gamma, or if this is exactly what his position was designed for? 1

"Hey! It's all the mated saps." Lil shouts. "Sierra, how you doing? Walking alright today?" Lil laughs at her own joke.

"I'm actually good. Lots of practice before the real deal." Sierra winks back. I can't say if I will ever join into their sexual innuendo banter, but at least I don't feel like my face is on fire out of embarrassment. The rest of my friends laugh.

"You good Bitty? You're a little red there." Oliver traces a finger on one of my cheeks, which of course makes it worse. I stand corrected, it still makes me so uncomfortable I turn into a tomato.

"Yup." I walk over to make a plate for lunch with the rest of my friends laughing at me.

"So, Sam, did you even make it all the way upstairs before you marked your girl?" Lil asks, taking the attention away

from me, thank the Goddess.

"Of course I did!" He is so dramatic, acting offended. "Marking your mate is special and once in a lifetime for most of us. We got to the top of the stairs and made it to the couch in the common area of our floor. I don't suggest anyone sit on that couch anytime soon." We are all rolling with laughter. Of course they would mark and mate in a semi-public place not caring if anyone caught them.

"Well, I'm glad we were all safely tucked into bed when that happened." Lil finally came back with after calming down a bit. "You two were bad enough before the bond kicked in, you need to be quarantined to another part of the pack for a bit."

"Oh shut up, it wasn't that bad. Besides everyone knew it was coming"

"Those of us with extra good hearing did anyway."

The whole room went silent and Oliver dropped his fork halfway to his mouth. My eyes went wide.

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I did NOT mean for that to fall out of my face.

Sierra starts laughing, "The rooms are sound proof, but I'm glad to know you can play along."

I shot up from my seat walking my half finished breakfast to the sink, took a deep breath then I turned around, "Just make sure you clean the arm of the couch and the back of the couch too." I winked at her and then took off. I can't believe I just said that out loud. I head to the office to check on Nathaniel before anyone can stop me.

They were terribly loud though. I wondered why neither of the twins said anything. None of them could hear it. Just another freak thing about me.

I knock on the door as I walk in. "Hey! Have you found anything about our hallway intruder yet?"

"Nothing, but there is a glitch in the feed around the time when we all would have been getting back from the celebration. Watch."

He pulls up the feed and plays it for me and if I didn't know to look for it, I never would have seen it. In the bottom right corner is a small flash of what looks like static, but with a shimmer. No interference I have everseen has ever shown as a shimmer.

"Someone used magic to cloak themselves?"

"Yep, and obviously doesn't care about having to reset the little dream bundle as often as needed because of their cloak. I did talk to Gentry this morning while you were training..."

"How did you know I was training?"

"One, I run surveillance, that's my job. Two, you are a slippery sneaky one that likes to get lost, so I put a tracker in your weapons belt. I know when you are more than a hundred feet away from me. And don't give me any privacy bullsh*t. Losing you to Mike was scary for all of us. We just handled it in different ways. Wyatt trails you like your Gamma, Lil sticks to your ass almost as close as your Alphas and I track every move you make from here. Just like your guys here, you mean a lot to this team. And whoever is trying to harm you knows that, which is why they're doing minor things to everyone."

"I wish we could figure out this spell sh*t too. I mean We showed the guys videos of Kaley actively framing me and they didn't see it, couldn't see it, I don't know. I can't believe they would ignore it or disregard it. But maybe under whatever spell that's exactly what they would do?" I rub my face. That day has been bugging me since it happened. "Ava heard what Kaley said to Jena and I but she said nothing, didn't defend me or back me up or even just confirm that Kaley was being a b*tch to the pups. Or even

that Gwen took her to the cells. She just looked at me like she was disappointed.”

“Yeah, I thought about that too. I was watching you mostly and messing with the videos, so I didn’t see much, but with the new ‘cloak’ theory I might have something.” He pulls up the video feed from the four different angles. “You didn’t notice anything from the room and I didn’t see anything live on the feeds, but magic generally doesn’t show up on the electronics, but look at this...” He pulls up the feed where Lucas shows me the fake camera.

“Yep, I remember that. Everyone seemed really angry at the sight of a camera. Especially since we had been placing them everywhere...with their permission. I thought it was weird then too.”

“Yeah, but watch this...” He backs the video up about thirty seconds. It’s when I am asking why I am being treated like a traitor and giving off my Alpha aura. I was so irritated I never noticed. I had them all submitted, even Lucas. I demanded an answer and from the looks on their faces, I was going to get one. Until the shimmer on the screen. Then the twins’ faces morph and they come out of the submission, like it didn’t affect them anymore. “Did you see the shift?”

“Yeah. My aura came out, I had them submitted, and then it just broke. How did that happen?”

“Look at the floor. You all were divided, but not until this

moment.”

“Huh?”

“Up until then, Cameron, Dakota and Lucas were all behind the desk, but Ava was leaning against the side, halfway to you and halfway to them. She didn’t shift until she stood up and stepped back after you submitted them. I bet there is some kind of spell or maybe even one of those little bundles like we keep finding on the doors hidden near or, more likely, in the desk. But it didn’t seem to be activated until the whole Alpha family was completely behind the desk. We need to check the office, because your twins have been using it without any problems that I have noticed, but if there is something there, it needs to go.” 3

“Great! So it’s probably my fault they turned on me by activating the asshole spell.” I rub my face again. “I’ll go find Elena and hopefully Gentry. I wish there was a way to do a sweep for magic like we do for heat signatures. I’m kind of over finding things randomly, this is taking up so much time.” I roll my eyes. 2

“We also need to figure out if that shimmer means there’s magic in the room or if there is an actual person in the room hidden.” 2

“Uh huh huh.” I whine. “You are supposed to be helping me solve problems, not give me more questions.” 1

“I am helping, just the long, highly detailed way around.” He

laughs. "Also, no sign of Kevin, so I don't know if that is a good or a bad thing. Kaley has been around, but really out of place I think. She goes to the training grounds, but sits in the stands. She doesn't talk to anyone and I can't tell who or what she's watching, but we can all probably guess.

She's been by the packhouse too, but I really only see her in the kitchen and dining room for meals. Her behavior is off for sure."

"I wouldn't even know what to do with her anyway."

"What are you talking about? She abused you for your whole life. Tried to kill you or seriously injure you enough to leave the pack. She clearly pegged you as her competition for some reason and really early. I would beat her all the ways she beat me, if I was you."

"But, there's something so wrong with her though. Don't get me wrong I know she deserves to be punished, but what if she was put up to all of this by her dad playing some really long game? What if she's possessed like the twins and their parents were? All her screeching and yelling and demanding was just for show. That I'm sure of and what in the world would make her think I was any kind of competition?"