

Chapter 0631

NO! I don't even know what happened to me. It's like my body and mind separated. The absolute feeling of despair, hopelessness, hatred, anger, defeat all licked up my insides like a white hot flame. While we were here distracted, someone or something else attacked our home. All the people waiting for us to bring some level of good news, where are they? Are they safe? Did they see it coming and get to safety?? Are the people we are holding prisoner safe? I didn't want them to die fighting for another person's obsession. I know I am breathing heavily, but I can't gain control over myself, I can't hear my wolf talking to me if she's trying. I'm drowning.

My chest is caving in and I know I am breathing, but my vision is lined in red. I will destroy these rogues and everything they love for what they have done and are doing to my pack. I let out a scream and a wave of energy blasts out from around me. My vision goes black for a moment.

Thick arms wrap around me from behind. I can feel the tingles run up my skin, I know they are supposed to calm me down, but it's not working this time. I am pulled back into a hard chest and I can feel breath on the back of my neck. Another set of hands grabs my cheeks. Again, I feel tingles, but I am so lost in my destructive thoughts, I can't for the life of me figure out who has me. I do know that my legs are

noodles, I don't think I could stand if I wasn't being held up.

Wait! I know someone is holding me up. I'm in my human form, how did that happen? When did that happen?

Someone is talking to me, but it's like speaking underwater; muffled, incoherent sounds. I still can't focus my eyes on anything but the plume of smoke eating what may be left of my home. I need to move, we need to move. Why am I trapped? My body isn't following instructions.

I think I am telling my body to move, but I don't seem to be going anywhere. Then heat trickles down my body like slow lava, from the top of my head, through my fingertips and to my toes, thawing out whatever had frozen me in place. I gasp and feel the needed air fill my lungs.

"Bitty, Baby, focus. Focus on us. Come back to us, we need you."

"Sweetness, come on, we've got you. Don't try to do this alone."

"Tiny, Love, we're here, always here. Breathe, Love, just breathe."

An electric jolt snaps me back into my body and I look around. My mates are surrounding me. Cam has me bundled in his arms from behind, Dakota to my right and Oliver to my left. They all have their foreheads pressed to my head, speaking to me softly and it's enough to break me out of my panic. I feel the tears running down my face.

"Can you turn it off baby? I think you got everyone here."
Oliver doesn't break contact when he asks.

"Huh?" I look up and blink as I take in our surroundings. Every tree from the grove is gone, the ground is singed black, except for where we are standing. We stand in a circle of bright green grass. I blink a couple more times and notice the rest of my family in similar polka dots of green surrounded by blackened earth.

I can see what Oliver is talking about though, a white flame with black tip is burning slowly across the land. I reach into my wolf and my magic and ask it to stop. Just like that, it obeys me and the flame recedes into the ground. I don't know how I know, but no one else will be able to place magic here, it is now protected.

The buildings are still standing as if nothing happened, but there are no rogue wolves. All that's left of them are heaps of ash. I hope the Moon Goddess takes pity on the ones who didn't want to be here. I'm sure, like Jena, many were taken and forced into this servitude.

"We need to check on Ava and Brett. I don't know where they were supposed to be. Lenny and Martha were in the packhouse. Gentry and Elena are probably fine, but I need to see everyone. This is all my fault. They are here for me." I am sobbing and I can't make it stop. "Why can't I make this go away? This is like Kaley at school all over again."

I grip my hair with both hands. I can't stop the feelings. I know I'm spiraling, but they just won't stop. People are getting hurt no matter what I do. I'm not enough to make this situation better. The Moon Goddess chose wrong. Anyone else would have figured it out by now. Why won't she just stop this suffering? 1

"Baby, you need to stop, now." Oliver's whisper is only loud enough for the four of us to hear.

"You have always been enough, Tiny. Enough to bring all of us together to handle this."

"You have always been ahead of the pack, give us a minute to catch up, that's all. Let us help, all of us." Dakota kisses the side of my head.

"Are you ready to run, or do you want a ride? You know, for old time's sake?" Oliver lifts my chin and smiles that small half smile at me. All of a sudden my stomach is full of little butterflies. He has always known how to just shut down my nerves and over thinking.

I shake my head trying to focus. "I can run, but is everyone here all good? I don't want to run into the next fight with our best warriors running on empty."

"You shut your mouth over there, Midge! Our training was worse than this, and the only one actually trying to kill us then was Drina." Lil laughs and Wyatt, Nathaniel and I all join in. My mates all grumble.

“Drina was just trying to kill Midge. The rest of us didn’t put her precious leader position in jeopardy.” Nathaniel jogs towards us after testing the blackened earth to make sure it was safe. “Are we going to run towards the danger or what?”

“You are not usually the first to willingly run to the fight, what are you up to?” Jena asks.

“Are you kidding? Do you know how many times I finally get called into a fight only to get there and Alpha Midge and her band of female badasses have destroyed everyone? I’m tired of missing out.” He shifts and takes off, everyone else falling into step behind him.

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"Sierra!" I shout before she can shift and run away. "It's time." She looks like she wants to kill me, but I won't risk her or her pup and she knows it.

"Time for what?" Cam asks, but the grip on my stomach tells me he knows exactly 'what.'

She growls and says nothing. I open my mouth, we don't have time for her pride, she blurts, "I might be pregnant." She covers her face. "It's not confirmed and Sky with her freak nose is the only one who thinks so, but..."

Sam stands there with the dumbest look on his face and I wish I could take a picture, it's adorable. His shaggy blonde hair is all disheveled from the fight, but his dark blue eyes are wide as the truth slaps him in the face.

"I'm a...I'm gonna be a...wait." He looks at me, that giant smile falling slowly. "You think she's pregnant with our pup." He starts using his hands to wildly gesture. "You clearly knew before you came into this fight, told her and YOU STILL LET HER FIGHT THAT LUNATIC!?! WHAT THE F*CK WERE YOU THINKING SKYLAR?!?" I don't think he noticed Jena and Lil step in front of Sierra during his outburst. "She could have been hurt! They both could have been hurt, we could lose our pup. I can't f*cking believe you." He is so pissed at me, but he isn't shaking or ready to fly at me. His

wolf is keeping him from doing anything stupid. Telling me their wolves have probably already had this conversation.

"HEY! Slow down." Dakota steps in front of me. Both his hands raised showing he doesn't want to fight.

I take a deep breath, letting her fight was always going to be a touchy subject. Once I know I am calm, I wiggle out of Cam's arms, immediately missing his body heat, and step around Dakota. A warm hand slides up my back and rests gently on my shoulder. My mates won't let me battle anything alone again.

"Watch your tone, Delta." I let a little of my Alpha aura out. "My Delta was given a choice having all the information we had at the time. We decided that she was most safe with us, not alone. She decided she wanted to fight for a home and future to raise your pup in. I made her tell you now, knowing we are going into another battle that is going to be heavy in magic. That is less predictable and I don't think she should be in the fight, but it's not my choice to make. You deserve to know, no regrets today. You two can debate whether she should fight in the safety of this ruined camp." I gesture around me.

I step to my friend and pull her into a hug. "I love you." I whisper into her ear.

"Love you too, traitor." She squeezes me back, then hugs Jena and Lil.

I turn and follow the path Nathaniel started toward our unknown disaster. We all shift quickly and I do another check in with everyone. Maybe the Goddess is helping somehow. Because Martha and Lenny are alright, they were with Ava and Brett moving the prisoners out of the pit and to the underground cells.

"Osiston, Nikolas, Gentry, Elena. Do any of you have any idea where all of these wolves are coming from? Some of them seem like they aren't even alive. It's like they are zombie puppets. At least this last group was. Does she have that kind power?"

"I've only heard of reanimation a handful of times and they were all in the kinds of stories you tell little kids to make them behave themselves. But all stories have some root in the truth though. So it's possible." Gentry calls out and sounds out of breath.

"Gentry, what are you doing? Are you guys under attack? I thought everyone was safe."

"Little One we are alright, but as you have noticed, your pack is under attack. We will need your help sooner rather than later."

"Skylar, we need you and your mates. There isn't anyone that we can see, but fires are starting everywhere." My wolf trips over her own feet at my surprise hearing my dad's voice in our head.

We run harder and pack that away to think about later. When we run through the pack it is completely destroyed. There's no way this is only an hour of work. Most of the buildings are on fire. I can feel the magic reaching out to me. It's angry, but not at us. It is mad at being used for destruction for no reason. I try to pull it back and set it free. I know I am doing it right when I feel a gentle warmth in my chest before some of the flames go out. It helped that one instance, but this is going to be way too slow to put everything out. 1

"Try your element. I was able to pull some of the flame out and release it. The magic doesn't like what is going on, but it doesn't have any control." I say to my mates and they don't even question what I am asking of them. All of our wolves spread out, but none go further than twenty feet apart.

We slowly walk through the center of the pack where the most important buildings are located. I continue to pull at the flames and thank them for doing as little damage as possible before releasing them. Oliver uses dirt to snuff out flames in lawns and gardens. Dakota is pulling water from bird baths and swimming pools to dump on the houses seeing the most damage. Every few feet Cam stops and takes a deep breath then lets it out slowly. 3

"Cam, what are you doing?" My wolf walks up next to him and rubs the side of our head along his neck and under

his chin."

"Remind me later that we really like it when you do that." He laughs in my head. "We discovered that if we focus, we can pull the oxygen specifically out of the air and smother the fire." I don't say anything in response, but I do rub under his chin again, stepping forward letting the curve of his neck run along our back and our tail curls around his muzzle before I move on to check my other mates. Cam's wolf purrs as we walk away.

We finally get to our street and this is where the heart of black smoke is coming from. The packhouse and surrounding homes are decimated. There is nothing left to salvage. What I find most interesting is I don't feel anything. I never realized how little attachment I have to the places and things here. My only attachments are the people that are currently surrounding me.

"Let's handle this so it doesn't spread any further into the island." Oliver calls out to us.

We all get to work. Some in human form, some in wolf form. Dakota and I found that we work best in human form, but Cam and Oliver stay at my side in wolf form. I do notice that Cam has constant contact with me. When I ask Elena about it as we work she says that his wolf is using me to keep him grounded and level. My mates' energy seems to deplete more than mine when they use it. By leaning on me I am sharing my magical endurance. 1

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Hours later all of the fires are out and everyone is accounted for. There are several injuries to attend to and we are all getting a crash course in coven healing. Field training was necessary for warriors, but this is a whole other level. Since they don't have the enhancements that our wolves give us, many herbs and other remedies more common to humans are used along with magic. All the injuries that our pack members sustained in the fight are strange. A bite that should have healed in minutes is still oozing even now. Gentry said it's the magic that has encapsulated the rogue wolves. It's almost like their saliva has a toxin in it.

"This is like what happened to you, Sky." Sierra has taken to helping with and is a natural at mixing the herbs and oils that Gentry and Elena have introduced us to. It makes sense considering what her parents do for a living. I almost forget that she has a whole other skill set in alchemy because of them.

"What do you mean? I was unconscious for that whole thing."

"We did so many tests and took so many samples. No one could figure out how you survived with everything that was running in your system and at the levels you were given."

"I think my wolf and I decided that no matter what we would never die at the hands of Kaley and her meatheads."

I didn't even think about the words that I just let fall out of my face. All my mates, my brother and Sam stop what they are doing and face us, not even pretending they aren't listening in now and move toward the table we are working at. I have never fully confronted the situation with Kaley out loud to them. The girls know bits and pieces, but with her dead, there is no retaliation they can do and I don't plan on mentioning it again. She was never worth the mental effort to even think about when she was alive, now I just feel like her karma came back and smacked her in the best way possible. No one will talk about her, no one will remember her, she died in such an unspectacular way, so many other exciting and scary things have happened, she became unimportant. It was always her worst fear and she did it to herself.

"So it was her?" Dakota whispers in a defeated tone, standing next to me, hip propped on the table.

"It was always her in some way." I let all the implications sit in the air, thick and stale. Then I turn to Sierra, changing the conversation. "You are really good at this Si, I think I am going to have you stay and make sure everyone here is cared for and ready to join when Vincent comes back and Adrielle finally shows her face." I raise my hands to stop her protest. "You are the best person. You know the formulas

for all of these potions and salves. You understand the toxins and poisons that are being used. You are quick on your feet, especially if the fight gets this far, and it will make every single one of us more calm and less distracted to know you are here. And everyone here knows and trusts your knowledge of all this plant sh*t."

"Sierra, you have our future inside that wild bossy stomach of yours, please listen to Sky." My brother approaches her like a skittish animal.

"Mateo, I can't just sit by waiting, that will be torture." I've never heard her desperate before.

"Look around you, do you really plan on being bored?" They both share a small smile

"I was going to ask if you would be able to duplicate this stuff on your own." Cam shakes one of the little vials with a green slime looking substance. "With Adrielle in play, we are going to need Gentry and Elena with us, guiding our magic. I still have no idea what the fu*ck I am doing and I am sure I will have my ass handed to me. You can work with my mom and any other warriors available to keep the healing supplies coming."

"I want all of you to know this is under absolute protest." She pouts, and Sam slides up behind her wrapping her in a hug.

She never would have stayed put if he had asked as her

mate. She would have played it off as him being too protective and dug her stubborn heels in. But, two of her alphas giving her operational orders that really will be helpful, she can work with.

Three warriors make it over to us. We have set up shop in the school's gym. It is the only place we have found in town that is structurally sound. It works, for now.

"Alpha's the North side of the territory has been thoroughly investigated. The few houses that were up there cannot be salvaged. The forest has been unharmed though, along with your shrines with the Belladonna and Wormwood."

"Thank you, Zayn. Make sure you all get food and rest. We will send out another patrol soon." Cam directs him. They thank us and go on.

Lenny and Martha have been keeping supplies here for the warriors and the few rogues that we collected when we got Gentry back. It has been easier to keep everyone fed like this, similar to what the Elite Warriors do at the compound. These rogues have been so helpful today. They know what we are going through, I'm sure many of them lost their packs this way, but we have one thing they didn't. We have the power of knowing the war is coming.

Most can't fight, but that hasn't stopped them from asking to learn. Many of our warriors have gotten past the fact that they came from the same rogues we are currently fighting and brought them into our folds. They have proven so far

that they want to be with us and side with us. I won't stop anyone who wants to help us get rid of this disease. They want a home, a pack to belong to. I hope we can give them that too.

"Osiston and Nikolas should have been back by now. Has anyone heard from them?" I ask the group around me.

They went to check the Southern part of the pack lands where Charlene and Alpha Brecc threatened us. I hate that I feel jumpy and anxious when I don't hear from someone every hour. I think I have been hard wired for check-ins since warrior training, but these constant attacks are making it worse. I need to be in constant contact with everyone just to know they are safe.

"They are fortifying your pentagram. Adrielle was able to break through and obviously do damage to your pack." Elena begins.

"Gentry finishes. "We think she was able to get through because all four of you were outside the pack borders. That is something we will have to research in the future. Your pack must be safe without the need to leave one of you behind. That sounds more like a curse to me."

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