

## Her Brother, Her Mate Chapter 10

Carli POV

I felt unsettled the rest of the night. Parker's droopy, brown eyes, pleading with me at my door filled my restless dreams. I didn't know mom wasn't his mom too. She is so obvious with her love for him. It hurts that she can love someone she didn't give birth to so wholeheartedly, while she treats her real child like hot garbage, that's if she acknowledges me at all.

I have training this morning. I wanted to skip, but Uncle Tommy messaged me last night telling me to be there. I respect him and love him too much to go against his word. Plus, we're starting rogue vampire slaying training today. I'm excited about talking with Gamma Nathan some more.

I never got my car last night, and I'm preparing to call Casey for a ride. My bag with my keys are in his car anyway. Parker decides to grace me with his presence before I have the chance to even retrieve my phone from my duffel bag. It's 4:50 in the f\*\*\*\*\*g morning. Why the heck is he even up?

"Carli," he jogged over to me from where he was leaning against his truck. "I, uh..I remembered last night about your car. Can I give you a ride?"

"Parker," I ran my hand through my hair, exasperated that I had to see him first thing in the morning after dreaming about him all night. "Why can't you just leave me alone?"

His face falls, and I feel instant regret for making him sad. I never cared if I hurt someone who had treated me unfairly. Why does it make my chest tighten and my heart contract to see Parker upset?

I sigh, chewing on my bottom lip as I contemplate how to make him not look so sad.

"Okay," I grumble, "I could use a ride. I'll be late if I wait for Casey anyway."

Parker's face instantly transforms into his megawatt smile, and for some reason, butterflies stir in my chest. I thought yesterday was just because of the alcohol, and my thoughts were so consumed with him because it was a mistake, but now I'm not sure. Seeing his smile does things to me, and when he's sad it's like I can feel his sorrow.

I let Parker open the passenger door for me. I even take his hand that he offers me as I step into his lifted truck. His smile grows and the heat I feel from his touch leaves me unsettled, like I'm missing something important when his touch is gone.

It's probably the effects of what happened between us last night. That should never have happened. If mom found out, I would be banished.

Parker is still grinning like a fool as he gets in the driver's seat and starts the truck.

"Are you going to stay for training again?" I asked tentatively.

His smile falters a little, but he tries to maintain it as he looks over to me, "Not if you don't want me to."

I chew on my bottom lip, thinking about what I want. For some reason, the thought of him staying doesn't bug me as much as before.

"If you start being an a\*s again, I'm breaking more of your bones," I finally say, and Parker laughs in response, making me smile a little. Just a little. I really will kick his a\*s if he messes with me today.

When we pull into the lot, everyone does a double take as we get out of his truck. Less than 24 hours ago, I broke his ankle and our mother slapped me for it. We were obviously on hostile terms yesterday, and everyone looks surprised to see us together this morning.

Casey breaks away from the group and jogs over to meet me and Parker, my Nike drawstring backpack in his hands.

"Hey," he smiles at me, then nods an apprehensive greeting to Parker, "I was waiting for you to tell me to come get you. You left your keys in our Jeep."

I take the bag from him and smile when I see he even put a Rockstar energy drink in the bag too.

"Thanks! Yeah, I still need to go get my car."

"I can take you after training today," Casey offers.

Parker, who remained right beside me, shook his head, "No need. I'll take her." He puts his arms around my shoulders and grips my bare arm tightly,

almost in a possessive way. The heat from his touch, again, makes me feel unsettled, but I don't want to push him away.

Casey studies us curiously. "I see you guys made up?"

I shrug and Parker tightens his hold.

"We have," Parker states, looking down on Casey smugly.

"That's great. Hopefully, we can have a drama-free training session today. We're waiting for Gammas Tommy and Nathan to show up still to start the rogue vamp stuff," Casey tells us. "We should probably get in formation before they get here."

The 3 of us walked to the astroturf field. Parker doesn't release his hold on me until he walks me all the way to my usual spot; the spot between Hillary and Casey.

Everyone tried to avert their gaze but I can still catch people glancing at us speculatively from the corner of their eyes. Even Hillary doesn't joke with me about Casey today because of Parker's possessive display. He very much looks like an overprotective mate than a brother right now. He smugly strode to the side of the group to watch from the sidelines, sending me a radiant smile when I peeked over at him. What is wrong with us? We can't act like this, especially in front of other people. I bite my lip, remembering the way his lips felt against mine last night. s\*\*t, I gotta stop..

When Uncle Tommy and Gamma Nathan arrive, both of them look extra enthusiastic. Uncle Tommy gives me an extra tight side hug, and so does Gamma Nathan, surprisingly, as they walk past.

Most people, outside of my closest friends, like Casey and Simone, and Hillary and Daryl, think Uncle Tommy is my guardian in some way. Elena is always the one who attends school events where a parent is needed, and Uncle Tommy signs off on my parent forms, so I don't have to ask my real parents.

I even have auburn hair like Uncle Tommy. Dad is blonde, and my mom has light brown hair. I look more like Uncle Tommy than I do my own parents, except for my green eyes. Those are somewhat like my mother's. Hers looked more hazel than green most days.

Gamma Nathan is on a different level than even Beta Anthony. He's a beast. It makes me excited to see what his Beta and Alpha are like if he is this skilled.

He shows us several seemingly impossible moves, like how to snap a vampire's neck in a way to avoid their fangs while using your other hand to stake them through the heart. He used his brother to practice on, and I kept flinching from watching like I was the one he was demonstrating with, feeling like the moves were too dangerous to try on a living person.

About halfway through the demonstrations, Gamma Nathan shifts and shows us a few more moves in wolf form. It's hard to kill a vampire in our wolf form. Killing one requires a stake through the heart, but he shows us that ripping the heart out and impaling it outside the body is much more effective. He even shows us the best way to impale a vampire using the things around us. Trees and vegetation are everywhere in Florida, but I thought they would easily break from the impact of a living being being thrust upon it. Nathan demonstrates how living tree branches still attached to the tree are much stronger, and he shows us the best angles to throw the vampires in order for the branch to pierce all the way through to the heart.

I feel jittery and full of anticipation by the time the training session, which turned into Rogue Vampire Killing 101, is over. It's now 6:30, and normally I would have to go home and get ready for school, but since school is out for seniors, I can attend Gamma Nathan's other classes throughout the day.

The next class isn't until after breakfast, so I have plenty of time to go get my car. Parker jumps up from the spot he was watching off to the side and makes his way towards me.

Casey leans in and whispers, "You sure you're okay to go with him to get your car. If you want me to take you instead, just let me know."

I smiled and shook my head at him, "It's okay. Simone probably wants the use of the Jeep too, so you should get home. I'll be fine."

Casey gives me a quick hug and pecks me on the head, pulling away right when Parker reaches us.

"See you later, babe," he calls, walking off towards his Jeep.

Parker watches him, looking annoyed. Casey didn't even acknowledge him before he left. I don't blame him. He's spent years hating the guy because of me.

Parker turns his gaze on me, and for some reason I'm nervous, like I just got caught cheating on a test or something. I have no idea where this feeling is coming from. Did what happened last night impact me this much?

"Ready to get your car?" he asks.

Before I can say anything, Uncle Tommy calls out to me, waving me over to where he and Gamma Nathan are talking. Uncle Tommy looks like a hot mess. His hair is poking every which way, and his clothes are covered in grass stains and mud, but he still looks ecstatic about something.

"I'll be right back," I told Parker, feeling slightly shy. I was abnormally aware of his eyes on me as I strode across the field towards the two men.

Uncle Tommy pulls me to his side, and when I try to protest because of the sweat and mud all over him, he decides to wipe his sweat-soaked forehead all over the side of my face, making me squeal in protest and giggle at his antics.

"So, the alpha brought me to his office last night and asked me for a surprising favor," he tells me, grinning ear to ear. "He asked if I'd be willing to legally adopt you, and I'm more than willing. I wanted to ask you what you wanted, though, before I gave him a definite answer."

I'm shocked to my core. What the f\*\*k? They not only don't want me here, they don't want any legal obligation to me anymore. I'm almost 18. Why the heck are they doing this now?

Uncle Tommy seemed to sense my distress and growing agitation, and his happy expression was replaced with apprehension.

"I have always thought of you and Elena as my parents more than them," I reassured him, hugging him tighter to his side despite the sweat and dirt, "I'm just upset they waited until now to reveal how much they didn't want any ties to me."

"I know sweetie," Uncle Tommy wraps both his arms around me and rubs my arms sympathetically, "I would have.." he grunts like he's in pain momentarily,

but quickly recovers. "I've always loved you, Carli. You're already mine. This will just make it legal."

Gamma Nathan is watching us with a somber expression, "I know you can't, but I can tell her. Just give me a sign and I'll tell her everything, Thomas."

"Later," Uncle Tommy says, "The young alpha is waiting for her and he.." he stops and grunts again, "Later."

"Tell me what?" I asked, looking between the 2 of them.

Nathan gives Tommy a look, but Uncle Tommy just shakes his head.

"Tonight," Uncle Tommy says, kissing my head, "Come over for dinner tonight."

I gave him a long look, trying to figure out what he couldn't tell me, but gave up and just nodded.

"Tonight," I said.