

Her Brother, Her Mate Chapter 19

Carli POV

A hole is tearing through my chest the further away I get from Parker, but I grit my teeth through the pain and continue walking, not sure where I'm walking to.

My mind is a mess. I wanted nothing more than to turn around and run back, throwing myself into Parker's arms, leaving my dignity and pride behind. I know that's only because of the mate bond, though. I can't trust that feeling. I can't trust my own desires. I have to use my head. I have to use facts and reasoning to talk myself out of doing what I really want to do.

First fact: Parker wanted nothing to do with me before 2 days ago.

Second fact: He knew for 4 years. 4 whole years, where he spent most of that time not only ignoring the mate bond, he was fighting against it, sleeping around, moving out of state, not reaching out to me once.

Lastly, this seems very similar to the way his father treated my mother. I don't ever want to end up being anything like her. I don't want to be with someone who is anything like him.

Casey is already ready to move to Blue Cliff Pack with me. I know we're not mates, and I'm not attracted to him in that way, but he is much more of what I want in a mate, if I want a mate at all. I don't want an a*****e like my stepfather forced on me. I'd much rather spend the rest of my life alone, or with a chosen mate.

I feel my phone vibrating in my pocket, and choose to ignore it, thinking it's probably Parker. It goes off 2 more times before I decide to pull it out and yell at him to just leave me alone. I should find some guy to screw before I answer it. I can be just like him.

When I checked the caller ID, it was not Parker at all, but Simone.

"Hello?"

"Hey, girl! What are you doing? Hillary told me you skipped guard duty today. Are you sneaking off to buy me a last minute birthday present?" her cheerful voice carries through the phone.

"I uh. . .I went to lunch with Parker," I told her.

"Is he buying me a present too? Casey said he was following you around like a lost puppy today. Actually, he said following you around like a disease, but a lost puppy sounds cuter. How can a disease follow you around? Doesn't make sense. What are you doing now? Is the puppy still with you?"

I laugh softly, thankful for Simone's bullshit banter. "I'm actually on my own. Do you think you could come pick me up? I'm at Bayfront Park. I was about to get an Uber."

"Um, yeah. But where is your brother? Did he leave you there?"

"It's a long story. I'll tell you when you get here," I said.

"Okay, babe. Be there in 10 minutes. Meet me by the amphitheater."

10 minutes later, Simone is skipping towards me in chunky-heeled sandals and a bright pink romper.

"Hey babe," She smiles brightly at me, "Where's your puppy?"

I chuckle, "I don't know. I left him back near Skyviews."

"Did you fight again? He back to being an a*s?"

I shook my head, "No. Not really. It's. . .complicated." I motioned for her to sit beside me on the concrete steps, "It's been a crazy 24 hours."

I told Simone everything, from making out with Parker last night, where she tried not to throw up before I quickly informed her that we don't share any DNA. We have completely different parents. I tell her about my talk with the Gammas this morning, my meeting with Vivian Meyers, and then she growls when I tell her about my conversation with Alpha Jared. She's more pissed than I was when I told her about the whole Clarissa bull shit.

Lastly, I tell her about my lunch with Parker, and about finding out he's my fated mate.

"Girl, that's some heavy s**t," she sighs.

"I know. It's like everything was just dumped on me all at once. It's too much. I just want to move and be done with it all."

“Casey’s going to be so sad when he finds out he’s not your mate,” she clicks her tongue.

“I wish he was,” I muttered. Everything would be so much easier if he was.

“You know, we’ve been friends for a long time, and I love you like a sister, but I’m glad you’re not Casey’s mate,” she says, offering me an apologetic smile.

“Why?”

“Well, no offense, but you’re a little too harsh on the opposite s*x. I love it as your friend, but as his sister, I was always worried you were too dominant for him.”

“What’s wrong with being dominant? He’s pretty dominant as well,” I scoff.

“Nothing is wrong with it,” she rolls her eyes and smirks, “I just think mates should balance each other out. You can’t have two tops in a relationship. I always thought Casey needed someone softer, more bendable. Your a*s is too stubborn.”

“Gee, thanks,” I mumbled.

“Don’t be mad. I just didn’t think you were a good match. You and Parker make much better sense.”

I look at her stunned, “How so?” We’ve both thought he was my brother for the last 18 years.

She shrugs, “I know he’s been an a*s the last couple years, but before then he had a real sister complex. You told him to jump, he jumped. He would literally do anything for you.”

“Bull s**t,” I shook my head in disbelief.

She tutts her tongue at me again and shakes her head, like I was crazy, “You were friends with my brother before me. I remember the first time he brought you over after a junior warrior thing for a play date. Me and him started fighting over something stupid like a slice of pizza or some s**t. You started bragging, saying your brother would have given it up for you. You were always telling us how awesome your brother was to you. Until one day, you said things changed.”

“Yeah! He found out I was his mate and could get away from me fast enough,” I huffed.

“Hey, if I found out Casey was my mate tomorrow, I’d s**t a brick. I would lose my f*****g mind. He thought you were his sister, chica. Sister. It sounds like he had no idea you shared no blood until Matt told him at the cove yesterday. Anyone would have a hard time accepting their sibling as a mate. It’s. . . icky,” she gags, “Totally gross. I still think it’s a little disturbing you’re mated even as step-siblings, but it makes sense. He’s the son of the true alpha, you’re the daughter of the true Luna. They both f****d up by having families with other people. This is probably the moon goddess’s way of correcting their mistakes.”

I gnaw on my bottom lip, contemplating her words.

“He still didn’t have to ignore me for 4 years. It feels like he just wants me now because of the possibility of me moving and him never seeing me again. I mean, he didn’t even tell me why he avoided me. He just went to his dad and withdrew my transfer without even talking to me.”

“Carli,” Simone shook her head, “You aren’t always the easiest person to talk to. You get defensive easily. He was probably scared you would run away from him, which you did do. Him being cautious doesn’t make him a villain. If you don’t want to end up like Alpha Jared and Luna Mary, then I would think twice about rejecting the mate bond. The moon goddess, though she gives us the choice to refuse, she does have our best interest in her heart. She wouldn’t put you with someone who you were incompatible with.”

“But,” I started, but she put her finger to my lips, stopping my defensive rant before I could start.

“Stop. You think because you’re some badass warrior, you have to prove yourself by acting like the typical male wolf would. No emotions, just rational thinking and the occasional fling to fill your carnal desires. You already have an obscured view on relationships. You don’t want to risk getting hurt, so you have an unhealthy view of s*x and only view the opposite s*x as something that will just disappoint you if you open yourself up to anything more. I know you had a f****d up childhood, but you have to quit using that as an excuse.

“Gamma Thomas, your real father, has always loved you unconditionally, even though he was told he couldn’t. Your brother, though he had that dark period, loved you unconditionally up until he found out you were mates. Yeah,

he sucked the last 4 years, but I'm willing to bet he didn't want to hurt you and that's part of the reason he stayed away."

Simone's speech leaves me without words to respond. I don't have an unhealthy view of the opposite s*x, do I?

Maybe I do. I don't know. I never thought much about relationships in the past. I knew one day I would have a mate, but before then, boys were just toys. Is that unhealthy?

"Sweetie, I'm telling you this because I love you, and I want what's best for you. I would talk to Parker again. Don't completely write him off just yet. Now," she slaps my bare thigh, causing me to yelp, then gets to her feet, "Let's go buy me birthday presents before we head to the packhouse. I saw a sale sign at Sunglass Hut and Express. Put your mom's credit card to good use before you lose it."

Her Brother, Her Mate Chapter 20

Parker POV

Driving back to the packhouse, tears were streaming down my face. My whole world is coming to an end, and I have no one to blame but myself. My own hesitation and ignorance is what's to blame. Why was I such a f*****g prick to her after I found out? How could I do that to her?

She said I'm just like my dad. I didn't know. I didn't know he rejected mom for my real mom. I didn't know that Dad stole her back while she was already in a family with his gamma. 4 years. He rejected her, but kept her in arms reach for 4 f*****g years; just like I did to Carli.

If dad had not been such a d**k to her her whole life, she might not mind being mated to someone just like him. Of course, she is going to reject me after being treated like s**t by the man I'm a carbon copy of for 18 years. The guy didn't even know her f*****g name! How? How horrible do you have to be to not even know the name of the girl you are raising as your daughter. He claimed Mary knowing she was pregnant with Carli. He should have taken responsibility for not just Mary, but Carli too.

What else did he tell her this morning? What else did he do to cause her to hate him this much and make her think so poorly of me?

I sat in my truck in the packhouse parking lot for a long time, letting my tears flow freely as I sobbed to myself, my heart feeling like it was broken in two. I should have gone after her when she walked away, but I was scared I'd push her away more. I always hesitate at the most crucial moments. I should have run after her and begged her to give me a chance. To give us a chance. I should have done whatever it took. I just stood there in horror and watched as she walked away from me, not looking back at me once. With each of her steps, I saw another layer to the wall she was building between us go up, and that hurdle seemed more and more impossible as she got further and further from me.

I growl, shaking my entire truck in despair and frustration. When I finally stop crying, and have stared out the windshield blankly for I don't know how long, anger starts burning in me.

Dad is such a f*****g prick. I hate him. I hate what he did to my mate and, in turn, did to me. I hate mom for abusing her instead of protecting her while I was away. I hate mom for being so scared of what others think, she was more willing to hide the fact Carli was my mate instead of helping me learn the truth so I could accept her sooner without the moral conflict. Above all that, I hate myself. I hate myself for taking so long to see the great gift I have been given. I turned away from her first. Maybe not in the same sense, but I rejected the idea of my sister being my mate before I even considered the reasons behind why we were mated in the first place.

Getting out of my truck, I slam the door, suddenly on a mission. My parents aren't anywhere on the main floor. They're both probably on the top floor, avoiding any real responsibilities on a Friday afternoon. I run up the stairs 2 at a time, not stopping to talk to anyone, though several people try. I get lots of concerned looks. It is probably because I look like a mess from all the f*****g crying and yanking on my hair.

I slammed the doors open to the alpha quarters on the top floor. Dad's not in his office, but I can hear his and mom's voices coming from the living room. They sound like they're arguing, which isn't like them.

"YOU KNEW! Jared, if you knew, why would you let me keep acting like that? Everyone probably thinks I'm such a fool. YOUR PARENTS KNEW! Your parents knew the whole time, and I just went on thinking they hated me because I was an orphan or not worthy of you. I didn't know they thought I was just a w***e," Mom screeches, hurting my ears.

“Honey, are you serious?” dad scoffs, “I didn’t know you were that ignorant about scents and mating. At first, I thought you insisted she was mine out of consideration for me. I thought you meant ‘Even though I was impregnated by another man, you can still be the father’. I didn’t know you were literally insisting that I was her father. When I figured out you seriously thought I thought she was mine, it was too late to tell you otherwise. I didn’t think it mattered, and I don’t think anyone else thinks so either. You’re getting worked up over nothing.”

“It’s not nothing! I never would have let that woman get that close to her if I thought I could be close to her too. That witch thinks she is Carli’s mom now. You didn’t even ask me if I wanted them to adopt her, you just did it. I didn’t have a choice about what happened to my daughter. Now Elena can hold that over my head for the rest of my life,” mom hisses back.

I can’t believe them. They don’t care at all how much they messed up their children’s lives, they’re more worried about their image. Elena was always great to Carli. Unconditionally great to Carli. A mom shouldn’t need her mate’s cooperation to be kind to her own daughter.

“Are you both f*****g psychotic?!” I yelled as I went into the room. “How can you be so self-involved and selfish? Do you realize what you’ve done to everyone else around you, or are your heads so far up your own asses all you can see is your own s**t?” I feel tears filling my eyes again.

“Parker,” dad says my name in a hard voice, “Watch your mouth. I don’t know what your problem is now, but you are not going to talk to us like that.”

“Or what? What are you going to do?”

“I can send Clarissa to Blue Cliff Pack still,” he lifts his chin, meaning to look down on me, but I’m taller than him and it doesn’t have his desired effect. It has the complete opposite effect.

I punched my father in the face as hard as I could, throwing all my aggression and agitation onto the right hook. He buckles over, clutching his face while mom flutters her hands over him in concern.

“That’s for treating CARLI like s**t for her whole life. Because of you, I’m going to lose my mate. I’m going to lose everything.”

“She rejected you?” Mom gasps in disbelief. “I’ll talk to her.”

"No, you are not," I tell her with a hard voice, "You've done enough. You've both done enough. I'm going to go talk to her real parents, and plead with them to help me, since the ones she was stuck with for 18 years have done nothing but f**k everything up."

Carli POV

Simone helps take my mind off everything for a couple of hours after our talk. I needed the distraction. She was driving me back to the packhouse now, and I was going through all the texts and phone calls I'd missed throughout the day. I'm surprised to see my mom texted me a few times. Very vague 'call me when you see this' texts. Not a chance. She probably wants to slap me around some more for more s**t that's not my fault. Probably for talking to Alpha Jared this morning. How dare I, right? Ha! How dare she let that a*****e go 18 years thinking my name was something else.

Elena texted me, saying dinner would be at 7. She's making fried chicken, which I'm so excited about. She's a fantastic cook.

I don't have a single text from Parker after I left him, which surprises me. I try not to dwell on it, but I'm a little disappointed. Why am I disappointed, though? I decided not to accept the mate bond, didn't I?

My talk with Simone is brought back to my mind. Maybe I should try talking to him one last time? Maybe I was being unfair earlier. We were doing great and having fun before I gave in and asked Parker about my suspicions. I didn't even really give him a chance to explain himself. I just told him off, then left.

I know he isn't just like his father. Alpha Jared is horrible. He's scum. Parker worked to become worthy of being called the alpha heir. He's a decent guy, and has always been open and kind to everyone in our pack. Before his 18th birthday, he treated me great, just like Simone said. He was an amazing big brother, despite our parents treating me like I was invisible. It's just so hard to look back on those days while trying to overlook the last 4 years.

"Okay, chick. We're here," Simone drove up to the front door of the packhouse, "Thanks for my new sunnies! I'll let you bring me the rest of my presents I know you have already gotten me tomorrow. 7PM at the beach! Don't forget. Tell your cousin I can't wait to meet her!"

"Thanks, Simmy. You're the best," I leaned over and gave her a quick hug and peck on the cheek.

“And give the puppy a chance,” she tells me one last time as I go to close the passenger door. “Don’t throw the mate bond away so easily.”

I huff, ready to argue, so she raises her eyebrows at me, daring me to try. I end up laughing instead. “ OK. I’ll talk to him.”

“Good,” she nods, then shoos me away so she can drive off.

I carry my bags from shopping up to the 3rd floor, dropping them on my small dining table before going to my room to shower. I’m sweaty and sticky from the ocean air and heat and I need to wash the yuck away. Taking off my bikini top, I’m reminded of being here earlier with Parker. I was so f*****g attracted to him back then, I would probably have just jumped in bed with him if he even suggested it.

This f*****g mate bond. I can’t trust myself around Parker. When he’s not near, I hate him, but after about 5 minutes with him, all I can think about is jumping his bones. I end up craving his touch and it’s so f*****g confusing.

I slipped on some shorts and a white cropped tank, readying myself to go to the Childes. I wonder what Courtney is like. She’s a year older than me. Uncle Nathan said she was going to school to be a nurse. Besides that, I don’t know anything about her.

Walking down the hall to the gamma’s quarters, I got whiffs of a delicious scent all the way to their door. I knock, then let myself in like I would normally do, and come face to face with Parker in a heated discussion with my real dad.