

Psycho Shifters Chapter 10

SADIE

FINDING FRIENDS IN UNLIKELY PLACES

Still in my cat form, I limped back into the battle room and collapsed onto my haunches.

Betas helped each other stand upright and s~~p out of their battle gear. A couple of betas had wicked wounds and were only supported by others holding them up.

A couple of them glanced over at me, and the air perfumed with their fear. It was nice that they were finally showing me the respect I deserved.

Blood coated the locker room floor.

“Everyone should report to the ward immediately to get their injuries treated. The doctors will be waiting for us,” Jax said as he lowered a limp beta male onto the ground.

Ascher and Cobra followed behind, both carrying passed-out betas over their shoulders.

Finally, the last beta shifters stumbled in and shut the doors behind them. Instantly, the howling wind stopped, and the small room became too warm.

I started to p~~t, but remained in my beast form. My shredded clothes were lying out in the forest.

I couldn't let them see my scars.

Slowly, the room emptied as betas helped one another to the ward. The alphas handed off the limp betas to servants who ran into the room with cloth gurneys.

Everyone bustled about as they hurried to the injury ward.

The heat made me drowsy, and I struggled to keep my eyes open as I rested my head on my furry paws. I just needed to take a long nap.

“Imagine your other form and focus on transforming into it. When you start to tingle, imagine shoving through a wall. Turn back now,” Jax alpha-barked down at me. His tree-trunk-like legs spread wide.

Thankfully, he had put on combat p~s. At least his massive d~k was no longer on display.

Jolted fully awake, instinctively I began to transition.

At the last second, I remembered why I couldn't.

Flattening my ears back against my head in annoyance, I shook my heavy maw back and forth.

“I gave you an order.” Jax stalked toward me, and vibrations from his chest rumbled through the small room.

A high-pitched whine escaped my throat, and I tucked my head down between my paws at his censure.

I wanted to listen.

Instead, I lifted my right paw and pointed to the door.

I opened my large eyes wide and pleaded with the big man to understand. His handsome face contorted in fury, and his bare chest rippled with power.

Gray eyes were colder than Cobra's frosty scent, and I crept backward until my furry b~t hit a locker.

I whined low and long and pointed with my paw at the door.

The adrenaline from the battle had disappeared, and in its wake, I was light-headed and woozy.

Jax's anger was too much. Behind Jax, Ascher and Cobra flanked him, and I shook my head, desperate to not pass out.

The entire room spun.

“Oh my sun god, is this the same bullshit as this morning?” Ascher stepped around Jax and stared down at me. Like usual, he was overly aggressive, and he flexed his tattooed muscles like he was going to force me to turn back.

I nodded my heavy head, annoyed at his attitude but grateful he had understood.

“The princess has an issue with nudity. She probably wants to change back without us here. Probably thinks she’s too good for us to look upon her.” Ascher laughed like it was absurd to even think I might be better than them.

I nodded vigorously.

Even though that wasn’t the real reason, I was desperate for them to leave the room. It was getting too hot, and I was beginning to p~t uncomfortably.

My thick fur was suffocating.

“We’ll be waiting outside the door to take you to the ward. You have one minute to transform and change or I’ll be coming in to get you,” Jax alpha-barked and stalked out the door.

Before he left, Ascher sneered down at me one more time.

Cobra just kept staring. He still had snake eyes, and it was freaking me out. How come he didn’t have to change back?

Once they were all gone, I pictured my two-legged form, and when the tingling started, I imagined shoving myself through a wall.

I transformed back. My n~d form pressed against the cold floor.

In a rush, I dug through the room until I found a pair of shorts and a sweatshirt in Ascher’s locker.

His clothes smelled like rich conifers, and I took a second to sniff them. It was wonderful, like hugging a soft tree.

I had to roll the shorts up about five times, and they still hung loose off my h~s. The black sweatshirt, which had been tight on Ascher, hung to my mid thighs.

Nervously, I looked down at my exposed legs.

My tan legs were embarrassingly skinny, and weirdly they never grew any hair. I had seen hairy male and female shifter legs, so I knew mine were not normal. At least my scars were covered.

“Time’s up. Let’s...” Jax trailed off when he saw me standing there.

All three men stared down at my exposed legs in shock.

My cheeks flamed hot. I didn’t need them to tell me my legs were embarrassing.

Their alpha scents—chestnuts, pine, and frosty snow—grew thicker in the small room. Their eyes glowed, and the rich pheromones made my mouth water.

“I’m ready,” I said quietly, breaking the spell. “Sorry, I need privacy to change. I couldn’t change back with you all—”

Jax cut me off by grabbing my face with both his massive hands.

“Are you injured?” His gray eyes glowed as he softly growled, gold jewelry tinkling.

“I’m fine. I think shifting back healed my wounds.” It was bizarre; my side no longer burned with pain, and I felt lighter and healthier than I had in a while.

Ascher manhandled Jax out of the way. For a second, his lush lips softened, and he didn’t look so angry.

Immediately, Ascher’s signature scowl returned. “It usually does for alphas. You still need to go to the ward to get checked.”

Cobra grunted, like Jax was being dramatic.

I agreed with Cobra.

“Obviously, she’s going to the ward.” Jax proceeded to drag me by my arm like a caveman.

“You’re being ridiculous.” I stumbled over my own feet as Jax pulled me through the massive gym and down the long hallways.

The training compound was a sprawling maze of hallways and rooms, and I struggled to orient myself.

My sense of direction sucked. Although, not for lack of trying.

“I can walk myself,” I repeated like a broken record. Jax just kept growling and dragging me about like a prized deer.

“I told you to stay behind me during battle,” Jax said instead of acknowledging my words.

“I was! Until Ascher was being carried away and everyone was on the ground. I had no choice. Trust me, I didn’t plan to, and I didn’t want to have to go after him. It all just sort of happened. Plus, you wanted me to transform, and I did. So, it was actually a good thing.” I rambled as I thought back to the chaos of the forest. I hadn’t had a choice.

“No, what you did was not a good thing. We said we’d protect you. You shouldn’t have done that. I had it under control,” Ascher snapped from behind me.

“Bullshit.”

“You put yourself in harm’s way,” Jax said, his grip on my arm tightening.

“No, I turned into a saber-toothed tiger and helped save everyone’s asses. You’re welcome.”

“I agree with the girl.” Cobra glided beside me like he was floating on air.

I tripped in shock. Jax’s strangling grip on my arm was the only thing that kept me upright.

“See, even Cobra agrees with me,” I said. “You both are being ridiculous.”

Jax growled at Cobra and stared him down. However, the pale alpha was unconcerned. He just smiled back at Jax with his creepy snake eyes.

“How come Cobra gets to stay a snake thing, but I had to change back?”

Instead of answering, Jax gently pushed me through a massive wood door labeled “Ward.” Inside, the long, thin room had curtains pulled around dozens of beds. A handful of doctors in white coats bustled around giving betas pills and smearing a yellow paste on wounds.

Jax dragged me down the long room until he found an open bed at the very end.

As we walked by, betas lowered their eyes and bowed their heads in respect to Jax. They also looked at me with fear and curiosity.

Females weren't alphas, but somehow, I was? It didn't make any sense. I'd always thought I was a null shifter. My small stature was different from ABOs.

Jax didn't glance at the betas. He just manhandled me into a bed and demanded a doctor look at me.

"I'm fine. You can leave me be now." I tried to shrug out of the big man's grip. Hell, I was feeling better than I had in a long time.

Even with me sitting on the elevated bed, and with him leaning forward and caging me in with his arms, he towered over me.

All the alphas healed after they transitioned back. So it was weird that Jax was treating me like a broken doll. He wasn't freaking out about any of the other alphas.

I was about to use some very colorful language to tell Jax where he could stick a doctor when my breath caught.

Jax's large hand fell away from my arms. But his calloused fingers trailed softly along my forearms as he released me.

There was a weird pinch in my stomach.

I leaned back against the wall and stopped myself from reaching back for his touch.

Jax's warmth and towering strength were comforting. Once again, I was losing my head around him.

I needed a lobotomy. Unfortunately, I wasn't rich enough to hire one of the few brain surgeons in the realm. So, I settled with the next best thing.

My head cracked as I slammed it hard against the wall. Pull it together, woman.

"Stay here until the doctor clears you." Jax leaned forward at the h~p and put his massive hands on the wall on both sides of my head.

Warmth radiated off him like a furnace, and his lush l~s were inches away from mine. His high cheekbones framed his perfect face, and up close his dark skin was silky, without imperfections.

I swallowed thickly.

For a fleeting moment, I wished I were tall and busty so I could handle all Jax's energy. The massive alpha was built like a god of war, and his close presence made my skin tingle.

Mentally, I slapped myself. Small b~~~~s could still give off big-d~~k energy. Numb Sadie knew how to do it.

I was thrown out of my musings when Jax reached his finger forward and delicately brushed my hair off my forehead.

For a long moment, we stared at each other in silence as his breath mingled with mine.

My forehead tingled where he'd touched it.

Jax leaned further forward, and I stopped breathing altogether.

His long braids fell across my lap, and I shivered when his cold gold trinkets tickled my neck.

I followed the veins that trailed down his neck, across his impossibly wide shoulders, and along his arms.

I had forgotten he was shirtless. Clearly, I must have hit my head harder than I'd realized, because it was difficult to forget.

Unlike Ascher and Cobra, he wasn't lean with sculpted abs. He was thick.

Everywhere, muscles bulged atop muscles. Hell, his pecs were probably bigger than my boobs.

Weirdly, I was into it.

The little gold barbells in his n~~~~s twinkled invitingly, and I wondered if he would growl if I touched one. Before I could move my hand, his stubble scratched slowly against the side of my jaw.

Jax's hot breath made my core spasm.

It had never done that before.

Warm chestnuts wrapped around me. I wanted to lick his neck to see if it would taste dark like chocolate-covered roasted chestnuts or sweet like the honeyed ones.

Suddenly, I had an overwhelming urge to reach forward and find out. For scientific purposes.

"I'll be waiting for you in our room," he whispered in my ear, his ridiculously deep voice making my core clench.

There wasn't enough oxygen in the realm.

The burning spread to my groin, and my stomach turned over till I was queasy.

Maybe it was good that I was seeing the doctor?

I was unwell.

"Jax, we need to debrief the oligarchy on the breach." Ascher stalked across the room to grab Jax. As he moved, every beta, man and woman, greedily drank in his colorful tattoos.

It was too bad he was a hothead and annoying.

Still, the queasiness got worse. I inspected my bitten fingernails and tried to ignore the alphas surrounding me.

I failed.

The side of my neck prickled. Beyond the edge of the curtain, Cobra smirked at me. He still had fascinating snake eyes.

A strange zing bit at my shoulder. It was the same sensation I had felt in the woods when Cobra had wiped the fae gore off my shoulder.

Jax took a step back and reluctantly walked away with Ascher. Still, he kept glancing over at me, like he was afraid I was going to disappear into thin air.

Keeping my eyes on him, I ignored the u~~e to look down at myself. The zing sensation traveled across my collarbone, down my arm.

When the three alphas left the ward, I pulled up the sleeve of my sweatshirt and gasped.

A tiny black shadow snake traveled around my tan wrist in a circle. I touched my finger over it, and a little zip of electricity sparked. Then it slithered across my wrist, winding around my fingers.

The little guy was playing.

I had never been that into snakes, but I'd always wanted a pet. And the little guy was so tiny and cute it made me smile. Somehow, I could feel the snake's happiness as it spun around my fingers.

Glad someone liked me. Apparently, I was desperate for affection.

"Wow, that was a lot." A shaggy blue head popped around the curtain next to me.

I jumped and guiltily shoved my hand into my sweatshirt. My heart beat erratically, as I was terrified that I had been caught doing something I shouldn't have.

I had a feeling Cobra didn't know I had one of his snakes, and I didn't want to have to give the little guy up.

"The alphas were growling and staring at you with such intensity that it made me overwhelmed, and I was in the sickbed next to you." The boyish-looking beta grinned at me, and I couldn't help but grin back.

He was all lanky limbs. Atop his head, he had electric-blue hair. I had never seen such a color in my life.

Physically, he was my polar opposite. Where I was golden with white hair, he was pale with aqua hair. I was built small and compact, and he was built lanky with long legs. His aqua-blue eyes were startling, like a crisp lake at the bottom of a mountain.

In contrast, I had been told my red eyes were horrifying. Like staring into the rumored hell realm.

I tried to live up to that analogy, but it was hard to be a badass all the time.

“They are a lot. Like I’m completely fine, but Jax still dragged me here like a caveman.” There was something about the beta that immediately put me at ease. I wanted to share things with him. Which was weird for me.

He whistled and came around the curtain.

Up close, he was about a head taller than me, with long skinny muscles. His frame was narrow.

He was the leanest beta I had ever seen. In general, most betas were built wide and bulky. Alphas were even larger and bulkier. Except for me.

“I’m Sadie.” I tried to cough to clear the roughness from my throat. As I held out my right hand, the shadow snake zinged around my left one. I was glad it stayed hidden.

“I’m Aran, a recently discovered beta.” He shook my hand firmly, like he was trying to impress me with his handshake.

Between him shaking my hand like I was some important person and the snake zipping around my arm with joy, I smiled and barely swallowed a giggle.

As we shook for an unnecessarily long time, I noticed that Aran’s hand was thin but rough, and covered in calluses. He might have been a new beta, but he hadn’t lived an easy life.

“I just wanted to thank you for what you did during the battle. If you hadn’t gone after it, we would have failed. Rumor has it we get punished for every fae creature we fail to apprehend,” Aran whispered conspiratorially.

“Really?” Leave it to the oligarchy to punish people after they’d just fought for them in a war. They really were pussies.

Aran perched himself on the end of my bed and whispered like he was sharing a big secret, “I’m not...big on the war.”

He was feeling as out of place as I did. All the alphas took everything so seriously. It was nice to find someone who had similar energy.

I didn't know if it was the shocking aqua mop on his head, his smaller stature, or the feminine softness of his features, but I found myself wanting to trust him.

"I'm not into it either. Something is going on with the oligarchy, and I'm not sure I believe their story about the fae," I whispered so quietly that only he could hear.

I thought back to the battle. The spider thing had definitely been violent, but it hadn't gone out of its way to kill any of us. In fact, it had acted more like it wanted to kidnap Ascher than attack us.

Aran looked up at me with an expression close to awe on his face. "I feel exactly the same way. Thank the sun god I came over to talk to you." His brilliant white teeth made him seem even younger.

"So how has the shifter realm hurt you?" I asked him.

Instead of sadness like I had expected, Aran's turquoise eyes danced with humor.

Some people were broken by bad circumstances. Others embraced their shitty lots and used it to terrorize the world. He was definitely in the latter category, and I aspired to be like that.

"Awful null parents worked me like a dog on a farm and tried to exploit me when I turned into a beta." He grimaced when he said "parents," his eyes clouding over with hate. However, he shook off the emotions and rolled his eyes dramatically. "How about you?"

"Orphaned and raised by a beta innkeeper that used me as his own personal whipping post. Also, I just found out I'm the first female alpha and can turn into a saber-toothed tiger, which you saw."

Aran's eyes rounded with horror, and silently I cursed myself. I had never told anyone about the beatings or scars. Now he would treat me like I was broken.

Surprisingly, a massive smile split his boyish face. "Oh, sweetie, you just found yourself a best friend. Fuck most shifters. Except you. You were a beast out there. And oh my sun god, your fangs are seriously sick." Sparks jumped in his turquoise eyes as he grinned at me.

A heady rush of relief coursed through me. He wasn't going to treat me like a broken doll.

Aran was going to be dangerous to be around. His smile was infectious, and I grinned back at him.

"I have a feeling we're going to overthrow the oligarchy." I winked to let him know I was only half joking.

"First, we'll have to overthrow your alphas, and I have a feeling it's going to be dirty, dirty, dirty work." He dramatically drew out the words dirty, dirty, dirty and fanned himself.

His raunchy expression made it clear what he was insinuating.

They weren't my alphas, but I didn't correct him. Like Cobra and Jax, Aran was definitely into men.

I relaxed further, and my smile widened. I didn't have to worry about him expecting something from me.

"You have no idea." I giggled like a little girl. My voice was still scratchy and broken, but it was the happiest noise I had made in a while.

The shadow snake sent a small electric zip of delight across my lower back when I thought about Cobra, and now it was slithering merrily around my back, adding to my joy.

My life was still a flaming mess.

Somehow, making a friend had made everything seem better.