

Psycho Shifters Chapter 23 - Tips

JAX

RAGE

A few seconds later...

I sprinted as fast as I could through the forest. Inhaling icy air, I exhaled pure rage and...pain.

The forest flashed around me in a blur as I ran away from Sadie and toward John.

A goddamn coward.

My chest hurt, but it wasn't from running. I had become so accustomed to physical activity it rarely registered; it was like breathing.

No, my chest hurt for what the fucker had been doing to Sadie. My chest hurt for what had already been done to her delicate flesh.

My sisters flashed before my eyes, and I wanted to retch. If anyone ever touched them that way, scarred them like that... Tears blurred my eyes, and I blinked away the frozen ice.

All the times Cobra, Ascher, and even I had taunted her or been rude to her flashed before my eyes. We were the worst type of men, lower than scum.

As the trees whizzed past me, more memories rose from my grieving heart. Every time Sadie had rolled her eyes and fought like a beast. Sun god, she had already earned the respect of every beta in the group.

She was so strong.

The image of her small, n~d body coated in blood, gold skin covered in raised white scars, would be forever branded in my brain.

She didn't have small scars or just a couple.

No, thick angry welts covered her entire torso, her back, even her arms. Her goddamn delicate, perfect little b~s were covered.

Once again, I swallowed down bile. I needed to gain control of myself.

My vision flickered, and I itched all over like my bear was trying to physically climb out of my skin. It had never acted like this.

I focused on breathing in and out and calming my racing thoughts.

The little alpha was a f~~~~g survivor, and I would ensure no one ever hurt her again. She had just gained an angry bear as her protector.

Whoever had scarred her like that, I would hunt them down. I would beat the fucker till they passed out and shit themselves.

Then I would give them to Cobra to carve up. No one could t~~~~e like he could.

I shook my head and tried to calm my thoughts. First, I needed to figure out why one of our betas had just kidnapped my little alpha. Mine.

The forest whipped around me.

Still, my heart burned in my chest when I thought about Sadie begging me to not tell the others about her scars. A woman's tears had always been my weakness. Nevertheless, John was a defector who appeared to be in line with the fae queen.

We would start by torturing every ounce of truth out of him, even if it wouldn't appease the aching pain in my heart. I growled as I thought about Sadie's scars and how she had trembled n~~~~d in the cold.

She should have been in the ward healing, not out in the f~~~~g ice, n~~~~d and bloodied.

I sighed heavily with relief, and I stopped sprinting through the woods. John was still slumped face-first on the ground where I'd left him. Usually I pulled my punches.

Flipping him over, I saw John's entire face was bloody and broken. It had already swelled significantly. An inkling of satisfaction swirled through me.

I was glad I had punched him with every ounce of my strength.

The fucker deserved it.

Thoughts of how delicate and sad the little alpha looked when I'd left her filled my mind. I needed to get back to her quickly.

Sun god knew Ascher and Cobra were probably needling her like usual.

If they only had an idea of the f~~~~g truth.

Maliciously, I stripped every piece of clothing off John. When the beta lay a~s n~~~d in the freezing temperatures, I grabbed him by his ankle and ran back to the compound.

I had seen the scratch marks and dirt that covered Sadie's n~~~d back.

The bastard would get the same treatment.

He would be dragged.

John was passed out cold from my fist, so he wasn't aware of the a~~~e, but the vindictive side of me still wanted to hurt him. I felt his pulse and could hear his soft breath.

He wasn't dead, yet. He was a beta, so he would heal and wake up from the trauma.

Instead, I made sure to sprint as fast as possible and "accidentally" swung my arm back and forth with all my strength.

John's body flopped behind me, and his head slammed into tree trunks and large rocks.

Each crack as John's limb or face slammed into a tree filled me with a kernel of satisfaction. My heart still ached something fierce, but it was a good start.

No one f~~~~g touched my little alpha and went unpunished.

After I'd been training and living with her for the past weeks, she had needled her way into my heart. Her sarcastic energy and ferociousness were a nice change from Cobra's and Ascher's violence. Also, it was hilarious watching her try to run.

The little alpha was funny, but tough as nails. I enjoyed being around her. Now I would never leave her side.

When the training compound came back into view, I didn't go to the locker room like usual.

Instead, I turned and headed to a large steel door on the far side of the massive center. It was hidden behind an alcove, and a person would only find it if they knew to look for it.

After dragging John through the door, I "accidentally" threw his body down the stairs as hard as I possibly could.

Also, I stomped down the stairs and "accidentally" stepped on his hands and limbs a couple of times.

Finally, after a long string of "accidents" that left John a bloody mess, I hooked both his arms to steel cuffs drilled into the concrete walls.

Blue electricity ran along the cuffs.

The room was a fortified interrogation room, otherwise known as a t~~~~e room. Each portal and training compound had one for prisoners and other unsavory characters in the never-ending war.

I had never had to use the room before, but now I was grateful that someone had the foresight to install one.

Plus, the steel cuffs had a fae enchantment. They forced the prisoner to speak truthfully and were impossible to open without a key or unless the prisoner died. After death, the cuffs were enchanted to open.

They'd never given us a key.

Satisfied that John couldn't hurt Sadie anymore, I hurried through the compound to try to find the little alpha. Every second away from her felt like an eternity.

Now that I knew the truth about her past, I would not be letting anyone a~~~~e her again. In any way. It was what I wanted for my sisters, and it was what I would give her.

Twice she had proven her loyalty and courage in battle. It was time for me to repay her.

I ran through the training compound and was alarmed to find that Sadie wasn't in the ward or at the dining hall. Had something happened to her while I was away? Had I failed her again?

Throwing open our bedroom door with all my might, I practically roared at Cobra and Ascher. "Where is she?" I half yelled and half growled at the two men.

Ascher and Cobra were both lying on their own beds and barely looked up when I entered.

"Princess is in the bathroom. She's taking forever." Ascher lazily tapped away at his phone.

"Pathetic girl." Cobra rolled his eyes.

Relief flooded through me that she was safe in the room.

No one had taken her.

At the same time, my hands tensed into fists, and I had to physically stop myself from walking over and burying my knuckles in both their thick skulls. How could they be so blind?

I focused on breathing and remaining the calm leader that I was known to be. I knocked on the bathroom door.

"Leave me the f~k alone, Ascher. Go f~k yourself." The little alpha had such a way with words.

Then it clicked.

I grabbed the door frame for support.

Her voice.

It was so obvious: it was broken because of the goddamn a~~~e she had suffered.

My heart b~~t in my chest, and I had to stop myself from keeling over and puking. The little alpha had screamed so loud from the beatings that she had lost her voice. She had been tortured.

I was aware that Asher and Cobra were staring at me with confusion, but I didn't care. She was all that mattered. Not their continual bullshit.

I cleared my throat and yelled through the door, "It's Jax! Are you okay?"

There was a long, awkward silence, and I imagined she was gnawing on her lower lip like she usually did when she got anxious.

Of course she is not okay. She was just kidnapped and has been f~~~~~g a~~~~d her whole life. Dumb question.

"I've literally never been better." Sadie laughed, and I heard bubbles splashing.

Even as my heart broke, I smiled uncontrollably.

I didn't realize how a~~~~d Sadie was because the little alpha didn't act like a victim. She acted like an alpha.

In the new light of her past, her droll wit and confrontational attitude seemed like a bloody miracle.

No one would fault her if she were emotional or needy. I didn't know if I could have survived what had been done to her and acted so blasé. Plus she was a tiny wisp of a thing.

"Have you eaten, and has your body temperature returned to normal? Do you need anything from me?" She might say she was fine, but she had just fought three spider fae and been kidnapped.

"I swear I'm fine. The warm bath is doing wonders." She splashed some more to get her point across.

Abruptly, I was imagining her delicate little body covered in soap. My gut pinched for a different reason, and I forced myself to think about her pain. Not how badly I wanted her. I was messed up to be thinking that when she'd just been attacked by John.

"Okay, I need to take care of something. I'll be back in a little to check on you. Do not go anywhere by yourself."

"Aye, aye, alpha."

Turned out I was really into sassy women. However, it didn't escape my notice that she hadn't said whether she had eaten anything.

"I'll be back," I hollered as I ran out of the room.

Finally, a short while later, I knocked on the bathroom door, and Sadie emerged wearing my sweatshirt and sweatpants. I had left them in the bathroom, and she must have needed a change of clothes.

My sweatshirt hung past her knees, and she had the hood pulled up over her long white hair.

Big red eyes looked up at me with a small smile. The pretty rubies glinted in the firelight.

Holy shit. My brain short-circuited.

Her alpha scent was pungent, and the delicious smell of sweet cranberries mixed with warm chestnuts wafted off her.

My stomach actually growled with hunger, and my cheeks heated slightly. I wasn't hungry for food.

"Eat this," I said as I pushed the heaping plate into her small hands.

She was so cute and little I had to physically stop myself from picking her up and bundling her close.

The feel of her frozen body pressed against mine as we'd run through the snow had awoken something in me.

She was mine to hold, to care for, to nurture. And I wanted to.

There was a burning desire in my gut to take care of her, so she never looked up at me with sightless eyes again. Her scars broke a piece of my heart.

"I'm too tired to eat," she mumbled as she rubbed her eyes and crawled into bed. Not acceptable. She needs to eat. She is too small. She is wasting away!

"You will not survive if you don't eat! Do it!" I alpha-barked, and my chest vibrated.

Shame filled me for barking at her, but fear over her safety and small stature was greater. She needed fuel.

Automatically, she picked up a bread roll and ate it at my word. I put the plate on her lap and brought a couple of pillows from my bed.

She stared up at me with raised eyebrows as I tucked the pillows behind her head so she would sleep more comfortably.

“Wow, I’m getting the special treatment.” She smirked and stuck her tongue out at Cobra, who was glaring at her from across the room.

The two of them were ridiculous.

“Eat and I’ll be back,” I said. She was small, and I would bet money that her nutrition growing up had been lacking. That would change.

Satisfied the little alpha was safe and not in immediate danger, I turned to Ascher and Cobra. Both men were looking at me with raised eyebrows, and it was clear from their expressions that they thought I had lost my mind.

“Come with me now. I need to tell you something,” I said.

They quickly followed. We walked through the compound, and for once, Ascher didn’t make any annoying comments.

They could tell something was very wrong.

When we stood outside the interrogation room, the chilly night winds shrieking around us, I turned to address them. I was confident out in the blustery snow that no one could hear us.

John was a loyal beta soldier we had never had a problem with. Odds were high that there were other traitors in the compound right now. The idea of the soldiers betraying us filled me with rage.

“While we were controlling Cobra and his beast, John dragged Sadie, n~~~d, through the snow. He was trying to take her through the portal,” I said.

“Motherfucker! We thought she was joking!” Ascher yelled and threw his hands up like he was going to punch someone.

Cobra grabbed him by the back of the neck. “Quiet the f~k down. Jax, tell us everything,” Cobra said, and Ascher quieted.

No one fucked with Cobra when he had snake eyes, and right now his eyes flickered back and forth between round and slit pupils.

“When Ascher took you back to the ward to get checked, I went out and did my usual perimeter check. On the edge of the forest, I noticed trail marks and fresh blood. With the heavy snowfall, the blood must have fallen seconds earlier to be visible. Since no one was supposed to be outside, I followed it.” I paused and closed my eyes.

For a second, I considered going back into the compound to check on Sadie. I’d almost lost her forever.

I swallowed down bile and continued with my story. “I followed the trail, and the deeper I went into the forest, the more sounds I heard. They were indiscernible but clearly distinguishable from the sounds of the forest. A few hundred feet from the portal, I found John running with a n~~~d and bloody Sadie held in his arms. He’d beaten her, and she was screaming as loud as she could. He had his hand in her hair, and he had her head yanked back at an impossible angle. She was screaming and kicking, and he was running to the portal.”

“Then what happened?” Cobra asked. His pupils were now staying slit, and they were starting to glow. Next to him, Ascher’s horns had lengthened on his head.

“I punched him and brought Sadie back to the compound. Then I went back out and brought John into the interrogation room. He’s chained there now.”

A sadistic smile spread across Cobra’s face, and Ascher popped his knuckles like he was fantasizing about beating John. I could relate.

“Here is the important part though. Sadie told me that before she transformed at the lake, she was kept as a servant. And she said John said he was bringing her to the fae queen, and he was going to be rich.”

“I’m going to k~~l him!” Ascher shouted. Once again, Cobra grabbed him by his massive neck and restrained him.

“Who kept her as a servant? Are we sure she’s not lying?” Cobra asked coldly.

I didn’t like the look in Cobra’s eyes. I could practically see his gears churning and distrust building. He was going to take it out on Sadie.

“She didn’t say, but don’t you dare f~~~~~g accuse Sadie of anything. She’s been through more than either of you know.” I got up in Cobra’s face and used my height to look down at him.

“What do you know that we don’t?” The bastard was too perceptive for his own good.

“Nothing. Let’s see if the prisoner has woken up.” I stalked down the stairs into the t~~~~~e room.

Against the wall, John was slumped out cold with his hands pinned above his head in the enchanted cuffs. His chest rose and lowered, and it was clear he was still breathing.

A beta could take massive amounts of a~~~~e. Their body might shut down, but they always woke up after a few hours unconscious.

John was barely recognizable. His n~~~~d body was a swollen mass of bruises and blood.

Ascher whistled when he saw John, and Cobra chuckled.

“I see you handled John with care. I’m impressed.” Cobra laughed, and I could tell from the genuine mirth in his voice that he was. Cobra loved violence.

“He may have accidentally hit a few trees, rocks, and stairs on his way here.”

Cobra walked over to the slumped man and reached down. He squeezed the beta’s d~~k and yanked it forward so hard I was surprised it didn’t rip off. Ascher winced at the action.

John remained passed out cold.

Cobra looked back with a smile. His slit pupils still glowed. “He’s out. We’ll try again later.”

Everyone nodded in agreement. Ascher and Cobra “accidentally” kicked John’s body as we left.

Quickly, we hurried back to the room to make sure the little alpha was okay.

After all, no matter what anyone else thought or said. No matter what we did. No matter what she thought.

She was our little alpha.