

Psycho Shifters Chapter 24

SADIE

CUTE KITTENS & HAIR DYE

“Look what I found!” Aran shook my shoulder through the blankets.

“Don’t care.” I buried myself deeper under my warm covers. No way was I leaving my warm bed on the first day I’d been allowed to sleep in.

Half the compound had been given the day off to prepare for the lanuarius party, and the other half had tomorrow off. The party was two weeks from now.

Luckily, Aran and I were both free today. Jax was off too, but he had left early to visit his sisters.

Unluckily, I was planning on sleeping in and Aran wasn’t.

After last week—fighting off the spider fae and being dragged buck n~~~d through the snow—I felt like I had been run over by an avalanche. I deserved some beauty sleep.

A kitten made a soft meowing noise.

“Look, it’s a little, fluffy white kitten!” Aran shouted.

Abruptly, I was wide awake. I threw back the covers and instantly fell in love. “Oh my goddess, it’s so cute. Where did you find it?”

The tiny creature was barely bigger than Aran’s hand and covered in white fluff.

Realistically, it was the cutest thing I had ever seen in my life.

“Can I hold him?” I asked.

“Of course.” Aran proceeded to dump the little poof on my lap. Immediately, it started to purr and curled up against my warmth.

“Aw, she likes me.” I petted her silky fur, and the little angel flipped over, showing me her tiny belly.

“I figured he would enjoy hanging out with a much bigger cat. Maybe he can sense your cat vibes?” Aran flopped down on the end of my bed and wrapped himself in my fur blanket. “It’s cold in this bed by the window. How do you sleep here?”

“I don’t mind it. Also, he definitely loves my cat energy. Maybe I’ll show him how to roar?” The little fluff ball proceeded to crawl up my sweatshirt and lick my nose.

My heart melted. With everything I had been through lately, I really needed the support.

“That would be cute. Can you believe I found him wandering the halls by himself, meowing? There are some mousers in the fortress, but his mom must have abandoned him, so I decided to take him in. I know what it feels like, little guy. Mom’s suck.”

I remembered Aran had scoffed when he’d talked about his parents.

I held the kitty up and cradled him to my chest. “Who needs parents? What are they good for anyway? Emotional support? It’s much healthier to repress emotions and ignore red flags.”

The kitty looked up at me with big purple eyes. It felt like he was sympathizing with me and offering me comfort. Clearly, I had been needing an emotional support pet for a while. Holding the kitten made me realize that.

“I’m so jealous you found him. I’m going to come to your room all the time to play with him.”

“Actually, as a beta, we aren’t technically allowed to have pets on the compound. Since Jax makes the rules, I was hoping you could convince him to let you keep it, and I would visit you.”

Joy swelled through my chest, and I cradled the kitty closer to me. “What makes you so sure Jax will let me keep him if it’s against the rules?”

“Hm, maybe because he stares at you twenty-four seven and literally growls like a wild bear whenever I touch you.” Aran rolled his eyes like I was being

dumb. “Especially after the attack. Sadie, the man stopped training the other day to give you a f~~~~g bread roll because he said you looked hungry.”

I made a childish face back at him while inside, a repressed, girly part of me squealed and flopped around.

When Jax had stopped me mid-run to give me the buttery roll, it had been like the moon goddess herself had reached down and kissed me. Seriously, I had been dying and needed the fuel.

It was the single sweetest thing anyone had ever done for me. Ascher’s annoying comments and Cobra’s scoffs couldn’t distract me from it.

Still, that was just Jax. Aran seemed to think I had some sort of power over all the alphas. If he saw the way they constantly berated me, he would lose that assumption real quick.

Some people loved each other, like Jax and Cobra, and some people hated each other, like D~~k and me.

In contrast, some people low-key did not like someone, so they spent every waking minute tormenting that person and letting them know they did not like them. That was how Ascher and Cobra felt about me.

I sighed heavily and kissed the little kitty’s tiny, perfect head. “I’ll try my best.”

“Yay.” Aran clapped his hands and jumped off my bed. “Now get your sleepy a~s out of bed. We’re hitting the town and going shopping for the party!”

Hitting the town sounded glamorous, exciting, and fast-paced.

A few minutes later, my tired a~s was on the back of a horse, shivering, as we trudged slowly through the snow.

“Giddyap!” Aran shouted at his horse and bucked his feet. The large, furry beast whinnied and started walking slower.

“I’m pretty sure we could walk faster than this!” I shouted above the freezing wind. There was a reason we stayed inside all day and trained. The shifter realm was f~~~~g cold.

“It’s all about the experience!” Aran yelled from behind me. His horse was mutinying against him and was falling behind mine. Which was impressive because my horse was barely moving.

Thankfully, it really did take no skill to ride a Yukata horse to the nearest town. The massive furry horses from the stables were extremely well trained and knew the path by heart. I just sat and shivered as it led the way.

Slowly.

An hour later, we arrived at the nearest small town. It was built on top of a huge glacier that jutted out over a dark lake. Houses were piled atop each other, and they were lit with lanterns.

In the middle of the houses, there was a little street of shops. On one side of the street, there was a café, a tavern, and a restaurant that specialized in elk meat. On the other side, there was a tailor, a boot store, a hairdresser, and a trinket shop.

Aran grabbed my arm and dragged me into the tailor’s shop.

The beta’s blue hair was frozen to his head, and his legs were a similar shade of blue, but he bounced up and down like he was having the time of his life.

A warm wall of heat hit us as soon as we walked through the door. Instantly, I began to thaw.

“Hot cocoa for you warriors. Thank you for your service at portal three. My name is Loria. How can I help you?” a middle-aged woman said as soon as we entered.

She was a null shifter, and she made a show of adding fresh chocolate shavings to the drinks before she handed them to us.

Loria made a mean hot cocoa. It was the best thing I had ever drunk.

Immediately, the decadent chocolate and soft shop music made me relax.

It was nice to be treated.

Still, I found it bizarre when a shifter was nice. The realm was harsh and unforgiving, and its inhabitants were usually the same way. It was impossible to stay soft when the world was so cold.

“We need two outfits for the lanuarius celebration. Sadie needs something s~y and daring, since she is the first female alpha,” Aran told Loria while he whisked around the room, pulling fabrics like he was a pro.

Technically, I needed something warm that showed off zero skin. But I let Aran live in pretend land for a little bit.

For a farm boy, he was really into colors and textures. I was really into books and Lucinda was really into cards. I guess fashion was Aran’s thing.

Thinking about my little sister made my heart hurt, but I reminded myself she was safe and sound at school.

Sipping my cocoa, I sank into a plush velvet chair and watched Aran have fun.

My eyes started to close as I sipped, and I wondered if my hobby was sleeping. Sometimes, I just wanted to curl up and sleep for days.

“Sadie wants her cleavage exposed,” Aran said, and I choked on my delicious cocoa. It startled me out of my restful state.

“No, please. I must have my entire torso covered. That’s nonnegotiable.”

There was a long pause as both Loria and Aran stared at me like I was crazy.

“Oh, I get what you are doing,” Loria said.

“Um?” Did she know about my scars? Could she see it in my eyes because I looked like a victim?

“You want a completely tight dress but will have it cover everything so you don’t seem too s~y. Smart girl. It is important to not seem too needy around those alpha warriors.”

The hot cocoa went down the other pipe, and I choked so hard my eyes watered.

As an alpha myself, I did not worry about seeming needy around Jax, Ascher, or Cobra. If anything, the men were all into wanton sexuality.

I was zero percent concerned about impressing them.

At least, I wasn't that concerned about impressing them sexually because that already seemed to not be happening.

I did want them to respect me as an alpha. Although, as soon as they'd seen me run, that ship had sailed.

Ascher spent every waking minute making fun of my fitness, and Cobra made constant snide comments about me being pathetic.

Still, images of Jax taking Cobra, and the twins climbing all over Ascher, popped into my mind.

I snorted with laughter at the thought of them preferring a classier woman.

"Sure, we'll go with that."

Sadly, my comfort in the plush seat didn't last long. A few minutes later, a small army of servants physically lifted me out of my chair and brought me into a side room.

On one wall, a large hearth blazed. Fabrics were draped over mannequins and every available surface.

Before I could process what was happening, the ladies had taken off my sweatshirt and pulled down my sweatpants.

I stood a~s n~~~d.

There was a loud gasp.

Everyone in the room stopped moving.

Sighing heavily, I pushed my palms into my eyes and prayed the moon goddess would deliver me from this awkward moment.

I had gone from zero people seeing me n~~~d to a bunch in less than one day. It was a little overwhelming.

"Mistress?" one of the servant girls whispered in horror, and I took my hands away from my face.

With a small shrug, I forced a smile across my lips and tried to give off “I’m fine” vibes. From the female stares of horror, it was clear my tactic was not working.

“It’s not a big deal. Please don’t worry about it. Let’s just cover them up,” I said.

Loria had tears in her eyes, and she gripped my hands in hers. “Oh, sweetie, we will make something for you. At the party, you will shine, I promise you.”

A tear streaked down her cheek, and my eyes watered in response to her kindness. The numb would probably tell me to stab her and collect her tears as trophies.

I giggled at the thought of my psychotic alter ego. Unaware, all the women instantly relaxed and began measuring me.

The awkwardness dissipated as the women wrapped string around my limbs, showed me different fabrics, and rushed around in a blur of productivity.

Unfortunately, the moment of tenderness from earlier passed, and as the fitting progressed, they proceeded to comment on how unnaturally skinny my waist was.

At one point, Loria actually prodded my hips and made a choking noise like she was throwing up. “Not birthing hips.” She jotted down notes on her clipboard.

I was super confused about how that was relevant to anything?

When they got to my arms, Loria had the audacity to laugh at me. All the servants tittered as she measured my bicep, then held up the measurements for the room to see.

“Warrior you are not.”

My one eye twitched with annoyance. I was half-tempted to transform into a saber-toothed tiger and roar in Loria’s face.

Like a smart warrior, I did what I could in the situation.

I stood numb and did nothing.

You didn't mess with middle-aged women holding pins and measuring tapes. The danger was palpable.

Finally, after what felt like forever, I stumbled out of the fitting room. My self-esteem was at an all-time low, and I had been stabbed by pins about five times.

Loria had yelled at me to stop moving, and I wasn't convinced the last stabbing had been an accident.

As a result, I kept the servants at arm's length and nodded suspiciously when they said my dress would be delivered in a few days. I didn't trust them.

In contrast, Aran was lying on a chaise in the shop, his feet up as a servant massaged them. He had a receipt in his hand and had already ordered his clothes. Glad he was enjoying the experience.

I stood over him and punched him in the gut to wake him up. He was at fault for this painful shopping adventure.

"Perfect timing, Sadie. We have a hair appointment now!" Aran's bright-blue eyes blinked open, and he shoved me out the door before I could protest.

It was my day off, so I didn't feel like fighting him. It was just easier to acquiesce to his demands. Plus, he had a massive grin on his face. I hadn't seen Aran this happy the entire time I'd known him.

The beta was unwell.

Before I could mutiny and ride my horse back to the compound, I sat in a hair salon.

"What color sums up your personality?" the hair stylist asked as he spun me around in a fancy leather chair.

"Um?" I didn't know what to say. I just gaped at him.

The stylist was a tall, burly man with bright-orange hair. He also had a massive face tattoo of a middle finger and "f~k off" in big letters across his forehead.

My brain short-circuited, and my mouth flapped open as I stared up at his tattoo. The middle finger was perfectly placed between both bushy eyebrows and took up most of his forehead. The fist covered his cheeks and mouth.

“What color!” he barked at me, and I jumped up in the salon chair.

This was not what I had imagined a hair salon would be like. Suddenly, I was grateful I had chosen to cut my hair myself once a year with scissors.

“Probably black,” Aran said from the far corner, where a normal-looking woman was delicately snipping his electric-blue hair.

How come he got the normal stylist while I was getting assaulted?

“I can’t do black on white hair. That’s so boring!” the stylist yelled and breathed heavily like he was trying to calm himself down. He seemed to be one second away from an aneurysm.

Thankfully, he mumbled words under his breath and began to work without me saying anything. I closed my eyes and prayed he didn’t choose an ugly color like pink or purple.

Aran wasn’t wrong. My favorite color was black. Or gold. Still, I was too afraid of my stylist. I wasn’t saying shit.

At the thought of gold, my mind flashed to a certain alpha covered in golden piercings. I didn’t like being separated from him. It was worrisome that I had gotten so used to being around the alphas constantly.

I needed to remember I was on my own. As a female alpha, the shifter realm was a lonely place to be. Always had been, always would be.

Sadly, it was dark by the time I finally left the salon.

Once again, Aran hurried me outside. Apparently, there was a masseuse visiting the training compound for two days and he had booked us appointments.

Since I had been struggling to survive training and the fae last week, I was genuinely confused when he’d had time to plan all this. Hadn’t he also been training?

When we got back to the compound, I barely had the energy to drag my tired body behind Aran.

Today I'd learned I would much rather physically attack people and get attacked during training than have to get poked and prodded by stylists. Honestly, it was almost as painful as running.

As we headed toward the masseuse, I shuddered thinking about how the tailors had laughed as they'd prodded my n~~~d body.

Those null women were ruthless and way scarier than beta soldiers. Someone should recruit them and my hairstylist for the war. His aura, and his face, literally screamed "f~~k off."

Finally, Aran led me to a room at the top of the compound. The masseuse was a big, burly beta named Mika. He had pretty blonde hair and dark eyes.

For some reason, every time he smiled at me, I blushed like a ninny. It had been a long day.

A few glorious minutes later, I found myself face-first on a soft bench, getting massaged. Thankfully, Mika said it was fine to leave my clothes on.

Still, the experience was divine. When Mika massaged my aching feet and hands, I swore I saw the moon goddess.

The room had soft music and a delicious lavender scent that put me to sleep.

When Mika said he was done, I lifted my head to find a large pile of drool on the pillow.

As I climbed off the table, the handsome blonde-haired beta handed me a business card. "If you ever have any massage needs, please call to schedule an appointment."

"Will do." A phone might just be useful after all.

I turned to walk out the door, but a hand on my arm stopped me. Lethargy coursed through me, so I didn't bother to pull away or knee him in the balls.

Turned out inner peace was the best deterrent of violence. Maybe that was why I was homicidal all the time?

“I really like the red streaks. They match your pretty eyes.”

Instead of shaking my hand like every man in the damn realm, Mika did something completely shocking.

He leaned down and kissed my cheek.

Like a mature, competent alpha female, I turned and ran out the door.

I didn't say anything, just hightailed my a~s out of the room and away from the handsome beta.

I fingered the spot on my cheek where he'd kissed me as I sprinted down the hall.

My first k~~s.

On a high of happiness, I tumbled into the alpha room.

“What the f~~k did you do with your hair?” Ascher launched off his bed angrily.

“It's a little much.” Cobra made a disgusted face as he looked up at me, but he didn't pause doing push-ups. He clapped behind his back after each rep.

“You cannot wear it like that!” Ascher yelled in my face, and I kneed him in the balls.

He fell to the ground with a crash, and I quickly jumped under my covers. The alpha was all bluster; he never retaliated.

My little, fluffy white kitty was still lying on my pillow where I had left him. Cuddling him to my chest, I turned my back to the room. Snow fell heavily outside my dark window.

Cobra grunted as he worked out, and Ascher muttered expletives under his breath.

I fantasized about maiming them both. Slowly. With one of Ascher's horns.

My inner peace was gone.