

Psycho Shifters Chapter 3

SADIE

MISTAKES AND ALPHA HOLES

I groaned as my arm throbbed. My face itched something fierce from dried blood, and I remembered getting my nose smashed in the bar fight.

As I took stock of my aching body, I blinked open my crusty eyes and wished I hadn't.

Three godlike men towered over me and blocked out the sky.

Instantly, my hackles rose, and I tried to flip the switch that activated the numb.

Nothing happened.

Sadly, it must have only been a day since I'd used it, because the numb needed at least a day and a half to recharge. Sometimes it took even longer.

"Wake up, Princess," one of the gods said, and my blurry vision focused on him.

First thing I noticed: he was massive and covered in tattoos.

Second thing I noticed: he was ridiculously handsome.

Every inch of his arms, legs, chest, and neck was covered in colorful flame and rose designs.

I had never seen a man so heavily tattooed in all my life.

The designs were impressive and added intensity to his massive stature and bulging muscles.

Still, his tattoos weren't the most shocking part.

Massive onyx horns jutted out from a bed of shaggy gold hair. They were large and thick, and curled atop his head.

The tattooed, horned god leaned over and shook my arm.

Up close, his features were arresting: severe cheekbones, a sharp jawline, and slashing amber eyes that glared at me.

Yep, the horned man was terrifying.

My gut screamed at me to punch him in the throat and run for my life because no man should be so large, handsome, and cool-looking.

I scrambled backward as the horned god stared down at me with a quirked eyebrow.

The fog cleared from my brain, and I realized I was crawling backward over a snowbank, shivering, and cold as f~k.

My only protection was my heavy cloak.

The good thing was, D~k wasn't standing above me with a belt, and the wounds on my back didn't burn anymore.

I flexed my shoulder blades and sighed with relief when my back didn't scream in agony. The wounds were mostly healed.

The bad thing was a different god, the likes of which I had never seen, was standing above me. I hadn't even known men could have horns.

Had I finally lost my mind?

Was I fully hallucinating?

"Where the f~k am I?" My broken voice was loud and rough, and my dry throat made me cough.

I crossed my fingers behind my back and prayed he wouldn't say the afterworld, because I was not psychologically prepared to be dead.

Sure, my life sucked, but you know what also sucked? Dying when you were still a v~n. That was just embarrassing.

"Don't play games with us," the tattooed god said with a deep, raspy voice, and my gut pinched a little at the sound.

He took a step back as I hauled my scrawny a~s up and stumbled away from him.

He hadn't confirmed I wasn't dead, and I was not about to let myself be attacked by a dark god of the afterlife.

As I slipped to my feet, I looked around.

Suddenly, I wished I were f~~~~g dead.

Who cared if I was a v~~~~n? Abstinence was cool.

In front of me, a towering gray fortress jutted out into the sky. The forest surrounded it on all sides, and there was a high brick wall around the perimeter.

Guards stood atop the wall, holding massive machine guns.

The big black guns glowed light blue with enchantment, and all of them were pointed directly at me.

Part of me was flattered that they thought they needed that much firepower to take me down.

A larger part of me wanted to pee my p~~~s and start crying like a baby. Because someone had dumped my skinny a~s on the front lawn of a fortress.

There were only a few fortresses in the entire shifter realm, and everyone knew they were located near the portals that led to the fae realm.

They were hidden in remote, mountainous valleys, and their locations were top secret.

Portals were the battlegrounds, where alphas and betas fought against fae monsters and stopped them from intruding into our realm.

The fortresses housed the soldiers as they trained and fought.

I was on the lawn of a war compound, on the front line of a war between monsters.

In theory, this was a good thing. If I was near a portal, I could escape from this shitty place.

In reality, this was a nightmare.

Lucinda was still away at school, and now I had no idea how to get to her. I couldn't escape through a portal without my little sister.

Then my sluggish brain chose that exact moment to remember the events at the lake.

Like a strong, independent woman, I keeled over and vomited into the snow. There wasn't much in my stomach, and I couldn't remember the last time I'd eaten.

I gagged dramatically and choked on my spit, hacking with my back arched in front of the three gods.

It wasn't my cutest moment.

"Disgusting, pathetic creature," someone sneered mockingly beside the tattooed man.

I made the mistake of looking over at the second man's face.

Holy shit.

He was gorgeous.

He looked like an ancient statue of a marble hero, and his skin was so pale that his light-turquoise veins sparkled.

An inky swath of hair fell around his eyes—a deep emerald that was darker and more vibrant than the coniferous trees in the forest behind him.

The horned god's features were so harsh they were intimidating, but this pale god was classically handsome.

He was like a statue of the sun god, like a painting of an angel from the rumored god realm, like an annoying bastard who thought he was hot shit.

He had a strong jawline, icy cheekbones, a straight nose, and a wickedly sinful mouth that sneered down at me.

The holy f~~k on top of the cake was hundreds of emeralds and diamonds melded into his skin in a fantastical glitter.

The little jewels decorated his cheekbones and crawled down the side of his neck.

“Obsessed much?” His perfect upper lip rolled up in disgust.

Yep, all men sucked.

“I’m just confused about why your skin is covered in rocks. It’s weird.” I flipped my hair over my shoulder as I acted like his jewels weren’t the prettiest thing I had ever seen.

Unfortunately, my white hair was a frozen rat’s nest, so it ruined the effect.

My stomach pinched, and I thought back to the little rats at the tavern.

I hoped they would be okay without me. They were going to miss their momma.

Yes, I had proclaimed myself the mother of rats.

It was a rare, powerful role that only the strongest women could hold. Or the ones that had access to cheese.

Either way, they were my babies, and I missed them.

I stopped worrying about my rats, because the horned man took a step toward me.

I took two steps back.

He and the pale man were made of muscles and tall as shit.

Both were more than a foot taller than me and three times as wide.

I was about five and a half feet tall and built scrawny. In contrast, they were built like they ate fifteen meals a day and lifted rocks for fun.

It was kind of embarrassing for them. They looked like they tried way too hard and had exercise addictions.

Not cute.

Still, I wasn’t fighting them.

The most exercise I usually got was lifting beer glasses for patrons and fighting against D~~k.

Just last week, I had dropped a tray of beer glasses because my bicep had cramped mid-carry.

Physical prowess was not one of my strengths.

I eyed the machine guns and the men in front of me. My best chance was against the guns.

All I had to do was sprint toward the brick wall, scale it, fight off the guards, jump down the other side, and run to the tree line.

I sighed heavily and wondered who I had pissed off in my past life, because this one was not going well.

“Relax, Ascher, no need to frighten her.” A third man stepped forward from the shadowed wall.

Apparently, the horned man was named Ascher.

Also, apparently, this new man had eaten his twin in the womb. There was no other possible way someone could be so massive.

I stepped back and almost peed myself with fright when he came fully into the light.

I was 100 percent screwed.

The third beast managed to make the other two men look average.

A fantastical feat, because until now, they had been the strongest and tallest men I had ever seen. Much bigger than even D~~k.

My mind short-circuited, and I took another step back.

The man had dark skin. Long braids hung to his biceps, and hundreds of chains and gold trinkets dangled from them.

The chains twinkled in the icy wind and blew around his w~~t.

He also had bars of gold through his ears, and a gold nose ring decorated his wide nose.

As far as I knew, shifters didn't wear piercings, because the extreme temperatures would weld them to our skin.

This absolute mammoth of a man looked fine.

I was kind of jealous; the piercings were pretty.

High cheekbones, plush lips, and stunning gray eyes completed the handsome picture.

His features weren't as harsh as the other men's, and it should have softened him.

It didn't.

I had never seen someone so large. It seemed impossible that someone could be so large.

Mountains of muscles piled atop his frame and stretched his fitted long-sleeved shirt to obscenity.

He looked like a drawing of a comic-book hero, with bulging muscles that were too large to be real.

Yet he towered in front of me. Alive and in the flesh.

My neck hurt as I tried to look up at him.

I estimated he was close to five hundred pounds and at least a foot and a half taller than me.

One punch would kill me.

"My name is Jax. What are you doing at portal three?" He took a slow step toward me with his palms out, like I was a wounded animal that would startle.

"I don't know."

“Liar. No one knows this location.” Ascher glared down at me, his amber eyes burning with fire as his chest heaved. Tattoos of flames leaped across the side of his neck and traveled up his high cheekbones.

“Perhaps a spy.” The pale man whose skin glittered with diamonds and emeralds sauntered in a circle. He caged me in.

All my instincts screamed at me to run away. His voice was frosty cold, and his rich green eyes were dead—completely soulless.

I could tell he was cruel.

“Stand down, Cobra.” Jax held out his hand and stopped Cobra from circling around me like a predator trapping his prey.

Cobra was such a fitting name for the gorgeous pale man, and he moved so gracefully he almost slithered across the snow. Nothing crunched beneath his feet.

“You have no idea why you are here? That seems doubtful. We found you slumped on our front lawn. Somehow you got through the gate. Explain yourself.” Jax didn’t sneer or do anything intimidating. He just crossed his boulder arms casually and flexed them.

I stared at his arm; it was two times the size of my t~h.

“Last I remember, I was getting tested at the sacred lake,” I said quietly, my permanently broken voice a rough rasp.

“Are you a new beta? Our forces are low, so that would be good. Although, you are unimpressively small. No offense,” Jax said with a grimace as the jewels in his hair tinkled.

His large frame blocked out the red sun, and I tried to inconspicuously shift away from the three men.

“Um, not a beta.” My heart jack hammered in my chest, and my vision spun.

“Alphas, please, there is a message from the oligarchy. Alphas, it is urgent!” A tall, skinny boy sprinted out of the front door of the fortress and ran across the lawn like his a~s was on fire.

I took another step back, hopeful I could disappear over the brick wall while they weren't paying attention.

Alphas.

It made sense.

All the rumors said they were formidable and psychotic, unlike any beta or null shifter.

A force to themselves.

These men were forces all right, a frigid snowstorm that froze everything in its wake.

I inched slowly into the shadows as Jax stepped forward to talk to the frantic boy.

Jax seemed to be their leader, and it made sense. He was a literal mountain. Plus, his eyes didn't gleam with crazy like the other two. He seemed more rational.

"Tsk, tsk. Do you think the little spy is running away? Do you think the fae queen sent her?" Cobra asked Ascher as his warm hand wrapped around my neck and gently squeezed.

Little jewels were embedded in the fingers, and my skin burned where they pressed into my neck.

Cobra's skin was warm, but his diamonds were cold.

I didn't let men touch me. Ever.

"Release me." I slammed my heel down as hard as I could atop the bridge of his foot and shoved my elbow back into his solar plexus.

Instead of releasing me, or even grunting in pain, Cobra laughed. A silky chuckle.

The hand around my neck tightened, and I saw stars behind my eyes. My elbow burned with pain where it had collided with his abs.

“What is it, Zed?” Jax asked the boy, who was keeled over and panting like he had been sprinting as fast as he could.

“The oligarchy just sent urgent word. The girl is an alpha. She is the next alpha. They have confirmed it. Don’t hurt her!” The boy, Zed, pointed at me and looked terrified, like he expected Cobra to snap my neck.

I wouldn’t put it past him.

“My name is Sadie, not girl.” I crossed my arms in front of my chest and tried to look intimidating, which was hard with a hand still wrapped around my neck.

“Bullshit.” Cobra released my neck and shoved me away like I burned.

It took me a moment to realize he wasn’t talking about my name, but that Zed had said I was an alpha.

“There is no f~~~~g way this princess is an alpha. There are no female alphas. They made a mistake.” Ascher stomped his foot with frustration and ran a hand along one of his horns.

From the fire in his amber eyes, it was clear he was a hothead.

I was used to his type: big babies who took their anger out on everyone else.

“Are you sure?” Jax tilted his head to the side and inspected me, like he was searching for some sign that I was a psychotic alpha that could shift into a beast.

“Yes, the oligarchy has confirmed it!” Zed said, gesturing at me like I was a busted fork he was trying to sell. It was hard to watch.

Jax nodded like he had come to a conclusion. “We need all the help we can get. Fine, we’ll bring her in and test her mettle.”

“No f~~~~g way,” Ascher said.

At the same time, Cobra laughed. “We’re gonna k~l her.”

All three alphas stomped toward the fortress, not bothering to make sure I followed.

They didn’t view me as a threat.

Zed came up to me. His big brown eyes were sincere, and when he smiled at me, he seemed genuinely kind. A rare trait in the shifter realm.

He said, "Sorry about that. We're honored to have another alpha at portal three, since it has been many years since another was found. I'm a null shifter. It's a big deal that you're an alpha. Congrats."

"I think the sacred lake made a mistake," I said and rubbed the back of my neck as we followed the alphas.

I didn't feel like celebrating.

An alpha wouldn't be covered in scars; they would be strong enough to protect themselves.

"The lake never makes mistakes. I feel good about having you here." Zed patted my back, and I tried not to wince when he hit one of the still-healing belt wounds.

I shifted away from his touch, and he quickly dropped his hand.

The boy was terrible at reading situations.

Still, while I did not appreciate another male touching me, I enjoyed his misplaced support. It was better than the hatred and indifference of the alphas.

As we entered the building, one thing was obvious: the fortress was overwhelmingly large. It must have had hundreds of rooms and hallways.

"So what creature are you, Princess?" Ascher asked with a sneer as he raked his hand over his onyx horns, and I followed them into a massive gymnasium.

We walked into the largest room I had ever seen.

Blue-and-pink mats covered the floor, and there was a track along the perimeter.

Across the gym, about thirty male and female soldiers stood and stretched.

"What?" I asked in confusion. I had been distracted by the size of the room and the group of beefy-looking soldiers inside it.

All three alphas stared at me expectantly.

“What beast do you turn into? What is your alpha form?” Jax said calmly.

“She’s probably a kitten.” Cobra laughed and elbowed Jax. It wasn’t a pleasant sound.

Zed had left as soon as we entered the gym, and I found myself wishing he was still standing beside me. His presence was somewhat comforting, the opposite of the energy the alphas were giving off.

“I don’t know,” I said truthfully.

My body wasn’t massive like the three alphas.

I was built scrawny, with barely any muscles.

I didn’t have jewels in my skin like Cobra, horns like Ascher, or strength like Jax.

Unlike alphas, omegas weren’t known for their physical prowess, and they transformed into small, nonthreatening beasts.

It would be less shocking if I were an omega and turned into a small animal, like a fluffy raccoon, or a rat.

Alphas were big beasts, and I was a little b~~~h—physically, not emotionally. Obviously.

“Well, lucky for her, violence helps reveal an alpha’s second form.” Cobra cracked his neck as he grinned at Ascher, and the sound echoed in the large room. The horned alpha grinned back.

I didn’t feel lucky.

I also didn’t understand why Cobra kept talking about me but didn’t address me directly.

It was weird.

Jax ran his hand over his face in frustration. “We usually don’t allow our alpha forms in the gym because they can be...intimidating. We’ll make an exception today and see if yours is revealed.”

My stomach dropped to my toes. “I think there’s been a mistake. I’m just gonna go.”

I turned and ran into Ascher.

He moved quickly, and his large, horned head blocked the door, his harsh features scowling down at me.

Up close, his alpha pheromones wafted, and my mouth watered at the amazing scent.

Ascher smelled like pine trees, a rich, musky scent that made my toes curl.

He leaned forward, and his nostrils flared wide, like he was breathing me in.

His amber eyes burned with rage. “You don’t get to run away. You f~~~~g wanted this. Now you get it.”

His delicious scent didn’t match his annoying personality.

“I didn’t ask for anything,” I said with disgust.

Jax sighed heavily. “You’re going to want to stretch.”

Cobra smiled at me, and it looked downright evil on his gorgeous face.

Ascher shoved me forward, and I stumbled to the ground.

On my hands and knees, I realized the mats weren’t actually blue and pink.

They were all blue—some were just dyed pink.

From blood.

The lever in my brain tipped.

The numb had recharged.

It clicked on.