

Psycho Shifters Chapter 8

SADIE

SLEEPOVER BESTIES

I slept like a baby. I should have been wary of sleeping in a room with three strangers. I should have been a wreck because I'd stabbed a man and watched him die.

Weirdly, for the first time in a long time, I didn't suffer a single nightmare.

Instead of breaking into a million pieces like I wanted to, I shoved my trauma back into the deep recess of my brain, where I kept all of D~k's bullshit.

It was the only way I had survived for so many years. I compartmentalized and moved forward, one step at a time.

The soft tinkling of an alarm clock woke me up, and I stretched my hands above my head. My large sweatshirt and fur blankets engulfed my small frame with heat, and I marveled at the sensation.

It was strange to wake up feeling warm and cozy. I had gotten accustomed to waking up frozen.

Sunlight filtered through the blinds beside me and illuminated the cozy room. It was much larger than my old room.

Nevertheless, the exposed beams, low ceiling, and large fireplace against the far wall made it much cozier.

There were two beds on the left wall and another bed across from it. My bed was at the end of the room, in a small alcove opposite the wall with the stone fireplace.

Ascher had sneered at me that I got the smallest bed in the room.

Still, I liked how the bed fit perfectly in the small space and had a window. The ground was three stories below, and I could jump out if I needed to. Cozy and functional.

“Sleep well, Princess?” Ascher’s deep voice was scratchy in the morning, and I shivered at the sound. I rolled my eyes at his absurd nickname.

He lounged in the lone bed against the right wall.

“Like a log,” I said. He was going to have to work harder to upset me.

The clock on the mantel above the fireplace read six in the morning.

Suddenly, the door next to the fireplace swung open, and Jax entered the room, fully dressed, looking like he had been up for hours.

“We wear green for training, and we have a private bathroom through this door. All your clothes are in the dresser next to your bed. You will train until you reveal your shifted form,” Jax said.

“Okay.” I looked away uncomfortably as Jax stared at me with his warm gray eyes.

It felt intimate having him look at me while I was in bed, even though I was completely covered in a massive sweatshirt and sweatpants.

Inexplicably, I fought the urge to pat down my hair, which was definitely sticking out in all directions.

My fingers dug into my palms, and I stopped myself from acting like a ninny.

“Are you okay after yesterday?” Jax asked softly, as he looked at me with concern.

“I’m fine. Let’s not talk about it.” I put force behind my words and tried to smile like I had a semblance of mental health left, like I wasn’t hanging on by a thread.

“Don’t clutter the bathroom, girl.” Cobra’s silky voice wasn’t scratchy like Ascher’s, but it was rougher than usual.

Goosebumps erupted.

However, the meaning of his words penetrated through my sleepy brain and anger flamed hot in my chest. Clearly, Cobra wasn’t worried about my well-being.

I didn't even own anything to clutter the bathroom with.

My anger turned into a different type of warmth as Cobra sauntered shirtless across the room toward Jax.

The pale muscles on his wide back flexed and bunched with every sway of his hips. A trail of emerald diamonds snaked delicately down his spine. It was breathtaking.

When he reached forward and grabbed Jax's face roughly with his hands, I should have looked away.

I stared.

Cobra slammed his mouth against Jax's, and he aggressively kissed him.

Jax stood still for a moment, but then the much larger man fisted his hand in Cobra's short, silky dark locks.

It was like watching two masculine gods collide in a show of might.

"Oh my sun god, relax, we get it. You have hot sex." Ascher threw his pillow at Cobra's back.

Jax chuckled and released Cobra's face. Neither said anything to Ascher, but Cobra turned around and gave me a smirk.

I rolled my eyes at him and made a childish face back. I didn't know why he was so concerned with staking his claim on Jax, because I was well aware the big man was out of my league.

Plus, I was never going to enter into a relationship; zero sexual experience ensured that. If I were in a league, it would be called "scrawny chicks with homicidal voices and general unwellness."

Ascher crawled out of bed. "We have fifteen minutes to get ready. You might want to hurry."

Once again, I was loving Ascher's insinuations that I was some type of pampered princess.

Since my broken nose was still pounding on my face and I was covered in hideous bruises, I was really wondering how he had made these assumptions.

I opened my mouth to tell him to go f~~k himself, but I quickly closed it.

Drool almost fell out.

Ascher stood shirtless in front of his bed, all six and a half feet of sculpted muscles on display.

His entire torso, arms, and neck were covered in intricate tattoos. Yet it wasn't the gorgeous tattoos that had me praying to the moon goddess.

An eight-pack of tattooed abs literally rippled as he stretched his arms above his head.

Suddenly, I felt light-headed.

Deep grooves on his lower h~p formed a V that went low into his gray sweatpants.

His golden hair was tousled after sleeping, and his onyx horns made him look like a fantastical creature from the fae realm.

I couldn't help but look at the bulge in his sweatpants. Was the beta gossip true?

"I'm not interested," Ascher sneered at me with his lush mouth, amber eyes rolling in disgust.

It took me an embarrassingly long moment to realize what he was talking about.

Face flaming, I quickly turned around and busied myself getting ready for the day.

"Trust me, I'm not either." I gathered my clothes. My rough voice was harsh and broken compared to his s~~y drawl, and the pit in my stomach grew larger.

"Sure, that's why you were eye-f~~~~g me."

I refused to turn around and look at him.

His body was all hard edges and bulging muscles, so different from my much smaller form. His flame and rose tattoos were a colorful work of art.

I should have ignored it, but his blatant rejection made my heart twist and my stomach curl in on itself.

Ascher wasn't the first man to tell me I was repulsive, and he wouldn't be the last.

I took my clothes to the bathroom but was stopped when the door wouldn't open. "F~~~~g hell." I yanked at the handle with desperation.

I needed to get away from Ascher.

"Cobra and Jax are bathing. Change out here."

I refused to turn around and look at the bastard. "I need privacy to change." Weird grunts and groans and splashing water sounded within the bathroom, and I quickly backed away from the door.

"Of course, the princess thinks she's just too attractive to change in front of the other alphas. You probably think you're special, claiming to be the first woman alpha."

As I breathed shallowly, the tightness in my chest grew and spots danced in front of my eyes.

No way was I showing off my hideous scars to the arrogant alpha that already found me repulsive.

"I need privacy!" I shouted mid-gasp and stared at the floor.

"Relax, Princess. Just go next door. There are empty rooms. We have this entire wing to ourselves."

I barely caught the tail end of Ascher's words because I sprinted out the door, into a neighboring room. It was an open room with a fireplace, but it didn't have any furniture.

Gasping for air, I slammed the door shut and fell to the ground.

I'd once told Lucinda to lie on the floor when she was having a panic attack because it helped center the body. Now I fell like a starfish onto the hard ground and felt zero comfort.

Instead, it just reminded me of yesterday when the beta had pinned me against the floor. I quickly scrambled to my feet.

Bumping around the room, I got dressed in a frantic rush.

Ten minutes later, I calmly walked into the alpha quarters with a fake smile plastered on my face.

The bathroom was open, and I slipped inside.

I went to brush my teeth with my fingers, but was surprised to find a toothbrush, hairbrush, and hair ties in a pile with a piece of paper that had my name on it. I had never had such luxuries before.

I guessed Zed had done it.

Staring at my reflection in the floor-length mirror, I took a deep breath and cracked my broken nose back into place.

My eyes watered and pain paralyzed my brain as blood gushed onto the floor.

A moment later, I stepped out of the bathroom with a silky wave of straight white hair hanging down my back.

I never knew my hair could be so smooth and soft.

My nose was now straight on my face, but the circles under both eyes had become a hideous deep purple. According to Jax, it would take a day for the bruising to heal. I hoped he was right.

Still, my teeth were freshly brushed, and I had washed my face with sweet-smelling soap. I felt like a million bucks.

All three of the alphas stood in front of the door, waiting.

“Your hair looks nice.” Jax stared down at me. His warm chestnut scent was tinged with that of cold frost, and Cobra stood behind him, looking smug.

I grunted nondescriptly. Ascher’s words still rang in my head, and I was horrified by how much power they had over me.

These alphas were nothing to me, and I didn’t care about their opinions. I needed to keep it that way.

“We’re going to be late for breakfast because you took too long.” Ascher stomped out of the room.

The alphas followed, and I walked with them but kept a foot between them and myself. Clearly, I wasn’t actually one of them and I would never be.

It was best if I remembered that.

At breakfast, Ascher loudly complained about the betas, the weather, and his pancakes. Jax made a couple of passing comments, and Cobra said nothing.

I gorged myself on sausage and waffles. Honestly, it was one of the best breakfasts I had ever had, and my spirits immediately improved.

Turned out it was impossible to have a pity party while eating warm syrup on a waffle. That shit slapped. I tucked a few waffles in my p~~~s for later.

Jax raised his eyebrow at my bulging sweatpants but didn’t say anything.

He was definitely my favorite.

After breakfast, the morning training session started. This time, we were in the gym with all the betas. Weirdly, no one mentioned the bearded man that had attacked me. Everyone just acted like he’d never existed.

We stretched and jogged to warm up, and then Jax led everyone through a punching and kicking sequence.

I got some side-eyes, but for the most part, everyone ignored me. Betas were good soldiers who didn’t question their alphas’ commands.

If Jax wanted me here, I was here. No one wanted to upset the alpha psychos.

I understood; I didn’t want to either.

The trouble hit an hour into stretching and going through punching exercises.

Suddenly, sirens blared, and lights flashed throughout the gymnasium.

“Fae breach, portal three. Midsize fae battle creature, species unknown. Fae breach, portal three. Midsize fae battle creature, species unknown,” blasted through the speakers on repeat.

Terror shot through me.

“Everyone to the battle room!” Jax jogged toward a black door hidden in the corner of the gym. Everyone followed.

The battle room turned out to be a large locker room that was full of every weapon imaginable. Guns, swords, and throwing knives decorated an entire wall.

“Every locker has your battle gear!” Jax yelled, and betas scrambled, opening lockers and putting on clothes.

There was a locker labeled “Sadie,” and I opened it up to find...nothing inside.

Fear made my hands shake. Great, they wanted me to die.

I took a waffle out of my pocket and had a bite. My terror abated slightly.

“We fight in our alpha forms.” Ascher stood close to me, and I jumped in surprise.

My locker didn’t have any battle gear, and my petrified brain struggled to understand what Ascher meant. “So you don’t use anything else? I’ve never fought, like ever before.” I swallowed roughly around the waffle in my throat.

War was all fun and games until you were smack dab in the middle of it. I’d thought growing up with D~k would prepare me for anything.

It hadn’t.

Ascher handed me a large gun. I had never fired before, but I had seen men use them, so I got the gist.

The long, cold barrel sent a chill down my spine.

“We know, Princess.” For once, the name didn’t sound like an insult. “We were told you had no experience. You have to come with us, but just stay behind us. It might trigger your transformation.” Ascher stared down at me with an intensity I hadn’t seen from him. He seemed different. Less hotheaded. Calmer and more controlled.

For a second, Ascher's amber eyes hardened, and it felt like a different man was staring down at me. He opened his mouth like he wanted to say something, but he snapped it shut.

He looked away from me, like he could see the question in my gaze.

I bit my lip to stop my teeth from chattering in fear and nodded like I was fine with going into battle. I didn't feel like agreeing, but there were literally zero other options.

What was I going to do, refuse to fight?

The oligarchy forced all alphas to fight in the war. It was our purpose in the realm. I had to act like an alpha. Even if it was just pretend.

"Sadie will not lead a beta team until she is ready!" Jax shouted to the betas, who were donning forest-green armor, the color of the oligarchy.

The beta soldiers strapped guns to their waists along with throwing knives. Almost all gripped swords in both their hands.

"We will head out in our three usual teams. Sadie will come with my team. She will follow my lead and fight behind me," Jax said, and all the betas and alphas turned to stare at me. Biting my lip hard enough to draw blood, I knew I looked like the nervous wreck that I was.

I tried to nod and give the room a smile of encouragement.

Whatever they saw on my face satisfied them, because everyone turned their attention away from me and back to preparing their weapons.

"Harbingers of fae death. Death to the queen!" Jax bellowed, and everyone raised their arms in the air and shouted it back.

Nothing in life was ever black and white, and I wasn't going to believe the fae were monsters just because shifters said they were.

Before I could start panicking again, the door was thrown open, and we ran out into the cold winter's day.

Heavy gray clouds obscured the sun and made the towering mountains seem melancholy. Wind shrieked through the forest in front of us, and the cold instantly froze my bones.

My face hurt as we jogged to the line of trees that separated the forest from the training compound.

“Alphas, transform now.” Jax’s deep voice could barely be heard above the howling winds. “No matter what happens, stay behind me, Sadie.”

Nodding, I walked over to where the three alphas had separated themselves in front of the betas.

Suddenly, Jax shifted into a monstrous bear.

If Jax was seven feet tall as a man, he was almost twice that as a bear.

He stood nearly as tall as the shortest coniferous trees. Thick, shaggy black fur covered his entire body. Long, dagger-like claws decorated both his feet and hands, and massive black spines poked out from his back like armor.

He must have been over five thousand pounds.

Ascher turned next. Unlike Jax, his entire body didn’t change.

Ascher grew taller until he stood a few feet shorter than Jax. His black horns tripled in size, and they jutted off a massive ram’s head. His torso expanded and bulked up but for the most part, looked the same, unlike his legs, which were covered in thick brown fur and ended in hooves.

Ascher resembled a creature depicted in the rumored god realm. He was a horrifying rendition of a devil ram, brought to life. His nostrils chuffed out air, and my stomach cramped.

I never knew a ram could be so terrifying.

Finally, Cobra changed.

Unlike the other two, only his eyes were physically transformed. It was clear, however, how he’d gotten his name.

Hundreds of snake shadows wrapped themselves around Cobra’s pale skin.

His emerald eyes changed shape on his face until massive snake eyes glared out at the world.

Slit pupils glowed on his otherwise normal face.

The shadowy snakes writhed around, quivering black masses that flashed across his pale skin.

I stared at the three alphas in shock.

Jax was a monstrous bear, Ascher was a freaky ram, and Cobra had shadow snakes.

Somehow, it made perfect sense. Still, it was bizarre to see them transform with my own eyes.

Jax roared, and I jumped at the guttural sound.

Alpha shifted forms were more terrifying than I could have ever imagined.

I couldn't envision the beasts they fought against. From far away, a menacing sound shook the forest.

I was screwed.