

Psycho Shifters Chapter 9

SADIE

SHIFTING INTO A BEAST

Cobra stood still and stared at me. The shadow snakes writhed across his pale skin, and I backed away from him.

Wariness crept through me at the sight of the snakes. They were unnatural.

Jax gave a soft roar that commanded me to follow behind him and stay close. I didn't know how I knew what he was saying, but I just did.

Jax turned, and the nearest betas stumbled backward, away from him. His claws and teeth were monstrous.

He was built for mauling.

The ground shook, and the wind shifted slightly. The scents of black tar and something unidentifiable tickled the back of my throat.

It burned.

Whatever made that smell didn't belong in the forest; it wasn't from the shifter realm. My stomach twisted as I thought about the fae creature that emitted such a pungent scent.

Ten betas jogged over in a line behind each of the alphas. Jax tossed his head behind him, and I nodded in understanding.

I tried to click on the numb, but it was just out of my grasp. Not enough time had passed.

I was going to have to go into my first battle without the numb. Without a shifter form. With a gun I didn't know how to use and nothing else.

Ninety-nine percent chance I was dead. The one percent was divine intervention.

I sent a prayer up to the moon goddess for strength and asked her to look after Lucinda if I died.

Cobra turned toward the betas and shouted over the wind, "We stay in groups, and we surround it! Follow your alphas. Like usual, our goal is to incapacitate, not kill the creature. However, the oligarchy has given us permission to kill if needed." His usual silky voice had a slight lisp to it.

It was also the most I had ever heard him speak at once.

Suddenly, we were running through the forest at breakneck speeds.

My lungs began to burn, and I fell behind the lines of betas. I was slower and smaller than everyone.

Navigating through the woods, I made sure to keep my eyes on the shifters.

Jax led. His lumbering form moved extremely fast through the woods.

Ascher's ram form was right behind him, his hooves pounding against the ground.

Beside them, Cobra slipped through the forest without making a single sound. Compared to the heavy footsteps of the betas behind him, he was a ghost.

"Screeeeeeeeeeee." The soft clicking shriek grew louder as we ran through the forest.

I stumbled and almost fell face-first into the dirt. A creature from a nightmare stood in the forest.

The fae was a monstrous spider that was at least two times the size of Jax's bear and probably weighed thousands of pounds.

Eight hairy, spindly legs protruded from two large circular body segments.

Massive black pincers protruded off of its head, and its hundreds of eyes were multifaceted and reflected light from many different angles.

It would have been a spider, if not for the dozen knifelike teeth that jutted at angles around its pincers.

The fae creature was heinous.

The scents of tar and spices burned my nostrils and caused me to choke with disgust. Its body was so large that it could barely stand among the tree trunks. Its spindly legs sprawled at weird angles against the trees.

Jax reared up to this massive height and let out a fearsome roar at the creature.

The sound was so powerful and commanding that the ground rumbled beneath my feet.

I threw myself behind the wide trunk of a tree.

There was a long silence as I waited. Maybe the battle was already over?

I stuck my head around to see what was happening. The spider fae reared its pincers back and let out an ungodly shriek.

Nope, the battle was still very much happening.

The noise was so loud that my right eardrum b~t, warm blood poured down the side of my face.

There was a scream behind me, and a beta slumped on the ground. Blood gushed from both his ears. He was out cold.

Ascher leaped from behind the creature and slammed his onyx horns against its body.

A crunch echoed through the forest as he penetrated the creature's exoskeleton.

Then all hell broke loose.

Betas shot bullets at the fae creature and stabbed it with their swords. I held the gun in my hand and fumbled with it.

The air was so cold that my fingers were numb and I could barely use them. I struggled with the cold barrel as I tried to switch off the safety.

When it finally clicked, I held it up in front of my face and took a deep breath.

I crept out from behind the trees and waited until betas weren't standing in front of me because I didn't want to hit anyone.

I aimed at the creature and fired.

A couple of my shots went wide, and I almost hit Jax's bear form, which was hanging off the spider's body.

My hands shook badly, and the cold only got worse, so I lowered my aim and tried to hit its many legs.

My bullets seemed to do nothing. It just appeared to get more enraged.

The spider kicked out its long legs and sent shifters flying backward through the air.

Jax leaped forward and latched onto the creature's neck. His massive claws sawed at the creature's body as he stabbed repeatedly.

Cobra stood to the side of the forest with his yellow snake eyes glowing. He raised his hands forward, and hundreds of black shadow snakes twisted off his skin and shot over the snow toward the fae.

Cobra's shadow snakes reared their heads back and revealed needle-sharp shadow fangs. They snaked across the trees and ground, then latched onto the spider's legs.

The fae creature shrieked, and black blood slid out like sludge from where the shadow snakes bit it.

All around, shifters were covered in blood as they struggled to contain the massive spider.

Jax had told me to stay out of the way, and I was really trying, but the fight was stumbling closer to my hiding spot, and I was too terrified to run and expose myself.

The fae's legs reflected light as bits of sunshine filtered through the clouds. Thousands of tiny daggers covered the spider's legs.

Red blood coated the white snow, pouring from where its dagger-clad legs made contact with shifters.

Suddenly, the spider fae released a loud, chattering shriek that echoed through the forest.

With a rapid lunge, the spider fae bent its head backward unnaturally and lunged with its pincers.

It grabbed Ascher off its abdomen and held him between its pincers. Ascher's ram head bleated and chuffed, and he raked long claws across the spider's eyes.

It didn't release him.

Abruptly, the fae reared up on its back legs and shook itself violently back and forth.

Jax was thrown off its back, and all the betas went flying.

In a blur of movement, the fae turned around and began sprinting through the forest sideways.

Everyone was lying on the ground, momentarily stunned by the force of the fae slamming them against trees.

The fae moved deeper through the forest. Directly at where I was hidden.

The massive beast moved toward me, and my entire body froze. I'd thought I would run away, or fight, in a moment of high stress.

I froze.

Ascher was wrapped in its pincers.

It was just little old me behind a tree and thousands of pounds of spider hurtling at me.

Every cell in my body tingled, and the weird sensation locked my limbs.

The tingling intensified until it was a paralyzing pain. My limbs locked in agony, and my body tilted.

I fell to my knees and face planted forward.

Directly into the path of eight sharp spider legs covered in daggers.

I lay on the ground convulsing in agony as the spider sprinted directly toward me.

By some miracle of fate, the spider ran over me and its legs barely missed my prone form.

The tingling...snapped.

My clothes ripped off my body and lay shredded on the ground, but I was warmer than I had ever been.

The world was different.

It was no longer unbearably cold and miserable. The temperature was comfortable.

I stood up and went after the spider.

I didn't just run; I leapt.

My lungs expanded impossibly, and fresh oxygen pumped through me.

Four legs ate up the ground. I was built for power, for chasing, for the hunt.

My vision was hyperfocused on the spider, on catching it. It was what I was built to do.

The spider fae skittered quickly through the forest, but the tightly packed trees slowed it down.

I was made for sprinting short distances.

Head down for power, my massive leg muscles contracted and released as I flew after my prey.

I would not let it get away.

The swirling black mass of the portal came into view. It was just like I had read in a book, a circular void of darkness against the white landscape. Ascher bleated louder as he struggled to release himself from the fae's pincers.

Within fifty feet of the portal, I threw myself toward the fae.

My large body went airborne, and I extended razor-sharp claws in front of my face.

Maw open, my jaw unhinged impossibly wide, my canines elongated in my mouth with a snap.

I slammed into the back of the creature with extreme force and ripped my fangs through its body.

A loud, chitter-like shriek echoed through the forest as the beast stumbled and fell to the side.

Between my claws and mouth, I sawed deeper into the wounds that Ascher had created on its backside.

Frantic, I bit down like a madwoman. Tar and spices filled my mouth, and I ignored the creature's gross taste.

With single-minded purpose, I bit through the black sludge. My body rocked to the side, and pain scoured my abdomen, but I refused to release my massive maw from its backside.

One spider leg bent unnaturally and kicked at me unmercifully, the beast desperate to unlatch my fangs from its body.

Lights sparked in my vision and everything jostled as my fangs dug deeper into flesh.

I didn't release.

It could have been seconds or hours as the creature stabbed at my side frantically.

Pain and existence became a swirly haze as I single-mindedly focused on keeping my jaw locked shut.

When D~k would beat me, I had found that the harder I focused on a speck of dust or biting my l~p, the easier it was to ride out the pain.

Now I focused all my energy on keeping my jaw locked.

The rest of the world faded out.

All of a sudden, the weight rolled over and pinned me to the hard ground. I was crushed. Fear overwhelmed me, and I fought to untangle my jaw from flesh.

I dug my claws in desperately as I attempted to separate myself from the creature and get air.

Long moments expanded as my lungs collapsed and I couldn't draw in breath.

My head grew hazy from a lack of oxygen.

In a rush of relief, the crushing weight lifted off my body. Rolling and crawling, I detangled myself. As I stumbled away, sticky black gore covered my white fur in a heavy sludge.

I stank like burned tar, and I hacked the black pieces of fae onto the ground as I sucked in oxygen.

Jax roared as he threw the fae body to the side. His massive bear moved to the front of the creature, and with another roar, he helped Ascher pry its massive pincers open.

Ascher fell from its grasp. His torso was shredded in a band where the pincer had held him. Still, he stood up straight and brushed sludge off his tattooed torso. He seemed mostly unharmed.

Stumbling onto four shaky legs, I took in the carcass before me. Its body was savaged from where I had sawed my fangs into it.

Cobra stood beside the spider's head, and his shadow snakes slowly streamed out of the fae's eyeballs and wrapped themselves back around his body.

I had a feeling I hadn't been the one to k~~l the fae.

Cobra's snakes had done it.

Abruptly, Jax roared into my face and transformed into a very n~~~d male.

His dark skin was splattered with black-and-red blood. He was a macabre painting of masculine strength, with gleaming muscles piled atop each other.

Unlike Ascher's lean form, Jax's body was thicker, with muscles bulging everywhere.

He was beautiful.

In an act of pure strength, I focused on his gold n~~~e piercings and not the massive, pierced d~~k hanging between his legs.

“I told you to stay behind us!” Jax grabbed my furry shoulders and shook me back and forth. His gray eyes flashed like cold daggers.

As I glared back, annoyance swelled in my chest. You would think he would thank me for helping save Ascher. If I hadn't acted, Ascher would have been pulled through the portal.

Also, based on my f~~~g claws and canines, I had shifted into my alpha form like they'd wanted.

I was an alpha, a beast.

My spine popped deliciously as I stuck my b~~t in the air and my furry white paws forward. I reached my neck down, and my ears flattened on my skull.

I was a massive cat.

Opening my large maw, I showed Jax my huge fangs and bit the air. He could shove his scorn up his a~s.

Jax didn't say anything. He just turned around and stalked away through the forest.

My stomach sank at his disapproval. For some reason, I wanted the large alpha to be proud of me.

Next, Ascher transformed back and stomped, n~~d, over to me. His tattoos rippled as he walked, and his black horns were still larger than usual against his hair's golden waves.

“I had it handled. You didn't need to interfere,” Ascher snapped. He was pissed because he hadn't thought there was any way I could be a female alpha.

A low rumble filled my chest, and I growled at him.

Ascher didn't say anything else. He just turned and followed Jax. His disapproval meant nothing to me.

I wanted to chase him down and bite him.

My side ached from pain, so I lay down on the gore-covered snow. I huffed in the cold air with annoyance.

The alphas should have been grateful for my help.

“You did good.” Cobra stood near me, and his eyes were still snake eyes—his slit pupils stared at me with unnatural stillness.

Cobra held himself like he usually did, his movements were smooth and graceful. If black shadow snakes didn’t writhe across his skin, I could almost believe he wasn’t shifted.

“Do you know what you are?” he asked.

I shook my furry head back at him. Some type of cat?

“You’re a saber-toothed tiger of lore.” Cobra extended a hand. Shadow snakes slithering across every inch of his pale flesh, and he brushed a chunk of black gore off my shoulder.

A strange sensation zinged through my shoulder, where his hand touched my fur.

He winked over one of his slit pupils, and it was creepy as hell.

If I were in my other form, my mouth would have dropped open with shock. Cobra was complimenting and helping me?

Also, heck yeah, I’d always liked cats.

I was a badass.

For a second, my stomach sank with melancholy because I wanted to share this moment with Lucinda. She would think my shifted form was so cool. She always loved stories about alphas and their second forms.

“For a girl,” Cobra called over his shoulder as he walked away.

Chuffing with annoyance, I limped through the forest, following the men.

Did alphas taste like steak? They weren’t good for anything else.