

Chapter 11 - Unscutable

Bradley POV

“What do you mean Hadley is missing?” Bradley frowned, as he listened to his father on the other end of the line. Saw his whole unit turn and look at him as well. Cooper actually stood up, looked more than shocked.

They were all back in Portland, had been now for 2 days.

“Her car is not here, Bradley. No-one has seen her in a whole day, not since she went to bed last night, not at breakfast either.” He could hear the worry in his father Benjamin's voice.

“She's not just gone out shopping with her friends? Left early this morning to beat the rush hour traffic?” Bradley asked “when was the exact last time you saw her?”

“When she went to bed. Was already up and gone from the suite before Lilly and I woke up. We thought she was off at training...but no, she didn't attend it this morning, I already checked that.”

Bradley was frowning now, “I presume you called her.”

“I'm not an idiot, son. Of course, I called her, so did Lilly. We have both called her a dozen times now, talked to all her friends, no-one has seen her.”

“Who's out looking for her?”

“Your brother's, me and my whole unit, everyone in the pack knows to report if they see her, she is not here, missing.” there was actual fear in the man's voice now.

“I told you to lo-jack the girls' car, father. She is too pretty, a snatchers' dream.” he was now worried himself though, Hadley was such a sweet natured girl, she was innocent and wanted to believe that there was only good in everyone, its why he'd sent her out here with his entire unit in fact. To protect her.

“I'll call her. Has she picked up at all?”

“No, it goes right to the message bank.”

He could already see Eddie was on it, calling her “Hang on Eddie is ringing her now.” They all waited patiently till Eddie shook his head, “No luck.”

“We’ll keep searching son...but”

She was her father's little girl, his only daughter in fact, and everyone loved Hadley. He sighed “I’ll send my unit back to help with the search. I have to stay though.”

“No son, don’t do that. You all need to be there. Just...thought she might have turned up there, keep an eye out for her will you.”

“What? Why would Hadley be out here? Piper upset her completely.”

“I know that son. But she was more concerned that Piper ran away from you, and thinks it's all her fault. Was talking to Lilly about it last night before going to bed, worried she’d screwed up your Mate Bond.”

Bradley shook his head and huffed at his father. “Well, maybe you should have, lead with that.” he muttered, annoyed now “We’ll search here.” He hung up.

“You think she came out here to try and convince Piper to come home?” Cooper sighed.

“Oh, I know she did, she apparently believes what she and her wolf, Letti, picked up on was Piper’s reaction to seeing me with another. She did come and apologise to me, for scaring the woman off, before we left.” he could only shake his head again.

Bradley had tried to convince her that she was wrong, told her a bit of the truth, that Piper had used to be a pack member, but that was it, told her that Piper was likely just scared to see her old Beta and Alpha was all.

Though she had not believed him at all, she had stood there and raised a delicately sculpted eyebrow at him and then repeated his own words back to him, “It’s not fear, it’s pain.” didn’t miss a thing that girl. Was going to make an excellent lawyer.

“On it.” Cooper was dialling a number a minute later, got a ‘no I didn’t see her or her car leave Beta.’ Cooper was not so dumb, shook his own head. The

girl, who was all sweet, was also very intelligent, intending to follow her father's footsteps and go to Law School.

"Did Hadley, Alpha Order you to say that you hadn't seen her or her car?" he asked in return. Was talking to the night gate guard.

Bradley sighed, knew as soon as he heard Coop ask the question the answer was going to be 'yes' and he was not wrong.

"What time did she put the order on you?" Cooper asked again. He knew how to question and interrogate.

"Thank the goddess you asked Beta." the guard actually sounded relieved to be being questioned "it was 3 in the morning. I'm sorry."

"Not your fault, Hadley is very bright." he hung up.

The guard would not be punished, he was under an Alpha's order not to tell, so he physically couldn't, poor bastard sounded like he was worried as much as the rest of the pack.

"3am." Bradley looked at the time now, it was nearly 7pm. It was a 13 hour drive without stops for eating and using the bathroom, and father did drum into all his children the stop, revive and survive policy for driving, a break from driving every two hours to stop the monotony of staring at the road and causing fatigue.

Hadley would likely only just be getting here now. " Let's watch the use of her pack creditcard, she'll have to book into a hotel at some point."

Harry agreed to track the girls' card, his laptop was already out, so not an issue.

Eddie took one of their rental cars to go and drive around to actually look for her car.

Bradley put in a call to her himself. She wasn't likely to ignore him. It would get her punished, not that he thought his father wasn't going to round on the girl about being young and alone, an un-mated Alpha female alone and vulnerable.

She did train, but hated to fight, it was not in her nature to sweet like her mother Lilly was. Lilly had been an Omega before she met his father, still had a submissive nature and was eager to please, even 19 years later. Had been an omega for 40 years before meeting his father, not so easy to grow out of, she'd once told him.

Just like Hadley was sweet-natured, liked to be helpful, didn't like to be a burden, and usually did exactly what she was told. The only difference was that Hadley did have Alpha blood, and could be, at times, defiant and strong willed. Though only where things were important to her and if she felt guilty about Piper Harper, or Piper Whitlock, as he now knew, that was her real name. This could well have set off Hadley's defiant nature and combined that with her need to help others.

He sighed when he got her voice mail like everyone else did: "Hadley, it's Bradley. You will call me back when you get this message. Or I will be personally searching for you." he told her.

Hadley knew that he was out here in Portland trying to get Piper to talk to him, not that he or his unit had even laid eyes on the woman. It had been 2 days and only Izzy and some other human women were working in the store, he and his unit had stayed out of sight, or he and Cooper had due to the fact that Izzy would recognise both of them.

Eddie and Harry had strolled on by the store a few times, the woman's office was closed up and the lights were out. As it had been on Saturday, when he had last been in the store. No such luck and it was now Wednesday night.

The store had been closed up by Izzy at 1730 on the dot, just like the day before. Opening hours were 0900 to 1730, that's what the golden lettering on the door stated, and Izzy was prompt to open and close up.

Eddie had offered to snag a human and stroll in there to sus this Izzy out, but Bradley got the distinct impression, Izzy was not stupid and would see through it, his Gamma was just as big and muscled up as his Beta was. And he'd had people calling all weekend trying to get an appointment.

Eddie was full of charm, literally could charm any woman with the acceptance of his Mate, when he found her. But he was also what humans would call damn good looking and Izzy, he thought, would hazard a guess as to Eddie being one of Bradley's men.

Considering the amount of calls he'd had put in, and that Piper had shut him down, this Izzy would likely be on the look out for anything that was out of the ordinary or even slightly suspicious. So now they were waiting. Piper Harper was a bit of a mystery.

Owned 3 stores and nothing else, not even a house in her name, no car in her name and all her stores and the land they were on, were all purchased through her company, Piper Harper Designs. There was no company car that he'd seen, and none registered to this store. Both the store managers of her two other stores had company cars. Izzy did not and he had no idea if Piper Harper owned a car at all. No car registered to one Piper Harper that he could find.

She had changed her name when she had left the pack. That was all he knew, though every Piper Harper he'd tracked down to an address was not her and there were only 5 Piper Harper's in Portland, and not one of them had been the one he was looking for. She had hidden herself not just in the pack, but had also taken great lengths to hide herself out here within the human world as well, it seemed, it was odd.

He didn't like it. His father had freaked him out a bit. Telling him that Whitlock's were few and far between, that she would be in danger out here all alone. That he had to get back out here to Portland and bring her back to the pack as soon as possible.

Had not really elaborated, but his actually worry and concern over the girl had shone through in full. So here he was back in Portland trying to track a lone she-wolf, who constantly masked her scent, which he supposed she did now to protect herself from those that would kidnap and sell off a lone rogue female. At least she'd been safe all this time and was well known in the human world. If she went missing, Izzy would report her missing. He was certain of that, there would be a state wide search for sure.

That brought his thoughts around to the fact that he just couldn't go and snatch the woman off the street himself, he was going to have to find a way to get her to agree to come with him. Maybe he could get her to tell Izzy she was taking a trip or something. He wondered if he could actually get Piper to agree to date him for a bit. He didn't know, could only ask, he supposed.

His phone rang, interrupting his thoughts, there it was Hadley's number. "Where are you?" he grated out, didn't even bother to state hello "Father is worried sick."

“I just went for a drive. Heading home now.” she told him calmly.

He didn't believe her. “So where did you drive to?”

“I've been in Helena all day. Just shopping, watched a movie.” she answered him.

“I don't believe you, Hadley. Not considering you left My Pack at 3 in the morning.” he spoke to her, his Alpha tone rolling out of him, not as her brother, but as her Alpha.

Got silence from the other end of the line.

“We have ways of getting answers, Hadley. That poor guard,” he sighed, he would use her sweet nature against her.

“You didn't hurt him!” she whispered, sounding mortified to his ear.

“What do you think it takes to get passed and Alpha Order?” he commented, saw both Cooper and Harry, shake their heads at his tactics but also smile at the same time.

“I don't believe you, you're not even there in the pack.” she suddenly snapped at him, her alpha genes kicking in.

“No, but father is, and he's much more hot headed than I am, you know this... That poor guard.” he sighed sadly, “you'll really have some apologising to do to his Mate and his 2 children, when you get home.”

“No.” she sounded more than horrified now.

“Tell me where you are.” he asked her softly.

“Bradley, I'm so sorry I didn't mean... I just... Oh you bastard.” she suddenly snapped those last three words at him and the line was disconnected.

Heard both Cooper and Harry laugh but it was Cooper who stated “Oh, she's on to you and your tricks.”

“Ah, it was worth a shot. Used to work on her all the time.” Bradley smiled to himself “Guess she is not so little anymore.” he dialled his father's number.

The girl when little had been easily swayed into talking by her guilt, not so much anymore, it seemed. Damned Alpha genes, but at least she was alright and had not been kidnapped at this point.

“I spoke to Hadley, she sounded fine. I nearly got her to tell me where she is. I’m betting here in Portland, trying to find Piper Harper to clear things up.”

Heard his father sigh, “It is her nature to fix things.”

“Eddie’s out now looking, where tracking her pack card, she hasn’t used it yet though, she must have cash on her.”

“Ah, that would be my doing...I’ve always told her to carry cash, in case of an emergency.”

“How much is she likely to be carrying?”

“A couple hundred,” his father informed him.

“Just bloody great.” Bradley muttered “So we’ll hunt two missing she-wolves going under the radar.” he snapped and hung up, before his father could even retort.

“Hadley has cash, a couple hundred dollars.” he told Harry, “so she won’t need that card until she runs out of cash.”

“I’ll continue to monitor anyway.”

Bradley was tempted to cancel it, but he didn’t want her running into any trouble if it was declined. “She’ll need it to book accommodation, even if she pays cash.”

“Doesn’t mean the hotel will run it right away.” Harry commented.

He already knew this, but there was nothing he could do about it. Eddie was out looking, it was unlikely Hadley would stay in her car, or some dingy hotel. No, she was used to staying in very nice accommodation. It was likely she would go to a larger, more respectable hotel, and they would insist on her credit card and likely swipe it right away. Seeing as how young she was, they would want assurance she could afford the room.

Though she was driving a nice new BMW convertible which her father had given her for her 17th birthday, when she’d officially gotten her drivers licence,

she'd not needed a big hulk of a car, was small and petite like her mother was.

He and his unit were booked into the Nines, a Luxury collection Hotel, here in Portland and had booked out 4 of their 1 bedroom king suite's, his had a nice corner view, though they were all in his suite talking and planning when not out there sitting and waiting on Piper to return to her store. Which was only a 30 minute drive from where they were staying.

Eddie strolled in the door pulling Hadley behind him 2 hours after he'd spoken with the girl, "Look at what I found at the Hilton." he smiled, "thought I'd stake out your father's favourite hotel chain."

Bradley stared right at her. "You are in so much trouble." he let his displeasure about her disappearance known "Sit your ass in that chair." He snapped his fingers at the couch in his room.

She looked suitably guilty to him. He put in a video call to his father. He answered right away. "We got her." he told him and then turned the phone around to show her to him. Hadley looked at the phone, took it even as their father was already yelling at her about how irresponsible she was, how dangerous it was for a young Alpha female to be out there on her own. The dangers of kidnapping, rape and torture.

Bradley watched as she sat quietly and took the tongue lashing from their father, just nodded when she should and apologised too, then and only then did his father calm down and tell her she'd scared him and her mother half to death, that they'd thought the worst had happened, let her actually talk to her mother Lilly. Told her she had better do everything, absolutely everything Bradley and the Unit told her to do or she would be severely punished when she got home.

Bradley didn't believe that last part, but it did look like Hadley believed it. His father had the biggest soft spot for the girl, a severe punishment likely just meant being grounded to her bedroom for a day or two and that room had everything she could ever want in it anyway.

He took the phone back from Hadley and spoke briefly to his father said he'd have one of his men drive her back tomorrow, saw Hadley actually pout, but it was his father that had his attention.

“Just keep her there, son. Don’t lessen your chances of getting to Piper. It’s very important she is brought in. Hadley’s punishment can wait.”

Bradley was surprised, but didn’t object. Put a few rules on his little wayward sisters, 1. that she had to stay here in the suite, 2. she wasn’t allowed to go anywhere alone, as it wasn’t safe to do so, 3. if she left this suite without permission, she would be spending time in the cells back at home. For every minute she left the suite there would be a minute in the cells. It was more of a threat, used in the hope she would actually stay put.

The look on her face said it all, she was horrified by the thought of it and also seemed like she actually did believe him too. He was staring right down at her, his jaw was set and his tone harsh, he was all Alpha, not brother. Saw her glance at Cooper as though he was going to save her, got nothing and just nod her head and even stated “Yes Bradley.”

“Oh and you will be sleeping on that couch, I am not giving up my bed for you.” he told her, saw her pout right up at him. Give him that look from her big blue eyes, that always got her, her way.

Tossed her a pillow and a spare blanket to make his point.

One she-wolf found, though she had not really been hiding.

One she-wolf to go. That was in fact hiding from him right this minute.

Chapter 12 - Unscentable

Piper POV

Brandon was back in school and thankfully, back to his normal self. Laughing and happy with his friends, apparently they were super shocked to see his snow boarding skills on the half pipe. He’d been showing them the photos and the footage she had captured.

Piper was currently working from home as she’d told Izzy she would be, and Brandon too. Izzy had sent one of the girls to her home to drop off the dress she had been working on, first thing Tuesday morning, so it wouldn’t fall behind schedule.

She was working from her home studio on the second floor of her home, but knew she could not avoid going into the store forever. She did actually have

in-person appointments to attend to. Though she had already heard from Izzy that they had been fielding calls all of Sunday and Monday while managing the store from Drake Industries, at least a dozen, she had passed on the new policy to the other 2 stores as well.

It wasn't just their store turning Drake Industries away, Izzy had sighed heavily "I don't think that man is going to just go away, Piper."

"He will," Piper had sighed right back "What days and times do I actually have to come into the store this week? Can you send me the list? If you can handle the lesser clients I'd appreciate it, Izzy."

Izzy had sent her the appointments she needed to attend to herself. Only 4 of them this week. All the rest Izzy could handle, there was 1 today and 1 on Friday, 2 on Saturday, then none till the entire following week. She was going to come into the store from the back court yard, didn't relish running into any wolves, if that man was still ticked off about not getting his own way.

Though now she had another Alpha to worry about as well, and not even one from this country. What was going on in her life? Why all of a sudden were things up in the air? Where had her well-settled and comfortable human life gone?

Drove herself to the parking lot a few blocks away and made her way to the store via the back allies, to attend her appointment for today. Saw another store owner sitting in the courtyard having a cup of coffee, though she could smell alcohol in that coffee, smiled at Caroline, she got along with all of the store owners around her, made a point to. Asked her how she was doing today.

Had a chat for a few minutes, and move on.

Drinking alcohol in her coffee at work was the way she dealt with having an unfaithful husband. Poor woman really should just go and get a divorce. She had heard the two of them argue on more than one occasion now. Had actually stepped in when the man had slapped her, he had not realised she had walked into the courtyard at the time and had seen him.

Piper had glared right at the man and slapped him right back for the woman. A little of Harper had been in that hit, that day. They had both watched with satisfaction as he'd stumbled backwards a step and held his own hand to his face, much the same way his own wife had done, just seconds before. Then

had told him to leave or she would call the police. He'd come at her and she'd reminded him of the security camera's in the court yard, evidence he'd hit his wife first, he'd stalked off.

Caroline was still with him 2 years later. Although she now drank at work, Piper had never seen any bruising on the woman to indicate any further abuse from her husband and she did note that when he was here they were out in the courtyard, used those camera's to her advantage now.

It was not Piper's place to get involved, though she had told Caroline if she ever needed assistance that her door was always open. Never had used it though.

Piper let herself into her office via the back stairs and called down to Izzy to let her know she was in the store and setting up for her appointment. Izzy strolled up stairs and into her office 10 minutes later with a hot coffee and sank down on the chair across from Piper, just looked right at her for a solid minute.

"What is it, Izzy?" she knew that look.

"Regular walk by's going on. Two rather largish men, not uncharacteristic of Mr Drake himself, about every 2 hours or so. They think I've not noticed them." she shook her head.

"Observant as always Izzy." it was expected that she would notice, Izzy had her own family issues going on and when she'd first started working for Piper, had found herself under her own father's watchmen.

Though that had stopped a long time ago now.

So this was about her, though which Pack those two men belonged to she had no idea. "Did you recognise them?" Piper asked out of simple curiosity.

"Not the same two that came in before." she sipped her coffee "Though that blonde one, mm, yummy to look at."

"Blonde one?" she questioned further.

"Mm, he's about 6 foot 2, wearing a nice pair of dark blue jeans today and a well fitted white tee-shirt, don't know what it is about him. But he gets my attention every time he strolls on by."

Hm, likely Edward the Gamma of her former pack, all women were drawn to him, and his Gamma Charm, lucky for Izzy that, that man had stayed outside. “Don’t get close to that man. Edward is his name. A real charmer, you’d be in his bed before you realised it.” she warned Izzy.

The woman did have a type, blonde and buffed up, which is exactly what Edward was.

“How do you know them, Piper?”

“I used to work for Drake Industries, before I came out here. Left.” she thought about that for a moment “Without permission, I guess you could say.”

Piper had thought about how to explain all this to Izzy, who she knew was going to come in here and ask questions at some point. She was her closest friend, hell her only real friend. The woman was trustworthy and a good employee. She had helped Piper out a lot when Brandon was little and so Piper paid her well above the standard award. Izzy was likely not going anywhere. Would still be around for years to come, Piper was actually thinking about bringing the woman on as a partner, before she moved on to run the up-coming store about to open in Australia.

That job came with a lot of perks; a company car, a pay raise, an apartment for the first year, travel expenses and moving expenses. Izzy wanted to go, Piper couldn’t deny her that. She had worked hard and earned it. Would miss her like crazy, though right this minute her and Brandon’s three-month stay in Australia for the opening of the store might just roll into a full move if things didn’t settle down and go back to normal around here.

“You can leave a job anytime you like. What’s the big deal?” Izzy asked.

“Drake Industries, once you're in, it’s usually for life. The boss has to approve your leaving. It’s a bit weird I know.” she waved her hand at Izzy to stop the next bunch of questions “You kind of sign your life away when you sign up to the new boss.”

“And you left without...permission. Broke your contract?”

“No, I just left and didn’t tell anyone...” she shrugged “that man, the first one to come into the store, Cooper is his name, Mr Drakes, second in command of the company. Likely recognised me and report me to his employer or

something like that.”. It was not the truth. He’d not recognised her but this would allow Izzy some closure.

“So, you are in trouble?”

“No, they actually can’t do anything to me, other than harass me at this point.”

“Your life is weird Piper,” she shook her head, “though a guaranteed job for life, that is some neat security.”

“And your life wasn’t weird?” Piper smiled at her. She knew it did sound nice to humans, a guaranteed job for life. They however, didn’t have to put up with random rogue attacks, enemy pack attacks and being tossed onto the front line by their Alpha to defend and die for his pack at his will any time he liked. They did not have to lose family members to those things, be left abandoned to fend for yourself when your parents died and there was no-one else around to look after you.

“I can only hope, you’re smart enough not to get involved with Mr Yummy, Izzy.”

Saw Izzy laugh “I’m not likely to. Mr Yummy can hang out in my dreams, while I work on that promotion to Australia.”

“You already have that promotion.” Piper smiled at her.

“Mr Yummy ain’t likely to move now, is he, so I’ll stay away.” she stood up “I’ll send Avalon up when she gets here. It shouldn’t be too long now.”

“Thank you Izzy, and no, he’s not likely to move from Montana, ever.” she told the woman. “Sorry.”

“No biggie.” Izzy shrugged and headed back down stairs.

Piper sighed, guess coming in the back was a good idea, had roaming patrols waiting on her out the front of the store. Guess she really had ticked him off, didn’t like being told no. Well, now he got to see what it was like, to not get what you want.

Bloody Alpha’s always used to getting everything they wanted. It was about time one of them learned that life wasn’t actually fair. That you couldn’t just have what you wanted even if it was yours.

Took a breath in and shoved that tinge of pain touching her chest down and away. Not to be thought about, not ours anymore. She reminded herself.

Avalon turned up for her final fitting and adjustment, she was happy with her gown, and out of her office within 45 minutes, all good. Piper headed out the way she came in, via the back entrance to her courtyard.

She was headed to the carpark when she heard a muffled cry of pain and fear. It was female. She stopped at the sound of men laughing, closed her eyes, hated these alleyways sometimes, and the dumb-ass men that thought it was okay to drag girls into them for what they believed was a fun time. Only to them, not to the woman or girls.

Took a breath in and smelled 4 distinct male scents, frowned not humans, wolves, and rogues at that. Took another breath in and found the female was a she-wolf, her nose actually crinkled instantly at the scent she was smelling. Piper heard Harper snort in annoyance, they knew that scent.

Did not want to get involved, the girl was not their problem, but... 4 rogues and 1 she-wolf, regardless of who that she-wolf was, it was not a fair fight. Turned down the alleyway and saw two of the rogues just standing back smiling all lecherously watching on, while one was holding the young she-wolf shoved up against the wall, a hand over her mouth, and the fourth one was touching her all menacingly and plucking at her clothes, tormenting the girl about what was to come she supposed.

Stupid girl, obviously out without her escort, she was pinned to the wall with a hand around her throat, a hand over her mouth to muffle her cries and a knee jammed between her thighs.

Harper snarled right at them. None of them smelled her coming but they were all looking at her now. Saw the big guy holding the she-wolf, laugh right at her, "More fun boys," he stated, and she watched as the two standing back came towards her.

The idiots thought she was a human. Well, she was not and she was well trained. Unbeknownst to them, it was going to shock them greatly. She punched that first guy at full wolf speed and strength, right in his face, busted that nose of his, and he fell backwards, completely caught off guard by her speed and strength. Spun a round house kick right into that second guy as he stood shocked by the attack on his buddy, slammed him right into the dumpster, heard both of them swear.

Saw that big guy raise an eyebrow at her and then try to smell her, he would smell nothing just like every other damned otherworldly creature would.

“Fight Hadley, I know you can.” she snapped at the girl who was just standing there, looking terrified about the situation she found herself in. Surely she had training, was an Alpha female. It had not escaped her sense of smell the day she had walked into her store. She had also noted the girl was fit like she trained as well. Didn’t want to say the girls name out loud, not ever, but had to.

Was taking on two rogues at the same time down the ally from her, as both those men had gotten back up and come at her together now, she had trained for this, but it was years ago, and she’d not actually had to hit a wolf in near a decade, mostly humans and they were easy to take down, one punch at wolf strength and they generally got the message and ran off.

Not this lot, fists were flying, and so were her feet. In her attempt to fight them, at one point she was grabbed by the third rogue, from behind, he’d managed to snag her and pin her arms to her sides, which only left her to use her feet.

Her claws were out suddenly, and Harper was aiding her, hadn’t seen their claws in years, dug them into the man’s thighs and gouged him til he was crying out in pain, moved her head to the side when she saw one of them coming to punch her in the face likely trying to knock her unconscious, he hit his own buddy right in the face.

That man let her go and as he gasped out in pain she took chunks of flesh from his legs with her as she stepped away from him, dragged her claws through his legs and shot off the mark to tear into the next guy. Could finally hear actual fighting going on behind her, seems the girl had decided to fight back, about bloody time.

Turned on the rogue who had a busted nose and dodged out of the way of his hit, feinted at him and then slammed her elbow right in between his shoulder blades and sent him sprawling on the ground, kicked him between his legs as hard as she could while he was trying to get up and heard him howl in pain and watched with satisfaction as he grabbed his balls and curled up in pain, Harper had lent all her strength on that one.

Turned around, two down, two to go, though the smaller of the two men was now looking at her quite wearily “Come here you dumb ass, I’m going to rip your balls off.” she snarled right at him and just to add to her threat and make

it more menacing, reached her clawed hand out and snapped it shut, made a yanking motion as though she was showing him what she was going to do to him.

Saw him look past her to his two injured friends, then just turn and bolt away down the alley in the other direction, didn't want to take her on it seemed. Her eyes moved to the big man, he had Hadley pulled up against him a hand around her throat. She was tiny for an Alpha female, barely 5 feet tall.

Huffed in annoyance, his other arm was around her waist, and she was completely lifted up off the ground, had no leverage to get herself free, was still struggling against the man, had several bruises and there were claw marks ripped through her shirt, she was bleeding in several places.

As was he, her eyes said it all. She needed help. The woman that was taking her place, was now begging with her eyes for Piper to help her, to save her life. She didn't like it, but couldn't let her be taken away by this S.O.B. who would brutalise her, likely rape her for goddess only knew how long, before passing her off to his friends and then selling her off when he was done with her.

"Put her down." she snarled at the S.O.B. "I'm a better choice."

"You're nothing." he laughed "She's Alpha-blooded, she'll sell for a real good price."

Saw as Hadley's eyes went really wide, fear in them now.

"Not on my watch. I know her pack and you, you're a dead man." she shot off the mark, regardless of the fact that he was using Hadley as a shield. The woman's wolf would heal her injuries, if she sustained any.

Saw the rogue's eyes go wide as he realised holding on to Hadley was not going to stop her from attacking him. He threw the girl against the wall to his left and Piper was on him all claws out, ripping into his side, managed to snag just one claw right between two of his ribs and right into his lung, heard it collapse the second her claw was out, she took a knee to her own ribs felt two of them crack and hissed in pain, as she turned on him, and put a full front kick right into his abdomen and then a knee to his face as he fell down.

Thankfully, Hadley had already wounded him and that collapsed lung helped a lot, so he was easier to take down than the others, saw him lying there on the

ground now unconscious, lifted her eyes to the other two who were getting up off the ground and snarled right at them loudly and aggressively, didn't need nor want to fight them again, but they were not looking at her, but at their leader, finally their eyes moved to hers, she fainted at them and they both turned and ran off.

Groaned and held on to her side, where her cracked ribs were, it was paining her, wiped the blood from her split lip and muttered "just freaking great." turned to look at Hadley, the girl was still laying on the ground, seemed to be dazed, had a head wound that was bleeding from where she'd hit the wall.

Couldn't just leave her there, if that big bastard on the ground woke up first, or his men came back, they'd just pick her up and take her like they had originally planned to in the first place.

Great what to do? Sighed and hauled the girl up, she could half walk in her half dazed state, made her way down the alley in the opposite direction that the rogues had gone, and flagged down a passing taxi. The driver looked very shocked at the state of the two of them, both had bloody wounds on their bodies. "Take her to the hospital." she told him and took all the cash she had in her wallet and shoved it into his hand.

He looked at it, it was more than enough. "I'll get there on my own." she put a still dazed Hadley into the back seat of his taxi. She was flopped down on the back seat, then closed the door. "I mean it, straight to the hospital." she pointed a finger at him and snapped a photo of him, making her point.

"What about you?" he asked, glancing over her wounded state.

"I'll make my own way there." she told him again. Saw the man get back in his taxi, snapped the number plate and committed his face to memory in case the girl didn't make it to the hospital. He looked trustworthy, she hoped he was.

Then went right to her car and left, headed home. She had to get cleaned up and hopefully healed up before Brandon got home from school.

Looked at herself in the bathroom mirror and sighed, she had a split lip, a gash through her right eyebrow and a nice sized bruise on her cheekbone. Bloody knuckles and a massive bruise where her ribs were broken, multiple claw marks on her arms and across her abdomen, a couple on her lower back. They were not out to seriously injure her, subdue her more likely. They

wanted her alive, could only presume to be taken and treated as they would the other girl.

To be sold off at some otherworldly black market, not a nice thought. Unfortunately, alone and unprotected, it did happen. Those four now knew she was not human, hopefully weren't locals to the area.

She'd not really smelled many rogues over the years, the odd one here or there, but could pass on by them like she was nothing to them, like she was a simple human and of no interest to them.

Despite not wanting anything to do with that girl or her Mate, Piper could not, in good conscience, leave that girl to a hideous horrible fate. It was not in her, as much as it pained her to know she'd just put the two of them back together, the girl was only young and didn't deserve to be sold off and used as a sex slave by some sadistic brute of a wolf, to live a life of torture and pain.

Piper showered and changed, got rid of her bloodied clothing altogether and headed off the two blocks to wait to pick Brandon up at the bus stop. Her face was healed, Harper had focused her healing ability on her face first, the bleeding had stopped on all her wounds, but her broken ribs would need more time, but it was autumn, so a long sleeved shirt and a pair of jeans were okay this time of year and hid her wounds from his eyes.

Chapter 13 - Unscentable

Bradley POV

Standing in his empty hotel suite, Bradley was absolutely fuming. Hadley had been told to stay here, not to leave this room, period. Yet she was now not here, the girl was literally asking to be punished.

He wondered absently what his father would do, if Hadley reported to him, he'd beaten her, sighed, he'd not likely beat her, but he did want to, really wanted to, but wouldn't. Wondered also how annoyed his father would be when he marched that girl right to the cells and put her in one of them.

She had disobeyed his directed order, disobeyed her own Alpha's order for that matter, wondered how long she had been gone for, didn't think that she had gone very far, her handbag was still in the room on the couch where he had made her sleep, walked over and checked it, no phone in there, must have it on her.

Dialled her number and growled annoyingly into the empty room. It was actually turned off. What was the point in having it if it was turned off?

Turned and stalked out of his hotel suite, banged the door closed behind him. He'd only come back to check on her after lunch, to make sure she was doing as she was told, and she wasn't. He took himself downstairs and showed her picture to the human doorman, asked him "Did you see my sister leave?"

"Oh yeah, got that pretty girl a cab." He smiled at Bradley.

"Where to?"

"I just haled it." The doorman told him.

"When?" Bradley snapped at the man, his annoyance no longer able to be held in.

"About 40 minutes ago, I guess," He answered, looking at his watch.

"Right," Bradley muttered. '40 minutes in the cells and counting little sister' she had been warned, he was going to follow through, regardless of what his father thought. She had been told by their father to do everything she was told to do. Hell, he as her alpha, had warned her himself and still she had disobeyed.

Walked back to his rental car and headed back out to where he'd left his unit. Nothing it seemed was going right, it was a 30 minute drive back to the cafe they were using as their base to sit and watch Piper's store. Walked into the store to find Cooper not at the table with the boys, glanced at Eddie and Harry, a slight frown on his face at not seeing his Beta, only to have Eddie look pointedly at the cafe counter area.

His eyes moved to it and he found himself looking right at Izzy, as he sat himself down. Well, now their cover was blown, she was looking at him with a raised eyebrow, as she collected her coffee's from the girl behind the counter.

'Cooper's in the bathroom.' Eddie mind-linked him 'tried to stop us from getting recognised as your men.'

Izzy walked right by him as she headed for the door, glanced directly at him. "I told you already, she's not working from the store, for several weeks."

“Purely coincidence.” He commented right back.

“Hm, right...You’re a long way from home aren’t you!” she stated and then walked out the door.

Bradley frowned, a long way from home, either she had looked him up or Piper had told her where they were from. “They don’t normally use this cafe.”

“Nope.” Eddie shook his head “there are 4 on the street and she wandered along looking at all of them in turn. I saw her look right at me for a moment and then just came in and ordered coffees. She didn’t acknowledge me at all once in the store, but pretty certain she came in because she recognised me.”

“Must have picked up on our walk-by’s.” Harry commented.

“She’s not so blind, in other words,” Bradley sighed. “Looking for anything out of the ordinary.”

“Likely,” Eddie nodded.

Cooper strolled over and sank down “Brad, your timing sucks.”

“Mm, it does seem that way.” He nodded “Hadley left the hotel in a cab almost an hour and a half ago now.” Found all their eyes on him in an instant.

“We’ve not seen her,” Cooper told him.

“Can’t be that far away, let’s go hunt the area.” They all got up and headed out of the cafe.

Bradley came to a halt at hearing Piper’s name mentioned. A tall girl was chatting with her mother as they came out of another coffee shop down the street, talking about how she thought Piper Harper was so nice and her wedding dress was perfect and super excited to be picking it up in a week.

“Excuse me.” Bradley interrupted the two of them, putting a smile right on his face, all his charming self and sex appeal for them to see, “did you just see Piper Harper in person?”

“Yes,” the girl nodded, “she is amazing.” smiling right back at him.

“Thank you, I was hoping to catch her myself today.” he nodded to them and then turned to look at Cooper expectantly, his annoyance that she was there in the store and they did not know about it for him to see.

“Brad, you’ve been here most of the day yourself. We haven’t seen her. There is no way she got passed us.”

Bradley frowned now, that was true, he’d been here himself only left to go and check on Hadley. But it was obvious from that woman’s statement she was in the store, “Go and find Hadley.” He muttered as he turned and marched himself down the street and right into Goddess Gown’s.

Locked eyes with Izzy, whose mouth he saw actually twitched in full amusement. He could only imagine from the look on her face, she knew he’d just found out that Piper was here in the store, and his men had not known.

Turned his eyes to the upstairs loft and before Izzy could say anything to him, stalked up there, heard Izzy laugh to herself and knew it was aimed at him, he and Benson nearly snarled at the woman, barely managed to keep it inside of him when he found Piper’s office empty, but the scent of that human woman’s perfume was there in the office, so she hadn’t been gone long.

Really hated this minute that she masked her scent, everywhere that she went. Even in her own office. Was fumingly angry with the woman, with the fact that she had somehow managed to get past him and his entire Alpha Unit at that.

“Can I help you, Mr Drake?” Izzy’s voice came to him dripping with sarcasm.

His eyes moved right to hers. “Where is she?” Bradley snapped at her. The woman was standing on the landing by the top of the stairs. She had tested his patience days ago, and now it seemed she was about to do it again. The look on her face, a very smug smile, told him she intended to do it again. Obviously had no issues dealing with him.

Likely had to deal with irate wealthy humans all the time, and was not afraid to stand her ground.

“Not here. Please remove yourself from Piper Harper’s office, or I will be calling the police.”

“On what grounds, a client looking for her?” he shot right back. He’d done nothing illegal.

Saw the corner of her mouth tilt right up now, stubborn bloody woman
“Trespassing.”

“It’s a store, community property so to speak.” Bradley informed her she had no idea who he was.

“Only if you are a customer, and Piper Harper doesn’t want anything to do with Drake Industries. I believe that’s the new policy she instated last week.”

“Well, I knew nothing about that now, did I? I was not notified of the new policy, so how would I know that? Go ahead Izzy, call the police...” he smiled right at her “I’m a lawyer.” He could see that shocked her completely, he leaned right down to her ear. “Oh, didn’t she tell you that.” He smiled “And a damned good one, came from a long line of them.” leaned back and let her see his smile “now where is Piper Harper?”

“Gone home for the day.” she told him simply.

“And where is home?” He asked right back.

“That is none of your business,” She stated quite coldly and then stalked off down the stairs away from him.

Bradley nearly laughed, a part of him really liked this woman, so very protective, headstrong and could stand her ground. It was no wonder Piper liked her, reminded her of a wolf in all likelihood. He followed her down the stairs, all the way to her counter and looked right at her, smiled his most charming of smiles and saw her facade falter slightly, her eyes went wide as his sudden change.

Bradley knew that his resting annoyed face did not make him handsome at all, just looked mean and nasty to most, but when he turned on all his charm and smiled, really smiled at someone, especially the ladies, they all fell all over themselves to try and please him, especially the humans, she was no different.

“Izzy,” Bradley practically purred out her name, softly “please help me out.” He continued to smile at her, watched her take a step back away from him and shake her head as if to clear it, her eyes moved over his face. Knew she was

taking all of him in, she couldn't help it, no human woman could. Well, not many anyway. "What can I do Izzy?" Bradley asked softly, "to get you to help me out." he leaned on the counter, with both his elbows, allowing her a real close look into his eyes. Most were mesmerised by them, both human and wolves alike.

"Oh, I'm not falling for that." she pointed a finger right at him "I've seen that before, dealt with people like you for a long time. Go away, I will not be telling you anything."

Bradley chuckled softly "I'll send my best man in to charm you, then shall I." and he meant it. She would not be able to get passed Eddie.

"W..What?" she gasped "I have a boyfriend."

"Hope he likes to share." Bradley smirked right at her. "Eddie won't take no for an answer, and it's very unlikely you will say no to him." He stood and walked out of the store, she might be somewhat immune to Bradley. Which he didn't mind at all, didn't particularly like flirting with her, didn't want too. He had Piper to consider and who knew if it would hurt her or not, so he would not. Eddie, on the other hand, was single and happy to mingle.

Bradley was done being tricked by Piper Harper, or Izzy, into believing she was not around. The bloody woman was starting to infuriate him.

'Eddie.' he mind-linked his Gamma.

'Yes Brad.'

'I give you permission to go and charm Izzy.'

'Sweet, she's a real cutie.' he could hear the amused happy tone in the man's voice. He could well imagine he was smiling right this minute 'Find Hadley first though boss.'

'Yes.' Bradley agreed.

They did not find Hadley, but did scent out her blood and found an unconscious rogue lying on the ground in a back alley. There was a lot of rogue scent in this alley. In fact, 4 distinct scents as well as Hadley. Fear was itching him, he didn't think she could take on four male rogues at once and win.

But something else was going on here too. Where Hadley's blood was didn't match up with the rest of the fight scene. There was another in this alley way, or maybe one of the rogues had turned on the others, but his major concern was that Hadley was no longer here, she was gone.

Eddie was already tracking her scent down the alleyway, hollered back at him, tracked it all the way to a main road, it was still quite strong, but then the scent was just gone, likely she was in a car and driven away.

"Check the hospitals." Bradley snapped out.

"Brad, what if there was another, helped her get away, that fight..." It was Cooper, he'd noted it as well, a fight where Hadley's blood was, but another fight meters away down the alley likely at the same time.

"I know," He nodded.

"What if it was Piper? We can't smell her, I can't scent another in the alley."

He sighed "If it was? She either put Hadley in a cab or took her home and I don't think she took the girl home," Bradley didn't think she would have even wanted to get involved in the fight, if she had, and thought Hadley was his Mate. She was saving the woman that she thought was now his Mate and putting them right back together. Therefore, he didn't think she would take her home, that would bring him right to her doorstep and seeing the two of them together had caused her a lot of pain last time, wouldn't do that to herself willingly.

"Hospital first." Cooper agreed with him.

Though if it was Piper who had helped out. That must have caused her some conflict, yet still helped her anyway, did what any she-wolf would do, saved another from a horrible situation. Unless they were both taken by the three rogues, he could smell but not see. He was actively praying that was not the case, praying Harper had come forward and helped her win against those rogues, and that they had put Hadley into a cab.

Damned woman so frustrating, yet still so caring at the same time, he had to find her, get that bloody scent masking spray off of her and find out if she was actually his Mate or not.

They found Hadley in the emergency room of the nearest hospital and all thoughts of punishing her and putting her in the cells back home were gone from him. The nurse who was looking after her, was telling him about her condition. She had a concussion and had been strangled by the look of it. He could see there was a large hand print around her neck and bruising on the entire left side of her face, she had a graze down her right cheek and a wound at her temple.

The short sleeved hospital gown she was now wearing showed bruising and claw marks on both her arms, defensive wounds and when she looked at him, her blue eyes filled with tears and then she just burst into tears. He hugged her to him and she just held on to him and sobbed.

“Careful.” the nurse told him, “she has more wounds on her body, some needed stitching.”

“How’d she get here?” He asked the nurse.

“My understanding a cab driver brought her in.”

“Hadley what happened?” he asked her softly, although he was certain he already knew and both Cooper and Harry had collected that Rogue to deal with him, he had to ask, he also knew she would tell him only what humans would understand.

She looked up at him, her right eye was bruised, he hated seeing her like this. “4 men attacked me, Bradley...but.” more tears spilled down her face.

Eddie’s hand was in her hair. “Shh, it’s alright Hadley.” his southern drawl rolled out of him, his Gamma charm in full effect to help her calm down and ease her stress.

“They came out of no where and dragged me into that alley, but...” again that hesitation.

“But?” Bradley prompted.

“Piper must have heard and came to help me...she’s injured too, Bradley, out there somewhere.”

“Did they take her?” he asked, and hated the 10 second wait for her to answer.

“No, she helped me up, into that cab and sent me here, but...”

“But?” he sighed.

“She took on three of them alone.” more tears spilled down her face and he felt Eddie’s hand on his arm. He relinquished Hadley over to the man, so he could use the force of his Gamma Charm to calm her down completely.

His father had said she was in danger, alone out here. She had just saved Hadley from a fate worse than death, he would ask her more details back at the hotel. He understood why she still looked badly injured, couldn’t allow Letti to heal her and let the humans see it, so had to remain injured.

“I didn’t get the chance to tell her I was your sister Bradley. I’m sorry.”

“It’s alright Hadley.” It likely was not a good situation for either her or Piper. “Did any of them?” he had to ask the horrid question “touch you?”

“No, well, not really. Piper came before they could, thankfully.” She answered him “She’s injured Bradley.” she sounded much calmer now that she was in Eddie’s arms.

“How badly, did you see?”

“Um, had blood on her face, down one side of her abdomen and on her arms, looked a right mess before I was thrown into the wall.”

Bradley nodded, he didn’t like it, didn’t have much choice about it. Wasn’t there to stop it, but if she had gotten Hadley out and won against 3 rogues, “Hadley how did you get away from the 4th man?”

“Piper attacked him too, he threw me at the wall and I hit my head. I don’t really remember much after that, just that she picked me up. It’s fuzzy, I think she threatened the cab driver to make sure I got here.”

He nodded, could see Eddie looking at him worry on his face, if Piper was Bradley’s Mate and even his own father was leaning in that direction, then the Luna to their pack was out there somewhere, injured. It was not sitting well with the pack’s Gamma. She was his job.

Why the alleyway, he thought, why was she there? It was blocks away from her store. He sighed, knew the answer right away. Because she didn’t want to

use the front door, so that back entrance went beyond that courtyard that led to the short walkway to the front of the store, there must be another exit, one he'd not been watching.

Got Hadley discharged and back to their hotel. Letti started healing her as soon as she was in the car. She was still upset and beside herself that Piper had gotten hurt while helping her, had begged him not to call their father, he'd told her he had to. So she'd begged him not to until she was healed.

This was the exact reason, she was not allowed to go out on her own without guards. Exactly what their father had lectured her about just yesterday, and then she had gone and done the most stupid thing and found herself in the situation they had warned her about.

She had now told him in full detail about the rogue's purpose for her, that she would sell for a good price. He'd even heard that Piper had told them she was a better choice. He shuddered to think of her, either of them, for that matter, in those rogue's hands. Put a call in to Cooper and told him what Hadley had said.

Heard the man and his wolf snarl in anger. He wasn't exactly sure what pissed him off more, what they wanted to do to Hadley, or that they had told Piper she was basically worthless. He just stated "I'll sort it out and end this before coming back."

Which just meant that the rogue was likely going to wind up dead after Cooper had tortured him for all the information he had about the whereabouts of the other 3 rogue's who had gotten away, they did not want any of them coming back to have another shot at Hadley or Piper for that matter.

Piper had taken them all on and won, so she must still train either on her own or in some gym. Both her parents had been good strong warriors, likely both on their way to elite status, and she had been in training, according to the pack records, both before and after she got her wolf, to be a warrior herself, likely wanted to take after them.

Likely wanted to make them proud of her, had trained right up until she'd scented him out and got hit with that first lot of betrayal pains he imagined, and then it would have just been a downward spiral into withering away to nothing. Bradley hated that thought, that she'd suffered through that.

Once he had woken up inside his own pack hospital after she'd left, and he'd heard his Pack Dr. Samuel tell him that not only did it sound like and look like he'd been suffering from a rejection. Eddie's claim that he'd felt severe pain from a she-wolf and only he would feel the Luna like that.

Then to go on and tell him that for the past 3 years he had been feeling the pain of another, not been able to track it down. Mostly it happened when Bradley was with a she-wolf, and that unfortunately, it was mostly when they were away from the pack. Though he did also feel it when Bradley had been with Bianca in their pack.

That when they were in the pack, Eddie had hunted relentlessly for the one in pain, but he had never been able to pin her down, or find out who that pain belonged to. Bradley had been more than a little horrified that it had been going on for 3 years.

He had stopped touching she-wolves, stopped flirting with she-wolves and stopped having sex right away, knew what it would do to the girl if it continued and he didn't want that. Was more than confused about it, apparently having a Mate he knew nothing about.

One he was damned sure had been in his bed that very night, he'd never felt anything like her before, touching her had created a need in him that he'd never felt or experienced with any she-wolf ever, the way she felt under his hands, the way she had responded to his touch even.

Then to reject him, and not just as her Mate, but also as her Alpha and the entire pack to boot. It was not good, he'd had no idea, didn't even really know what she looked like, had been so damned consumed with how she had felt the pleasure he was taking in being with her. His bloody eyes had been closed most of the time, immersed himself in that pleasurable feeling, so self-absorbed by it. He was an ass-hole, it seemed.

Pulled his mind from that and put a call into his father and told him what had happened, let him talk to Hadley and see her. Her mother too, heard her actually promise to do as she was told, now that she really understood the risks of being out and about alone.

Chapter 14 - Unscentable

Piper POV

Piper hit the treadmill at sun up, like she did every morning. Her ribs were still causing her pain, but Harper was working on them. She found Brandon next to her 15 minutes later. She smiled down at him as he stepped onto his own treadmill, frowned right at her and pointed to the bruising on her ribs, "What happened?"

"I'm alright, slight altercation with a man, trying to hurt a woman...I won." She grinned down at him "So you think today's the day, you'll beat me?" Piper asked, distracting him with a challenge.

"Maybe." he grinned right up at her as he turned on his machine.

Piper ran every day, about 18 kilometres in the morning and another 18 to 20 in the evening, depending on how she felt at the time. Both their treadmills were hooked to the iFIT app and she was currently running through Vermont. It was up on the screen with the iFIT trainer running and chatting away about the sights and when to breathe and when to kick it up a notch and when to slow it down. Her treadmill under full control of the iFIT app.

Brandon only ran every other day usually, but he had been running every morning with her since they got back. She didn't mind the company, liked running with him. "How's Aspen?" she asked him.

"Sleeping, he's not awake every day." Brandon commented.

Piper wondered if that was because Brandon was too young or if it was because Aspen was too young to emerge fully. Or if pushing forward in Whistler, had been too much for the boy's wolf.

"He's alright though? You're alright?"

"Yes, stop talking and trying to make me loose my breath." Brandon shot at her, then grinned "When he wakes up, he said we'll beat you."

Piper and Harper both snorted at him, fully amused now. "Good luck." they laughed at him "Challenge accepted."

"You're on mum." He grinned right back at her.

Brandon got off the treadmill first with a huff, which had made her laugh. The morning was brisk, but sunny. They ate out on the deck of the dining room,

which overlooked the woods of the Emerald Estates Park, and then she took him to school herself instead of him catching the bus.

Came home to work in her home studio on the 2nd floor till her appointment at 5pm this afternoon, where she dropped Brandon off at one of his friends' homes to hang out until she was done working. He didn't mind, happy to hang out and play soccer in the back yard till she came back to pick him up.

Arrived the same way she did the previous day, via the back entrance and courtyard, strolled up the stairs and let herself into her office, called Izzy to let her know she was in. Saw Izzy walk into her office and look right at her, a deep frown on her face.

"What is it, Izzy?"

"Did you get into a fight yesterday on your way out?" she asked very directly.

"What?" Piper asked, shocked that she knew this. How could she know this?

"Mr Yummy came into the store today, this morning and tried to sweet talk me into giving up your home address." Izzy said as she sat down in the chair on the other side of Piper's desk.

Piper was staring at her now, goddess had the pack's Gamma charmed all of her information out of Izzy? "Did you tell him Izzy?" Piper asked, quite concerned.

"What? No! Of course, not Piper. I really just wanted to punch him in his handsome face most of the time." she shook her head "but then he told me, you got into a fight and were injured Piper. I was really worried."

"Did you tell him after that?"

"No!" she shook her head "I know you would have called me right! If something happened to you."

"Of course I would have." Piper lied to her "Do I look injured to you?" she stood up and even turned around so that Izzy could see all of her.

"No!" Izzy nodded "they're playing dirty now. I don't like it, Piper, and I don't think they are going to leave you alone either."

Piper sighed, it didn't seem that way at all "Mr Yummy?" she wondered allowed not many could resist that man's charms, "You didn't get charmed by him? Like at all?"

"No, his attitude." she shook her head. "So super sure of himself. And what the hell is with that accent? That suddenly rolls out of him... I just," she shrugged, "got ticked off at him, seemed to surprise him too, that I wasn't all into him. Rolled my eyes at him at one point and he just stood and stared at me very shocked."

"Hmm." Piper smiled, though "I bet it did, that man is better with the ladies than anyone in Drake Industries." it was very interesting that Izzy was immune to Edwards's charm.

"Mr Drake himself, had more luck on that front. Almost had me telling him what he wanted yesterday. Got all smiles and charming at me in the store. Are they all like that?"

"Yes unfortunately." Piper nodded "When they want something from you, that is."

"You know Piper, I noticed something about Mr Drake himself, while he was here up close and personal yesterday, and he only missed you by like 10 or 15 minutes too."

"Mm, what did you notice?" she asked, curious herself now.

"That Brandon's eyes are exactly the same as Mr Drake's." Her look was very direct.

Piper said nothing at all. But trust Izzy to pick up on that, but then how could she miss it, those eyes were unmistakable so deep dark blue with those brilliant jewel green flecks all through them, they were kind of like looking at a blue green opals, very beautiful and mesmerising, unlike her caramel brown eyes.

"I'm guessing, he doesn't know then. That's why your reaction, why you're avoiding him, huh?" Perceptive as ever, though not the reason she was avoiding him at all.

Heard the door chime and sent Izzy down to answer it. The woman went even though Piper had not answered her question, she was not dumb.

Miss Harvey arrived promptly on time, to discuss her dress and produce a sketch of what she thought she might like. It was not a rough sketch either, turned out to be very detailed, so much so that Piper got the distinct feeling that it was not the girls' handiwork.

Took a screenshot of it for reference. It felt very familiar to her, then asked who designed it?

“Oh I did, but I had my friend draw it up. What do you think it will cost to make?”

Piper shrugged “That depends on a lot of things: fabrics, lace you choose, the beading quality and style, the buttons the type of underlay and if you want an inbuilt corset or not, what price are you looking at spending and do you know what material you want it made out of.

“Oh yes, I have a list.” she pulled out a computer-printed list of materials and handed it to Piper “I like to come prepared.” she smiled right at Piper.

Piper put her phone on her lap, and as she looked at the list in her hand of materials in her hand, she knew this was not the girls design, this dress was made by another designer. It was a Victoria Lambardi Design. She was damned certain of it.

“Are you sure you designed this? I won't make another designer's dress.”

“I did.” she nodded “My friend is a brilliant sketch artist, is all.”

“I can see that.” Piper nodded, as she flicked the picture of the dress to Victoria's number to see if it was her design. Was now just waiting for confirmation.

It didn't take long for her phone to start ringing and Victoria's name popped right up on the screen. “I'm sorry, do you mind if I take this?”

“ Not at all, go ahead.” Miss Harvey smiled.

Piper placed the phone on the desk and hit the call button, put it on speaker phone, “Vic how are you?” saw Miss Harvey's eyes widen.

“I'm not very good Piper. Did you just send me a design drawing of my latest gown, that came out a month ago?”

"I believe so. I have a Miss Harvey here who's claiming it is hers, but I recognised your label right away, thought you'd like to know."

Watched as the girl shot to her feet, Piper held onto the sketch when she tried to take it from her.

"I want that girl's details, please Piper."

"No problem, I'll send them in detail, even attach the photo if you like."

"It's my design," Miss Harvey suddenly burst out.

"It's a crime to steal a designer's dress." she heard Victoria snapping over the line "and I'll be pressing charges, Piper, please detain her."

Piper stood and the woman fled from her office. "Gone Vic, sorry running away as we speak."

"All good Piper, thanks for the heads up, what did she actually want?"

"To see how much it would cost me to make it. But I know your style, you do love your bling." she smiled. "you know the girl?"

"I believe I do. I fired her about a month ago, one Miss Jade Harvey right,"

"Yes."

"Please do send me any details you have for her. That sketch went missing with her along with a few other things."

"Sure I'll flick you an email right now. And send the sketch and item list she provided me, by courier tomorrow right to your office."

"Thanks Piper."

"No worries, have a nice night." Piper hung up and did just that, she really did hate it when someone tried to pass off another's work as their own. Victoria was higher ranked in the bridal industry than Piper was, and she was actually a very nice person to boot. Friendly and happy to sit and chat with Piper at bridal shows, they'd had dinner a few times, and hung out at an after party or two.

She helped Izzy lock up the store and told her she would see her next week.

Izzy was off for the next 4 days, headed home for her sister's wedding on Sunday, reminded her not to take any of her father's crap, out there in Maine. She wasn't due back at work until Wednesday, then told her "now Izzy, don't do anything silly." all her meaning on don't sleep with some man while drunk and they both laughed then headed off in two different directions.

Piper frowned and turned around to look back behind her 3 times on the way from her store to where she had left her car in the car park, got the impression she was being followed or watched at least. Neither she nor Harper could pick up the scent of a rogue or pack wolf, for that matter. Shook it off and got in the car, to go and pick Brandon up from his friend's house.

Stood in the kitchen preparing dinner while Brandon headed upstairs to shower after playing soccer the whole time she was gone, with his friends, more had turned up. They all lived close by, some just next door to where he had been, a good social group for him. She was happy about that.

Tonight, beef schnitzel with mash and veggies was on the menu. Not that Brandon was going to be happy about the vegetables part, he voiced on every occasion that he didn't like them, protested on occasion and had outright refused to eat them altogether at times. So stubborn at times.

She hollered up to him to come downstairs for dinner when it was ready and he whined right away at the sight of the veggies. She saw it coming the minute his eyes landed on the plate.

"A compromise, you eat all your vegetables and I'll let you eat in front of the TV, even put on your favourite anime to watch."

That got his undivided attention, he smiled right at her and headed off with his plate.

Piper chuckled to herself, there was always a bribe to be had "If you cheat." She added "it will be vegetarian all week long, next week."

Saw his eyes go wide, he looked horrified by the idea, he knew that she would do it too. Pouted a little at her, "Come on mum, that's not fare." he moaned, "Aspen needs meat not vegetables."

'Ah, that cheeky little bugger' she thought, still smiling, playing the wolf card already. It didn't take him long. "Aspen will suffer if you cheat, as much as you

will, because I mean, breakfast, lunch and dinners for 7 days, oh and snacks too.”

Saw him shove a fork full of squash into his mouth and chew it, all unhappy like. Burst out laughing at his ‘I’m eating it’ expression, so hilarious, he could always make them laugh, even Harper was chortling at his antics.

She sank down on the lounge next to him, nudged him “You know, you and Aspen need carbs as well as protein to grow up big and strong.”

“Your just trying to make me eat stupid vegetables.” he muttered.

“There good for you.”

“But taste like crap.” He muttered as he put more in his mouth and screwed his face up to show he didn’t like it.

Piper just laughed again, she did try to cater to his needs and only bought vegetables that she knew he would actually eat. Never bought green beans, or any beans for that matter. The boy wouldn’t touch them, regardless of bribery, so she just didn’t buy them.

She retired to her studio to work some more after Brandon went to bed that night, would have to get up and go into the store first thing for Miss Whitmore’s appointment and hoped the girl was over her tantrum from being put off last weekend, to this weekend.

The dress she had ordered was complete. Unless the girl had put on weight, that was, she’d insisted on a skin-tight gown and it had been adjusted twice now due to her weight change. This would be the last time. If no alteration was necessary, the girl could take it home with her and then she was on her own.

Sat sewing beads into the dress she was currently working on until nearly 2 in the morning, before putting it back on the mannequin, finished it completely, stood and looked at it, smiled to herself, it had turned out lovely and she just knew that the young bride was going to love it, Hope was a sweet natured 25 year old girl, a medical student with lots of debt ahead of her, this dress was a luxury for her, and her parents unbeknownst to her had saved every spare penny for her wedding dress and so she had gotten exactly what she wanted. She would take it into the store tomorrow and call her to tell her it was completed.

Actually recalled Hope crying when her parents had told her she could have any dress in the store she wanted, that they had saved well for her wedding day. She was their only child and they wanted her to have a beautiful day. Piper had thought it was very sweet, and had given them a 15% discount on the dress to help them out, with the actual wedding, they'd tried to refuse her. She'd shrugged it off with a smile. It didn't bother her, and it was her store, her choice.

Was woken by Brandon at the crack of dawn and he was dressed and ready to go for a run, all super excited, yelling at her to get her butt out of bed. She could see Aspen was up and awake the flicker of white in his eyes while they were bouncing around, he was ready for that who's faster challenge, she got up and dressed in her gym gear, tossed him a Nashi pear for a snack before their run "out in the woods today?"

"Sure and Aspen is going to kick your butt mum." He was grinning so excitedly, likely his wolf was itching for the challenge.

Harper pushed forward and looked right at him, saw Aspen push forward and she taunted him playfully, "Bring it on son." she grinned right at him.

The second they were done eating, they were out the back door and down the stairs to their small yard, which had four long stone stairs that led straight out into the woods. They had been running in the woods together for a while now, had a nice warn in track from their house that wound through the woods beyond their house all the way down to the Gaf Meadows Park, down to Morgans Run Park and then back again.

Aspen was fast but only young and Harper could keep up with him quite easily, and then once back inside the Emerald Estate Park woods she shot ahead of him, laughing. Heard him actually snarl at her in his displeasure at her running by him and leaving him behind. She'd been holding back and now he knew it.

They stood at the threshold of their property line and grinned right at him. Aspen and Brandon both looked more than annoyed, only made her and Harper chuckle "To slow young man." She teased him and tossed his hair.

"You got too much practice." Brandon muttered.

“Awe, come on. Aspens only a boy, he’ll grow strong and faster with time. Then one day he will be able to out run me in a heart beat. I imagine.” she’d smiled down at them “You want to go another lap?”

Saw him actually consider it, saw Aspen look right at her, snort and then just stalk off still in control of Brandon’s body. Guess not. She strolled after him, to shower and ready for the day.

He still seemed annoyed at breakfast, but even Harper was happy right this minute, seemed her day had been made, having Aspen challenge her, she really liked it, enjoyed her first real wolfen interaction with her son, the first real interaction with another wolf, she was happy about, since they were 18.

Both she and Harper did know that Brandon and Aspen would out run them at some point. The boy had Alpha genes, so the minute he shifted for the first time, would likely be when he could out run them, wondered if Aspen already knew that, what he was, an Alpha Wolf, might just leave that one alone unless they brought it up. It was likely though, she thought, he had come forward to protect her from another Alpha.

Drove out of her driveway and got that weird feeling she was being watched again, though she didn’t see anything out of the ordinary, lived in a house on the corner of two cul-de-sac’s and she saw no unusual cars on the streets, just the usual neighbours about as well, waved and smiled at them as she drove by, and away from her house, even checked the review mirror saw nothing near the house.

Shook it off as just being paranoid, her house and car were registered to her natural name, not attached to her business in anyway, just like Brandon’s last name. Everything away from the business was under Whitlock, but no-one knew that was her real last name, so it was fine.

She also didn’t drive anything super fancy that would draw attention to herself, owned a Nissan Rogue, had laughed at it when she’d seen one, thought it was apt, checked it out and found it had lots of cargo space, which was good for her to transport supplies around, and she liked the motion activated lift gate, came in real handy at times. There was plenty of seating space for driving Brandon and his friends’ places as well.

Dropped Brandon off at his friend Tyson’s place for the boys’ birthday party, told him to have a nice time and then quietly reminded him not to let Aspen appear, he’d looked right at her as if to say ‘I’m not dumb you know.’ before

getting out of the car to head into the party. Drove to her store and parked in the car park a few blocks away like she always did and walked the rest of the way to her store.

Though it was really starting to get weird now, and her paranoia was worse, constantly felt like she was being watched, even Harper was all bristled up inside her mind, knew whatever or whoever it was, that they had been sensing now since yesterday, here at the store and today at their home, this couldn't be good. Piper didn't think Bradley would be so pissed off as to track her and send someone outside of her work place.

Though Izzy had said Mr Yummy, had tried to get her to give him her home address. Not that Izzy had done so. Smiled at the thought that Izzy had just wanted to punch him in the face, she was stubborn. Must have ticked Edward off too. There weren't many that could resist a Gamma and his Charm, especially not a human woman.

A part of her wished she'd been there to actually see it, another part of her wondered what Edward himself made of it. A Gamma's ability never worked on their own Mate. Just made them irritated, that their Mate would try to sway them into getting what they wanted, and that was how it did appear that Izzy had reacted to him.

Izzy had also told Piper that she had been drawn to the man. Every time that he had walked passed the store window, she couldn't help herself but look at him. Poor woman could well be his human Mate. She had no idea, hoped not, that would cause Piper and Harper more trouble.

If she was Edwards Mate, Edward would not only take Izzy away but would have her pledge loyalty to Bradley and then that man could pull any and all information out of Izzy where Piper was concerned, if he so chose too.

Walked into her office and headed downstairs, the store was already open, said good morning to the 3 staff already in the store, Laura, who would be taking over from Izzy as the store manager in a months' time, when they went to Australia, Clare and Dianne, the two girls working on the floor today. There were already customers in the store along with their families to help the women pick out the dress she was looking for.

Piper placed the dress she had finished last night, in the back. It was already in a sealed gown bag and had the owner's name on it. Then collected the two wedding dresses from that section and moved them to the front of the store so

they would be easily accessible when her clients got there, one for the final payment to be made and picked up and one for the final fitting, which she was hoping for no more adjustments.

Chapter 15 - Unscentable

Bradley POV

Bradley just stared at Eddie, more than a little confused by what the man had told him. In fact, all in the room were staring at him with raised eyebrows. As the man reported to him that he was unable to get any information out of the Assistant Manager, Izzy, from Piper's Goddess Gown Store.

Absolutely nothing at all, that apparently the tiny human woman was immune to not just his good looks and natural charming self, but also to his mild use of his Gamma Charm and then his full Gamma Charm as well. They were all shocked, and Eddie himself was clearly not happy about it at all, he'd never come across a human who could resist his full use of the Gamma Charm, gifted to him by the Goddess herself.

Izzy had watched him walk into the store, he'd smiled right at her full of charm and she had damned near blushed apparently, smiled right back at him, like she'd already liked the look of him and he'd thought it was going to be a walk in the park. For when she had slid her eyes over him and she had done, he'd registered her heart rate increase and she'd sucked in a breath all sharp, reacted to him as though she was very attracted to him even her dark brown eyes had darkened slightly and her pupils had dilated a little, all the tell tale signs of attraction. All the things he used to tell if his Charm was going to be needed or would work. Everything had lined up for him to charm her.

But though he'd been able to flirt with the girl to soften her up, as he worked up to getting the information that he wanted out of her. The moment that he had brought up Piper, her whole attitude had completely changed, she had gone from smiling and being all friendly to instantly frowning at him, with narrowed eyes.

So he'd kicked it up a notch and turned on his Gamma Charm just enough to sweet talk her like he would any human woman, and the reaction he had gotten had shocked him completely. Izzy apparently had taken a half step back from him and glared right at him, then snapped at him "I don't give out personal details of employees to anyone." and looked like she had been about ready to smack him one.

Eddie had decided to use the full use of his Gamma's Charm on the woman to try and calm her down and had reached out to touch her to assist with the use of his Charm, only to have her actually hit his hand away and tell him not to touch her. His southern drawl had been well pronounced when he'd tried again to get the information from her and she had raised an eyebrow at his sudden change of accent, he'd still gotten nothing from her.

So he'd changed tactics altogether, figured hitting on her and sweet talking wasn't going to work, so he told her the truth, that Piper had gotten injured in an alleyway behind the store and that he was honestly concerned about her, had even let his real concern for Piper shine through to her, been genuine with her, that he just wanted to make sure that Piper was okay.

She had not believed that either, had stood before him and folded her arms right across her chest and outright called him a liar to his face. Had still refused to give out any information on Piper. Izzy wouldn't even put in a call to Piper for him to make sure she was alright and safe.

Stated flatly, "If Piper was in trouble she would have called me and told me," and then glared right at him, took a step towards him and stared him down almost, no fear in her where he was concerned, one tough lady, which Bradley had thought the same thing the other day.

After a full minute of the two of them just staring each other down with Eddie starting to get more than annoyed with the woman, she had pointed a finger right in his face and narrowed her eyes right at him and he'd quoted her "Tell your boss, to get lost. Piper is not interested in A-holes, who believe they can just have whatever they want, because they are some bigshot, rich, smug bastard who are used to walking all over everyone, without a care as to the fall out." Then she had just turned and walked away from Eddie, stalked her way across the store to the front door and yanked it open for Eddie to leave had looked right at him pointedly and told him "Get out, and do not come back. Get a dress else where."

Bradley was still frowning at the man, for the term A-holes, he was not an asshole. He was actually quite liked by his pack, tried to keep everyone happy, and well protected. As for the smug bastard, well, that would likely have come from his interaction with her himself earlier the day before. The walking over everyone without a care as to the fall out, could be that Izzy knows more about he and Piper than he did.

But hell he'd not so much as looked at another she-wolf since learning about his unknown Mate all them years ago. Just in case touching another one would still hurt her, he had no idea if a rejection was in place or not. He thought he had actually been very considerate of her, even though he'd had no actual proof of her being his Mate. Not so much as even let a she-wolf near him in 8 damned years. Not an easy thing for an Alpha blooded male to do. Though it hadn't been that hard for him, likely because he had already tasted her and nothing else really interested him any more. A tell-tale sign she was actually his Goddess-Gifted Mate.

He'd gone and searched that court yard and found a small gate covered by the hedge that was growing along the courtyard walls, hidden from view but well maintained, the gate had not even squeaked when he'd pushed through it.

He had set Cooper up to watch it, had him mask his own scent so that she wouldn't pick up on the fact that there was someone there watching her. She had turned up again the next day, late in the afternoon, though Cooper had not gone in and confronted her or tried to explain anything to her, instead he had stayed outside due to the conversation his wolfen hearing had picked up between her and Izzy.

Apparently, Eddie had been given a nickname by the two of them, "Mr Yummy." It seemed that Piper and Izzy were very close indeed. Izzy had reported to Piper, just like Cooper or any of his unit would to him.

Izzy had told Piper that she thought he was playing dirty to get at Piper and that she didn't think Bradley was going to go away. Izzy was very right about that, it was very interesting to Bradley, Cooper and Harry that Izzy thought Bradley himself had a better chance of sweet talking information out of her than, Mr Yummy did.

Eddie had huffed and stared hard at Bradley for a long moment and then just turned away to look out the window. He was unhappy to hear that, it was clear to the whole room. Cooper had looked right at Bradley for a long moment then just sighed a little on the heavy side, which had made everyone turn eyes on him, even Eddie from his place by the window.

He'd not wanted to impart anymore, but there was definitely more he had to report, finally stated softly that Piper had a son, that his name was Brandon. Cooper had come back late that night, had managed to flag down a passing

taxi and gotten him to trail her car home, so he could lay eyes on the boy as well, stated he just wanted to confirm if what he'd heard was true.

It was true, he had watched her pick the boy up and take him home. Then he'd just retired to his room shortly after he'd made his report, not said anything further on the matter at all.

Bradley knew that there was more, something else was going on, the whole bloody unit did. Cooper was not one to sit on information, so Bradley had strolled down to the man's suite himself after dinner, to give the man time to think about it and how he wanted to impart it, only to find that he was not there at all.

Cooper had left the hotel, without informing his Alpha or any of the others at that.

Bradley had called him right away and gotten the man's voice mail.

Had stood and frowned in Cooper's room, he'd not said anything more about the boy, actually had not said anything about her or the boy, other than that he had trailed them home. He knew where the woman lived now. Had not imparted her address to him either and now Bradley was starting to wonder if Piper did not live alone, she had a son, she could well have a human husband.

If that was the case? Cooper likely wouldn't want to tell him at all, not considering what they all thought she was to him. He'd never scented her out. So he had no idea if her having sex with someone else would affect him. She'd stated her rejection and likely thought it was in effect, due to not one pain of betrayal since that night. She could well have found a human and gotten married.

Bradley did not know how that was going to go down. Right this minute, Benson was agitated by the thought of his Mate with another, seemed to kind of understand the situation, but was very unhappy with the thoughts that were rolling around inside his mind. They did not know the exact situation, didn't even have it confirmed she was his Mate either, but they did believe this was the case.

Both he and Benson did believe she was theirs deep down.

Morning came and Cooper was still not back, Bradley had called the man a dozen times, damned near every hour on the hour, something was definitely going on and he did not like it. He was still sitting in Coopers room when the man finally let himself into his suite.

He stopped and stared at Bradley when he saw him, then just sighed and closed the door behind him.

“What the hell is going on Cooper?” Bradley had snapped right at him his anger showing.

“I spent the night watching her. Trailed her to work this morning as well. Leave it alone Brad, for now.”

“You said, she had a son!” he snapped still angry.

“She does, I’ve been trying to get a photo of him, it’s why I was out,” he walked towards the bathroom.

“Cooper whatever is going on. I need to know it.” he’d gotten up and stalked after his Beta to the bathroom, not ready to let it go, sitting waiting on the man all night that would not take his calls, rejected his own Alpha’s calls, his bloody best friends calls at that, had left Bradley ticking away like crazy, his annoyance with his Beta had turned to anger. He’d not slept all night.

Had prowled around and paced back and forth inside of Coopers suite all damned night long, and just got more furious about the entire situation.

“We can’t just take her Bradley, not when she has a child to consider, More tact is going to be needed.”

“I understand that, I just need to know if she is or isn’t my Mate, if she’s not I’ll walk away, regardless of what father said. So did you get a picture? Of the boy?”

“I did.” Cooper nodded “I need a shower, had a run this morning, I’ll talk to you when I’m out.” then he’d shut the bathroom door right in Bradley’s face.

Bradley was hard pressed not to kick the damned door in and Alpha Order the information out of his Beta, stood glaring at the door, he knew Cooper would have heard the snarl that came from Benson because of the lack of respect.