

Denied by Destiny: Trapped in the Shadows of the Mate Bond

C 251 - 260

3 Years later

-Josie~

Bang!

I let the vibration of the firing gun run up my arms, as it tries to pull at my shoulders. Control...its all about staying in control.

There's nothing quite like shooting my trusty 9mm gun. The way my chest contracts just as I fire, my heart stopping...my body freezing just for a split second until I once again hit the bullseye.

I am in complete control.

I never miss, that's why I am officially the new Head of Training for the weapons division.

My record speaks for itself.

Putting the gun back into safety mode and placing it on the table, my phone buzzes from inside my bag as I am the only person in the peaceful meadows. There are guards on border patrol just out of sight but for the most part, I was alone.

This was my spot, this is where I lead the training. Dad even had a cabin built out here for me, it's my go to place when I need space. It's also where I run my female only exercise classes, in the privacy of the wooden large cabin.

Lobo, my dog that was gifted to me a few weeks after my 18th, lays panting under the table trying to cool off from our marathon run earlier. He never left my side, I think that is exactly why he was given to me. I don't care the reason, I love this fury best friend of mine.

"Come on Lobo, I need to get these back under lock and key." I whistle out, as I place the guns in a black holdall and securely place them over my shoulder. Taking out my phone, I read the influx of recent messages from Maya...she was trying to coax me out for another party night...but they had a way of landing me in trouble.

With Lobo by my side, I head back towards the house to place the weapons in the secure small armoury located in the basement. The collective pack's weapons were kept in the main armoury, but Dad always championed against Mum for me to have easier access. Mum protested at first but soon caved in.

Once the guns are locked away, I make my way back upstairs where I find Mum in the kitchen.

"Hey Mum." I move to sit up on a kitchen bar stool, Lobo ignoring me as he rests in his day bed. After a good meal in his belly, he'll be back for cuddles with me.

"There's my baby, how did you get on?" Mum and Dad have been such big supporters of mine, especially when my brother's left for alpha training. I think they knew I needed something to call my own, something I could put my own stamp on. Being the best shooter for some years, and weapons training needing a complete overhaul...when Dad suggested it, I jumped at the opportunity. A real chance to make a difference in an element of training within this pack.

"Good, still maintaining my record." I smile out at her before my face drops, his bag sitting on the counter top. My eyes dart to Mum questionably.

"George is here. I told him to go straight up."

I bite down on my tongue just in time to prevent a moan escaping my mouth. Why was he here...

"Be nice." Mum gives me a pointed look as I climb off the kitchen bar stool. Now I understand why Lobo was ignoring me, he could smell his scent in the kitchen. Lobo has a problem sharing me especially with George.

George was as close as me having a boyfriend actually gets. I just don't have the time, don't have the interest in being in a fully committed relationship, not when my duties at the pack take priority. And George tends to be a bit...clingy.

That's not to say I don't enjoy spending time with him when I've had a few too many drinks, I consider George as my booty call, whereas he has often used the term girlfriend to describe me.

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As soon as I enter my bedroom, I can hear the water running in my ensuite. Why did he leave his bag downstairs if he was upstairs having a shower. Then I remember why...he was extremely well built, his toned body always having this skill in shutting my negative

thoughts out. He wasn't afraid to flaunt his good looks, even in my parent's house.

"You joining me beautiful?" His eyes lock onto me as mine are too busy roaming over his body. George and I will never be long term, I have no desires to find a mate and leave my family pack...which is what George is hoping for. He is a member of my Mum's pack, the Clear Waters pack which is managed by Auntie Alora on a daily basis. I think George expects me to claim him one day and declare myself the new Alpha of the pack...the pack that is lined up for my triplet brother Jace to take on. Jaxon, being the first born of all three of us is lined up to take over Dad's pack, the Dark Phantom pack. But I have needs, female needs, and George is very good at helping me with my needs.

"I thought we could stay in for dinner." And there it was, the real reason he was here...to suck up to my parents.

"I can't, Maya just text." She was my go-to excuse, and she backed me up every time. The thought of not going out now seemed hard to consider. I'd be a bad friend for letting Maya face whatever new problems for herself she has conjured up today alone. "Come on Josie, we never get to see each other. If you aren't at the hospital then you're at the shooting range. I've travelled all this way.." His tone changing to one of annoyance.

"I didn't ask you to, you didn't call ahead George to see if I was free."

"I just assumed."

"What, that I would drop everything the moment you turned up. That I would cancel my life to be with you."

He shuts the water off, stepping out of the shower and wrapping a towel around his waists. He is before me in seconds, his hands clutching at mine as he pulls me into him. But I pull myself out of his hold, he is soaking wet, and I was now heading out. "Josie!" He lowly growls at me, the warning in his voice doing nothing to stop me. He knows it, I know it. He knows me well enough by now.

"Come with me?" My offer is half-hearted and I'm hoping he will say no. He and Maya don't exactly get on...which always causes friction when we are together.

"Huh, what to play second fiddle to Maya no thanks." He rolls his eyes, his face changing slightly at the mention of my friend.

"It's a party George, people tend to socialise at parties." I tut back in annoyance from his bitter tone against Maya.

"And I came to be with you, alone with you." His eyes pierce into mine, that charm trying to worm its way into my resolve...trying to make me cave in o his needs, his commands.

As I tiptoe up, my lips preparing to brush against his, I notice his demeanour change... that flicker of him expecting to have got his own way. His chest sighing in small relief. But he is with the wrong girl if he thinks I could so easily be controlled. I let my lips linger on his for a moment before pulling them away and kissing the side of his cheek.

"Save me some eggs for breakfast." I wink before walking into my bedroom, reaching for my leather jacket and not looking back.

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~Josie~

As soon as I arrive to the location of the party, I had that ominous feeling wash over me. Which was only confirmed as I pulled up to the house to find the front door blocked with people's backs as they try to look over heads to something happening inside. Stepping out of the vehicle, I wished Lobo was with me...if any danger was imminent he was the one to inform me. Otherwise, I might as well be walking into the dark.

I can already hear Maya screaming inside, her volatile words reaching out to the front courtyard. Pushing through the crowd at the front door, they...as always...easily move aside, their gasps and small whispers at my arrival only stiffening my back as I make my way to my friend.

My reputation as always precedes me, a reputation cleverly created and spread by the very female I was here to check up on.

"Maya?" I ignore the eyes on me, the shocked whispers as I make my way through the deep crowd. Bodies turn away from me, from the scene. They are happy to watch a show but not wanting to be involved with any show I might put on, they do not want to be caught in the crossfire...at least that is what they think, what the perception of me is. It is further from the real truth.

I find her, screaming at her boyfriend of two years with a broken bottle in her hand. Smashed glass covers the floor as Toby, her boyfriend, stands side by side with another female. A female that is watching Maya's breakdown with petrified eyes.

"What's going on?" I don't think twice about entering the aggressive situation, my legs closing the distance between us automatically.

I am by Maya's side trying to calm her down, my eyes watching the broken bottle in her hand, moving quickly to grip her wrists. Gasp erupting around me.

Glaring daggers at the spectators, the crowd starts to disperse around us, only a few remaining.

I turn to my friend, my grip on her wrists tightening until she drops the bottle, the remains of it smashing to the ground.

"He found her...he found his mate." Her eyes turn to me, her body starting to give up the fight as anger turn into sobs.

"Maya...I." He takes a step forward to comfort her, his newly found mate pulling at his arm.

"Don't...when were you going to tell me, how long have you known?"

"I was just waiting for the right time..."

"I think you should leave..." I give Toby a fierce look daring him to challenge me. He concedes instantly, his new mate might be from out of town, but he knows who I am, he knows my reputation.

He pulls his mate away, her eyes looking between him and me in disbelief before the murmuring of whispers starts again.

"I thought you weren't coming." Maya moans drunkenly at me as I pull her towards the pool area out pack. She didn't need to watch Toby leave...out of sight, out of mind.

"I was at the shooting range when you text, I do have to get up early for a shift but then I found George in my shower..."

"Ugh spare me the details."

"Here...let's drink to forget show we?" I reach for two shot glasses on the outside bar stand, reaching over to select tequila rose as my secret weapon to snap her out of this mindset.

We knock the first shot back with ease before I pour us another.

"I can't believe he found his mate." The sadness in her eyes breaks my heart, she acts tough...mouthy, but she has a heart of gold buried beneath that hostile exterior.

"Found her but didn't tell you, instead he let his relationship with you take priority. He was worried about telling you, because he cares Maya. If he didn't he would have told you immediately, would have cut contact with you. Instead he strung you both along." I wanted to yell at him, for hurting her like this. This was the risk of hooking up with people that weren't your mates, you ran the risk of being hurt when they did.

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Two years is a long time for a non fated mate relationship. I did warn her.

She warned me back, but then I realised George telling me one day that he found his mate would actually be doing me a favour.

"I guess you're right." She sighs out before knocking back the second shot I had prepared.

"You know I am, now take this shot and let's have some fun."

Waking up spread out on the couch, my head rolling off towards the floor, I regret drinking so much. By 3am Maya had forgotten all about her ex, hooking up with a new male that tickled her fancy. I'll give it to her, she sure knew how to move on quickly.

I do feel for her at times, out of the girl friendship group she is a part of at Uncle Jude's pack, she is the only one that hasn't found her mate.

Meaning she is left out of couples nights, the girls also not particularly interested in wild nights out any more. I was still up for some fun but not if it took me from my pack duties.

Wiping the drool off my face and trying to flatten my hair down, I check my phone... shit, I have under an hour before I need to be at the hospital some how fitting in a shower, breakfast and driving home. This was going to be tight.

After sending Maya a text to let her know I was leaving and to call me tonight, I very carefully tiptoe over the passed out partygoers scattered on the floor. The whispers last night didn't stop just because I refused to listen and I don't fancy them starting up again this morning.

Starting the engine of my white beetle car, I drive the short distance home, not needing to stop at either gates, both pack guards are well trained to look out for my car, which means I don't have to stop and wait for access. An agreement sorted between Dad and Uncle Jude as soon as I reached age.

Parking out front I find a black convertible in my usual space...my heart jumping with excitement. They were back.

Leaping out of the car, I rush towards the front door when I stop...a black motorcycle is parked in the neighbouring space. My fingers trail against the seat..pausing as they pick up the helmet to inspect it further. Hearing laughter in the house I put the helmet back, opening the front door to hear the voice of George talking with my brothers.

Really...he stayed the night.

As soon as I enter the house, I hear them pushing out their chairs, fighting to race towards me. These two men were my other halves, part of me. I hadn't seen them for a year, I could feel my heart trying to leap out of my chest with excitement as I rounded the hallway corner towards the kitchen.

I am in their arms within seconds, both of them taking it in turns to embrace me.

"When did you get back?" I beam out as my feet are placed back on to the ground. Lobo by my side, his barking with concern at my reaction. The last time he saw Jaxon and Jace, he was still a puppy. "Last night, where were you?"

"I..." My eyes dart to George sitting at the table, his eyes staring at me with anger. But my eyes don't remain on him, they land upon the male sitting next to him...an intensity knocks the air out of my lungs as dark broody brown eyes meet my silvery grey ones.

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~Josie~

My eyes were locked in a hypnotic state of rapture. They were pulling me towards him, like gravity and I could sense my body wanting to lean forward. To seek out that unknown sensation. Wanting more. It took all my mental capacity to look away.

"Where were you?" Jace, the more jovial of my two brothers, pulls my head under his arm trying to hold me in a head lock. But my moves are unbeaten for a reason. I spin myself last minute, trapping his legs within mine and pushing him to the ground. His legs trapped within mine's tight hold.

"Nice!" Jaxon nods in approval, Jace growling playfully on the floor.

"Wouldn't mess with Josie, Jace. She's unbeaten in combat for a reason." Dad proudly chuckles from the table, my eyes briefly flickering to the guest again, his eyes having not moved off me.

That pull tries to suck me under again. My eyes dart down to his chest, I can't see the most part of his body as he is sitting but judging by his broad chest, he was tall and muscular. His biceps were tight under his grey top, the material straining without his muscle even being flexed.

His eyes roam the length of me, I am not hidden behind a table...his eyes scanning the length of me. But I see no sign in his eyes of what he is thinking...maybe he is questioning

my Dad's claim of being unbeaten in combat. He wouldn't be the first male to underestimate my abilities.

My eyes hold his again, suddenly it feels very warm in here, suffocatingly hot. Whoever he was, he had a deep dark aura to match those eyes.

"Huh we will see about that." Jace mutters as I offer him a hand to help pull him up off the floor. "Females only, right?" Jaxon looks to Mum and Dad in astonishment, needing to get the facts right.

"Nope, overall. Our best fighter." Mum confirms out loud.

"Yeah but..." Jace stands up preparing to shut me down.

"Our best fighter Jace!" Mum's eyes give that dagger stare, the one I have inherited from her. That was also mine and Jaxon's queue to sit at the breakfast table, not to start an argument, especially not in-front of company.

Sitting down opposite George I am very aware of eyes on me, but when I look up...they aren't George's. they are those dark brown eyes again. He makes no attempt to look away, in fact even whilst looking at me...his forehead creases, his frown lines appearing. He must be quite a few years older, he held himself with more confidence than the male sitting next to him. The male that slept in my bed last night, I just wasn't in it.

"So where were you...last night?" Jace asks again, a smirk upon his face as his eyes dart to George. My brother's weren't huge fans of George, they saw through his facade, but I don't think they'd like any one I brought home.

"Maya needed me." I shrug in response.

"At a party?" George chides, as his hands hold the cutlery firmly.

I hold his gaze, not backing down. He's trying to make me look like a bitch for ditching him when he didn't even tell me he was coming.

"I told you I had plans." I calmly state.

"I didn't know that!"

"Then call ahead next time, don't just arrive uninvited like you're my..." I could feel the warm glare of his eyes on me still, but I refused to look. I refused to be flustered by this judging male.

"What, Josie? Like your boyfriend..." George grunts out, his nerve of talking to me like this in front of my own family...

The cutlery in my hand is slammed down onto the table, Lobo barking at the abrupt clang by my feet. He was always good at sensing the change in my emotions.

I wasn't usually one for public displays of drama, but George was getting on my last nerve.

"I've got a shift to start." I control my growing anger by reaching for a slice of toast and biting down hard on it. I push my chair out, Lobo already by my side as I go to exit the house again. The shower will have to wait, he'll only try and pounce on me... I'd rather use a can of body spray to see me through the day.

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"Hold up, let us finish and we'll come with you. We need to show Knox the borders anyway." Jaxon calls after me.

"Not border patrol Son, Josie works at the hospital now." I hear Dad correct my eldest brother just as I close the front door to silence.

....

Knox, that was his name.

Why have I spent half of my shift at the hospital thinking about Knox.

Soaking bandages in the herbal concoction I use on a daily basis, I lay them out to dry in my small preparation room. I wasn't medically trained but had a natural interest in natural remedies, using plants and herbs to speed up certain recovery processes. It was usually the broken arm from warriors at training, it was very rare I had to deal with blood or open wounds in my role here.

But we practice for the worse and often run pretend attack protocols, preparing for an influx of severe casualties...which thankfully hasn't happened.

But as Doctor Abel says, it's best to be primed than ill prepared.

My body skin was warming from the memory of those eyes roaming the length of me, my mind not concentrating on the task in hand that I didn't hear the door open...or my voice being called from behind.

As soon as my elbow is gripped, my body jumps into defence mode...my hands reaching for his throat as the bowl of herbal remedy is knocked to the floor.

"Chill, it's just me." George tuts as he pulls my hands away from his throat.

"What are you doing here?" My hands clench into tiny balls by my side, my frustration at his intrusion needing an outlet as my nails dig into my palms.

"I was saying goodbye, I'm heading home. I called out to you...I even knocked on the door."

"I didn't hear you." My hands moves up to rub down my face, I didn't hear him because I was engrossed about somebody else. Somebody I didn't even know. What was going on with me...

I could hear Doctor Abel's and Dad's voice outside in the corridor, which meant Dad let George into the hospital. Usually outsiders weren't allowed to visit here, but then I suppose George is a member of the Clear Waters pack. "George...I think we need to cool things off for a bit." I sigh out, bending down to pick up my now empty bowl.

"What do you mean?"

"You want things I can't give you..." I stand up, turning but he turns me, pulls me to him.

"You give me everything I need beautiful." His hands grip at my hips, as he pulls me deeper into him...his nose moving to my neck. The seductive meaning clear in his tone.

"No, stop....I just, I can't be the girlfriend you want me to be. I've got too much going on here..."

"Well Jaxon and Jace are back now."

"And?"

"And, they'll take certain things back under their control. Like the weapons training, which will free you up more."

But I don't want to be freed up, weapons training was mine...I had worked hard to be appointed into that position. To hell if my brothers think they can take that away from me.

"Maybe I'm not making myself clear...we need a break from each other..."

His eyes turn cold the moment I seethe out my words. His face no longer on my neck, the seduction gone...anger registering on his face...as his jaw tenses.

"You forget, who else is going to want you.." His words are laced with bitterness, as his hand grips my arm tightly.

"Is there a problem here?" A low voice, more like a rumble, comes from the doorway. George's grip on my arm vanishes but the dark brown eyes of the male standing by the door has clogged it, his arms crossed over his broad chest. George jumps back, that coldness shifting instantly to a careless gaze.

"Whatever Josie, just call me when you change your mind."

Which will be never.

George goes to move past Knox, but the broody male makes a point of blocking the doorway, a level of coldness settling across this compact room as his eyes bleed out into a black colour, his wolf coming forward.

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-Josie~

The tension within my small preparation room was tangible. I could feel it on my finger tips...taste it. The air remained suffocating, which isn't something George was capable of.

Black eyes turn from George's onto my very own...my breath catching in the back of my throat. Why did he stare have some kind of power over me...

There seemed to be some kind of stand off happening between the two of them. George's back elongating, his shoulders hunching forward, his feet bouncing on the balls of his feet...he was preparing for an attack. Yet this Knox seems completely unfazed by George's stance, eyeing George like he was merely a wolf cub...yet he was the full sized predator. There was even a trace of a smirk entering onto his lips.

With a silent nod, Knox moves aside just enough for George to past through. He doesn't make it easy for him though.

Unable to stand this oppressive atmosphere any longer, I go to move past Knox but to my complete shock he pushes me backwards. Deeper into my little preparation room, his foot kicking the door shut.

Creating privacy between us.

This room was slightly bigger than a storage cupboard, George and I just fitted but Knox was twice the size, he ate up the remaining space...I couldn't move, I was completely at his mercy.

His eyes return back to the deep brown I was becoming more familiar with, the blackness fading out. My body was now not my own, it is caught in a fight between that unexplainable gravitational pull towards him and wanting to push him away from me...scream at him for getting involved in my business.

"Did he hurt you?" His eyes break from mine, my mind snapping out of a tranced state as soon as his hypnotic stare drops.

""What?"

"He touched you, did it hurt?" His eyes return to mine, a level of anger laced within them. His jaw tenses again as if my slowness in responding to him was irritating him. "No...no he didn't hurt me."

"Good." He nods, as he leans in closer to me...sniffing the air around me, his nose scrunching up in slight disdain.

"It's the medicine." I croak out, clearing my throat as I reach for a cloth to wipe the floor. I couldn't smell the spilt ingredients, all I could smell was leather and sandalwood...strange.

He quirks an eyebrow as he takes a step away from me, releasing me from being trapped between him and the enclosed worktop space.

His eyes dart to the floor before rising back up and scanning the bottles of liquids and herbs labelled in the glass cabinets.

Without another word he spins, a heavy footstep echoes as his hand reaches out for the door, but before I can think of my actions...I've gripped his elbow to stop him. "Knox..."

"Kit...It's Kit Knoxbridge, but I'm known as Knox." As soon as he stops, a cold exterior washes over him...I shouldn't have touched him, why have I touched him.

His cold eyes dart to my hand, gripped at his elbow before burning back to mine.

"Sorry..." I snatch my hand back, what the hell did I just do.

"Can you not mention George and me to my Dad..""So there is a George and you?"

"No, not anymore. I meant..."

"You don't want me to mention to Alpha Hector what I saw?" His body is closed off again, his arms moving to cross over at his chest. I shouldn't have touched him, he's not from this pack. He might have taken it as an insult.

"Yes...it's just...George is from our other pack, and I don't want conflict between my Mum and my Auntie just because I've decided to call it quits with him. He'll get over it." I can hear my inner self telling me to shut up, that I was going off on a tangent. Completely embarrassing myself in front of this hot, dark and broody, far too attractive male that was a guest in my house...in my pack.

"Somehow I find that hard to believe..." He murmurs before sighing out, his hand raking down his face.

As his hand slides down his face, my own hand twitches to touch in again. Busy, I need to keep my hands busy.

Turning my back on him, I reach for ingredients in the glass cabinets, preparing a new batch of infused dressings. It was hard to breathe in here with the door closed but there was something about that new scent...intoxicatingly addictive. "Your boyfriend..." He stops as his hand is on the door handle.

"Not boyfriend...just erm..." I can't exactly use the term fuck buddy...I hardly know this male and something deep in my gut is warning me to play down George and me. Maybe I just didn't want my brothers finding things out, he came with them, he must be friends with them...

My mouth starts to open, preparing to finish my response when the hospital alarms start sounding out through the corridor, the flashing lights warning of an emergency, of an attack.

I go to reach past him for the door handle when he blocks my path to the exit, instead pushing me back.

"Stay here, don't move!" He demands with a growl.

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~Knox~

Closing the door, I take in a much needed intake of air...holding my breath had been the only way to control myself in such close proximity to the alpha's daughter.

Jaxon and Jace hadn't mentioned a sister...

From the moment she walked into their house this morning, all I can think about is the fiery red head.

My hands remain tightly clasped around the door handle, as figures rush past me...the alarms loudly sounding and flashing lights putting me on edge. This pack hadn't been attacked in years, so why now. The hospital was large, one of the biggest I have ever seen in a pack..not that I visited many packs. This was the first time in a long time, I had returned from alpha training with some of my own students.

I prepare to check in on Alpha Hector when my hand that was still tightly gripped around the door handle of the storage cupboard is pulled, the door swinging open and my body moving with it.

The fiery red head rolling her eyes at me as I collide into her.

"It's just a routine exercise. Move!" She orders at me, her feistiness doing nothing to quell that rising fire igniting within me. Her blatant disregard for my orders angering me in a way I hadn't felt in years. No one disregarded my orders. "Look Princess, when I give orders I expect them to be followed."

"Princess? You've got your wires crossed handsome!" She tuts at me, before barging past me and joining the figures running down the corridor. I follow her to find her communicating with a doctor, Alpha Hector also there, watching his daughter intently. She seems to have no issues following the doctor's orders as she is sent out of the ward.

Bloody typical.

"Knox, this is Doctor Abel...he runs the physiotherapy department here. Abel, Knox is the Head of the alpha training programme the lads have just returned from." Alpha Hector introduces me.

"Nice to meet you..." The doctor places his hand out for me to shake, which I do more out of politeness than anything.

The fact that she followed his order so easily has pissed me off greater than I could have imagined... What was going on with me.

"How did the alphas get on?" Doctor Abel looks to me with interest, his shoulders held high but his eyes struggle to keep mine.

"Top of their class, Alpha Jaxon in particular has broken all records set by those before him." I respond, my eyes darting around the ward as it scans for information. Something seemed off about this male, from the way he ordered the alpha's daughter to the way he is trying to come across as non threatening....maybe I'm used to the alpha bloods... the born leaders rather than the healers.

"You don't seem very busy in here for a routine drill?" I glance down the corridor to find medical staff continuing to run chaotically as if their lives depended on it. Yet this ward was still, no madness...only two males were laid up in a bed. I could see they were

bandaged up with the same cloth that the red head was preparing...had she touched them. Had her hands been on their skin....

A flash of anger hits me from my wolf before I am able to push it back down.

"If this were a real emergency, believe me we would be helping during the first wave of injuries, that's where Josie is now."

"How is she getting on?" Alpha Hector asks with enthusiasm.

"She has a gift for natural remedies, seems to be a strength of hers. It's just trying to convince the other doctors of the benefits of alternative medicine side of things."

"I can have a word.."

"No Alpha, that's not necessary. Josie is strong minded, she'll turn them around. I have no doubt."

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Something rattles me from the way this doctor talks about the alpha's daughter, far too personal for my liking. Even the way he uses her name...I haven't yet dared to say it...yet dared to think it. Protocol goes, she is the alpha's daughter and should be addressed as such. Alpha Hector finishes giving me the tour of the pack hospital, before showing me the rest of the pack grounds, including the borders.

For some reason I had been entrusted to see parts of the pack that I know for a fact other visitors could only dream of.

His hospitality doesn't end there, once we are back at the alpha house, I find myself sitting in on a meeting with Hector, Jaxon and Jace.

Alpha Kaia also present as she sits at her own desk as Luna of this pack. The notorious Dark Phantom pack couldn't be farther from the rumours.

Jaxon and Jacer were discussing the changes in the pack whilst they had been away. The biggest change, even surprising me, how much the red head had taken on.

"There's a new border rota system I would like to implement..." Jaxon states out to his father, who is listening but making it very clear he is still the acting Alpha.

"You can test it for a fortnight and if it seems to work then you can implement it." Hector responds watching Jaxon keenly, his chin resting in his hands.

"The warriors need additional training." Jace also states out, the triplet brothers being identical in appearance, but very different in personalities.

"What do you have in mind?" Alpha Kaia interjects from her desk, before standing up and moving to Alpha Hector's side. Her hands stroking the back of his neck as his hands grip tightly at her hip.

"Training in wolf form.." Jaxon responds for his brother, not at all undeterred by his parent's display of affection. This must be the norm.

"We do that already." The alpha couple respond simultaneously.

"We want to increase wolf form training at the cost of skin on skin combat." Jace finishes, his eyes looking to his brother.

Jaxon would inherit the Dark Phantom pack and Jace the Clear Waters pack...which meant Jace had the opportunity to learn from Jaxon's mistakes when came to taking over his own pack. Something an alpha never gets a chance of...a trial run. He will be able to watch his brother first hand, then when it came to his turn...be better equipped in the running of a pack.

The alpha's I train would kill for Jace's position.

Something about the skin on skin combat being cut didn't sit well with the alpha couple. Alpha Hector and Alpha Kaia look at each other with unease.

"You do know what that would mean?" Alpha Hector turns back to his sons.

"That our wolves would be better prepared for attacks?" Jaxon responds shrugging his shoulders.

"It would cut down Josie's training..."

"She isn't a warrior, she won't need to train." Jaxon bites back.

"Her training assists her with being head of the weapons training..." Alpha Kaia folds her arms in front of her chest.

"Excuse me?" Jaxon places his hand up to stop his own Mother's response. An act that does not go unnoticed by Alpha Hector, a growl echoing through the room. "Who is head of weapons training?" Jace asks perplexed.

"Josie, we appointed her only 6 months ago."

"You did what?" Jaxon speaks the words I was thinking.

Suddenly all eyes turn into a sign of a group mind-link, their bodies remaining still as their eyes lock in on a conversation I am not privy to.

"I can leave..." I offer out.

"No, you are fine Knox." Jaxon responds before his eyes glaze back over. His aura the strongest in the room as he battles against his parents as the future alpha of this pack.

Denied by Destiny: Trapped in the Shadows of the Mate Bond

-Knox~

I was sat in a family's home preparing for a family's war.

The fiery red head returning from a shift at the hospital, greeted by her family..and myself. I've never felt more out of place in my life than I do than at this very moment in time.

This had the potential of heading downhill very quickly. I didn't know the red head but something told me when backed into a corner, that's when she comes out fighting her best. And she was about to be backed into a corner by her brothers.

"Josie sweetheart, how was your shift?" Alpha Kaia's tone is soft, welcoming.

"A bit slow today.." Her eyes lock on mine, a smirk of defiance forming onto her face. She's lying, she looks exhausted but if the argument of earlier regarding her weapons training was anything to go by... if she showed signs of working in the hospital was also too much... they would unceremoniously cut that from her too.

She has been thriving in her parent's pack, a pack that was about to become her brother's.

"Did George find you?" My shoulders stiffen from the mention of the shit.

"George?" I don't miss the flash of annoyance in her eyes.

"Yes, he was looking for you... Dad, didn't you walk him to the hospital?" Jace was inadvertently trying to diffuse the tension that was about to fall upon this living room.

The Varon family had money, there was no denying that but they didn't thrust it in your face...their décor taste was comfortable family home. Mistakes could be made here and covered up by the dark furniture.

This was a nurturing supportive pack and family home. The alphas had done well, if anything to maintain that reputation they had of being ruthless...nothing here screamed ruthless to me. Yet it would take a fool to not see just how powerful this family, the alpha mates were.

"He found me." She grunts as she kicks her trainers off and lands on the couch next to Jace, placing her legs up under herself. She had the temperament of a wild lion, but could switch to the demeanour of a harmless cat wanting cuddles on the sofa. She was the complete opposite of me, I was rigid, cold...I had to be.

"Uh oh trouble in paradise?" Jace tries to tease her but he has hit the nail on the head, her eyes flickering back to me.

"What's going on?" She moves the subject on, her eyes falling upon her parents and Jaxon who, similar to me, were sat adjacent to her.

"We wanted to talk to you.." Alpha Hector starts before he is cut off by Jaxon.

"I am cutting you from weapons training." His voice is like a thunder booming through a still sky.

"What, why?" That soft approachable feline has snapped back into a ferocious defending lioness.

"I have no need for weapons training in the future of the pack." I watch Jaxon watching her, I've trained him to be a fierce alpha...but there are things I can't teach. Things he'll have to learn for himself.

"Future of the pack? What are you talking about?"

"When Alpha, I plan to increase training in werewolf form, weapons have the potential of revealing our location, our existence to humans.

What better way to defend the shifter world, than in our shifter form?" Jaxon's eyes bore into his sister's, his aura glowing in a small warning to her.

Her eyes move around the room in disbelief, before fixing on her father's.

"Dad?"

"Don't undermine me Josie, this is how things are going to be." Jaxon's aura increases and to my astonishment she doesn't use hers to challenge him.

I'm waiting for her explosion, that fiery personality to come out...when instead, her exact opposite response tugs at my heart.

"Did I do something wrong?" She looks back at Jaxon, her body shifting forward on the couch. Her body language was open, ready for criticism...ready to learn, to be better. But Jaxon's was completely closed off, unnegotiable. "No."

"Then why are you cutting me as head of weapons training..." "Josie."

"I earnt that role, I'm the best shooter in this pack, the best combat fighter.."

"But you aren't a fighter are you Josie, how can you be?"

I don't understand how his words could have winded the air out of her lungs, but I witness it all the same. He might as well have punched her in the chest...it would have had the same reaction.

"Jaxon!" Alpha Kaia growls out to her son in warning, before the four of them enter a mind-link and to my astonishment...they leave the fiery red head out.

Her eyes land on mine before narrowing with that defiance that I was quickly learning built the foundation of her being. She doesn't wait for them, she storms out of the room and enters a door in the hallway.

By the time she has returned, she has a 9mm pistol tucked into the back of her leggings as she bends down to place her trainers back on. Giving me full view of her perfectly tight bottom.

She must be able to feel my eyes burning into her figure because as soon as she stands up, she raises an eyebrow at me before moving, slamming the door, viciously, behind her.

The bang forcing them all out of their mind-links, and I'm starting to wonder what this red head vixen has been able to get away with in her brother's absence.