

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

c 261 - 270

-Josie~

Bullshit, absolute bullshit.

Bang...miss.

Bang...miss again.

Bang, bang, bang.

The bullets were landing on the target but not hitting dead on the bullseye, which is only what I expected of myself. The anger rushing through my veins making my aim off.

Standing alone in the meadow, I let my head roll backwards...trying to calm that rising anger within me. They moved the conversation into a mind-link, completely shutting me out.

I know why they did, they didn't want Knox to hear what they had to say to each other...about me. But it still hurts nonetheless, still makes me feel left out...even to this day. They did it because of him...the broody eye holder.

Argh...why is he even here. Why is he getting into my business. Who the hell is he....

First he is there at the breakfast table sitting next to George, then he is invading my personal space at the hospital. The place nobody comes to visit me, my tranquil spot...my peace.

The place where I am not the alpha's daughter but just Josie, training under a doctor,

Steadying my inner self, using deep breathes to find my centre again, I let my body relax...let that feeling of knowing I could do this, that I've got this wash over me.

I had one bullet left...I was in such a hurry to get away from them that I didn't even bring the holdall. I just took the 9mm gun from the safe in the basement and placed it in the back of my leggings.

His eyes were on me, I could feel them as he noticed the gun...his jaw tensing as I stood back up. He might not be used to training with guns, but that's all I had.

Deep dark broody eyes that make my lower core tingle, a need that I've never felt before. Not even with George.

The sun was starting to weaken in the sky, the long day coming to an end. I didn't usually come out here this late, the night time sky always leaving me at a disadvantage. If I stayed out here any longer then I'd struggle to see the target. Bang...a direct hit. That's better, I feel better now. More focused again.

As soon as I place the gun's safety back on, Lobo comes running towards me into the meadow clearing. Bending over, I give my trusted companion a scratch behind an ear, which he laps up.

"Who's a silly house guest...who's getting into my business...yes that's right.." I giggle as Lobo drops to the floor to reveal his belly, wanting more tickles. I feel my phone buzz in my front pocket, these leggings didn't leave a lot of room but I could still fit my phone and gun, which was all I needed.

A message from Maya pings up on my phone, shit I was meant to call her after I finished work but I lost track of time thanks to the emergency drill and then coming home to find Jaxon couldn't even wait a day of being home to screw me over.

Just as I start to type out a reply, to get all the details of last night, Lobo pounces up off the ground...his eyes darting towards the treeline.

A growl emits from him as his back arches up and his paws start to claw at the meadow's ground. His teeth flash just as I hear movement myself in the treelines...my heart stopping as my eyes squint in the direction of a possible threat. "What is it boy, what can you see?" I whisper, reaching for the gun in my back waistband. It was empty, but whoever was approaching didn't know that.

I clasp it tightly in my hands, my training all coming to this very moment. I lift the gun up, taking aim towards the treeline when who should appear but my own brother..Jaxon.

"Woah...let's not get violent now shall we." He walks out of the treeline with his hands held high, an amused smirk upon his face.

Sure, these weren't silver bullets but they would certainly put him out of action for a day.

"What are you doing here?" I grunt, lowering my gun but my other defence weapon still growling, his teeth snarling in warning.

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"What's with the monster dog?"

"He has a gift for sniffing out bullshit."

"Listen.." He sighs out as he lowers his hands to his side.

"No, you listen Jaxon. You've not even been back for a full day yet and already you are trying to undermine my hard work of the past year." He might be the future alpha of this pack but he was my brother, I could still talk to him how I wanted. No title would stop that. "I'm not trying to undermine you, I'm just trying to keep the pack at its safest, you at your safest."

"I don't need your help and what's with your friend. Bringing the professor home from college for extra points?" "Ha.." He starts to chuckle at my snarky reply, that triplet bond between us has never helped me in keeping secrets.

"Knox, why..got the hots for him?" He crosses arms in front of his chest, taking no notice of Lobo now barking at him. "Don't be ridiculous. I just don't appreciate being caught out in a family meeting..when a non family member is there."

"Okay, I get it...I fucked up. He's here to help me out, but he won't be here for long."

He takes a step closer to me, Lobo continuing to bark by my feet. What a good dog I have. He'll happily bite anybody that comes for me.

"Shall we control the pooch?" Jaxon continues, his eyes remaining on Lobo.

"Lobo, down!" I command at him, also placing the gun back in my waistband.

"I didn't know you were working at the hospital now.."

"You would know a lot of things if you checked in once in a while."

"Ouch, okay I guess I deserve that. So no more border shifts?"

"Doctor Abel was giving me more shifts at the hospital, it felt like a no brainer to switch." I shrug, I couldn't do both...and the hospital felt more my calling.

"You going to show me what a hot shot you are then?" His head whips to the targets in the meadow, encouraging me to show him my shooting but he was too late.

"I'm out of bullets, another time...I need to give Maya a call." He rolls his eyes at me, knowing now that the pointed gun was empty.

"Invite her over, some of the lads are holding a welcome back party for Jace and I. She can bring Toby if she wants."

"They aren't a thing anymore..."

"Oh?"

"He rocked up to a party last night with his mate. That is completely over. Who else is invited?" I was still revelling from last night's shots, another night of drinking might actually put me under. But then I can't be the only one not to attend, not to celebrate my brother's return.

"I don't know members of the pack, why?" He eyes me suspiciously. I can't exactly ask if Knox was going to be there, anyway the man was like a fossil..why would he want to attend a party of teenagers. "Just wondering."

"Sure you are." He smirks again, my eyes scowling at him.

"I can set Lobo on you.." I quirk my eyebrow at him, my hands stroking behind Lobo's ear again. My faithful guard dog just waiting for my order.

"There are going to be changes around here Sis, whether you like them or not."

"I won't like them."

"But changes are coming and you need to get on board...or..." Even in the openness of this meadow I can feel the power of his aura, the strength radiating through him. He had Dad's aura...he had the notorious Dark Phantom alpha's traits. His aura was readying to wash over me, like a pointed gun but this time fully loaded with the most powerful of ammunition.

Something I just can't fight.

"Or what, you'll transfer me to the Clear Waters pack."

"Now that is a plan..." He taps his chin jokingly.

"I can just imagine George waiting for you to arrive, his arms outstretched... his fangs ready to mark you." He takes a step forward, his aura dropping as he hangs his arm around my shoulder. "Nobody is marking this neck, not if I have anything to do with it."

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~Knox~

This pack was the most guarded I think I have ever been to. There isn't a safety measure Alpha Hector and Alpha Kaia haven't thought of and there's not much I can comment on. So why am I really here...

I was waiting for Alpha Hector and his Beta Riley, to finish their evening report. Jaxon and Jace must have put a good word in for me, I've been to packs to assess their security before but never had an all access pass like I do at the Dark Phantom pack. Sitting back, my eyes cast around the impressive office of the alphas...two desks sit side by side. There couldn't be a werewolf alive today that wouldn't be in awe of their power, both jointly and individually.

I grew up hearing stories of the Dark Phantom pack, tales that would leave most children with nightmares. But the truth is very different, the inside of the pack gives a much different feel to the reputation that is projected outwards.

A clever idea on Alpha Hector's part to aid in keeping his borders safe.

"Didn't fancy going to the party then?" Alpha Hector looks up from over his report just as Beta Riley leaves the room.

"Drunken 19 year olds? I think I'll take a rain check." I had no intention of getting drunk with a bunch of teenagers, those years are long behind me. However, there was a brief moment as the fiery redhead left in a mini black dress that my mind could have been one for turning.

I felt the urge to pull on my trousers as blood travelled south at the sheer sight of her. There could be no denying how incredibly attractive she was but damn...in that dress she was a knock out.

She stood out in this pack, not only as the daughter of the alphas, but as a redhead she unintentionally stole everyone's attention.

Anger washes over me from my wolf, from the image of her strutting out of the house in that black dress. Why did I care what clothes she wore, I wasn't her keeper.

"So, what do you think?" Alpha Hector places his report down on his desk before opening his arms in a gesture encouraging me to provide feedback.

Come on Knox, get your head in the game. Stop thinking about someone who you hardly know.

"It's the tightest I've seen in a long time, I don't really think there's anything I can suggest that you haven't thought of."

"Not even on the borders?"

"Again, I don't know what I can suggest other than higher fences, extra bodies on patrol or incorporating weapons if you were expecting a real threat. But you've not been attacked for what..." "Well over 19 years. But that's not to say we should get complacent."

Why am I getting the sense he is hiding something, even from his sons. Why invite me here when they are more than capable of continuing his impressive reign.

"Are you expecting an attack then?"

"Not necessarily...but the moment it is announced that I am stepping down as Alpha, Jaxon may find the borders an issue." I didn't really know what he meant by this, all new alphas have a period of adjusting and Jaxon has proven in training how steadfast he is in keeping this pack safe.

"I'm sure Jaxon will have a few teething issues but nothing to cause any concern. What about your other pack, do you want me to visit there?"

"The Clear Waters, that would be my mate's pack. It's just as secure, until Jace takes it over I have no real concerns. Unless my mate or my daughter visits..."

"Your daughter?" My back straightens, a move that irritatingly doesn't go unnoticed.

Fuck!

"Josephina hasn't made it clear which pack she will end up in. She expects to remain here but until Jace leaves...I'm expecting a U-turn in her decision." "You would let her go, be away from her family?"

"She'll be with Jace...but something informs me she won't want to be anything other than a beta."

"A beta, really?"

"It just depends for which brother. She can't be the beta of both packs."

"I had the impression she liked being at the hospital.." I start but trail off as his alpha eyes pierce into mind.

"You've taken notice?" His eyebrow rises as he sits back in his chair, his hands knitting together. My eyes hold his, alpha or not I'm not the type of wolf to back down.

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"Only in passing.." I shrug, acting like it makes no difference to me what she gets up to. Why should it...

Training had been pushed back this morning to make room for a heads of department meeting, again something I had been asked to sit in on.

It had been drilled into me a long time ago to wake up early and train, so without the training I head to the kitchen to make coffee only to find a black-haired female that I didn't recognise searching through the cupboards. "What are you searching for?" I watch her trying to reach to the highest of shelves. She was a short thing, even on tiptoes. She turns to look at me, her eyebrows frowning as she then clasps at her forehead in pain. "Painkillers."

"Heavy night?" I scoff out resting my back against the kitchen island.

"You could say that, who are you?" She eyes me with suspicion.

"Knox, I'm visiting for a short while."

"Oh hey, I'm Maya." A smirk enters onto my lips as I turn away towards the coffee machine, so this is the one that Red's ex doesn't like.

"You the first up, where's princess?" My tone is sarcastic, sudden images of other males being with Red last night pop into my mind. Something my wolf also doesn't like the idea of.

I don't know why, I wasn't here to be her bloody body guard, I was here to assess the pack's safety measures.

Not what the alpha's grown up children get up to.

"Who?" She spins around to face me as I reach up into a cupboard for a coffee mug.

"Josie." I grunt out, saying her name was just as hard as I thought it was going to be. Even her father last night calling her Josephina didn't help, it just reminded me even more of what a red headed goddess she was in my dreams.

"Princess? Buddy, do you have the wrong girl. She's a mama's warrior, not a daddy's princess." Maya chuckles as she finds a packet of tablets, downs them in one and leaves a complete mess in her wake. Fucking teenagers.

The morning meeting has started right on time with a group of departments heads such as IT, training and healthcare. Jaxon and Jace leading it as Hector and Kaia attend, along with the pack's beta Riley.

Both of the alpha's sons have a pale look on their faces, both clearly regretting the consumption of alcohol last night.

Jace is even wearing sunglasses as he slowly sips on his morning coffee.

Just as Jaxon is about to start talking the door swings open, Josie breezing in full of beans, like a breath of fresh air compared to her hungover brothers.

"What are you doing here?" Jaxon grunts as she takes a seat opposite him, which also happens to be opposite me. Her breasts were bursting out of her sports bra, her red hair tied in loose plaits as she takes her seat...my eyes unable to not drink her all in. "Head of departments meeting right?" She chimes out, as she opens a notepad...a pen swirling between her fingers.

"I dropped you." Jaxon growls out.

"You aren't alpha yet." She bites back before looking at Hector who gives her a wink.

Listening to each department head take it in turns to report on matters and suggestions, it isn't long before it is Josie's turn. I sit up slightly as she starts talking, her eyes locking on mine every so often and it takes all my energy not to look south of her face. Her suggestions are shot down by Jaxon, something that unsurprisingly seems to be rattling her. The pen that was swirling in-between her fingers is now in-between her red plump lips...

The conversation moves on to the head warrior who discusses training practices with the alpha's when Josie cuts him up.

"Perhaps with Jaxon and Jace back, they can take over training." She cuts in, that pen now back in her fingers.

"Why do you say that?" Jace responds his eyes barely able to stay open.

"Every couple of days we have a warrior in the hospital. A broken wrist, a broken leg from training. Somethings not right if it is injuring our warriors at training and the hospital can't keep picking up the slack for bad training techniques."

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~Knox~

I've seen hundreds of training grounds, thousands of training exercises but something piqued my interest about training at the Dark Phantom pack.

With the meeting finished, everyone went about their normal business and I joined Jaxon and Jace as they walked towards training.

I was in desperate need for a ride on my bike, I needed to clear my head...get my focus back. Something that only a ride on my bike could achieve. I've been around alpha families before, but this one was different...

"Do you have to be such a dick?" Jace nudges Jaxon's shoulder as he overtakes him slightly coming down a small hill towards the training ground.

"What?" Jaxon looks up from his phone to scowl at Jace.

"Josie..."

"You're happy that she's training with guns?"

"If it keeps her happy."

"Jace. You can't be serious?" Jaxon stops dead in his tracks, growling at his brother.

"Nobody is pointing a gun at her, she's doing the shooting...I don't really see the problem."

Jaxon looks to me, as if suddenly remembering I was here with them before he pulls Jace back by his elbow, their conversation swiftly moving on only through mind-link.

I take that as my cue to move on. The ride on my bike couldn't come quick enough.

I continue towards the training ground, finding the warriors already out, huddled together in a circle as they boisterously cheer at one another. The level of pumped up testosterone putting even my alpha training exercises to shame. Well at least they know how to psych each other up for a morning's training session.

As I get closer I stand back, letting them continue with their cheers, all of them holding something in their hands.

A young lad, most likely having only just joined the warriors waves something in the air in glee before they all cheer at him, his hair being messed up and his chest being pounded on as his pack members congratulate him.

"What's all this?" I take a step closer, curiosity getting the better of me as I want to know more. Their bodies stopping simultaneously as they turn around to realise, they have an audience...their alphas also walking towards them.

"Just getting ready for training..." A cocky mouthed male smirks back at me, his arms crossing hiding the object even more.

Does this shit think he could keep that thing hidden, beat me in a fight...

I'm the trainer of alphas, I train the males that train him, keep him alive. There isn't a person here who isn't a match for me.

"Training doesn't start until your alphas are here, so what is all this?" My chest puffs out as my eyes roam amongst them, these were the warriors of the notorious Dark Phantom pack...what were they playing at. "Maybe I should fetch Alpha Hector?" I threaten with a smirk.

"Look...it's just a joke we play." The male with his arms crossed sighs out.

"A joke?"

"It's a lads thing, you know?"

"A lad's thing...no I don't know so why don't you tell me." I bluntly reply.

"Just don't tell the alphas."

"I won't make such promises..."

He pulls his hands away from his chest to reveal a long white straw. What the fuck, they all have a white straw in their hands..

"What is this shit?" I pluck the straw from his fingers, looking at it with confusion.

"We draw straws..."

"For what purpose?"

"For which one of us gets to spend time with the alpha's daughter."

Red?

They can't be serious...

"Let me get this straight? You draw straws to select one of you to be injured enough that you need to go to the hospital?" I want to burst out into laughter, until the cocky prick opens his mouth again. "Have you seen her? We all need an opportunity to tap that."

I burn red, hot molten rage erupts within me from his comment...tap that? Like she was a piece of meat just waiting to be explored by their hands.

The energy it takes to keep my wolf below the surface is unmeasurable.

"And you take it in turns?"

"Yes, one at a time. We draw the straws to keep it fair."

Fair?

"I think we can do better than that..." I toss the straw to the ground before stamping on it with my boot.

I'm on him in a flash, his cocky arrogant smirk wiped off his face as I knock him to the ground and grip his arm behind him.

Pain echoes from his mouth, a resonating snap joins his cries as I lift his arm towards his shoulder blade...a bone snapping through and piercing out.

"What is going on?" Jaxon is behind me instantly, but he doesn't pull me off his pack member.

"An important training exercise Alpha...respect." I growl out in disapproval.

I stand up, my eyes looking at each male holding a straw. I can't believe they would abuse their positions, disrespect their title as warriors even if they think it is for a game.

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"Who won?" I snap my teeth.

"I did.." The younger male steps forward, head hung low shamefully...well at least he's got courage.

"I think we will increase the alpha's daughter's workload today shall we?"

"Knox what the fuck is going on?" Jace charges after me as I pull both injured males towards the direction of the hospital.

"This is the training issue, why the hospital keeps getting injured warriors from training...they are doing it onto themselves." I fling both males ahead of me as I pause to update Jace. "Be serious.."

"I am, they are taking it in turns just to spend time with your sister, to have the opportunity to make a move on her." Why did Jace follow me and not Jaxon, because at least Jaxon would think of a suitable punishment for these shits.

Instead Jace bursts out into laughter, bending over and clinging onto his chest as if his lungs ache.

"Jace." I seethe through gritted teeth, annoyed at his reaction.

"Okay, well it seems like you have this handled. I'll go back to the others." Astonishingly, he walks off still laughing. I don't think there will ever be a time when Jace isn't finding the funny side to life.

I march the males towards the ward that she works on, bypassing the doctors in the emergency ward that call after me as their warriors struggle to breathe through the pain.

They can have the healing they so longed for, but without the pain relief. Let's see then how they cope.

She notices me charging down the corridor, my hands gripping at the nape of their necks as I toss them at her feet.

"What is this?"

"Two new patients for you."

"They need to go to the emergency room Knox, he's still bleeding." She crouches down to touch the elbow wound of the first one I took down, his bone poking out. His face paling even more as he follows her gaze...I can see him swallow down vomit as she pokes at it. "They have elected themselves for painfree medical attention, isn't that right lads?"

"Yes!" They both groan out as I kick their lower backs for a response.

Excitement, her eyes shine with excitement. Fuck, not the reaction I expected.

"Okay great, put them over there.."

"They are your patients now."

"Just help me?"

"Look Red, I've just practically carried them over here for you..."

"Then you can carry them over to a bed." She orders at me expectantly.

I don't know who the fuck she thought I was exactly. I take a defiant step back, locking my arms around my chest as I give her a cold glare.

Refusing to move and help her, she takes the hint as she reaches for the worse of the two, the one still dripping with blood from his elbow. Until she resets the wound, his healing ability will not be able to kick in.

But...to my surprise, she struggles to lift him up. It doesn't help that he is squirming in pain and she isn't being delicate with him, causing more pain on his part. Yet for some reason her wolf isn't lending her the strength she needs.

Unable to watch her struggle any longer, and because no matter how frustrated I am with these males...she deserves so much better than male attention only being given to her because they fight amongst themselves, I step forward and aid her. "Thanks." She murmurs as I launch both males towards a bed each, watching her get straight to work.

"I can't stop the bleeding, can you mind-link Doctor Abel?" She orders at the male she was treating.

"Me?" He grunts as she wipes a cloth on his open wound that seems to sting him.

"It's that or you bleed out." She pushes his head in irritation.

"You can go." She looks up to me with a quirked eyebrow.

"I think I'll stay...in case you need these strong arms again...." I crack my knuckles, her eyes lingering on my hands.

"I think I'm fine." She clicks her tongue before reaching for another bandage.

"I knew something was wrong at training, did the Alphas not attend this morning?"

"They are there now miss." The quieter of the two males chirps up as he holds his broken wrist in his other hand.

I wasn't as harsh on him as I was with the other, plus he had won the short straw...so it only fair they both got a trip to the hospital.

"Who did this?" She eyes her patient suspiciously.

"Him." His chin lifts up as his eyes point in my direction.

"You did this?" She spins on the spot looking at me with those sharp silvery eyes.

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~Josie~

He did this? He harmed these males...for what purpose...

I'll admit this as close to blood I have gotten in a while, usually the healing I do is for strengthening of muscles, the occasional resetting of bones, not closing open wounds. I try to control the excitement rising in me for being able to get my hands actually dirty for a change, to try out different remedies.

"You did this? You harmed my pack members?" He had majorly overstepped on his visitation rights. He was meant to view and give feedback, not attack pack members...were Jaxon and Jace not with him at the time. How could they have allowed this to happen. "Before you judge me Red, you need to check your facts. Enjoy the catch I have brought you today because I have a feeling you won't be getting any injured warriors for a while." His voice is cool, annoyance seeping through it.

This male was impossible, he's standing here as if he has done me a favour. As if I should be thanking him for hurting these warriors.

I head towards my preparation room, moving swiftly past him only for him to walk backwards, blocking my path. Was he purely put on this earth to irritate me...

"Where are you going?" He says with a triumphant smug smirk plastered upon his face. I would like to be the one to wipe that smile off his face.

"I need to prepare more dressings, if you know what is good for you...you'll be gone by the time I get back."

"Is that a threat little wolf because you don't have your gun on you right now." He growls softly.

So, he noticed my gun, which meant he had been checking me out.

"Are you checking my butt out again?" I sarcastically ask, letting my eyes scale down to his lips and back up to his eyes. I, like him, was good at mind games.

My eyes hold steady, letting him know that I am a match to any power game he wants to play...gun or no gun.

He takes a step closer to me, his height completely towering over me as those deep brown broody eyes burn into me. Maybe he wants to play this game with me...just as much as I want to play it with him.

I step aside, making a point of swaying my hips as I walk away...just on the off chance that he was checking if I had my gun on me or not.

The moment I am in my hideaway, my hands land on the worktop as I try and calm my breathing. Why did those eyes have a way of making my knees weak.

My mind replays the moment he stepped towards me, his great height towering over me...there was something about being caught in the cast of his shadow. Dark yet appealing. Never needing to close an open wound, typically the herbs I need are up on the highest shelf. I try to reach again, even considering climbing up as I locate the exact jar I needed.

As I elongate my upper body for one last attempt, still unable to reach it...I still, as an arm curls up my back, up my arm and with ease, lands on the jar of herbs my eyes are fixed on. His hand leaves a trail of tingles that climb my skin, following his touch like a vine he was growing, entwining me in. Butterflies explode within my stomach as his lips almost touch my ear.

It was super tight in here but there was enough room for him not to be pressed up against me. He had closed the door quietly behind him, affording us some more room...but he wasn't using it. This was a game of his and I won't let him come out as the victor.

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Even as I inhale the dreamy scent of leather and sandalwood, I'm fighting that urge to cave in as I perk my back out...my butt pushing back into his groin. He'll notice I haven't got my gun on me today.

A groan escapes him as he reaches higher, grabbing the jar and looking back at me.

"You don't play fair, do you Red." He chuckles slightly by my ear before placing the jar down on the worktop in front of my slightly exposed tummy. His thumb brushing against my belly button, those tingles erupting again. "Not if I can help it."

I turn, my back now pressing against the worktop's edge as I try to make a little room between us.

Now facing him, this close...I can appreciate just how handsome he is. His dark brown broody eyes hold a twinkle in them today, his jet-black hair styled perfectly as is his facial hair.

Up this close I only now notice that he has two slight dimples at the edge of his lower cheek bones, his facial hair almost hiding them...no wonder I have only just noticed them. Up until now he's been giving me cold looks from across a table.

The scent of his leather jacket still lingers off him but mixed with some kind of cologne he is wearing, something scented with sandalwood...reminding me of the woods Lobo and I often run through.

"I need to get back..." I start to move aside, collecting the jar, making an excuse to leave.

"Burnt oranges..." He leans into me, his nose seemingly smelling me.

"Huh?"

"Burnt oranges and spice...you smell like autumn Red." His brown eyes give a flash of his wolf, his fur side pushing forward to see me. There is something poetic about the rim around his pupils becoming darker, almost black. He was being affected by our closeness just as much as me, no matter how much he denies it. But to say I smelled like burnt oranges....

"I do?" That wasn't possible...he must be smelling the dried herbs in this room.

"Hmmm..." He leans in closer, his lips almost touching mine.

"Don't you have wounds to heal?" I can feel my eyes almost going cross eyed as I stare at his mouth, the words vibrating from his lower lip before he bites down on it. I swallow hard as goosebumps shoot across my arms, my body almost curling into him.

It's quite the fight not to give in, like a desire to touch him first...kiss him first. This was just a game, he was playing mind games with me...passing the time. Well, I can be just as tricky, just as stubborn to win.

"I..." However, he does smell good.

"You sure you're up for this?" He asks as he takes a deep slow intake of air, his eyes roaming over my upper body. Dipping down to my rising chest.

This trap he was setting for me...would it be so bad to be caught up in it.

"Up for what?" I gasps out, as I feel that gravitational pull to him, a static charge between our bodies being so close. I hold my breathe as he licks his lips...

"Josie?" I hear my voice being called outside in the corridor, but my eyes are glued to the male in front of me. His head leaning in... his lips moments from touching mine.

"There you are...is everything alright?" The door is abruptly pushed open, Doctor Abel discovering me pinned between the worktop and Knox.

His eyes turn to that of concern. He goes to say something as his back stiffens but Knox speaks first.

"I was just helping her with her herbs." Knox smirks before backing away from me and leaving.

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- Knox ~

The roar of my motorcycle vibrates through to my bones, immediately relaxing my body and mind. Whipping in-between traffic as I let my bike go full throttle, this is where I feel myself...this is my sanctuary. Somewhere I don't need to think, just do.

Turning off the main route, I follow the directions to a local view point, a place that will give me a good view of the nearby lands. Soaring through the winding road, my mind goes to Red. How is it possible that she keeps getting under my skin...more importantly, why do I let her.

I hadn't planned on following her into her hall in the wall, I was blindsided by my anger at those shits for taking it in turns to get injured, just to spend time with her...what was it..."tap that" one of them said. My legs were already following her before my mind knew what it was doing, then...her scent hit me. Burnt oranges and spice.

She reminded me of the home I grew up in...the woods, that autumnal aroma of golden leaves turning crisp under foot.

Her scent did something to me...let alone the way she pushed her butt out into my groin.

Just one taste...one taste of that soft skin.

Arriving at the look out point, I park my motorcycle and remove the helmet to get a better view. Vast land owned by the Dark Phantom pack spreads across the landscape, with the skyscrapers of the local city just visible in the distance.

Alpha Hector had more land than he let on, he wasn't a boastful man and I can see why, he was smart. To own this, and his mate owning the land at the Clear Waters pack...I'm starting to understand why he is expecting an attack as soon as he steps down.

I hear laughter to the left of me, my eyes darting to the side to find a couple sitting on a bench looking out. Humans enjoying the view, little did they know what creatures hid behind the trees that they gaze out upon.

My drive back as slower, I didn't need the urge to release built up tension within me, she was out of my system.

My plan was not to think of her, not to look at her...speak to her. It was a solid plan, one I had every intention of seeing through, until I arrive back at the alpha house and cut the engine to my bike.

She was there, walking to her home... piles of folders tightly held into her chest.

As I remove my helmet she stops, her eyes staring back at me. I can feel my wolf wanting to move me, wanting to walk over to her...but I hold him still, stop him from taking over my body. I won't crack, I can't.

Those sharp silvery grey eyes have a way of piercing through me, and they don't relent not even when she starts walking towards me. Her walk is enticing...even when she is carrying paperwork...she makes bringing work home, sexy.

I am just about to take a step towards her when Jace comes jogging up to her, flinging his arms around her shoulders...her body jolting in fright. Surely she heard him, Jace isn't exactly a quiet man.

He starts escorting her towards their home, his eyes following her gaze to find me.

"Pack run tonight Knox, you in?" He calls out to me.

"Sure." I respond playing cool.

I haven't been part of a pack run for a long time. Sure my wolf runs with the alpha wolves in training, but this was different, this was all wolves of a pack running together...no matter your status within the pack.

I held back, watching the pack collect together as they enjoy a large outdoor feast first, cooked by Jaxon and Jace on the BBQ.

The warriors were eyeing me with caution as I walked through the crowd to pile my own plate of food up high. They should be cautious of me.

Everyone was here, except for Doctor Abel and to my surprise...Red. She must be held up in the hospital, there's no way she would miss this, as the alpha's daughter, she can't miss this.

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

As the pack's natural ambience comes to a small whisper, Alpha Hector raises his hand to say a few words...I'm listening but my eyes are scanning around the crowd. She wasn't here. She wasn't standing in front of the pack members like her family are doing, she

wasn't standing by the alpha family's side. Why not, where the fuck was she. Was this another example of her reluctance to accept her changing position within this pack, just like not training unless it was with a gun.

Such a show of defiance would not be forgiven by Alpha Hector, even Jaxon would have something to say to her...so why aren't they marching her out here...reminding her of her duties as the daughter and sister of the four alphas?

"Why is the alpha daughter not present?" I whisper to a female next to me, her eyes widening as my voice is closer to a hushed growl.

"She must be at her shooting range..." Her words are jittery, as she takes a step away from me. The male she steps into looking over her shoulder at me as they enter a mind-link, before he also looks away from my glare.

I had heard rumours, rumours of a white wolf but to see Alpha Kaia shift before my very eyes was something else. All eyes of the pack turn to me as I gasp out loud, her white wolf shimmering under the full moon glow. She was spectacular to see in the flesh.

Alpha Hector's black charcoal wolf in contrast makes the white wolf even more visible. I am not a threat to them, even as Jaxon and Jace look to me before shifting, I am not a threat to their parents, to their mother. It's just strange to see the thing of fairy tales right before your very own eyes.

I am not a member of this pack so the call to shift from the alphas doesn't affect me, yet I take part in it as if I were.

As soon as the air around me starts to shimmer, I follow the pack members in shifting into my wolf form. My wolf pushing on that connection between us, wanting full control as I grant him what he wants, what he needs. He had been cooped up for longer than he was used to. Stretching his spine out, I feel him elongate his paws...as he feels the earth beneath us, his snout sniffing the scent of nature.

I haven't got the pack mind-link so I follow the general flow of direction all the wolves are running in. Pushing through branches, pushing through long grass... this was just what I needed, like the bike ride...to clear my thoughts.

Yet my thoughts, even in my wolf form go back to her. Why was she not here...I search ahead of me, even overtaking wolves to get a better view on the alpha family running ahead of us but there were still only four wolves, not five. And having spent a year with Jaxon's and Jace's black wolves, I know they are not hers.

I break off, that feeling of anger rising within me. She should be here, if they aren't going to tell her, then I will. She should be here, a sign of unity to the pack.

I return to the alpha house, shifting back into my skin form... and placing my clothes back on. The shooting range at the meadows..that is what the pack member said...seemed like a good place to start.

Dreading through the long wild flowers of the meadow, I don't see the shooting range set up but I do find a wooden cabin with the lights on.

Why would she think solo training at a time like this was a good idea...a time when as a pack member you get to build upon the bond you share with your pack...under the watchful glow of the full moon. What is her problem...

Irritated with her princess-like attitude, I march over to the cabin my wolf for once trying to calm me down, trying to stop that fury rising within me.