

## Psycho Shifters Chapter 7

COBRA

ESPIONAGE

An hour earlier...

The endless black vortex threatened to drown me.

For the last six years at the training complex, fighting as an alpha to contain the third portal, I had managed to hide my darkness deep in the recesses of my broken mind.

Living, training, and fighting alongside Jax had slowly thawed me.

The large man's calm presence had given me the strength I needed to fight off my demons. Around him, I had rebuilt my broken consciousness piece by blackened piece.

Now all my effort was crumbling around me.

I hadn't been obsessed with a woman since the incident. They disgusted and repulsed me; the new white-haired girl was no different.

Her almond-shaped eyes, thick lashes, and overly large l~s were the perfect disguise.

The most poisonous vipers were the most beautiful.

Their menace was almost unrecognizable until their fangs sunk through your flesh and their venom stopped your heart.

I would never be a fool again.

Sitting on my bed in our shared alpha room, I focused on writing up a training plan for the next day. Jax and I alternated drawing up training schedules.

My pen left large ink splashes as I pressed it too hard into the paper. My instincts screamed at me.

The pit in my stomach was a lead weight that cramped uncomfortably.

The girl was unnatural and full of secrets, and I knew in my bones she was hiding something.

During training, I had barely focused on my own battles. I had been distracted by the smallest shifter I had ever seen.

She was so short it was laughable. Her head barely reached my chest.

Not only was she short, but her limbs were so scrawny it was amazing she hadn't already perished in the biting cold.

There was no way this pathetic slip of a girl was an alpha.

When I'd first met her, I'd completely dismissed her, thinking she would be dead in the first battle.

Now I wasn't so sure.

Her unnatural red eyes should have warned me. I had never seen a rich ruby around someone's pupils before, and I had seen a lot of different creatures.

She'd lived up to the sharpness of her eyes when she fought the betas.

Her small body had been pounded repeatedly by blows, blood had dripped down her face, and she had endured it all without flinching.

After fighting for that many hours, others would have crumbled at so many challenges.

She hadn't crumbled; she'd fought like a beast.

I had never seen a shifter so small, so weak, who didn't flinch.

Even with her cheek cut and foot broken, she had stood ramrod straight like she was completely unaffected by physical pain.

There were only a few people in all the realms that could take such a beating without a bat of the eye.

They were all trained killers. And they were the demons that haunted my memories.

The girl had smirked back at her fighting partners like she had wanted them to pound her harder, like she lived for the violence.

My pen stabbed through my paper, and I fought the urge to slam it into my thigh.

The emeralds and diamonds in my skin itched, like my beast was at the surface and wanted to break free. It was hammering at my subconscious, screaming something at me.

Jax's fierce strength enraptured me because he gave as hard as he took.

With him, the broken part of my soul could bathe in the comfort of a bloody fight, in the endless peace of violence.

My knuckles flexed as I imagined the feel of the girl writhing beneath me.

She was the first woman I'd met who could give and take like Jax. She hadn't crumpled underneath fists.

She took brutal hits and punished back.

Fighting Jax was a fight that soothed the void within me. My instincts told me that fighting the girl would be the same.

No.

She was a woman, and I despised them all.

For some sun god forsaken reason, I'd broken the vow I made to myself to never talk to a woman again.

A vow I had kept for over fifty-years.

All it took was a few snarky quips from her lush mouth, and I couldn't help myself but snap back at her. Not talking to her was impossible.

I wanted to taunt her as I brought her to her knees.

The darkness became more stifling. I couldn't do anything, I just lost myself in the endless void that burned me alive.

I needed to stop obsessing over the girl.

“Do you hear that?” Ascher asked without looking up from his fancy phone.

The young shifter had been revealed as an alpha only a year ago. Sometimes it took longer for a shifter’s body to grow into its full immortal size.

Ascher was unique in that his horns had appeared on his twentieth birthday, and he had immediately bulked up. He’d mastered his shifted form the first day we’d fought him.

Still, he was loud and obnoxious and unbroken by the world, eager to prove himself.

In contrast, Jax was a hundred and twenty years old and had been assigned to fight at many portals.

I was a hundred years old, but had spent most of my miserable life in the fae realm.

I had only escaped to the shifter realm six years ago. That same year, Jax and I had both been assigned to this portal.

We’d never had any issues with Ascher. He was hardworking and his beast was formidable. Even now, his black horns curled large on his head, a constant reminder that he was more than he seemed.

Still, I ignored Ascher’s question, like I usually did.

Even though I appreciated him, it didn’t mean I was going to indulge his antics. Jax dealt with that.

I didn’t have the patience.

Most of the time, all my attention was focused on keeping myself together, keeping my mind intact.

Jax grunted noncommittally as he did push-ups on the ground. His bulging muscles shone with sweat, and I couldn’t help but admire the larger shifter.

He was my rock.

I also knew him better than myself, and I could tell he was rattled by the girl as well. She was an unknown and practically stank of secrets and lies.

No way was she an alpha.

The oligarchy had told Zed she had no battle experience whatsoever. Every time her skin cracked with a punishing blow, she retaliated harder.

It was like the pain fueled her. We'd been lied to. The darkness crept into my vision.

Both Jax and I were distrustful in general. We took our orders and led our troops, but neither of us were big nationalists.

The only person I was loyal to was Jax.

The oligarchy had its secrets, and something about the never-ending fae war didn't taste right in our mouths.

I hadn't survived what I had to be a fool to the political machinations of people with too much power.

They were using the girl for something, and I would break it out of her.

"Right there, again. Did you hear that?" Ascher sat up and put his phone down.

The cocky alpha looked stressed, and my skin prickled. What were the odds that my instincts went haywire at the exact same time that Ascher's did?

"I felt something, a vibration." Jax stopped doing push-ups and jumped up. "On the floor above us."

I listened quietly and heard the echo of a body hitting the floor. When you trained for war all the time, you knew what physical combat sounded like.

Two people were fighting.

Instantly, my mind snapped the pieces together.

"The girl is above us." I had barely finished speaking, and all three of us were rushing out the door.

Zed was cleaning the hallway, and when he saw us running, he followed.

I knew she was up to something, and I shouldn't have ignored my instincts.

She needed to be locked in a questioning room and tortured until we were sure she wasn't here to destroy us.

The scents of blood, pain, and fear intensified the closer we got to her room. The darkness inside me broke, and it took every last ounce of willpower to not release my beast.

I saw the room, and everything stopped.

A rushing sound filled my ears, and suddenly, I was drowning.

The girl was lying on the floor, twitching.

Her eyes were wide open and sightless. She had a large butcher knife gripped in her right hand.

Beside her body, Darren, one of the more aggressive betas, was kneeling on the floor, clutching a bloody face.

He gurgled in shock.

It wasn't his bloody face that broke me.

It was the girl's sightless eyes and empty expression, the mewls that bled from her cracked voice, that dragged me into the swirling abyss of darkness.

Her nose was smashed, and her face coated in fresh blood.

I knew what an attack looked like, and Darren had no permission to be in the girl's room.

Unthinking, I grabbed Darren by his hair and dragged him into the hallway.

He looked up at me with a pleading expression and motioned furiously toward the girl.

He wanted to come up with an excuse.

Clearly, he thought he was somehow justified in attacking her.

The void flashed between an endless inky darkness and blinding red rage.

He thought he was justified.

My entire existence flickered, and it was times like these that made me wonder if I had already lost my soul.

They had taken it from me.

Calmly, I broke each of his legs and arms. His dark eyes filled with horror, and tears tracked down his mangled face.

Mercilessly, I took every break and applied pressure expertly above it.

A high-pitched scream tore out of his lungs and disfigured mouth as I created compound fracture after compound fracture.

He dared to scream and plead like a victim when he had attacked the girl in her room.

He was a monster of the worst kind, the ones that tried to hurt those they thought were lesser than themselves. I scissored my hand into his windpipe.

Instantly, the screaming stopped.

“You f~~~~g dare.” He had the audacity to try to plead with me for mercy after what he had done.

The endless fury raged through me like a tempest as I held him up by his hair.

Holding myself still, I didn’t allow myself to move another inch. I had taken it far enough on my own.

I wouldn’t make any more decisions without Jax.

This was our training center, our portal to protect, our soldier to punish.

We made decisions together.

There was a raspy gasp, and I turned to find the girl standing there. Her braided hair was messy around her face, and her eyes were wide with terror.

With a glance, I took in her injuries.

The beta had broken her nose twice—violently. The blood poured off her face, and her knuckles were bruised from where she had punched back.

I shuddered to think what would have happened if she hadn't had a knife.

Why did she have the knife? The thought infiltrated the void.

She keeled over and vomited across the floor. My instincts screamed at me to comfort her.

I stood still.

If she was an actor, then she was one of the best I had ever seen. The images of her covered in blood, fighting in the training center, flashed before my eyes.

She might be that skilled.

"He was going to r~e her." Zed stood in front of Sadie, like he could protect her with his weak, useless body.

He stood too close to her for comfort. I didn't f~~~~g like it.

Then his words sank in. The void splintered within me, and my skin itched.

My monster screamed to be released.

I focused on Jax, the only person who had ever kept my beast at bay. As I looked into his stormy gray eyes, the void retreated.

"R~e?" I asked softly.

Jax nodded. He knew what that word meant to me.

I snapped the beta's neck. The bloodlust and endless banging against my skull perished.

A cold peace calmed me.

My instincts, my beast, were finally appeased.

Standing still, I ignored my surroundings as I muscled the void back into the deepest, darkest parts of my mind.

Back where it belonged. Back where I could control it.



The girl moved to return to her room, and I shifted in front of her.

As I listened to Jax demand she live with us, the calm I worked so hard to control threatened to fracture into a million pieces.

I could barely keep myself together around the girl. How was I supposed to live with her? In close quarters?

“You gonna beat me up?” The girl bared her little white teeth at me.

Her red eyes flashed with anger, and the white strands of her hair framed her heart-shaped face.

For a second, I itched to run my fingers through her silky locks, across her high cheekbones.

The girl had no idea how much I yearned to hurt her, tie her up, and have my way with her pathetic body.

If she knew, she wouldn’t have taunted me.

She would run away screaming.

“Why did you cut out his tongue?” I asked instead of wrapping my knuckles around her small throat and squeezing until she gasped and begged me for air.

My body itched to slam her against the floor and ravish her.

“Because he was spewing shit,” she said as her red eyes flashed with pain.

She bit down on her quivering lower l~p.

I had watched her fight for hours without flinching, and now her l~p trembled like a little girl’s.

Instantly, rage boiled through me; she was keeping secrets.

Nausea spread through my gut, and the void beckoned.

This was why I hated women. They were all liars.

Jax gave her his arm, and his usually calm eyes were passionate, his body tense.

Once again, the weight in my stomach returned.

Jax was my rock, my alpha. Without him, I was broken and untethered.

Now someone else had his attention. Someone with secrets.

How long until she manipulated his protective instincts and love of women and drove him toward her and away from me?

She was everything I could never be.

She wasn't broken.

Jealousy ate at my chest like writhing maggots. I bent over to whisper in her pathetic little ear.

"I don't beat up weaklings." I fantasized about throwing her to the ground and ravishing her.

As much as I wanted her to be, she wasn't weak.

Still, she was nothing compared to the warrior beside her. Jax was a magnificent specimen of strength and control.

She was a little girl in over her head, and she would never tempt me. Her weak breakable attitude was all an act, a concentrated lie, and I wasn't going to fall for it.

I stalked down the hall.

I had barely survived a woman before. She had held me captive for decades, and I'd promised I would never be so helpless again.

Women coveted pretty, shiny things, and that was all I was to them.

The ultimate bauble in their collection, a massive alpha covered in the rarest gems of all the realms.

They wanted to own me, use me, and brag to their friends that they were involved with the sparkly man, the one much prettier than all the others.

The void in my soul, the one that made me cruel and harsh, was a dark, swirling abyss with no end.

Jax was the only person who could touch me without my skin crawling off my bones in disgust. He was the only person who didn't view me as a shiny trinket to be possessed and bragged about.

I was the warrior who fought and lived beside him.

He was calm and collected and sometimes too gentle for the horrors of true leadership. When it came to violence, he turned to me for help.

Jax didn't like me for the facade of my looks. Jax liked me for the inky depth of my rotten soul. He was the first lover to ever do so, and he would be my last.

The big alpha was my end and my beginning. My everything.

Right now, the little girl was touching Jax's glorious skin and walking beside him like a debutante.

She was a waif with delicate features and secrets.

How dare she touch my Jax? How dare she try to take him from me?

A woman had broken me into this being of frost and darkness, but I lived to spite her.

My instincts screamed at me, I wouldn't survive this girl.