



Fated

D.M. Page

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Brickstone University Reverse Harem Book

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To everyone who took a chance on a new author. Thank you!

Contents

1. Aly.

2. Nic

3. Aly.

4. Aly.

5. Aly.

6. Aly.

7. Jax

8. Aly.

9. Kiran

10. Aly.

11. Jeremy.

12. Aly.

13. Aly.

14. Aly.

15. Aly.

16. Aly.

17. Aly.

18. Aly.

19. Aly.

20. Aly.

21. Aly.

22. Aly.

23. Jay.

24. Aly.

25. Aly.

26. Anna

About the Author

Also by D.M. Page

One

Aly



In a matter of seconds, my vision goes fuzzy around the edges, black encroaching until I can't see anymore. One second I'm consumed in my grief for Anna, the next, her fangs are ripping into my neck.

My ears ring and throat burns like fire as I go in and out of consciousness on the floor as her weight is ripped off my body.

Hands press down on my neck. There's shouting but I can't make out the words, the voices sound like my mates. I almost think I hear a crash but my ears are ringing too loud to tell. The agony is so intense I can't focus on anything else.

Slowly, I regain consciousness and the anguish recedes to the point where I can concentrate on my surroundings. I can finally hear and see what's going on.

Nic is kneeling above me, shouting orders at the others as he heals me. His hands press down on my neck. Jeremy, Jay and Kiran have a screaming Anna pinned to the floor. Jax is on my other side, brushing hair off my face and whispering soothing words. I can feel Bailey's fur against my arm.

“What happened?” I croak, gaining Nic’s attention.

He stares down at me with relief and anger swirling in his eyes. His lips are thin as he takes in my features.

When he doesn’t say anything, Jax supplies, “you look better, his healing mixed with your own means you’re going to be okay.”

Neither of them have removed their hands from me but the others are still stuck holding Anna back.

“She’s hurting herself to get over there,” Jay yells from across the room.

Nic’s eyes grow dark, and he tenses, ready to eliminate the threat if it means keeping me safe. He has a tight control over himself but it’s being tested.

I raise my hand and grab his arm, trying to hold his focus on me. “Please,” I beg.

A war rages behind his eyes but eventually some anger leaves him, and he leans down closer to me.

“Just knock her out,” Jax suggest.

Nic hesitates then moves away, towards Anna and I’m a little nervous about what he’s going to do. But in the end, I trust him. Even if she is acting like the enemy right now, he knows how important Anna is to me.

He mutters a spell and Anna slumps down to the ground, unconscious. Jay, Jeremy and Kiran set her down, laying her out comfortably on the floor. They take a few cautious steps

back from her body and when she doesn't move they all come straight to me, looking me over and examining my neck.

"I'm fine, but why did Anna attack me like that?" I ask.

"She's a new vampire, she could be starving and volatile," Jay says.

"But she didn't go for us, just Aly. If she was thirsty, our blood would be equally tempting," Kiran points out.

So, she was after me specifically, that's not good. A thirsty vampire we could handle, not one who is targeting me for some reason.

"Why though?" I ask.

Everyone is lost in thought as they try to think of why Anna would do this.

"She can't be in her right mind, Anna would never hurt Aly on purpose," Nic adds.

He and Jeremy are standing over me protectively while we talk. I'm glad Nic is at least acknowledging that Anna would never do this.

"That's it! Anna would never do this in her right mind because she's not in her right mind! She's sired," Jax declares.

Sired? Anna is sired by that evil man? Oh, hell the fuck no!

"How do we fix it?" I demand, looking at them for a resolution.

No one answers me, all giving me looks of pity, like there is no way to stop things. We are not leaving her like this.

“Do. Not. Look at me like that! Anna is not a lost cause! We are going to rescue her and that’s all there is to it!” I’m shouting but I want my point to be extremely clear.

“Okay, okay, don’t panic. We are going to help her, don’t worry.” Jay rubs a soothing hand up and down my back.

Everyone nods and gives me reassuring expressions.

“Promise?” I demand.

“We promise,” Nic responds, “for now, I’ll keep her knocked out while we find a way to counter the sire bond.”

“Okay,” I softly agree.

Anna will be fine, I’ll make sure of it.

I try to sit up, feeling like I should be recovered enough by now but my head spins as I do.

“Whoa,” Jax says as he catches me from falling back to the ground, “take it slow. You lost a lot of blood.”

“Shouldn’t I be healed by now?” I whine but before Jax tells me, I know why I’m not.

“Draining a hunter of all their blood is one of the few ways to kill them, so it will take longer for your body to heal. Relax, we are here for you.”

I let Jax lift me off the floor and carry me over to the couch. Jay moves Anna to her bed and I give him a grateful smile.

“You’re sure she won’t wake up on her own?” Jeremy asks Nic, looking at Anna with distrust.

I’m glad they’re protective and care about me but it can’t be Aly above anyone or anything else.

“Yes I’m sure. She’s out and I’ll keep strengthening the spell.”

We all settle into an awkward silence in the living room of my apartment with Anna. It feels like a different life to be back here. I’m not the same girl I was.

“So, what’s next?” I ask, looking mostly to Nic for a plan.

“Well, we still need to stay under the radar while we search for a solution for Anna. I think we should recruit our parents to help find an answer.” Everyone nods their approval so Nic continues, “we can’t stay here, the apartment is still not safe. Let’s take Anna back to the cabin.”

“As soon as she can, Anna will need to be back in school. Her parents will notice if she misses too much class, and we don’t need more attention,” I say.

“Well, we will try to get her back here as soon as we can,” Nic says.

Everyone pauses, standing in silence, I’m not sure what we are waiting for, then I realize it’s me. We are waiting on me to take us home.

“Oh!” I say, trying to stand up off the couch.

Jeremy stops me with a hand on my shoulder. “You need rest, we can wait to transport back to the cabin. Take some of my blood for now.”

He nicks his thumb open before pressing the blood to my lips. I ingest some but I know it’ll only help so much after losing all that blood.

When I lay back against the couch, the guys take up position around the room, guarding us. It’s unlikely something will happen but Ryan could be coming back for us. I doubt it, since he probably thinks Anna already finished me off, but I can’t be sure. We need to stay prepared for him or the hunters.

After an hour of recovery I feel well enough to at least transport us all to the cabin.

“Okay, gather around. Jay can you hold Anna for the transport?” I ask.

He picks her up gently in his arms and comes to stand next to me. I focus on grabbing the guys and Bailey as I picture the outside of the cabin. The tugging sensation in my gut tells me we are moving before my feet land on the grassy lawn. When I open my eyes, I see the front of the cabin, like we left it hours ago.

I’m exhausted and practically collapse back into Nic’s arms. He wraps them around me and picks me up, carrying me into the cabin bridal style.

Nic takes me right back to the master bedroom we’ve all been using and starts stripping me, but must realize what a

bloody mess I am.

“You need a shower before you can sleep, I’ll help. Do you think you’re up for it?” Nic asks.

“Yes, of course,” I respond around a yawn.

He picks me back up and heads off to the shower while I try to keep my eyes open.

Two

Nic



Carrying my weak and bloody mate while trying not to show how enraged and terrified I am, is a struggle.

Watching Anna rip into Aly's neck was one of the worst moments of my life, all of them involving someone hurting or taking Aly. I know Anna has no control over what's happening, she would never hurt her best friend. But knowing something doesn't stop the fury pulsing through my veins.

Someone hurt my mate and if she wasn't alive in my arms right now, I would lose complete control. I feel like Jeremy but everything has been too much lately. Too many things are happening to my Aly while I stand idly by. No more. I make a vow to protect her better, no matter what it takes.

Stepping into the bathroom, I set Aly down gently on the counter and quickly strip my own clothes, also covered in her blood, before starting the shower. As soon as the water is warm, I step in with Aly in my arms.

“Nic?” Her voice is weak and it kills me to hear. I hate that I couldn’t heal her fully from the blood loss she suffered.

“Yes Princess?” I respond, my own voice rough.

“Get out of your head and be with me. I’m here and I’m safe in your arms, okay?”

I want so badly for that to be enough, to give her what she wants but I can’t. The image of her on the ground, bloody with a vampire on top of her, is trapped in my mind.

She rests her head on my chest, not pushing me further. I try to be in this moment with her, noticing her soft skin under my hands and the way our mating bond pulses when she’s close. It does calm me down, especially when she starts humming under her breath.

“I am supposed to be taking care of you,” I point out.

“You need it more,” she responds and I can’t hold back my scoff.

“You’re the one who almost died tonight.”

“And you had to watch,” she volleys back.

I grab some shampoo and start scrubbing it into her hair, rinsing away any trace of tonight.

She sighs, leans against me more and her eyes flutter, she’s falling asleep. I hurry through the rest of the shower, shampooing her hair and cleaning her body before promptly washing myself.

While I carry her to bed, she's fast asleep in my arms, completely exhausted. Grabbing a brush, I comb through her hair before laying her down in bed.

Taking care of her was calming after everything that happened and I really appreciate seeing her without blood. It calms something in me. Slowly, all the guys trickle in and gather around her, needing reassurance too.

"Today was crazy," Kiran breaks the silence.

"Let's go out in the kitchen to talk, we don't want to wake her up," I say but no one moves.

"She's out cold, we can talk quiet. I don't want to leave her right now," Jay argues.

I agree, so I make my way back to the bed and sit next to Aly again.

"We can't keep letting things happen to her," I say, anger leaking through my voice.

When I glance up, each of them have guilty expressions looking back at me. They feel as horrible as I do. But I don't blame them, I blame myself.

"We know," Jeremy grits out.

"We got to her in time, she's here in front of us healing," Jax reasons.

"Her pain is not just physical though, what's happened to Anna could destroy Aly. She's going to feel guilty, like Anna getting turned is her fault," Jay points out.

“It’s not though, this is all Ryan’s fault!” Kiran clenches his hands in the comforter on the bed.

“Shh, keep your voice down,” Jay whisper yells at him.

Kiran reminds me of another thing, though. “We all met him, how did none of us realize he was a vampire?”

“He was over three thousand years old. Strong enough to hide himself from us,” Jax points out.

“I never liked him,” Jeremy feels the need to say.

Rolling my eyes, a little tension leaves my shoulders at the familiar moment. Bickering with my best friends is too normal.

“Yes Jeremy, we know, you were right.” Kiran gives Jeremy a little shove.

We all settle in around Aly, taking up any available space, as we all try to touch her. The guys got cleaned up while I was with Aly so at least no one is bringing this horrible night into the bed.

“Where did you put Anna?” I ask.

“In a guest bedroom,” Jay answers.

“I should go renew the spell before we sleep soundly next to her.” When I roll out of bed, each step away from Aly is painful.

I almost trip over Bailey who’s curled up on the floor next to the bed, he doesn’t look up.

Anna is sprawled on the sheets in the bedroom next to us. They took care of her, making sure her body at least looks comfortable.

The sleeping spell I perform should knock someone out for twenty-four hours. I will be renewing it every twelve, just in case. After performing the spell twice today and healing Aly earlier, the exhaustion finally catches up to me. I'm dead on my feet but there's one more thing I need to deal with before I can go to sleep.

I promised Aly we would find a way to help Anna and I intend to keep that promise.

I head to the kitchen and grab one of our many burner phones. It's late but if I had to guess, one of my parents is awake. The phone almost rings all the way through before my mom's voice answers.

"Hello?"

"Hey mom, it's Nic," I respond back since I'm sure she's confused by the random number.

"Nicoli! How are you my sweet boy?"

Even over the phone she can make me blush.

"I'm... okay mom." She cuts me off before I can tell her why I called.

"And Aly? How's that beautiful mate of yours?"

"She's okay too mom but that's why I'm calling."

“Alright, tell me what you need. I was trying to get some small talk in and pretend my son isn’t currently in hiding.” She’s joking but I almost wish I had stuck to lighter topics longer for her. I make a mental note to call her without needing something but right now I’m too exhausted to pretend.

“Sorry mom, I’ll call again soon, I promise. Something happened tonight,” I start. I go on to tell her everything about mates and hunters, the encounter with Ryan and stop before what happened to Anna.

“You’re telling me that supernaturals have mates who are hunters? Well that would explain why fated mates became rare, because a whole species has been taken out of the equation. Hunters tend to be female while the other species more male, so there’s only been a chance if your mate was one of the few females in the other species.

“On top of that, people don’t believe in cross species mixing anymore so it’s more unlikely for someone to find their mate because they’re only looking in their own species! Everything has been distorted over the years making it almost impossible to find mates!”

Well, that sums it up well. She’s right, by changing the beliefs of supernaturals, they made it almost impossible to find a mate. We only found Aly by pure chance. A deep sense of loneliness settles in my gut when I think about a life without her. Sure, I would have eventually found a mate in the mage community, but she wouldn’t be made for me like my Aly is. I sure as hell wouldn’t have shared her with my best friends

either, it would be a random group of mages that she picked out.

I thank whoever or whatever brought my Aly to me, I never want to imagine my life without her again.

“You’re right mom, it’s incredibly sad, isn’t it?”

“Yes it is son. You know, this could be the solution to your problem. If all the communities hear the truth, they’ll start mixing to find their mates. Everyone dreams of finding their fated mate, even if it’s another species. The hunters wouldn’t be coming after you, confident you’re lying and the other communities would back you up. You would need to find a way to make everyone believe you.”

“Ya, a lot easier said than done. Another problem is I’m sure there will still be elitists who won’t want to dilute species lines, even though they originally came from mixed pairings.”

“Yes but I would imagine they would be out numbered. I will think about how you could share this and what would make it undeniable.”

We got off course in this conversation but I still think it was a worthy distraction. We still need to find a way to protect ourselves and this feels like the right path. But there’s something else that I need help with first.

“Thanks mom, but there’s actually something I need your help with first. I didn’t finish the story of tonight yet. Ryan turned Aly’s best friend Anna into a vampire.”

My mom gasps on the other end of the phone.

“She’s sired to him, and he must have given her a command to kill Aly before he left because she’s singularly focused on attacking my mate. He wanted Aly dead but didn’t have the guts to stick around and do it himself. I need to find a way to counteract the sire bond.”

“Oh that poor girl. How is Aly taking it? She must feel horrible. You better be there for her. Where is Anna now?” My mom asks, switching thoughts on a dime.

“Anna is knocked out in a bedroom, I’ve got her under a sleeping spell while we find a solution. Aly was almost drained of blood tonight, so she’s sleeping, I’m not sure how she’s going to feel when she wakes up but I can imagine guilty. I’ll obviously be there for her mom, you don’t need to tell me.”

“Of course I don’t, but I’m your mom, so I will anyway. I think I may have heard of something that can counteract a sire bond but the information is fuzzy, your fathers and I will look into it,” she says and a weight is lifted off my shoulders knowing they will help.

“Thank you so much. Could you also talk to the guy’s parents and have them search as well? The more assistance the better.” My voice sounds exhausted once again. I can’t imagine having to call them for help.

“Of course, you sound tired Nicoli, go get some sleep. We have your back and will aid you however we can. I love you.” She uses her most motherly tone.

“Love you too mom, goodnight.”

Hanging up the phone, I take a deep breath. One step at a time, and we will get through this.

I head back into the bedroom and see the guys left my spot next to Aly open for me. Good, because I would have absolutely moved one of them. Sliding in next to my mate, I wrap my arms around her, breathing in her unique scent of lemon and honey while I fall asleep.

Three

Aly



I'm completely closed in on both sides and I would panic if I didn't sense two of my bonds vibrating. My mates are surrounding me.

As I slowly wake up I realize there are lips pressed against my neck. They are peppering kisses under my chin and nuzzling the skin there.

It takes me another minute to realize he's kissing the spot Anna attacked me.

“Jay.”

He doesn't pause in his goal, devouring my neck with his lips, tongue and teeth. Jay presses his body more tightly against mine and I can feel every hard inch of him.

I reach back and grab his hair, giving the strands a little tug. It breaks him out of whatever trance he was in.

“You almost died,” his voice is hoarse.

He's tracing small circles on my neck, never losing focus from that area. Thank god Anna bit the other side of my neck,

not my mark from Jay. I would be devastated if it got distorted.

“I didn’t.”

He bites my neck. “Yes you did. I watched it happen and I’ve never felt more useless in my life. Actually, not true, every time something crazy happens to you I feel that way.”

“It’s true,” Kiran breaks in from my other side, sandwiching me between them.

“You guys got her off and Nic healed me. How can you feel useless when you saved me?” I point out.

“Because you shouldn’t keep getting hurt.” Kiran leans in and kisses my forehead.

“Exactly,” Jay agrees.

“You guys aren’t responsible for protecting me from everything. Life is dangerous, it’s how we handle it that matters.”

Jay bites my neck again, I guess I won’t be getting my point across right now. They’re still in fear mode and not ready to hear reason.

“You have to take your own advice when it comes to Anna,” Kiran says.

A pit grows in my stomach at the reminder. Guilt settles into every pore of my body as I think about what happened to Anna.

“That’s completely different. It *is* my fault she’s now a vampire. A vampire that can’t be woken up because she doesn’t have control over herself.”

“It’s not different. Life is dangerous, you didn’t do this, Ryan did. It’s how you handle it that matters,” Jay insists firmly.

“I guess we all need to take that advice,” I say, not wanting to continue talking about it.

“Would you like to forget about it all for a while?” Kiran leans in and kisses me. Jay resumes kissing my neck.

“Yes, I would love a distraction. Where are the others?” I ask around a moan. It’s weird only waking up to Kiran and Jay here.

“Doesn’t matter, we can help with that,” Jay whispers.

Jay’s hand drifts up and wraps around my middle, drawing small circles around my belly button.

Kiran licks my bottom lip before biting down on it, making me moan.

He pulls away from me and I chase after his lips. He lets out a self-satisfied laugh.

Kiran leans down and picks me up, wrapping my legs around his middle, before taking me into the bathroom.

I give him a questioning look because the distraction I was looking for involved a naked Kiran and Jay surrounding me.

Once again, he laughs at me before setting me on the counter. He steps back and strips his shirt off, drawing my eyes to his chiseled body.

I receive a view of his muscular back and tattoos when he turns around to start the shower.

Jay walks in and gets on board real quick, stripping his clothes off before coming over to help me down.

I'm already naked, Nic didn't bother to put pajamas on me last night after our shower. I don't think I need one again so soon, but I have a feeling they want to make sure every reminder of last night is gone. I can let them do that.

Jay picks me up, so I'm straddling him and easily carries me over to the shower. We step under the flow and not a second later, Kiran is pressed up behind me.

Hot water pours down my body and steam fills the room. I tilt my head back letting it saturate my hair before leaning forward and kissing Jay.

I start slow, and he lets me before he presses me into Kiran, so he has more leverage.

He devours my mouth like a punishment.

Kiran grabs my ass, helping Jay get more leverage, as he leans in and kisses my neck. Being the shit stirrer he is, he makes eye contact with him while licking Jay's mark on my neck. My pussy instantly clenches around nothing making me whimper.

He swirls his tongue around it but doesn't get to do much else before Jay is growling at him.

"Mine." Jay's eyes flash wolf, and he flashes his fangs at Kiran.

Kiran laughs before moving away from that side of my neck.

"Alright, I'll stay in my lane." Kiran traces his finger up his own mark on my arm.

I groan and I don't even care how obscene the noise sounded. These marks are like hot buttons for me.

"Do you need more baby?" Kiran never stops his tracing.

"Yes!"

Jay brings a hand down to start fingering me but I'm too desperate.

"No. I need you both now," I demand.

Jay raises his eyebrows at me but complies, pulling his hand away and lining up with me.

Kiran helps hold me up so Jay can slowly work himself in. He does shallow thrusts until finally our bodies meet.

"We need an orgasm baby," Kiran whispers. He starts playing with the dark green vine again, swirling around it while Jay pounds into me.

"I'm sure he won't mind." Kiran uses another finger to trace Jax's mark.

That absolutely sets me off and I can sense Ajax's shock through the bond. Touching the mark made him experience my orgasm stronger than usual.

While I'm still shattering, Jay leans forward and licks my mark before biting down again.

The sensation triggers a second orgasm for me and I cry out so hard there's no doubt everyone heard me.

"Now you're soaked for us." Jay looks back at Kiran.

"Do you want to try something new baby?" Kiran presses tight against my back.

I'm not sure what he means but I'm open for anything from these guys.

Jay pulls out so Kiran can press in, coating himself. He fucks me a few times before nodding to Jay.

I'm about to ask what the hell they're doing when Jay presses in right next to Kiran, both of them stretching my pussy to its limits. There's a slight burn but nothing I can't handle.

"Oh fuck," I groan.

"Feel good baby?" Kiran asks as they slowly start moving. They're sliding against each other as they alternate pushing inside me.

"So damn good." Any pain has turned to an overwhelming pleasure.

I can't think about anything except all the sensations taking over my body.

Jay lifts my wrist to his mouth, staring deep into his eyes as he bites down, possession shining through his expression.

I come around them and the sensations get stronger as I'm drowning in pleasure. They both pick up their pace before coming inside of me, filling me with a mixture of their come.

Jay and Kiran pull out of me, still holding me up in their arms as we all catch our breaths. The shower rinses us off as we stand under the stream.

"That was new," I eventually say.

They both laugh and they finally sound like themselves. Like some of the fog has lifted after the events of yesterday.

"I think we were both feeling very possessive of you," Jay admits.

"Some more than others," Kiran jokes.

I lean back against Kiran and wrap an arm around his neck. He leans down to give me a soft kiss.

We wash up and rinse off before getting out of the shower. Jay wraps me up in a towel while Kiran dries my hair with another. It's like I'm a princess being doted on.

"Perfect, that's how you deserve to feel." Kiran kisses my temple.

I guess I said that aloud. I'm too blissed-out to have control over my mouth right now.

We dress and head outside to the kitchen where the other three are gathered. They're all staring at us with various degrees of amusement and lust. Jax's gaze is very knowing so I head over and perch on his lap, next to Nic.

He wraps his arms around me immediately, breathing in my scent.

Jeremy passes over a coffee which I immediately chug. I'm exhausted, like a zombie, after everything.

Nic gets a serious expression on his face and I know we are about to get down to business.

Four

Aly



“I talked to my mom last night, and she’s going to help search for a solution for Anna. She’s also going to talk to everyone’s parents to see if they can assist too,” Nic says.

I am relieved he’s already gotten the ball rolling on this. I want Anna out of Ryan’s control as soon as possible. But after that, there’s another problem.

“Thank you so much Nic,” I say, leaning over and giving him a sweet kiss on the cheek. “Once Anna can be woken up, what will she be like?”

Vampires were not a subject covered in much detail when my parents were teaching me. I imagine they didn’t have all the information on other species, just like the guys didn’t know much about hunters.

Everyone defers to Jeremy. “Well, she’ll need to be trained. I think I can handle it but if not, we may need to try finding a vampire willing to help.”

My gut churns at the idea of bringing someone else in. I only trust the people in this room and their parents with Anna's safety. And I only trust their parents because the guys do and I have that much faith in them.

"Let's start with you and go from there. What kind of training?" I ask.

Jeremy gives me a nod of agreement before continuing, "she will need to learn to control her blood-lust, strength and speed as well as training her to protect herself like you were trained Aly."

That's not so bad, the only truly terrifying thing in that list is the blood-lust.

"How bad will the blood-lust be?" I ask.

Jeremy shrugs. "It depends on the vampire."

"There's something else we should discuss while on the subject," Nic cuts in. We all watch him, waiting for more information.

He focuses on me. "Drinking someone's blood is considered extremely intimate and sexual. It's not something any of us would be comfortable letting her do."

He states it so matter of fact, it takes me a minute to catch up. I glance around, and they're all nodding their head in agreement, with serious looks on their faces. Damn, I love these guys.

"We will need to find someone for her to feed from" Jay says after I give them all a blinding smile.

But that won't work. We can't bring anyone else into this, I'm sure of it. That only leaves one option.

"It's not ideal, but she can drink from me. I know neither of us feel that way, it'll be an act done as friends."

Several frowns and fierce eyes glare back at me. I know I'm going to have an argument on my hands but I feel in my gut this is the right move, even though it sends a tendril of fear down my spine. When she drank from my neck, it almost killed me. My hand unconsciously touches the spot she tore open.

"No. Absolutely not!" Jeremy shouts.

"It's too dangerous Aly," Nic tries to reason.

The other three stay mysteriously quiet and I'm guessing they're leaving this battle to the three of us. When I focus on them, I see fear shining in their eyes and more than one of them looking at my neck.

"Does she need to drink directly from me?" I ask, trying to switch directions.

Jeremy frowns, clearly thinking about what I asked. "She will need to learn to control herself but just for sustenance, no."

"Great, then we will give her my blood in a cup for now and figure out the rest later. Deal?"

After a minute of deliberation, I get several nods back. Their mouths are turned down and eyes narrowed, I know they

don't like it, but I think they realize this is the best option we have.

“Fine, but we evaluate as we go. If there are any problems, we stop,” Nic commands and I agree with a nod of my head.

They're being reasonable and I appreciate that.

“What can we do to help find a solution for Anna?” I ask.

No one immediately answers and I'm guessing it's because it wasn't an easy question.

“I know you won't like this,” Nic starts, “but I think we should let our parents find the answer. It's too dangerous for us to be out in the world looking. Ryan or hunters could be after us.”

“But,” I start but I'm interrupted.

“Nic's right, going out there is not safe. Our parents will be able to be discreet,” Jay says.

“They'll find the answer, I'm sure of it,” Jax adds.

“We could use the illusion charms again,” Kiran points out and I want to kiss him.

“Yes! Let's do that,” I say.

Nic glowers at Kiran but quickly returns his focus back to me. “Fine, but it takes time to make them. The old ones ran out. I'll start working today.”

“Thank you,” I lean up and whisper before indulging in a long, slow kiss.

When I pull away his smile warms my heart. I know he's doing this to make me happy and I appreciate it.

"Can you make one for Anna too, just in case?" I ask.

Nic nods. "Yes, that's smart. Good thinking Princess."

Kiran grabs my hand and tugs me out of Jax's lap to him. "We have a lot ahead of us and I think you should work on your magic while Nic builds the illusions charms. You've mastered the teleportation but haven't had progress on the mind manipulation."

I'm tired but I know this is important. I nod, and we head into the middle of the living room to train, Jax trailing behind us.

We've already tried this a million times. Jax and Kiran are trying their best to help me but my powers are different from their magic.

Bailey joins us, scratching at my leg until I kneel down and pet him.

"Maybe I can't manipulate minds," I say, "not every hunter has the same magic. Just because my mom can, doesn't mean I'll be able to."

"You're right, it doesn't, but until we have another lead for you to work on, we keep trying," Jax says.

"Should I ask my mom about the power?" I suggest.

I've been wanting to talk to them again and this could be a good reason to.

Of course, Jer hears me and jumps in right away. “We have a lot going on right now, let’s wait on talking to your parents.”

I sigh but accept his reasoning. We do have a ton going on and Anna is my main priority, not my powers.

Bailey nudges my hand when I stop petting him, reminding me of another mystery on our hands.

“What do we know about Bailey and having a familiar?” I ask.

They all share a glance but it’s Jax who speaks up. “Not much when it comes to hunter’s familiars. We will need to find a way to get information about it. Clearly, he can transport too and fight. You have a mental bond, I’m guessing he can sense your emotions and even your wishes for him. We know he’s an Athermy but I don’t actually know much about them except that they bond with hunters. I’ll need to study it more.”

I nod. It’s weird to think of Bailey as anything but a dog, although now that I’m not trapped in the mindset of a human, he really doesn’t look like one. He’s more wolf than dog, I’m surprised anyone was willing to pet him. At least he’s the biggest sweetheart down to his core.

Five

Aly



We've been training and checking on Anna constantly for days while Nic builds the charms. I haven't made progress on my magic but I've been distracted. It feels like we aren't doing anything useful, I'm letting my best friend down as she lays sleeping in a guest room and I hate it.

Nic says it should only be a few more days until the charms are complete. It's taking him longer since he's making them stronger and an extra one. He's hoping these will last longer or maybe be reusable. I don't understand all his magic talk, so I'll have to take his word for it.

We've been checking in with their parents every day but so far there's been nothing concrete. Jeremy's mom seems to think they're really close to something, though, so I have hope.

Anna remains sedated in the other room and my guilt grows every day. The guys keep trying to distract me but their attempts only work for so long before I'm thinking about Anna again.

Nic disappeared earlier and I'm not sure where he went. There's a clinking noise, like metal on metal coming from the side of the house. I walk outside and listen for the noise, trying to pin down exactly where it's coming from. The building next to us. When I walk over and into a garage, Nic is looking at a car. I don't know much about cars but this one seems pretty old.

I haven't been in here yet, the place appears unused. It's covered in cobwebs and everything looks like it's thirty years old. Nic glances up immediately when I enter.

"What are you doing?" I ask.

He's got the hood open as he fiddles with something inside. I didn't know he knew anything about cars.

"I'm taking a break while my magic recovers. This was the twin's parent's car when they were in hiding here. As fae, they had no way to transport around unless my dad came over to help."

I walk around to stand next to him. "Okay, but that doesn't explain why you're looking under the hood. I can transport us, so we don't need a car."

I'm a little offended but maybe he wants something to do. It can get boring waiting around the house to hear news, even though we've been entertaining ourselves in a sexual manner.

"We are relying on you too much. I want to make sure we have a working backup plan."

A backup plan? He doesn't trust me?

I know he can feel my hurt down the bond when he immediately turns to look me in the eyes. “Not like that. When Anna bit you and you got drained, you couldn’t use your powers to transport us. Being vulnerable made me realize we need a backup plan just in case. Or what if we had to split up? You can’t be in two places at once.”

He has a good point. A great one in fact, but I still don’t like it.

“You’re right,” I grudgingly admit.

He leans in and gives me a kiss without touching me with his greasy hands. I wouldn’t mind getting dirty with him.

“So, does it work?” I ask.

“Honestly, I don’t know much but it wasn’t starting. I was able to fiddle with it some so let’s find out.” Even when Nic is admitting to not knowing something, he still sounds confident.

He wipes his hands off on a rag before opening the garage door and sliding into the drivers seat, I join him in the passenger.

He slides the key in and after it splutters for a second, the car turns on.

“You did it!” I say, excited for him.

He’s got a small, proud smile on his face. “Ya, I guess I did.”

He regards me for a second before saying, “fuck it. Do you want to go for a ride? I need to make sure there are no

problems, and we should be safe enough.”

My answering smile is huge. The rest of the guys are going to be so jealous we went on an adventure and got out of here. They are as bored as us.

“I would love to!”

He puts the car in reverse and maneuvers out of the garage.

“Should we tell the guys we are leaving?” I ask.

He waits until it’s too late for them to join us before sending a message through the pack bond.

Testing out the car. Be back soon. Watch over Anna.

I can feel three amused mates and one grumpy one as we drive away. I’m sure Jeremy doesn’t think leaving is safe, but we need to have fun every once in a while.

Once we hit the road, Nic takes off. He’s resting a hand on my thigh as he navigates the back roads.

“How long do we need to drive the car?” I ask.

He chuckles. “We are probably good but I have you all to myself, I’m not going to give that up in a rush.”

Butterflies erupt in my stomach.

I lean over, so I can lay a head on his shoulder. “Sounds good to me.”

We keep going until we hit a dead end, a cliff overhang with an absolutely beautiful view. When we come to a stop, I hop out of the car and walk closer to the edge.

“You better be careful, I can’t fly,” Nic says coming up on my left side.

“I will, but if I did fall, I could just transport back.”

Nic throws an arm around my shoulder. “You’re awfully comfortable with your magic for someone who didn’t know supernaturals existed until recently.”

I nuzzle into him deeper. “I have great teachers.”

We stand there taking in the view. The deep valleys form a canyon, full of reds and oranges, and we are standing on the edge. Who knew this was so close to the cottage we’ve been staying at?

Nic’s fingers start following the patterns on my arm, swirling around the different colors of my mark from him. These boys love seeing how they’ve marked me.

Of course, every time they pay any attention to my marks, I get extremely worked up. They know this, I’m convinced they love seeing me squirm.

“I’m about to drag you home,” I warn.

The hand on my arm never pauses.

“Who says we have to go home?”

I mean, we did fuck against a tree back at the cottage so it’s not out of the realm of possibilities. I don’t mind where I have my guys, as long as I get to have them.

Nic leans over and kisses me, long and deep. He’s not rushing, but he’s got me all worked up and I want it fast and

dirty.

I jump into his arms and wrap my legs around his waist. He doesn't miss a beat, grabbing me under my legs and supporting me. I drop my lips down to his neck while his hands knead my ass. I'm startled when he starts walking, not sure where he's going until I'm laid down on something hard and warm. I drop my hand down to feel the hood of the car under me, still hot from our drive over.

Nic leans over, capturing my lips with his again as he grinds himself into me. My legs stay wrapped around his waist as I desperately try to remove his clothes.

I'm not making much progress, and he takes pity on me, leaning back just enough to slip his shirt off. My hands immediately find the planes of his chest while he slips my top off.

I'm sure no one is around, but it feels scandalous to be getting naked in public. Without Jay's impeccable hearing, we might not know if someone is here until it's too late. None of that is enough to stop me, however, from unbuttoning my pants and sliding them off as well.

Nic lowers his face to my core, giving me one long lick before groaning. "You taste so fucking delicious. Perfect. Like mine."

He dives back in, forcing more cream from my body as he works me perfectly. When he gives me the slightest static shock to my clit, I come hard around him.

He leaves me empty which means I am clenching around nothing and craving his cock badly.

“I need you,” I beg.

“Okay Princess, I’ll fuck you right here where anyone could see how much I own you. That you’re my mate and you aren’t going anywhere. Not even death could separate us.”

Before I can process the fact that, based on that comment, Nic isn’t completely over what happened with Anna, he’s plunging into me.

He brutally pounds me until all I can process is pleasure and his complete possession of me. Nic grips my thighs for leverage, so I don’t slide back on the car.

He stops deep inside me and grinds his hips in a circle, pressing against my clit as he does. Lips attack my neck as he pushes my body closer to an orgasm.

His hand wraps around my throat, with his thumb under my chin so my head is tipped back before whispering, “come.”

And I do, so fucking hard.

He lets me enjoy my orgasm for a minute before pulling out of me. I’m about to bitch him out for stopping when he flips me over so my hands are pressed against the hood.

His palm slaps my ass as he pushes back inside. He grips my hips so hard he’s probably leaving bruises but I feel so incredible I don’t care.

He fucks me hard, hitting my sweet spots every time until my legs almost can't hold me up anymore.

“Come all over me Princess. Grip me so hard I forget anything except the feeling of you.”

I do. I'm dripping everywhere. Nic groans as he comes with me. We've definitely scared any wildlife away with the sounds we are making.

I lean back against Nic as we both take a second to gather ourselves. He kisses the soft skin behind my ear before fully pulling away.

He uses his shirt to clean me up before helping me back into the car and throwing it in the back seat.

Having fun? Kiran's voice interrupts my bliss and I can't help but burst out laughing. He sounds so damn amused.

Nic joins me before answering him.

Lots. Thanks for asking. Coming back now.

I grab Nic's hand and enjoy our ride back together. Hopefully Kiran and probably Jay keep their teasing to a minimum, although I'm so at peace, I won't even mind.

Six

Aly



I'm sitting on the couch with Kiran, Jax is reading at the table, Jay is cooking and Jeremy and Nic are sparring. I've been working on my magic for hours but still no progress. A phone rings on the counter, when I'm finally taking a break, and we all drop what we're doing and head to the kitchen.

Nic picks it up immediately. "This is the phone we gave our parents the number to."

I'm not sure how he keeps track of them all but now is not the time to ask. My heart starts beating at twice the pace and my palms get sweaty. I really hope this is good news. We need it.

"Hello?" Nic answers and puts it on speakerphone.

"Nicoli? Is that you? It's Jeremy's mother," a woman's voice says through the phone.

Nic looks up and meets Jeremy's eyes. "Hey mom, I'm here too. We all are, what's up?"

"Oh! Is Aly there?" She asks and I actually blush at how excited she sounds about talking to me. My mother definitely

never sounds that happy about it.

The guys' parents seem very excited about having a daughter through mating.

"Hi Mona, yes I'm here," I say back.

"Nice to talk to you dear! We must catch up sometime soon but I have good news I imagine you want to hear first."

Catch up? That would imply we've ever talked in detail with each other. The idea of spending time with her warms my heart. Jeremy rolls his eyes but I can feel through the bond that he's pleased. He likes to pretend he's heartless but I know better.

"Yes mom, please tell us."

"We tracked down an amulet that is supposed to stop the person wearing it from experiencing their sire bond."

My heart soars and I feel like an enormous weight has been lifted from my shoulders. Anna is going to be okay, we have a solution. I think I stop breathing for a second.

"That's incredible!" I say.

"Do you have it?" Nic asks.

"Well, we know where it is, but getting it is going to be tricky. I think you six may be better suited for the job, unfortunately. Or at least know someone who is."

My heart drops a little but I still have hope. We can get it, my mates and I.

"Where is it?" Jeremy asks.

Everyone is paying close attention to the phone as Jeremy's mother talks. She explains that the amulet is in the possession of a hunter. They tracked its sale to a Mr. Johnson living in Michigan. All of them tense when she says the word hunter.

Jax takes notes on every detail she gives us and I know we are all already thinking through the logistics of this.

"Promise me if you need help you'll call us," Jeremy's mom demands. I'm surprised she's not insisting on facing the danger herself but their parents have always believed in the guy's abilities.

"We promise. Thank you for your help, tell dads I say hi." Jer clicks the red button on the phone, ending the call.

"So, a hunter," Kiran says, looking around the group and taking in everyone's expressions.

I know mine is determined but I'm not sure what he sees in everyone else's.

"I think we need to," I start but I'm cut off.

"Don't say it." Jeremy doesn't appear furious like I expect but instead, scared. That's one hundred times worse.

Guilt blooms in my stomach for everything they've been put through. They've had to watch me almost die breaking a memory spell, get taken by my own mother and almost be killed by my best friend. When this is over, we need a long vacation.

“Let’s talk all options before making a decision,” Jay suggests, steering the conversation to safer grounds.

“We could break in,” Kiran suggests.

“Or offer to buy it,” Jax adds.

I go along with them, even though I know what the most logical answer is. I’ll let them work through it first though. I at least owe them that.

“We could try to find another one,” Jay throws out but even he knows that suggestion is weak. It took their parents a week to find this one, who knows how long it would take to find another. We don’t have that time, Anna’s parents are going to start demanding answers soon.

“We could kill him for it,” Jeremy says and his eyes light up like he loves that idea.

I scan Nic and his shoulders are down in defeat. I know what’s coming out of his mouth before he says it.

“Or we could ask Aly’s parents to help us get it. If we can think of a way to trust them, then they may be able to just ask for it. They’re hunters and should be trusted by another member of the community.”

Jeremy clenches his fists, he might punch Nic for suggesting it. His hatred of my parents is still going strong. Jax is sad but resigned and I know he’ll do it for me. Kiran is still trying to smile and be happy but I can tell it’s forced. Jay has wrapped himself around my body like he can physically protect me from my parents if he’s close enough.

“Let’s at least go talk to them,” I say.

“First, we need a way to make sure they won’t double-cross us,” Nic says.

“You’re right,” I agree. I don’t trust my parents either, I wish I could. Maybe this can be the first step to repairing my faith in them.

“It’s got to be a spelled item,” Kiran says looking to Nic.

He sighs and I feel bad. He’s been pushing himself all week to make these illusion charms and I know he’s tired. I wish there was some way I could help. I have to at least try.

“Nic, is there any way I can help you?” I ask, moving to stand next to him, wrapping my arms around his body and try to send him strength.

“Whoa! What did you just do?” He asks, looking down at me in awe.

“Uh, hug you?” I answer not sure why he’s forgotten what a hug was. Is he okay?

“No, not that. You sent me power. This is amazing!” He sounds so excited.

I glance over at the rest of the guys, expecting them to be just as confused as me, but they look excited too.

“What do you mean I sent you power?” I ask and I feel a little excitement too. This could solve a lot of problems for us, and I was just wishing I could help Nic, now I can.

“Well, when mages mate, they can power share, aka get more power from their mates. I thought it only worked between mates who were both mages because that’s all I’ve ever seen. But you just sent me power so it must work between all types of mates. Damn, so much information has been lost to us because there’s only inter-species mating.”

“Amazing! How do I do it again?” I ask, excited to help him.

“This doesn’t hurt Aly at all right?” Jeremy breaks in and asks.

Nic scoffs at Jeremy like he’s stupid. “Do you really think I would let her if it did?”

Of course my hackles go up at that. “Hey! You don’t *let* me do anything.”

Nic breaks his stare off with Jeremy and turns to me with soft eyes. “You’re right, I meant I wouldn’t ask you to if it would.”

I nod in approval.

“It does drain your power reserves though. You’re basically sending me your power, so I can use it as a mage instead of you as a hunter.” Nic genuinely smiles, so hopeful that this will work.

“If we could figure out how Aly replenished her power before, we could help her do it again,” Jax points out.

I have no idea how that worked last time.

“We could ask my parents when we go to see them, maybe they know.”

“And we could read the book we got from Ryan for the answer,” Kiran adds and his voice trails off, I bet he’s realizing what I am.

I forgot about the damn book that we risked our lives to get. We’ve been so caught up in everything with Anna that we haven’t even opened it. I peer up and all the guys have annoyed expressions on their faces, like somehow they forgot about it too.

“We need to read that damn book,” I say and everyone agrees.

“So Nic and Aly will work on a charm for her parents and the rest of us will examine the book,” Jax suggests.

Jay, Jeremy and Kiran share a look like they know Jax is going to be doing this, but they agree anyway. They can still help him figure things out or discuss what they read.

“Okay, let’s do it,” I say and grab Nic’s hand.

He drags me into the other room and shuts the door behind us.

“Okay, first I need to find a spell for this and decide on an object to charm,” he tells me.

“Something small would be ideal, we don’t want the hunter to think they’re being influenced. Something they would normally have on them,” I say.

“I agree, any ideas?”

“Can the items be different for each?” I ask. I still don’t know much about how Nic’s magic works but I’ll leave it to him. He can answer my questions when I have them. I have enough to learn about my own magic.

“They can be different,” he answers.

“My mom’s charm could be earrings,” I say taking off the pair in my ears and setting them in the table.

“That’s a good idea. These don’t mean anything special to you, do they?” He asks and it’s sweet of him to check.

“No they don’t. Do you have any ideas for my dad? I’m not sure what men wear or have on them.”

He thinks about it for a minute before saying, “how about a bracelet but instead of on his wrist, we have him put it on his leg so it’s hidden under his pants?”

“That’s a fantastic idea Nic, I don’t have any bracelets but I do have hair ties. Those should be big enough to go around his ankle.” I run over to my duffle bag and pull out a pack of hair ties. I bring one back to Nic and place it on the table next to the earrings.

He’s looking through a spell book and stops on an intention spell.

“This spell allows me to know if someone intends to follow through on what they say. As soon as their intention changes, I’ll know.”

“Perfect Nic, can you also add a spell, so they can’t take the items off? So only you can?” I ask.

He snaps his fingers. “That’s a great idea, I know there’s something for that in here too. We’ll do it next.”

“Perfect!” I give him a huge smile. He’s one of the greatest mates ever. I am so lucky.

“Listen, this will take a lot of magic to do. It’s a powerful spell, you have to stop before you’re completely drained, okay? I don’t want you defenseless.”

“I will, but I wouldn’t be defenseless. My biggest asset isn’t my magic, it’s my combat abilities.” I defend.

“Yes it is, but when your magic is depleted, you’ll feel drained all around. You’ll be exhausted,” he explains.

Oh. I think back on any time I’ve drained my magic, and he’s right, I was exhausted.

“Okay, I’ll stop.”

“Great, try to send me magic again like you did before.”

I step up next to him and place my hands on him. I think about sending him strength like I did before, how worried I am about him and that I don’t want him to be fatigued, how much I care about him.

It starts as a small tingle and turns into so much more as I push more energy. I can feel it traveling from me to Nic and how much is leaving my store. So far it’s not too much but I can see how it could get depleted quickly.

Nic starts chanting and making motions with his hands that I don't understand. I can see the magic moving between them, the same colors as my mark from him, purples and blues. It's beautiful to watch, I don't think I'll ever get tired of seeing him do magic.

I can feel his energy getting lower the longer the spell goes on, feel his exhaustion through our mating bond. So I send more power through to him. His exhaustion eases but mine increases. I'm close to having to pull back but I don't want this spell to fail.

Jeremy busts in the room, pricks his finger and offers his blood to Nic. It's enough for him to finish the spell and I stop feeding him energy.

Jeremy wraps his arms around me as we watch Nic's magic settle into the items. I know using his blood drains Jeremy's magic but I'm so glad he joined us to help. I'm not sure we would have been able to do it on our own. It's an incredibly difficult spell.

"Thank you," I whisper, kissing Jeremy under his chin.

"Anything for you," he responds and I can feel a small blush form on my cheeks.

"Did it work?" I ask Nic.

"Only one way to find out," he says picking up the hair tie and passing it to Jeremy.

Jeremy slips it on his wrist, trusting Nic implicitly and my heart warms.

“Do you promise to never steal my food?” Nic asks and I can’t help but burst out laughing.

Apparently, Jeremy is a food thief. He was always stealing food in their house when they lived together. I would never have guessed it.

Jeremy laughs too and says, “yes.”

“Lie, that’s not your intention,” Nic says with an eye roll.

“At least we know it works!” I say with a cheeky smile.

Nic can’t help but return it. “Try to take it off.”

Jeremy attempts to remove the hair tie but it won’t budge from his wrist. He yanks on it as hard as he can but it’s stuck there.

“What the hell? Take this off!” Jeremy demands.

Now I’m full on belly laughing and it feels so incredible. It’s been a while since I’ve laughed this hard.

Jeremy softens, getting less angry and almost smiling when he looks over at me so happy. He turns to Nic, and his face gets harder. “Take it off.”

Nic is laughing now too. “But it’s so ideal! You won’t be able to lie to me at all! I can ask all sorts of questions.”

“I just won’t answer!” Jeremy replies.

Jay, Kiran and Jax come in the room looking at us like we are all crazy.

“What’s so funny in here?” Kiran asks, coming up to me and wrapping his arms around me.

Jay joins him and starts playing with my hair, swirling it around his finger. “Ya, I could hear Aly Kat laughing from the other room.”

Jax leans against the wall and waits for an answer.

I explain that the spell worked and Nic tested it on Jeremy. I can’t stop laughing when I tell them that it can only be removed by Nic. At this point it’s not even that funny, I’m just in desperate need of a laugh.

They all join in until everyone is laughing at poor Jeremy’s expense.

“You should ask him if he’ll ever stop stealing our food!” Kiran says around laughs.

That only makes the laughing worse when I tell them he already did.

Eventually, Nic takes pity on Jeremy and removes the lie detector bracelet.

“Damn, that would have been fantastic,” Jay jokes.

“So, when are we going to use these on the parents?” Kiran asks and we all defer to Nic.

If he doesn’t answer soon, I might lose it and that would be a shame after all this laughter and fun.

“Let’s go tomorrow, after we’ve all rested and recharged. Some of us are low on magic, and we need to be at full strength,” Nic says.

“I agree,” I say, walking up and wrapping my arms around him. “Thank you.”

He leans down and gives me a kiss. Licking my bottom lip before nibbling on it a little. He gives me a slight squeeze before pulling back.

He gazes around the room. “So rest up tonight, no magic and be prepared for tomorrow!”

Everyone heads out of the room, going their separate ways and I enjoy a few extra minutes thanking my mage properly.

Seven

Jax



I head over to the living room and settle back in with the book on hunters and their mates we got from Ryan. This book is a well of information and I can't believe I waited this long to read it.

I've been skimming it for now, trying to see what's most important. There's so much in here to come back to, it's everything we need to know about our mating. I have a feeling this book will be key in convincing people our mating is real and that their mates could be out there in other species. Everyone will need to read it, but for now, I'll fill them in on the important stuff.

I didn't get much done when I had the guys surrounding me pretending to read it too. They ended up messing around and joking with each other.

I stop when I notice a section about familiars. I'm surprised it's in this book, but we will take any information we can get. The chapter isn't too detailed on the bond between

hunter and animal, but it does talk about how that bond extends to mates.

Apparently, when we mated Aly, we got a weaker, secondary bond with Bailey. It would explain why Bailey spends time with us as well, why he seems protective of all of us.

I read more from the book.

Mates can influence the familiar's actions or call the animal to them, like their hunter. The familiar will listen to their hunter over anyone else but a mate can also build that bond. The more time spent together, the stronger the bond.

That means Aly is able to call Bailey to her. We should practice that because Bailey has already come to us in a time of need and been invaluable. We need to be sure we can do it again.

There's nothing more about familiars here, so I keep flipping through the book.

I get really excited when I see a section on power-sharing.

hunters can refill their magical stores through physical contact with their mate or mates. The skin to skin contact transfers energy to the hunter without draining their mate.

So it's like how Kiran and I gain power from the emotions of people without draining the actual host. This is outstanding. No wonder Aly hardly runs out of power, one of us is usually touching her.

I hear her leave the room with Nic and walk into the living room, so I call her over, excited to share the information!

“Aly, come here!”

She makes her way over to the couch, sitting next to me and I can't help but admire the ruffled look she has after being with Nic.

“What's up Jax? How's the book going?”

“Well, answer me this. Do you feel more recharged than you did twenty minutes ago?”

I'm testing the theory.

She looks at me like I'm crazy. “Of course I do. Time helps replenish my magic.”

I don't think she even knows how slow magic usually recovers because she's always had us around. This is probably a normal pace for her. Then she'll go to bed tonight, surrounded by her mates and wake up completely refreshed.

“Actually, in such a short time, you shouldn't be experiencing that much energy,” I say matter of factually.

She smiles at me like I'm adorable but I'm not sure why, I'm just informing her. “You're so cute. And do you have a theory on why my magic is replenishing so quickly?”

Oh. “The book says skin to skin contact with your mates gives you energy. We wouldn't have noticed it since we are always together.”

Her smile grows as she rests her hand on my arm. “So you’re saying I’m recharging now, just by touching you?”

I nod.

“This is incredible!”

I’m so glad I was able to help by finding useful information in this book. It would be a lot worse if the book was a dud.

Aly leans in, pressing her body against my side and whispers, “want to help me recharge?”

My initial reaction is to blush but all the cravings I’ve had for Aly quickly take over. I’ve had years to think of all the things I want to do to my mate and knowing it’s Aly makes every fantasy ten times hotter.

I want to devour her, own her and make her mine in every sense of the word.

Grabbing her hips, I swing her onto my lap.

“Always.”

I lean in and kiss her, devouring and owning her mouth. Aly comes back with enthusiasm, gripping the back of my hair and tugging as she tries to get closer to me.

I run my finger down my mating mark on her arm, thinking about when Kiran did it in the shower with Aly. I should be mad but I honestly don’t mind, I got to feel Aly come more strongly and know she was thinking of me too. Plus, it was Kiran, we share everything anyway.

Now if he was dumb enough to try that with Jay, he might be in danger. Wolves are very territorial, especially of their mates.

Leaving Aly's lips behind, I kiss down her throat, on the opposite side of Jay's bite. I'm trying not to think about the fact that Anna's teeth were here far too recently but I can't. I bite down on the skin, wanting to replace the memory with a new one.

Aly moans so fucking loud, I feel like I've won something.

"Fuck Jax, you're so damn sexy," Aly whispers as I continue ravishing her neck.

She reaches down to unbutton my pants, moving them enough to get my dick out.

I run my hands down her body and realize her ass is completely bare under Nic's large shirt she's wearing.

I grip the skin, dragging her across my cock as I feel how wet she is against me. She's absolutely soaked, and I am so wrecked for this girl.

She reaches down to line us up, sinking down on my cock in one try. I grip her hips hard as I thrust up into her from below.

She slides her hand under my shirt, raking across my abs before grabbing my shirt and taking it off.

Her nails dig into my shoulder before raking down my back. I pound harder into her, enjoying the feel of her wrapped around me.

“Shirt off,” I demand.

As soon as she rips it off over her head, I get to see her chest bouncing in my face, little pink nipples and all, it’s perfect.

“Can I see your fae form?” She asks.

I almost stop, she’s shocked me so much, but I wouldn’t deny her anything.

I push back the human facade and release my fae side, my skin is more luminescent, my eyes are a light green and my ears are pointed.

She’s staring at every inch of me like I’m the best thing she’s ever seen and I love it. Clearly, she likes it as she bounces harder on top of me.

She reaches up and brushes her finger along the top of my ear, almost making me come instantly. It’s incredibly sensitive and I didn’t realize how much I would love having my mate touch them. Kiran is going to be so jealous.

I groan and lean up to kiss her, swirling my tongue against hers while she grinds against me. We use the couch to bounce her on top of me, gaining momentum until I know she’s about to come.

I can feel her walls tightening around me, that fluttering that tells me I need to push her over the edge.

I decide to try something I’ve been practicing for just this moment. Using the smallest tendril of my light magic, I flick her clit with a small blast of heat.

She moans my name and I can feel her gripping me as she comes, hard.

“Jax, Jax, oh fuck, Ajax.”

Her chanting my name gets me close but it's her fingers on my ears again that sends me over the edge. It's a direct connection to my dick. I pull her tight against me and grind into her as I come as deep as I can inside her.

At this moment, I want to own and possess her.

She collapses against me, totally spent. I gather her tight to my chest, rubbing up and down her back and through her hair.

When I can get my thoughts together again, I can't help but ask, “how does your magic feel now?”

She chuckles softly against me, running a finger around her mark on my chest. “I feel like I haven't used any magic. It's extraordinary, I'm so glad you found this information Jax. Thanks for reading this book for us.”

“Of course, I would do anything for you,” I answer honestly, enjoying the feeling of her in my arms.

Eight

Aly



I face off against the guys in the living room, steeling my spine. “Okay, it’s time we face my parents again. Nic did you let your parents know we’re coming?”

The guys all stare back at me with various degrees of dread. Even though we agreed to do this, I think they were still hoping for another solution to miraculously appear.

“Yes, I let them know we are coming and I’ve got the charms, so we should be good. Are you sure you want to do this?” Nic asks.

His eyes are pleading with me to find another way but there isn’t one, and we all know it. They don’t want me hurt by my parents again and the idea of letting them loose is terrifying to them. They want to protect me and I can’t fault them for that, but Anna needs this and that’s what matters now.

“I’m sure. We have the charms, and we could take them if we need to. They don’t have any weapons. They’re our best hope for getting this amulet,” I say firmly.

“We know, let’s do this,” Jay says and starts heading for the door. I appreciate his support.

Everyone follows him outside. There was a fight about leaving Anna here unprotected but the guys reminded me no one has found the cabin yet. She’ll be safe here, and we might need all the man power we can get if it comes to a fight.

We make our way outside and past the barrier before forming a circle. I tap into my magic and imagine the shack at Nic’s family home. I feel a pull and grab my guys to go with me.

We land in the grass on the edge of their land with the hut in front of us. Nic’s mom and some of his dads are there waiting.

“Hello,” Nina, Nic’s mom says, going in to give Nic a kiss. She proceeds to give one to each of us and I get a tight hug as well.

I smile and hug her back, appreciating her warmth and acceptance of me.

“Let’s get this over with,” Jeremy says, making his way to the door.

“We will wait out here but shout if you need us,” Nina says as we make our way inside.

We fan out inside the room. My parents don’t look horrible, clearly Nic’s family has been taking care of them like I asked. I appreciate that they were willing to do that even

though hunters have come after them for years. I'm sure it was hard on them, but they did it for me.

“Hi mom, hi dad,” I say, breaking the silence.

They both sit up from the cots they're laying in and stare at me. They're clean and clearly being fed since they haven't lost weight. I know it's not a comfortable situation, but it's better than a lot of the alternatives.

“Aly dear, you're here,” my mom replies.

“Yes, I'm here. How are you doing?” I ask, really wanting to know.

“They're actually taking care of us, I imagine we have you to thank for that.” Mom runs her hand through her hair self consciously.

“I'm glad,” I say honestly.

“It's more than we would have done if the roles were reversed,” my dad adds, and he sounds genuinely bothered by that. Like maybe their kindness has shown him another side to things.

“I was wondering if you would be willing to help me?” I ask and I can hear how vulnerable I sound. It will really hurt if they deny me this. This is their chance to show me they're trustworthy, that they can be my parents.

We all hold our breath as we wait for a response, we don't have to wait long.

“Of course, anything. What do you need?” My mom sounds hopeful.

“It’s a long story, you know my best friend Anna?” I go on to tell them about Anna becoming a vampire and the sire bond. Their faces get hard when I tell them she attacked me.

“Simple. Kill her,” my dad says like I was asking for advice on what to do.

My back goes straight and anger floods my veins. Of course they think the solution is to kill my best friend, she’s a vampire, what else would they think?

“No!” I say, voice hard.

They look me over and take in my body language. I’m stiff and clenching my hands, clearly pissed, and they seem confused by that.

“What were you asking for?” My mom asks carefully, sensing she’s losing her chance for forgiveness here.

“We need help getting an amulet for her that will block the sire bond. It’s an ancient artifact, and we have no way to remake it,” Nic cuts in, sensing I’m too angry to speak.

Their saving grace is the fact that they don’t ignore Nic or glare at him in disgust like they did before. If they still treated my mates like they were nothing, then there would be nothing left to salvage here.

“How do we come in?” Dad asks.

“The person who has it is a hunter, a Mr. Johnson. We want you to get it from him, is that possible?” Jax asks.

They think about it for a few minutes before responding and I appreciate that they’re taking this seriously.

“Mr. Johnson is a collector in our world, a very well-known one. If word of our traitor status hasn’t reached him yet, we may be able to borrow it for professional research. That’s a big if though,” Mom says.

“And he may be hesitant to part with it,” my dad warns.

“Are you willing to try?” Jeremy asks, voice hard, clearly he thinks they’ll say no.

They make eye contact briefly before determination sparks in their eyes.

“If Aly wants it, yes we will.”

“Great, unfortunately we don’t completely trust you but this could change things,” I say, looking for Nic to continue.

“We have charmed objects here that will tell me if your intentions to help us change. Are you willing to wear them?” He asks.

“Mage magic?” My mom asks hesitantly. I can tell this makes her nervous, but she didn’t outright say no, so that’s progress. Right?

“Yes, I made them. One of us is willing to test them in front of you so you can be sure it’s not malicious.”

My mom nods, looking a little unsure but trying to be confident. I know this goes against everything she was ever taught.

Nic comes over to put the hair tie on me but my mom's voice stops him.

“Not Aly!” She sounds genuinely concerned for me.

“Don't worry mom, I completely trust him. Plus, I'm the only one who could put on the earrings to test. Trust me.”

She slowly nods and I can tell she doesn't want to, but she's trying.

Nic puts the hair tie on and passes me the earrings, so I can put them on. I wait a second, then turn to my parents.

“See? No issues.”

I lean towards Nic, so he can remove them, and he quickly does.

“We can't remove them ourselves,” dad surmises.

“Correct,” I say, “so, do you trust me enough to do this?”

Their reply is instant and it calms something in me.

“Yes.”

Nic steps forward and hands them their charms.

“Dad, wear the band on your ankle, so it's not obvious.”

He follows my command and puts it on his left ankle while mom clips her earrings into place. Once they're on, I wait for Nic to begin.

“Are you planning on actually trying to get the amulet for us?” He asks.

They both reply, “yes,” and Nic nods his approval.

“Are you planning on trying to escape while you’re free?” Jax asks.

They both respond, “no.” Nic nods again.

“Are you planning on hurting or trying to take Aly while you’re free?” Jeremy asks.

Again they answer no, thank god. Jeremy relaxes some at hearing that.

“Are you planning anything against us, harmful or otherwise?” Kiran asks and it’s a good, vague question.

“Only to win back our daughter’s trust,” my mom answers.

I turn to Nic immediately, needing to know if that’s true. When he smiles at me, I know it is and an intense balloon of relief fills me. They really do want to make amends.

“Okay, let’s do this then,” I say and my voice croaks a little from the overwhelming emotions.

Jay comes up behind and wraps me in his arms for comfort. Nic mutters an incantation and the doors to the cell open, releasing my parents.

They come out slowly, clearly afraid this is all some horrible trick. When they make it beyond the barrier, they finally relax.

“We need to clean up and look like hunters again, he’ll know something is wrong if we show up looking like this,” my mom points out.

I have to agree, their appearance is not strong and fierce, like normal. They need fighting clothes and weapons.

“Do you have somewhere, besides the house, we could go to get your things? I imagine anywhere the hunters knew about is being monitored,” I say.

They share a look again before my mom speaks up, “we have a safe house we can go to.”

“We will have to do that transport,” dad says.

Nic steps up right away. “Are you planning on taking us to your safe house just for supplies and clothes?”

After we get the response we need, we head outside, so they can transport us. It’s a little nerve-racking putting so much faith in them, but we have to trust in Nicoli and his magic.

I experience the sensation of moving before quickly feeling the ground under my feet again. In front of us is a plain house in the middle of a suburban neighborhood. There’s nothing that stands out about it and it looks like the neighbor’s homes around it.

My parents start to head to the door, and we quickly follow. They brought us in behind some trees, so luckily, no humans or otherwise saw us.

“It should only take twenty minutes to get ready, then we can head out,” mom says.

We all agree and let them go off on their own. If they decide to do something different, Nic will know. We settle in around the kitchen table and wait.

It’s very anticlimactic. We’ve been expecting a fight or betrayal, but so far things have gone well. Now the biggest obstacle is getting the amulet from Mr. Johnson. Hopefully he’s willing to let my parents borrow it as fellow hunters, they seem to think there’s a chance at least.

When my parents come back downstairs they’re the full-blown hunters they trained to be. They’re dressed in all black hunting leathers, weapons strapped on their backs and hair pulled back.

The guys tense around me, clearly recognizing this style from all their run-ins with hunters. I can feel their unease down the bond but this is a necessary evil.

“Ready?” My mom asks carefully, sensing the tension.

“Do you know where we are going?” I ask.

Mom nods and dad answers, “we’ve been there before. Hopefully he recognizes us.”

We all get to our feet and gather outside the house. Once again, we let my mom do the transporting, since she knows where we’re going.

The mansion we land in front of is huge. It’s insanely decorated with gold and marble. It doesn’t even look real.

Kiran whistles from behind me. “Damn.”

“Damn is right,” Jay adds.

“Okay, this is up to you now. If you need backup, throw this and it’ll make a sound loud enough for us to hear. We will join you,” Nic says passing a small ball to my mom.

She pockets it before squeezing my shoulder and making her way towards the mansion. Dad gives me a small smile before joining her.

I hope this works.

Nine

Kiran



I'm really nervous while we sit here waiting for Aly's parents to come through. This is monumental in her relationship with them and I only want her to be happy. I keep checking in with Nic, we all do, to make sure nothing has changed.

It feels like it's been hours but when I check my phone for the time, it's only been forty-five minutes. How long should this take? How long until I can stop feeling pain and guilt from Aly down the mate bond? I hope we can help Anna.

A part of me feels guilty but I try not to show anyone. This isn't about me. If we hadn't come into her life, Aly would never have triggered her hunter gene and Ryan wouldn't have changed Anna. But there's no part of me that would give up my mate, so I feel like a terrible person.

"Any changes Nic?" Jax asks aloud, needing verbal confirmation.

"No, their intentions are still the same. Hopefully they're just making small talk and trying to convince him to let them have it."

“They haven’t set off the signal, so we can’t assume anything is wrong,” Jay says, staring right at Aly.

She looks worried and I realize it’s not only for Anna. She’s worried about her parents in there. They’re redeeming themselves by helping us, and she wants a relationship with them. They are her parents after all. I’m not sure how I would handle my own betraying me.

“They should be out soon,” I reassure Aly, grabbing her hand.

“I have something we could talk about to distract us,” Jax offers.

I think we will all could use a distraction and I know Jax wouldn’t bring up anything stressful.

“Yes, please!” Aly doesn’t take her eyes away from the house.

“I read something earlier today and I haven’t had a chance to tell you yet. I know how hunters form their mate bonds, what happened with Aly and Nic.” Jax sounds excited.

Nic raises his eyebrows. “How?”

“Hunters ingest their mate’s blood. Usually, it’s done in a ceremony with wine or something but not always. Aly must have gotten some of Nic’s blood while they were...” Jax clears his throat and blushes.

It’s crazy, I’ve seen Jax with Aly and I know how confident he is. But outside of those moments, he’s still the same old twin I know.

Aly and Nic are clearly thinking back to their time together. I wonder how that happened?

“I bit your lip hard enough to draw blood. I remember feeling bad. That must be it,” Aly says.

Nic’s smile is filthy as he thinks back on it. Damn, I’m jealous.

I hear a soft pop.

“We need to go,” Aly’s mom says urgently after appearing out of nowhere.

In the next instant we are being transported back to their safe house, landing safely in the backyard.

I glance around our group to make sure we have everyone, then observe the parents to see why it was so urgent. They appear completely fine but that doesn’t mean anything.

“What happened?” Aly asks. I can feel her anxiety down the bond.

“First thing first,” her mom says pulling something out of her pocket. She passes it to Aly and I lean over to see what it is, praying it’s the amulet.

It’s an antique, with its long gold chain and red gem on the end.

“Is this it?” Aly asks.

Her mom nods and hope blooms in our chests. We got it.

“Why were you in a rush?” Jeremy asks, forever skeptical.

She sighs. “He was suspicious of us, he followed us out, so we went another direction then transported to you all. We were worried he would be outside searching the grounds for anything suspicious, so we had to go. But I don’t think we will have any problem going forward.”

That’s a damn good reason and even Jeremy has to admit that. He just nods in response.

Aly’s parents separate from us, sitting down at the kitchen table.

Aly passed the amulet to Nic who puts it in his pocket.

“We should get back and try this on Anna,” Nic says but it’s followed by an awkward silence.

What do we do? Are the parents trustworthy enough for us to leave here or do we need to lock them back up? Would they go back to Nic’s family estate or fight us? We didn’t exactly plan this part out ahead of time.

I think they’ve shown their loyalty and deserve more freedom but it’s not my choice to make.

All eyes turn to Aly.

What do we do? She asks through the bond.

Her parents politely turn away, giving us the illusion of privacy to work this out.

We take them back. Jeremy demands.

I almost roll my eyes at how predictable he is. We all know this is up to Aly, he can’t bully her into what he wants.

Or we leave them here with the charms on. Jax says.

I'm shocked he contradicted Jeremy but more than anything, Jax wants what's best for Aly.

Aly turns back to her parents, clearing her throat to get their attention.

“Are you planning on rejoining the hunters?” She asks.

Her parents look rightly affronted by the question and answer, “no! They tried to kill you, our daughter. Never.”

True. Nic says, squeezing Aly's hand.

“Will you stay here unless we talk about it?” Aly asks.

“Yes,” they respond together.

Nic squeezes her hand again.

“Okay, then you can stay here. You're earning back my trust and it's not a chance that will be given again, so please don't mess this up.”

They look ecstatic and I feel like Aly has done the right thing. I just hope it doesn't come back to bite us in the ass.

“There's one more thing,” Aly says and now she seems nervous, almost vulnerable.

“What is it?” Her mom asks.

Her mom tends to take the lead over her mate in ever conversation, this one is no exception.

“I've got a handle on my transportation but I'm not sure what other magic I should be expecting or working on, if any.

I think I had an experience in dream sharing, though.”

Her mom nods like she understands. “We didn’t train you in the magic since you didn’t have any. It’s something we would have gotten to after you triggered the gene if it had all gone normally.

“For hunters magic is passed down from the mother, so you should have the same skills I do as well as the joint hunter gifts. All hunters can transport, have enhanced strength and speed as well as a general disposition towards advanced fighting techniques. They come easier to us, we were made to fight like mages were made to wield magic.

“I have the ability to control someone’s actions through mind control, it’s very rare so it’s our only gift. This includes dreams. Only a few others in our species have the skill, including one of our elders. Unfortunately, it’s not something that’s easy to learn. I could always work with you on it.”

That was a lot of information. Most of it I knew, meaning Aly knew it too but I didn’t realize their gifts were passed down maternally. That means Aly should be able to control people’s actions, she just needs to learn how. Jax and I haven’t been able to make much progress helping her.

“What can you tell me now that might help me? If I need to, I’ll come back for more help.” I think she’s ready to get back to Anna but can’t let this opportunity pass her by.

“It doesn’t sound great but you have to invade the person’s mind. Work on sending your magic to their brain then send the

action. If you focus too hard on what you want them to do, it won't work.”

Aly nods then turns to us. “Ready?”

We all head outside to the backyard and behind some trees for Aly to transport us out.

Ten

Aly



We land back at the cottage with the amulet in hand. I've never felt such relief but I'm also incredibly nervous. What if it doesn't work? What if Anna still tries to kill me? That's actually a good point.

I put my hands out and catch Nic and Jay who are next to me. "Wait."

They all turn to stare at me, clearly confused.

"What's wrong Aly?" Kiran asks.

"I want you guys to make me a promise." When no one immediately objects, I continue, "if this doesn't work and Anna attacks me again, you can't kill her. Put her back to sleep."

"Of course we won't kill her, Aly Kat!" Jay exclaims, sounding shocked I even had to ask.

But he's not who I'm worried about. I turn to stare at Nic and Jeremy, both of which have hard expressions. I raise my eyebrows.

“If she’s a risk to you, I can’t promise that. I’ll protect my mate above all else!” Jeremy declares.

Nic doesn’t say anything but his eyes say it all. He agrees.

“She’s not a threat. I’ll be more prepared this time, all of us will,” I say.

“I’ll protect her unless it’s a last resort. If you’re going to die, you have to let me save you,” Nic says, eyes pleading.

When I glance behind me, I know Jay, Kiran and Jax have switched sides. If it comes down to it, they’ll choose me. But I know they’ll try their best to save Anna too.

“I love her,” I say, meeting each of their eyes, so I’m sure they know how important she is to me.

“It’s a moot point anyways. This is going to work,” Jax says, sounding confident and I relax some.

“Then let’s do this,” I say, leading the way inside.

We head right into the bedroom we’ve been keeping Anna in. The guys have reassured me that as a vampire, Anna doesn’t need to actually eat, so she’s been okay staying knocked out.

“Don’t forget she’ll be starving after not feeding for so long,” Kiran says.

It’s an important reminder.

“I should bleed into a cup before we wake her, so she can feed if she’s calm enough,” I suggest.

“Good idea,” Jay says and leaves the room. He comes back in a few seconds with a cup from the kitchen.

“Here,” Nic says materializing a knife and handing it to me. “We will need to wait until you’re healed. No need to tempt her further.”

I slice into my wrist and let the blood drain into the cup. Once it’s full I set it aside and wait for the cut to heal. It doesn’t take long.

I would like to think bleeding into a cup for my best friend to drink is the weirdest thing I’ll ever do but who know at this point. Since meeting the guys, everything’s been weird.

Nic walks up to Anna, holding the amulet and looks back. “Everyone ready?”

We all nod and watch in anticipation as he puts the amulet on Anna’s neck. He steps back and starts muttering a spell before waving a hand towards Anna.

He steps back further and slightly in front of me. “It’ll be any minute now she wakes up, she’ll come out of it slowly.”

It starts with a few body twitches or small noises but it’s clear when she gains complete consciousness.

She shoots up off the bed, looking around the room in confusion, reaches a hand up and touches her mouth, her hand coming away clean. I’m glad we cleaned her up or there would still be blood. She appears so confused.

“Anna, hi. It’s Aly, it’s okay.”

“I’m starving.” She gapes at me. “Aly? Did I... did I attack you?” She sounds horrified and a part of me settles. If she doesn’t like the idea of attacking me, that’s an amazing sign.

“Don’t worry about that. How are you feeling?”

The guys are all tense around me, ready for anything, but I can feel their hope down the bond. This is good, fantastic.

“I’m confused and so, so thirsty. I can hardly think I’m so parched, it’s like my stomach is empty,” she sounds miserable and so confused by the sensations running through her body.

I take a step forward but all my guys flinch, so I stop. “Anna, the thing is... Ryan, he changed you. I don’t know how to tell you this, so I’m just going to spit it out. You’re a vampire. So you’re hungry for blood. I’m so sorry.”

I watch as the pieces click together for her. She glances away. I know she isn’t coming to terms with what she is but trying to be strong. She gathers herself together then faces me again.

“I don’t know how to process that. All I know is, I’m famished.”

“The table,” I barely start before she’s racing to the table at top speeds.

She’s so fast I can’t see her. Anna only hesitates a second before she starts gulping the blood from the cup and actually moans while she does it. Glad I taste delicious, I guess.

“More. Can I have more?” She begs.

I'm about to say yes and rip my vein open again but Jeremy stops me.

"Try to wait Anna, it's important. Can you think more clearly now?" Jeremy asks.

"Everything is a blur but it's better."

Guilt settles like a rock in my gut. This is all my fault. None of this would be happening to her if it wasn't for me.

"Let's go sit down in the living room, and we will explain everything," I say.

And we do, we explain what happened to Anna, how much time has passed and what the amulet does. She takes it all in stride, being the strong best friend I know she is.

I'm sure she's still hungry too, but she's showing so much control by waiting. I know Jeremy doesn't want her to begin her life as a vampire by gorging on blood, it could start her down a bad path.

"Aly, I... I hurt you? I almost killed you! How can you sit there looking at me?" She sounds distraught.

"Anna, you didn't mean to. You weren't in control of yourself. I could never be upset with you for that," I try to reassure her but I can tell I'm only somewhat getting through.

"What do my parents think?" She whispers, changing the subject.

"I've been texting them from your phone that you're sick. They're worried but now that you're up, you can call them," I

say.

“I have to go back to school,” she demands.

I sigh, knowing this was coming. Luckily, I’ve already been working on the guys to make this happen. I look to Nic to explain the terms.

“You’re doing great so far with any blood-lust so it is an option. You’ll have to wear a necklace that disguises you from others. I already checked and your lectures are big enough that they won’t know what you look like.”

Anna doesn’t seem completely pleased but I know it’s the best option we have, so I hope she comes around to it.

“You’re doing great but I want to know how you’re feeling inside. Do you have the urge to drink from any of us?” Jeremy asks.

Anna hesitates, even though I know it’ll be hard, she’ll tell the truth.

“Yes, but I’m in control. I am thirsty, when I can drink more but I’m not going to rip anyone’s neck open.” She flinches at her choice of words, tossing me a grimace.

“It’s not your fault Anna. Do you still feel the urge to hurt me at all? Or remember what Ryan said to you?” I ask.

I hate having to ask, I wouldn’t if it wasn’t so important. Ryan wants me dead and eventually he’s going to realize I’m not.

I can tell thinking about his attack and her subsequent death is hard. I mean, how could it not be? She died and now she needs to live with that memory.

“Well, before he killed me,” she doesn’t go into the details of how, “he told me I had to kill Aly. That he wants me to kill her as soon as I can. I remember what lack of choice felt like when I woke up but I don’t feel it anymore. I don’t want to hurt you at all.”

My shoulders slump, finally relaxing. This is good. Excellent. Anna is in control and doesn’t want to kill me. It’s the best I can hope for after everything that’s happened.

It gets quiet, no one knowing where to go from here.

“I guess we should pack and get ready to go back,” Jay suggests, looking around at each of us.

“I guess so,” Nic says, standing up. I can feel that he doesn’t like this plan, but he knows it’s important to me. He knows I want the best for Anna after everything I’ve put her through. She wants to go back to school so that’s what we will do. My guilt is too strong to do anything else.

I check on Anna, and she’s smiling at the idea of going back. It’s the first real smile I’ve seen on her face since she woke up and I know we are doing the right thing. I’m not letting her go back alone.

The guys get up to pack and leave me alone with Anna, sensing we need a minute.

“I’m so sorry!” We both blurt at the same time. We share a look of shock.

“Why are you sorry?” I ask.

She glares at me like I’m crazy. “Aly, I attacked you. If your guys hadn’t been there... I would have killed you. Of course I’m fucking sorry!”

She sounds miserable, the guilt in my gut increases.

“Oh Anna, that wasn’t you! None of this is your fault, it’s all mine and I will carry that burden, not you. I’m so sorry.”

“What are you talking about?” She demands.

“I’m talking about the fact that you didn’t even know supernaturals existed until I came into your life. You would never have had to deal with this if I didn’t exist. If I wasn’t your best friend... you would still be human,” I lay it all out there for her.

“That is so stupid!” She shocks me by saying.

“What?” I whisper.

“You didn’t do this to me, Ryan did. You can’t be held responsible for other people’s actions. You didn’t know you were a hunter when we met and you didn’t introduce me to Ryan. I dated him all on my own.”

Her words lessen some of my guilt. Is she right? Does she really feel this way? It’s her next words that seal the deal for me.

“I imagine your mates are feeling something similar. Would you ever blame them for this? For coming into your life? Because I wouldn’t give you up as my best friend, just like you wouldn’t give them up. If you don’t blame them, then you can understand how I don’t blame you.” She sounds strong and sure in her convictions. How did she get so wise?

I burst into tears, basically tackling her into a hug. We hold each other tight and let the forgiveness settle in.

“What’s wrong?” Kiran asks, running into the room. He must have heard the thump from me landing on Anna.

When I turn to look at him he’s smiling as the other guys gather around him, watching us.

“You made up,” Kiran says, and he sounds relieved.

“We were never fighting, just holding on to stupid guilt,” Anna says giving me a pointed look.

If my mates are feeling guilty then I need to fix that right away.

I squeeze her hand and turn to face my guys.

“Are you guys holding on to stupid guilt about what happened?”

As soon as I ask, I can feel through the bond that it’s true. Kiran feels worst of all and I’m not sure how I missed it this whole time. I think I was too caught up in my own guilt to notice theirs.

I sigh. “I was too, but it’s not on any of us. This is Ryan’s fault, and he should have all our anger directed at him. I understand but,” I decide to use Anna’s move against them, “would you blame me if the situation was reversed?”

I can feel a switch flip in them, instead of guilty, they feel angry at the idea of me holding onto that guilt.

I walk up to Kiran and hold his hand while asking, “are you going to let it go and move past this?”

He gives me a soft smile, leaning down to press his nose to mine. “If you will, I will.”

There’s a round of agreement from all of them and a weight I didn’t know was there, is lifted off my shoulders. We need to be a unit and on top of our game going forward, no room for useless guilt.

“Great! Now, when are we going back?” Anna asks.

Eleven

Jeremy



“I have arranged a house for us to stay in, Anna you’ll stay with us. We can leave whenever we are ready,” Nicoli says.
hello

Anna and Aly seem relieved but I’m a mess inside. I don’t want my mate back out in the open, at risk. We are safer here and everyone knows it, so why are we going back?

Because it’ll make Aly happy and even though her safety is our number one priority, so is her happiness. Aly hasn’t complained once but I know she’s been wanting to go back. She was ripped out of college with no chance to say goodbye. She thrived there, even if she doesn’t realize it.

We also don’t want to raise any red flags when it comes to Anna. There are people who will notice if she goes missing, and she can’t explain this to her parents. Plus, it’s easier for a new vampire to adjust if she tries to act normal. I know all this, I just wish it didn’t include my mate being exposed.

I've already tried talking to Nic about it, and while he agrees, he thinks this is best. And I have to trust him, even when I don't want to.

But if Aly thinks I won't be stuck to her like glue when we go back, she has a surprise in store.

"Let's go now, we are all packed up," Aly says and my gut clenches.

I can do this. I trust Aly to take care of herself and I trust my best friends to keep her safe. We can't live in hiding forever, it's just not healthy.

"How will we get there?" Anna asks.

Aly's face fills with excitement. "I have the power to transport us anywhere! Think of all the places we'll go once this is all over."

Sure, with us too.

Anna is thrilled as we make our way outside. I don't say anything, they're being positive and thinking of the future. It's a good thing, a healthy thing.

Jay knocks his shoulder with mine. "Calm down Jer, we will keep her safe. We are going to end this soon, I can feel it."

Surprisingly, that makes me feel better.

We gather around Aly, Anna looks nervous about transporting. I subtly stand by Anna, so I can catch her if I need to, the first time can be jarring.

“Here, put these on before we go.” Nic takes the charms out of his pocket and starts handing them out. “I’ve made it, so we can still see each other as ourselves but anyone else will see a disguise.”

He hands me a bracelet with one bead on it. I slide it on my wrist and pull the strings so it tightens. Magic rushes over me, I wonder what he made me look like?

I can see a flash of the magic as Aly puts her necklace on, Aly’s disguise is blonde with a lighter complexion, and no identifying marks, but then she’s just my Aly again. I didn’t see anyone else’s flash, so I’m not sure what they look like or myself. I’m grateful Nic made it, so we can see through the disguises. I wouldn’t want any of us getting mixed up once we are back on campus. Plus, I want to be able to see my mate the way she is.

“Okay, everyone ready?” Aly asks and there’s a round of agreement.

The familiar sensation hits my gut as I see my surroundings melt away. We land among the trees in a backyard. Anna immediately loses her footing and starts to go down but luckily I’m there to catch her. Aly gives me a grateful smile and my heart warms. I’ll deny it if anyone asks, but I love making my mate happy, it fills me with a joy I never knew I could feel.

Nic puts his phone away as he strides towards the house, he must have shown Aly a picture to bring us here. We all follow him, taking in our surroundings.

It's a typical college town house, nothing too fancy. I can't tell how many bedrooms it is from here, but it's big, so that's a good sign.

Although, I've enjoyed sharing a room all together back at the cabin. We've been puppy piling it each night and I think we would all miss it if we separated. Hopefully, we can find a way to still be close.

But if Nic can have his own room to satisfy his neat freak tendencies, then I think we will all be happier.

When we get inside, the house is clean and furnished. I'm guessing Nic pulled some strings to get it and have it set up for us. I don't know if Aly realizes it yet, but that guy is seriously loaded.

"How did you get this place in the middle of the semester?" Aly asks.

Nic gives a non-answer, confirming my suspicions that she doesn't know.

"So, not to be awkward but I'm starving. Can I eat again?" Anna asks.

My gut clenches, I don't like what comes next. But I'm going to need to get over it because we can't starve Anna.

"Yes, you can. You can eat when you're hungry, you just don't want to gorge yourself on it. It's food, nothing else," I say.

"You can have some of my blood. I'll fill a cup for you, okay?" Aly asks.

I follow her into the kitchen where she grabs a knife and cup. I hate that she's doing this but I understand it's for her best friend.

"Anna is doing really well," Aly comments while she fills the cup.

I don't answer right away, making Aly squint at me with worry shining in her eyes.

"Right?" She asks, sounding concerned and my stomach tightens into a knot.

"She is. My parents told me there was a chance but I didn't want to get your hopes up."

"A chance?" She sounds confused and of course she is, I've barely explained.

"The amulet is also giving her more control over her blood-lust. I don't know anything about how it works," I tell her.

She searches my face as she waits to heal.

"Why don't you sound happy about that?"

I hesitate. I don't want to make her worried, but she deserves to know.

"Because, I don't know anything about how it works or if it'll last. It makes me nervous that she could lose control."

Aly takes it in, assessing my opinion in her head, then nods.

"We will need to keep a close eye on her, I agree."

She smiles at me and I can't help smiling back. I can tell she's staring at my smile, taking in all the details. I quickly revert to my normal expression which I'm told looks pissed off.

“You can always tell me what you're thinking Jer, and we will work it out together. Okay?”

She's right. I know she's right. I'm just so used to being quiet and keeping things to myself. Sharing with her doesn't come naturally. But it feels incredible every time I do. Like the burden isn't mine alone.

“I know Aly. You're right, I'm sorry.”

She smiles again, grabbing my hand and threading her fingers through mine. I give it a little squeeze as our mate bond sings in happiness.

I can't believe there was a time I wanted to deny this. That I was going to let my past come between me and the best thing to ever happen to me.

“Let's go check out the rooms,” Aly says, pulling me along behind her.

Nic is leading Anna and the other guys upstairs, so we join them. Thank god he found a furnished house for us, we don't need anything else to deal with right now.

“So, Anna here's your room,” Nic points to the first one at the top of the stairs. It is a normal room with a dresser and a bed. Anna looks like she's ready for some alone time as she

hurries into her room, grabbing the cup from Aly with a thank you.

Nic continues down the hall, pointing out rooms for each of us. I don't plan on using mine much, so I barely take a peek inside when he tells me. We get to the end of the hallway where there's the master bedroom.

“And here, we have Aly's room.” Nic opens the door to massive master bedroom with a huge bed. It's bigger than a California king.

“What?” Aly asks confused but I'm not. I know exactly what Nic was thinking.

“Well, I figured you might let some of us sleep in here with you so we would need the space. It's the one thing I got from the supernatural world since beds for a large group are much more common there,” Nic says.

When does he have time for something like this? I swear his brain is always working and thinking ahead for things like this. Does he sleep?

“I love it, thank you, Nic!” Aly exclaims.

She steps further into the room before turning around to look at us. “You can all come stay here any time. I would miss all of you too much if you didn't.”

I agree, I'm planning on spending every night in here. I have a feeling they all are. I can't sleep thinking about Aly being in danger and I'm not there for her. When I step into the

room with everyone, Nic's phone rings. He looks down at it then swears.

"I have to take this. It's my parents," he explains as he turns around and leaves the room. I can hear him answer the phone as he goes.

I'm about to pounce on Aly because this giant bed is calling us when Aly's stomach growls. She laughs at the interruption but looks ready to ignore it. I know who won't though.

I glance over at Jay and even though I know he wants to stay, his instincts will be telling him to feed his mate.

"I'm going to go make some food for us," he says, giving in. He leans down and gives Aly a very thorough kiss before leaving the room. He tosses me a wink as he goes.

I guess it's just the four of us.

Twelve

Aly



Nic and Jay exit the room, shutting the door behind them. That leaves me with three of my mates and a new, massive bed. I think we all know where this is leading and I want to speed it along. Walking backwards, I hop up and lay back on the bed. I start lightly rubbing myself over my jeans while looking at Kiran, Jer and Jax.

Their eyes zero in on me.

Kiran moves first, coming behind me, so I'm leaning back into his chest.

"I love this bed already," I say.

Kiran tilts my head back with a finger under my chin then leans in to kiss me.

His tongue slowly dances with mine before sucking my lower lip between his teeth.

Jax and Jeremy join us on the bed. The three of them slowly strip me of my clothes with soft touches. They're teasing me into a worked up mess.

Jax pulls my lips from Kiran, kissing me long and deep while pushing me into his brother. When he pulls away he gives me a very sexy wink then settles back against the pillows.

“Go ahead Jer, Jax and I have been wanting to do something for a while. You can warm our girl up and give us a show,” Kiran says, running his hands up and down my body.

I’m sitting up, naked and leaning back on Kiran’s chest when Jeremy lies on his side facing me.

Kiran grabs both of my legs, lifting them up and apart, opening me to Jer.

“With pleasure,” Jeremy replies.

He scoots in, lining up with my opening and pushing inside. It’s an incredibly deep angle and when he gets all the way inside, I cry out.

Jax leans against the pillows, watching Jer push in and out of me, stroking himself.

My legs are over Jer’s body and I use the leverage and Kiran’s support to rock myself, making our bodies slap together as Jeremy gets even deeper in me.

I stare down at where our bodies meet and it’s so sexy seeing Jer fuck me.

All three of them have a great view of what’s happening between my legs.

“The other two are missing out,” Jax comments.

Kiran reaches around me, plucking at my nipples as he kisses my neck.

“How did we get so damn lucky?” Kiran asks, voice hoarse.

“Good question brother.” Jax leans over and nibbles on my ear. He runs his hands up my thigh and teases my clit.

As he circles my clit I feel myself grow tighter around Jer. My body tensing as I get so close to release.

Jax eases off and I’m not even embarrassed by the whine that escapes.

“Jax!”

“Sorry, Aly, it’s not time yet.”

Damn him.

I rock harder against Jeremy until he is hitting the perfect spot inside me every time.

I throw my head back on Kiran’s shoulder as he continues loving on my breasts. Out of the corner of my eye I see Jeremy and Jax share a look.

Ajax’s fingers come back, swirling around my clit until I’m on that cliff again. He tugs on it slightly and I come crashing down around them.

Kiran tips my head back, swallowing my moans as I come.

I hear Jeremy curse and feel him join me.

Jer pulls away and Jax takes his place, kneeling in front of me.

I sit up on my knees with Kiran and Jax on my left and right.

Kiran plays in my wetness, pushing Jer's come back inside as he slowly fingers me.

Jax grabs my jaw and pulls me into a demanding kiss while squeezing my breast.

I reach down and play with both of their cocks which are hard as rocks brushing against me.

Kiran slowly moves me until I'm bent over between them. My ass pressing against Kiran's large cock.

He waits until I've wrapped my lips around Jax to sharply thrust into me. He doesn't let me adjust, trusting that Jeremy warmed me up enough.

I suck on Jax, using the momentum from Kiran to my advantage.

My sweet mate is holding himself back from fucking my mouth like he wants to, I can tell. He's restraining himself and I hate it. I want all of him, exactly how he is.

I take Jax as deep as I can, swallowing around him while Kiran continues to pound into me.

When that doesn't push him over the edge I pull my mouth off him and meet his eyes.

"Please don't hold back Jax, if you want to use my mouth then do it."

Apparently, that was all he needed to hear. He fucks my mouth, slamming into me, uncaring if I can take it or not.

Lucky for us both, I can.

Kiran curves over my body, adjusting his angle until he's hitting the perfect spot.

I close my eyes as bliss builds and right before I'm about to come, Jax pulls out of my mouth.

In the hottest move I've ever seen, he grips my throat, tilting my head back and maintains eye contact as I shatter around his twin.

Kiran works me through my orgasm.

Jax pulls me up until I'm kneeling, pressed right between them. He moves his focus to his twin.

"I want her ass."

Damn.

Kiran doesn't hesitate, easily flipping me around until I'm facing him. He lifts my legs up and over his hips before sliding back into my swollen pussy.

He pumps into me as he kisses my lips. I know he's trying to distract me from what comes next.

As many times as I've been shared with Kiran and another mate, Jax and Kiran are equally huge and it's going to be a stretch.

I want it bad enough I don't care.

Jer is leaning against the bed, enjoying the show as I'm being prepared by Jax.

I'm guessing Kiran and Jax have talked about this. Either that or Ajax has been reading up on the subject.

He scissors his fingers in my ass, stretching me for him.

He pulls his fingers out and I cry out at the loss of sensation.

"Shh, it's okay I'm coming back."

Jax pushes into my ass, slowly working his way inside.

"Relax baby, you can take us both," Kiran whispers in my ear. He reaches down and rubs my clit until Jax is all the way in.

I'm sandwiched between my twin mates and I never want to leave.

They both slowly start moving, thrusting in and out of me until all I can focus on is the sensations I'm feeling.

It's pure bliss.

"Fuck I've wanted this so long."

"Same brother."

Their voices are hoarse and I can tell they're both close to coming themselves.

I start to lose feeling in my fingers as my whole body tingles from all the pleasure. So many nerves are firing off. I'm not sure I'm breathing anymore.

“I want to see you come around them baby girl.”

And that does it. Jeremy’s words set me off and I shatter around them.

They both curse at the same time, and they sound like the twins they are.

I can feel their thrusts get sporadic as they come in me before we all collapse down on the bed.

We lay there for a minute, our breathing labored until Jer interrupts us.

“We have to go downstairs and eat soon otherwise Jay will come back up and yell at us for keeping Aly too long while she’s hungry.”

“Fuck,” Kiran groans, pulling me tighter against him.

“I can’t move. We have to eat up here,” I say, snuggling deeper between them.

Jer laughs. “Okay I’ll make it happen.”

He gets up and leaves the room and I thank my lucky stars for my mates.

Thirteen

Aly



We are going to class today which is extremely weird. It feels like forever ago that I went to classes every day and did homework.

We aren't actually enrolled ourselves but sticking with Anna as she goes to her classes. It was too late to join the semester now in January and Anna needs protection, that's why we are here.

Plus, we do not have time for homework right now. We have enough on our plates as it is. First priority is surviving then we can think about school again.

Nic, Kiran, Jeremy and I are with Anna for her English Literature class today. Of course, Jeremy tried to get me to stay behind but I insisted on going with my best friend. It's kind of overkill to have four of us but Jeremy and Nic wouldn't be denied. Kiran offered to stay back but there was no way I was leaving my fun, silly mate behind. I couldn't handle just Jer and Nic for the day while they're in protection mode. Jax and Jay stayed back.

We walk into Anna's lecture and I see her wave to her friend Lizzie. Awkwardly, Lizzie stares at Anna confused until she remembers she's in a disguise and Lizzie has no idea who she is.

"This is so annoying! None of my friends recognize me!" Anna says, leading the way to the back row.

"Sorry Anna, it's safest this way. Hopefully, we don't have to look different for long," I say, trying to be comforting.

"You're right, I'm sorry. It's for safety, I know that!"

We sit down, Nic and Jeremy take the ends with Kiran, Anna and I taking the middle. I sit between Kiran and Anna, leaving Jeremy to glower at me. Obviously, he wanted to be sure he was next to me.

I point at Kiran and roll my eyes because we both know how extremely powerful my dark fae is in a fight. Which won't happen. But if it did, Kiran is more than capable of protecting me.

"This is weird, being back. I didn't even like school that much when it was my own classes," Kiran leans in and whispers.

I scoot a little closer. Anna is next to me setting out her books and opening her laptop. She's clearly ready to jump right back in and pretend everything is normal.

"I know. I do want to get my degree though so once we get the council on our side, I want to come back," I say.

Kiran rolls his eyes but smiles and I know he's on board.
"We have to. Ajax would never settle for less."

I laugh because he's so right. At least I'll have my genius on board with coming back to school.

The lecture drones on and on. This is so far from my major, I can't relate to it at all. I should make Anna take a computer science course for me. She would hate it. She seems to be thoroughly enjoying this class, which melts my ire some. I want her to be happy and if this does that, then I'm glad.

Kiran taps on my hand in warning before talking through our pack bond.

Remind me never to go to Anna's classes again.

I laugh a little aloud and Anna gives me a death glare as students look over at us.

That bad? Jay asks.

It is pretty boring. I respond.

Sorry guys, Jay and I can go next time. Jax says.

You would probably enjoy it Jax. Nic chimes in.

If I was with Aly, I'd enjoy it. Jay flirts.

I know I blush and Kiran, Nic and Jer laugh at me. Now Anna is glaring at us, probably hating the distraction.

Unless she puts Anna between you and her. Jeremy complains.

Or you have to sit next to Kiran and some random student.
Nic adds.

Ouch Aly Kat. Jay is clearly laughing.

What are you guys doing? I ask, changing the subject.

Cooking a delicious dinner for us like the amazing mate I am. Jay gloats.

I'm reading a book about supernatural animals. It's full of good information, especially one thing! Jax sounds excited.

Tell us! Kiran says sounding just like Ajax.

It's about Bailey. There's a section on Athermys. They are incredibly loyal and related to the wolves that humans know. They are almost extinct because there was an attempt to train them by mages, but they refused to be tamed. The captured Athermys attacked the trainers and had to be killed. It's incredibly sad. Sounds like they choose their loyalty carefully and it cannot be forced. They often choose hunters. You must have impressed Bailey for him to choose you. It also says they can imprint emotions on other animals.

My heart swells. I always knew Bailey was special but now I know our bond is too. Thank god he found me.

That's great! Thank you Jax! I say.

That's really helpful. Good job staying on top of research Jax. Nic praises and I'm sure Jax is loving it.

Kiran's hand snakes up my leg and to the hem of my skirt. His fingers just start playing with the skin there.

I shoot him a glare, but it's not genuine, I can't deny loving his hand on me.

What? I'm helping you. I don't want you bored. Kiran says in my mind.

I can feel Nic and Jeremy's attention shift to Kiran's hand on my leg.

Dirty Dirty, I wish I was there. Jay says.

Kiran's hand starts to drift a little higher when abruptly everyone starts getting up around us.

"Class is over?" I ask.

Anna death glares at me. "Yes it's over! You three are a distraction! Can't keep your hands off each other for an hour lecture!"

I blush when people look back but Kiran wraps his arms around me with no shame.

"Sorry Anna, can't get enough," Kiran says.

Anna points at him. "You are banned from coming to classes with me again!"

People are watching us now, so I try to get us to move along. We don't need to draw attention to ourselves, even if we are in disguise.

Kiran leaves me and throws his arm around Anna casually. I can hear him apologizing as we make our way out of the room and I know he'll be able to sweet talk Anna into forgiving him.

Nic and Jeremy bracket me in from either side as we follow behind them.

“Next time I want to sit by you,” Jer complains.

I laugh. “Sure.”

Jer gets tense next to me and I’m not sure what it is until he turns around and glares at some guy behind me.

“Fuck off.”

The guy turns the other way and leaves at Jeremy’s instruction.

“What was that about?” I ask.

Jeremy ignores me and looks over at Nic. “Did you have to make her disguise hot too? Guys are still checking her out.”

I roll my eyes. Is he serious? We have Ryan and hunters after us, and he’s concerned about some guy checking me out? Being away from the masses while at the cottage at least calmed that instinct down.

“Jer, I didn’t even notice them,” I start but Nic cuts me off.

“The charm works with the person’s traits to change them, I didn’t pick the look exactly. Aly is attractive so her disguise is attractive. It would have been double the work to choose how we would look.”

Jeremy just grunts.

We make it outside and start heading towards Anna’s next class. It’s a boring day of normal but I’m excited to one day get back to it for real. I miss studying with my guys and going to parties.

Fourteen

Aly



We've settled in at school and it feels weird to be back. I knew it would but I feel like a completely different person now. I've changed, but I'm happy with who I am. A strong woman who has the love of five men, and I love them back.

But I don't want to spend the rest of my life in hiding from the hunters. It's time we make a plan and get back to normal.

Anna has left to do something, she didn't say what but I didn't push her. I'm trying to give her space to find her new normal and I trust her. I tried to insist on protection but she turned me down, and she's an adult who can make her own decisions. Plus, we've been combat training and she has strength as a vampire.

So, now is a good time to get the guys alone and talk about this.

"Hey guys! Can we talk?" I shout from the living room to the whole house.

I hear movement immediately as they all start coming down stairs or in from the kitchen. I can feel through our bond

that they're wary, why?

“What’s wrong Aly?” Jay asks when he gets here first, looking around for the problem.

I scrunch my nose up in confusion. “Nothing is wrong, I want to talk about our situation with the hunters.”

The rest of the guys come in, clearly confused too.

“Is this about Anna being in my room? I promise it was necessary. She was helping us find you and I’ve been meaning to tell you, I just forgot with everything else,” Jax rushes through saying.

“What? Of course I’m not upset about that Jax. I didn’t know it happened but I don’t care. You were working to find me. Plus I trust you!” I grab his hand and give it a little squeeze. I can feel him calming down.

Jeez, why are these guys being so weird?

“Relax guys, she just wants to talk about the hunters and what we are going to do,” Jay adds, and they all relax.

“Baby! When you shout we need to talk, and we can feel how angry you are through the bond, we all assumed we were in trouble. Don’t scare us like that again!” Kiran says, grabbing my hand and pulling me into his lap on the couch.

I can’t help but laugh, at least they haven’t gotten complacent.

“I’m sorry! I didn’t mean to worry you. I was angry that we are in hiding and I think it’s time we make a plan.”

They all settle into seats around me in the living room. Nic and Jer sit in arm chairs while Jay and Jax snag spots next to Kiran and I on the couch.

“Yes we should. I’ve been thinking about this a lot actually. I think we need to let the world know about hunters having mates, show them proof of our bond and explain that mates exist across races. People will be excited to hear they have a mate, everyone wishes to find theirs,” Nic says, and he sounds so confident.

I wish the idea of telling the world about our bond didn’t fill me with nerves. What will they think? What if they don’t believe us?

Jeremy must feel the same way. “What happens if we come forward, and they don’t believe us?”

Kiran wraps his arms tighter around me. Coming forward is risky.

“We should start with our elder council. Even if they don’t believe us, it’s not like they’ll try to kill us. We just go back into hiding. If they do, they can help us convince the hunters,” Jax suggests.

“This is a chance for peace between all the species, if they see that, they’ll want to help,” Kiran agrees with his twin.

I know we are all sitting here thinking through anything that might happen. All the worst case scenarios are running through my head.

“It’s worth a try. Everyone deserves a chance to find what we have, if they don’t believe us then that’s their loss, but at least we tried,” I say.

There’s a long pause before anyone speaks again, dead silence.

“So,” Kiran says, breaking it, “we are going before the joint elder council for supernaturals.”

“I guess so,” Jay responds.

“We should bring the book! It talks all about our bond,” Jax adds.

“That’s a great idea Ajax!” I say.

Jeremy looks upset. He hasn’t said anything but I know he would rather stay in hiding for life. We have to take this chance though.

“How do we get a chance to go before them?” I ask, knowing next to nothing about this council or how they work.

“I think my parents could get us an audience with them, I’ll reach out and ask,” Nic offers.

I give Kiran a kiss on the cheek before hopping up and going to Nic. Before I can bend down to give him a kiss, he pulls me into his lap. He wraps his arms tight around me.

“Thank you for always making a plan and being our leader. I appreciate you,” I say, kissing him on the cheek.

“You’re welcome,” he says, squeezing me tighter.

“We don’t have to do this,” Jeremy breaks in by saying.

“The danger could be gone Jer, if this works we will be free,” I say.

“Or we could be in more trouble than before. It’s a high risk, high reward situation and I don’t want to take a high risk with you.”

He’s so sweet even when he’s being stubborn. I know he only wants me safe but this could end safer than running and hiding. But he’s right, it could also end worse.

I don’t respond, I’m not sure what to say. I feel terrible that he’s so stressed about our safety all the time.

“Jer, I think we have to. One day, the hunters will catch up with us no matter how hard we work to stay hidden. If not them, it’ll be Ryan. We have a three thousand year old vampire after us. We need the community’s help if we want to stay safe,” Nic says honestly.

Now I know how Nic was convinced this is the best plan. If he didn’t think so then we wouldn’t be doing it. Jeremy must know that too.

“Okay,” Jeremy concedes, “but at the first sign of trouble we run.”

He doesn’t wait for a response, getting up and leaving the room.

I snuggle deeper into Nic and ask, “is he okay?”

“He will be,” Jay responds.

I hop up and follow Jeremy, wanting to comfort him. I don't want him alone when he's upset.

Nic let me go, so I'm assuming he thinks I'm doing the right thing. That gives me confidence.

I can hear Jeremy in his room, so I knock softly at the door. When I don't get a response, I knock a little harder.

The door swings open hard, "Nic, I'm fine... oh."

He stops when he notices it's me by the door.

"Hi," I say with a little wave.

"Aly, I just need a few minutes to calm down," he confesses.

"Let me help," I say.

I know the best way to help Jeremy calm down. I step forward and place a hand on his chest, slowly making my way down to the hem of his shirt. Grabbing the edge, I start to move it over his head.

Jeremy presses against me and lines every inch of his body up with mine.

"Strip."

I do as commanded, taking all my clothing off until I'm standing naked before him.

He stares at every inch of me with a fire burning in his eyes.

He runs his hands down my body until he stops, cupping me.

“Your turn,” I demand.

He raises an eyebrow at me but complies, stripping his clothes off.

He comes back, pushing two fingers in me immediately, making me rock against him.

With a hand on my throat, he flips me around until my back is pressed up against his front.

He walks us over before he bends me forward, pushing me on the bed until my ass is up in the air. I’m about to protest the position when he smacks my ass and presses his mouth against me. I shut up real quick.

Jeremy devours me. He’s not gentle as he eats like it’s a punishment for me. Hitting every spot, sucking and nibbling me until I’m screaming out. He’s not letting me come and I’m dying.

When I’m right on the verge he pulls back, standing up and plunging into me. I shatter around him, and he holds himself deep inside of me, enjoying the sensation.

He pulls back slowly then pounds into me as hard as he can. It’s a fast, brutal fuck and I know he’s taking his anger out on me.

He grabs my ass, using leverage to thrust harder. His piercing drags against me in the best way, building me up more and more.

He slows down, leaning forward to grab my breasts, giving them a hard squeeze before flipping me on my side.

He folds my legs together and slides back inside. It's incredibly tight in this position and it feels amazing.

“Say you're mine,” he demands.

I gasp out the words between moans. “I. Am. Yours.”

“Fuck.”

He goes harder, pounding into me without restraint until I come apart. I come so hard I know I'm strangling his cock in me. He's cursing up a storm as he finally joins me, pushing himself in deep before filling me.

He brings his face to mine, resting against my forehead.

“I hate when you're in danger. I feel like a terrible mate that I can't stop it from happening,” he confesses.

I stare into his eyes and I see anguish. He really feels this way.

“Jer, I hate when you're in danger too. You can trust me to take care of myself, remember?”

He nods. “I just wish you didn't have to.”

“I know. We are all going to be safe and find our way through this. It's almost the end, I can feel it.”

He leans in and gives me a sweet kiss which is in contrast to the rough fuck we just had. He gives me soft touches and little kisses all over my body, reminding me how much he loves me.

Fifteen

Aly



“Can we do something fun?” Anna asks, as we are all seated around the table eating dinner.

Jay made lasagna and it’s delicious. I am one lucky girl who gets to have his cooking for the rest of my life.

“Something fun?” Jax asks, scrunching up his nose.

Anna rolls her eyes and ignores him, focusing in on who she knows will help her most with this: Kiran and Jay.

“Yes! Something fun. It’s all serious and doom and gloom around here. Don’t you agree Kiran? Jay?” Anna asks.

Smart girl. I guarantee they’ve been feeling the same.

“Well, we could probably all use a pick me up,” Kiran starts but Jeremy cuts him off.

“We can’t go out for no reason.”

Now I’m rolling my eyes. I elbow him in the side and say, “let’s hear them out.”

He grunts but stays quiet.

“We could do a game night or something,” Jax offers. I love the sweet idea but I know Anna is itching for a night out. She has never stayed in this many nights in a row before.

“Sure next time, but not what I meant for tonight. Sorry Jax,” Anna says.

Jay turns to Nic. “What do you think?”

Nicoli has been quiet, probably weighing it all up. He can tell Anna is miserable, which in turn makes everything harder here. We’ve been trying to keep her safe, but we are probably smothering her too much. I know she’s been sneaking out but I haven’t ratted her out yet. I understand her better than the guys and I know she needs this.

Reaching across the table, I grab Nic’s hand.

“We will wear our disguises and stay together. If anything happens, we get right out of there. I think this will help tensions around here,” I say, as sincerely as I can.

He thinks it over then nods. “I think we can go.”

Jeremy stiffens next to me but surprisingly stays silent. He’s trying to be more confident in my abilities and I love it.

Anna squeals loudly and claps her hands. “Great! Let’s go tonight! I’m going to get ready now!”

She hops up and dashes out of the kitchen before anyone can respond.

Once she’s gone, I turn to the guys. “Thanks guys. Anna loves to go out and be social, so I know this has been hard on

her. I also know things have been tense around here since coming back, so hopefully this helps everyone relax.”

Jay leans over and gives me a kiss. “It’ll be fun! I’m excited. We haven’t been out in a while!”

I love his energy, it’s infectious.

Kiran hops out of his seat. “I’m going to make a drink!”

I can’t help laughing. When we first met, and I had no idea we were mates or what the future had in store for us, these two were always trying to party and have fun. It’s part of who they are. They probably need this too.

We finish up dinner pretty quickly after deciding to go out tonight. Kiran hands out a round of screwdrivers. Jay and Kiran are pushing me upstairs to get ready.

I find Anna almost dressed when I get upstairs and this feels like normal. Me late and Anna almost ready. It’s like our going out ritual.

“You need to get ready!” Anna screeches at me.

I laugh. “I know! I’m going right now. I don’t think I have any going out clothes.”

I might have to wear something comfortable, what a shame. For once, I won’t have to wear heels because Anna demands it.

“Don’t worry! When I packed up the clothes that weren’t destroyed by Ryan, I planned ahead. I already planned an outfit for you.” She points to some clothes laid out on the bed

and of course there is a pair of heels with it. “I also packed the coffee maker so don’t think you got away from that thing.”

“Really?” I complain.

Of course, like Anna signaled him, Kiran shows up right then. “Is that what you’re wearing baby? That’s hot.”

He wraps his arms around me from behind and presses himself against me.

I sigh. “Fine, I’ll wear it.”

I grab the clothes off the bed and head to my room. Kiran follows behind me and lies on the bed while I change. He’s already dressed in dark wash jeans and a black t-shirt. Of course, he looks hot as hell but when doesn’t he?

“Are you excited?” He asks. Kiran hasn’t taken his eyes off me while I change, totally unabashed in his ogling.

“Ya, I think it’ll be fun to hang out as a group outside of the house.”

“I want Anna to be happier too,” he adds, making my heart melt. He’s so sweet.

Jay comes in next, dressed similar to Kiran and hops on the bed. He leans against the headboard.

“What are we talking about?” He asks.

“Just that Anna has been down lately, and we all know it. If we make tonight super fun, hopefully she cheers up,” Kiran explains.

“Ya, she’s been through a lot and there’s only so much we can do. Trying to live like she used to will help,” Jay agrees.

I hope so. I hate seeing my best friend struggling.

When I finish getting dressed, Kiran lifts my foot into his lap and runs a finger up my leg.

“These heels are very sexy,” he says.

I can feel goosebumps break out on my legs. Jay leans forward and kisses my thigh. I think it’s about to get sexy but a voice in my head interrupts us.

Anna is about to leave without us. Jeremy says.

I pull my foot away. “Later.”

The three of us head downstairs to see everyone else ready in the living room.

“Finally! Let’s go!” Anna says, she turns and heads right out the front door.

“She’s eager,” Nic says and follows her out.

We are walking distance to the bars and Anna books it there in her heels.

When she heads right to Fieldhouse I smile, this is the bar I met the guys in. I had no idea my life was changing that night.

Jax nudges me and I know he’s thinking the same thing.

It’s packed but Anna heads right to the bouncer, says hi, and he waves us all in. Do her charms just work that well even when she isn’t herself?

We get inside and even with their disguises on, people are drawn to my guys. Everyone is waving or saying hi, it's a lot of attention. I'm glad hunters don't have that affect on people.

Jeremy pushes right through the people, Jax pretends he doesn't see it, Nic is polite and Jay and Kiran smile back. It's so them.

Anna heads right to the bar and I know she's ordering drinks, probably shots. I follow quick behind her.

I'm glad Nic made the charms so we can still see each other through the disguise. Although, it's weird having no idea what I look like to everyone else here.

Anna has a row of shots lined up by the time I get to the counter and join her. Jay and Kiran are close behind me and grab theirs, ready to go. Jax rolls his eyes but grabs one.

Jeremy and Nic evaluate the room before deciding, when they hesitate Anna calls them out.

“We are here to have fun! It's fine, it's just one.”

They pick theirs up and throw them back. I know they weren't swayed by Anna but decided it was safe enough. I'll let Anna think it was her. It's human alcohol so it's not like it'll really affect them.

Of course, one turns into four but I'm barely feeling it. I know being a supernatural increases my tolerance but I wish it didn't. I wonder how Anna is adjusting to it?

I sidle up to her and ask, “you doing good girl?”

“I miss getting drunk,” she says with a pout.

“You’ll get there, you just need to drink more. It’s fun! Plus, no hangover! I was so jealous of the guys for that.”

She actually gives me a real smile for that. “You’re right! Let’s dance!”

She pulls me toward the dance floor and pushes her way to the middle. The guys stay back but I know they still have eyes on us. Anna and I dance and move like we used to and it feels incredible.

Turns out I needed some normalcy too. Anna’s smile is truly happy and I love it.

Some guy with short black hair comes up to me but I quickly shut him down. He moves over to Anna who rolls her eyes.

“I’m not interested in being a second choice,” she tells him.

This is when he shows his asshole nature. Apparently, being shot down once was okay, but twice was too much. He latches on to Anna, grinding himself into her.

“It’s okay, I know you want me,” he says.

I know the guys see what’s happening, Jeremy is on his way to deal with this guy. Anna handles it first.

She flips the guy over her shoulder, making him land on the ground, hard. He’s wheezing and holding his stomach.

It was bad ass and I love that she defended herself, but that was a feat of insane strength. People are staring at us, and we are drawing a crowd.

The guys quickly wrangle us up, and we head out the door. People part for us like we're diseased.

Once we are out of ear shot of anyone, Nic starts ranting, "Anna that was reckless! You can't use your strength like that in public! We have to stay under the radar."

"Nic," I start, but he just keeps going.

"Have we not made it clear? We have to stay hidden! We are in hiding!"

"Man, you're overreacting," Kiran tries but Nicoli isn't listening.

"Nic!" I shout and finally he stops and looks at me. "She was scared. A guy was pushing himself on her, it was a reaction. One you would appreciate if it was me and some random guy."

That shuts Nicoli up real quick. He knows I'm right and I can feel his guilt through the bond.

He turns to Anna and surprises even me by giving her a hug. "I'm sorry Anna. This is on that guy, he deserved worse. I'm sorry none of us were there for you."

Anna looks shocked. I know she's feeling guilty for using her strength so publicly, I'm guessing she thinks she deserves it.

“Thanks Nic. I really am sorry, it was instinct.”

Grabbing her hand, I squeeze it before pulling us along. I want to get back to the house.

“It was dark in there, I doubt anyone got a good look at our features,” Jay says.

“I agree,” Jax adds.

I’m not one hundred percent sure I agree with that but if it helps us feel better, I’m okay with saying it.

“I cast a confusion spell on the bar, it should stop anyone from remembering too well,” Nic says.

Oh good. I tap into our bond and see his magic is somewhat low.

Still keeping hold of Anna, I reach over and grab Nic’s hand too. I send some energy down the bond just to help even him out.

He gives me a small smile but I know he’s beating himself up over how he went at Anna.

We get back to the house and everyone stands around awkwardly. It’s a little early for bed and I don’t think anyone wants to end on this note.

“We should watch Big House! I never got to finish the season,” I say, looking at Anna.

“PJs and pizza?” She asks hopefully.

I immediately agree. “Of course, I’ll order pepperoni and ham right away.”

Anna speeds upstairs to get changed and I'm not sure she realizes she's using her vampire powers.

The guys look at me hopefully and I laugh, they're like puppies. "Yes, of course you can join. But comfortable clothes are a requirement."

After the pizza comes and everyone changes, we all settle in to watch together. Anna and I get right back into it. We snuggle on the couch and make the boys get us drinks, it's perfect.

Sixteen

Aly



We are all gathered around the table eating a pasta dish Jay made and I made for lunch. He taught me the recipe for the sauce and I feel like I'm really getting the hang of being his sous chef.

Someone's phone rings, making me jump. I got used to the lack of phones when we were in hiding. We still use burner phones but Nic's tends to ring a lot more now.

He pulls the phone out of his pocket and accepts the call before putting it on speaker.

"Hi mom," Nic says.

Her cheerful voice responds, "hello dear! I have good news but news that makes me nervous."

What does that mean? Nic rolls his eyes, so he must be used to this.

"What is it mom?"

"Well, we got you an audience with the elder council. It's next week. I'm nervous about this Nicoli but I know you're

doing the right thing,” she says.

“Thank you so much mom! We will be safe, I promise!” Nic says before hanging up.

“We are going to see the council?” I ask.

He grabs my hand and nods.

“We need to prepare,” Jax says.

“What are we going to say!?” Kiran asks, worried.

Now that it’s not an abstract idea, I think we are all more nervous about it. This is huge and the fate of supernaturals everywhere rests on this one meeting. No pressure.

“Calm down. We already have an idea of what we are going to do, we just need to iron out the details now,” Nic says, taking control of the situation.

Bailey rubs himself against each of our legs, trying to comfort us. He hops up with his paws on Kiran’s chair and licks his hand until he gets pet. I’m impressed Bailey can tell who needs the most comfort. What Jax found in the book was right, Bailey does have a bond with the guys too.

He’s right, we have a plan, we just need to refine it. We’ve got this.

The guys give me a brief synopsis of each elder on the council while we finish eating. There is one from each species, some men and some women. They are extremely powerful and hold their positions because of it.

Kiran warns me that the dark fae elder is an elitist who will never side with us. Ajax isn't sure where the light fae elder will fall, she's a wild card. Jay feels confident his elder will come through for us, more than any of the rest.

Nicoli thinks the mage elder runs on logic and will only side with us if he's thoroughly convinced. Jeremy didn't have any insight on the demon elder since he's newer.

It's all good information but not super reassuring. I would have loved to hear them say they will all believe us and be on our side instantly but I know that isn't possible. If that was the case, the guys wouldn't be so nervous about the meeting.

It's crazy to me the five other races can work together enough to share a council but the hunters hate the rest so much. It doesn't make sense to me a whole species would be created to hurt the others.

"Aly there's something else I wanted to mention," Nic says, pulling me out of my thoughts, "it's not about the meeting."

"What's up?" I ask.

"Well, I wanted to talk about the fact that Anna snuck out again last night."

Oh. That. Ya, I noticed too, but I was hoping the guys didn't somehow. Considering Jay is a wolf, that was a pretty low chance.

"I think she wants some space. Nothing to worry about. She's an adult, we are not her keepers." I try to come across

confident but I'm not sure I hit the mark. Either way, this conversation is over.

"I have class!" Anna yells from upstairs and we all look around. I hope she didn't hear us, not that we said anything wrong but I don't want her to feel like a prisoner.

"Who's going today?" I ask.

"Jer and I are going with you and Anna. The rest are staying here to work more on our plan," Jay says, standing up and stretching out.

"Great, let's go."

We all head out and walk to campus, on our way to one of Anna's English classes when I see the asshole from the bar. The one who rubbed himself all over my best friend.

He's different in the daylight. Less confident, shakier and quiet, with a large band-aid on his neck. He's with friends, but he's not really talking.

Maybe he only has confidence when he drinks. That boy needs to give it up because no one wants that kind of confidence.

I know Jeremy and Jay see him too when I stare too long. They follow my gaze and lock in on the kid.

"Be back," Jeremy mutters.

I'm sure he's been dying to teach this kid a lesson but on campus probably isn't the best spot.

I grab his arm as he steps away, and he looks down at me, baffled.

“We are supposed to be discreet. You can’t go beat on him now. There are people everywhere,” I say.

Jeremy looks like he wants to anyway. I turn to Jay for support but his face is just as fierce. I love these guys and the fact they’re defensive of Anna, but they need to put their anger to the side and be smart.

Luckily for us, and him, the kid turns to see who’s glaring death at him. As soon as he sees us, he turns and literally runs away. Like drops his bag and sprints in the other direction. It’s unnatural how fast he got out of here.

What the hell? He didn’t even see the guys at the bar and if he did, he shouldn’t remember them after Nic’s spell so what was that about?

“What just happened?” I ask.

“The punk avoided a beating,” Jeremy says, anger lacing his tone.

“But why?” Jay voices my exact question.

I think it hits Jeremy that he shouldn’t remember us. It doesn’t make sense.

“You guys were looking at him like you wanted to eat his insides,” I try but that doesn’t ring quite true.

I’m forgetting how intimidating these guys can be. I don’t see them that way but other people might.

“Whatever,” Anna interrupts, I forgot she was here. She’s been so quiet. “I need to get to class, come on.”

She starts walking away, and we have no choice but to follow her. I don’t have a great feeling about what happened though.

What’s wrong? Nic asks down the pack bond.

I’m sure they can feel my unease and confusion through our mating link. They probably hate being out of the loop back at the house.

I’m not going to worry them with this. We have bigger things to worry about than a weird interaction on campus.

Nothing, just campus stuff. No need to worry.

I can feel them all settle at that and I think I made the right decision.

Seventeen

Aly



We've been trying to act normal but as the time ticks down to our meeting with the elders, we all get more nervous.

It's just so full of unknowns. Will they believe us? Could they do something crazy, like separate us? Are we in danger by revealing ourselves? If the council believes us, could word of our mating get out and even more psychotic people come after us?

Those questions keep running through my head until I'm practically attached to the guys. It's easy to do because they're all nervous and seeking comfort too.

We are all puppy piled in the giant bed in the master bedroom and it's the morning of our meeting. I don't think anyone wants to get out of bed and face today.

I try to close my eyes and fall back asleep when Nic sighs. "We need to get ready. Shower with me?"

I nod, and he grabs me out of the bed, carrying me to the bathroom. He sets me on the counter while starting the water, giving me soft kisses and words of praise. I soak it all up,

knowing this is his way of taking care of me. I feel loved and I need that right now.

Jeremy comes and joins us in the stall. I'm assuming the other three have gone to get ready in their own bathrooms. I'm sandwiched between them as they wash my hair and soap my body. They spend forever getting me clean.

I have a feeling they are trying to prolong the shower but eventually we have to get out.

It's time.

* * *

I transport us as close to the council chambers as I can, but they have a huge barrier around it to protect them. They want to be sure they can see a threat coming.

Nic showed me a picture of where we should transport, courtesy of his dad with the same power. Apparently, his family is a big deal in the mage community and have spent a lot of time here. I'll need to question him about it extensively but now isn't the time. That's probably why he decided to drop the information.

I'm nervous as hell. I grab hold of the two hands next to me which happen to be Jay and Jeremy. They let me, even though I'm holding on way too tight for comfort.

"It's going to be okay Aly Kat," Jay whispers.

I just nod because I don't trust myself to speak.

Nic leads the way as we head towards the huge building up ahead. It's in an isolated part of Oregon, away from humans but it still seems like a normal building. Very inconspicuous except for it's size. It seems like everything in the supernatural world is hidden in plain sight.

“Just remember the plan. We've got this,” Nic says as we make it to the door.

I can feel nervous energy down the bond from all my mates but more than that, I can tell Nic is full of confidence. I grab hold of that with both hands and pretend it's my own feelings.

Nic knocks three times on the door with a colonial knocker. After a brief second, the door opens on its own, letting us in.

I squeeze Jer and Jay's hands harder as we step into the building. The place is decked out and clearly full of money. It's like a palace in here, it's completely unnecessary. I'm glad I wore a dress and heels.

We follow a long hallway down to the chambers and stand before another door. Before we can even knock on this one, it's opening to reveal what looks like a council chambers.

There are five people seated at an elevated table that curves around the room. They're spaced evenly apart and are incredibly intimidating from down here.

It's made up of three men and two women, at least it's not a sexist council. Although, how they're treated remains to be

seen.

“Hello, please come in,” one of the female voices says.

We make our way inside and I find myself standing next to Nic as the rest of the guys fan out around us. It’s subtly protective but I doubt this council misses much.

“I am Eve, the elder for shifters. You have requested an audience with us on the subject of mates, is that correct?” The same woman asks.

She seems kind. Not the harsh voice I expect, but like a grandmother. This is Jay’s elder.

“Yes, we have some information we think is important. We hope you will listen to what we know,” Nic says confidently.

“Ah, you are Nicoli, the mage. Your parents got this meeting,” a male voice says.

“Yes elder.”

“Please introduce the rest of you,” the same man says.

“This is Kiran, a dark fae, Jeremy a demon, Jay a shifter, Ajax a light fae and our mate Aly,” Nic says.

I notice he leaves off that I am a hunter. We all agreed it was best to tread lightly. To them, I am the enemy.

“You all share a mate?” Another man speaks up and he sounds disgusted. Not a good sign.

I can feel Kiran stiffen behind me and I can guess this is the dark fae elder.

“Calm now Joka, let us introduce ourselves then we can hear them out. Considering they are here to talk about mating, I have a feeling this will all be explained if we give them time,” Eve says.

I like her, a lot. I am already incredibly grateful for her.

“I am Joka, the dark fae elder,” he says, confirming my suspicion.

The other female speaks next, “I am Kia, the light fae elder.”

I have a feeling they know the guys know this and the introductions are more for my sake. They don't recognize or know me like they might the guys. I have no idea how big or small their communities are.

A man in all black speaks next, “I am Roner, the demon elder.”

The man who said he knew Nic speaks next and I know he's the mage elder. “That makes me the mage elder, Monit.”

“Thank you,” Nic says.

“Why don't you tell us why you're here,” Eve speaks again.

“Right. The five of us, we are fated mates with Aly,” Nic says.

He's cut off immediately.

“That's impossible!” The dark fae elder says.

“Preposterous!” The mage elder adds.

“Calm yourselves, let’s hear them out,” the demon elder commands.

At least he wants to hear what we have to say. I know from our preparations that these elders are all considered equals, so we just need three out of five to believe us. Which is good, because I have a feeling no matter what we say, the dark fae elder won’t believe us. He clearly doesn’t want to.

“We all felt the mating pull toward her and our bonds have fully formed. We didn’t understand it ourselves, so we’ve been working to uncover how this happened. We’ve found a four thousand year old book that explains this was common place then. We believe a spell has been cast to remove this knowledge from history. This book was protected by a vampire.” Nic sounds so sure of himself, I’m so proud. He’s doing an incredible job.

“Why would someone do that? It would take incredible power for it to be done,” the light fae elder asks.

“This is going to be the most shocking part. Please, keep open minds as this could determine the fate of our species finding mates in the future.”

“Out with it!” Joka demands.

“The bonds include hunters.” Cue the gasps but Nic forges on, “we didn’t know it when we met her, she didn’t even know it because she hadn’t triggered the gene but Aly is a hunter.”

They all zero in on me and I feel the guys tense. They don’t like that I’ve been outed as an enemy behind lines. This

was our most debated moment, to reveal what I am or not. But in the end we realized it wouldn't all make sense without the missing piece, me.

“You want us to believe that thousands of years ago, hunters mated with other supernaturals? That all the races mixed with their fated bonds?” Joka sounds disgusted.

“Yes, because it's true. Please, look at this book,” Nic says.

Nic doesn't leave my side, instead Jay comes forward with the book from Ryan and hands it to his elder. We had identified she might be an ally before this meeting and it would make most sense for whoever had the book to hand it to their elder.

We hope she will actually examine the book instead of tossing it aside.

They all start arguing around us but I notice Eve is looking at the book. I still have hope.

We stand here quietly, letting them burn off some of their anger.

What do we do? Jay asks in our minds.

Let's give Eve another minute. Nic says.

That pays off when she looks up from the book and examines us. She stares at us before speaking up.

“This book says it's true,” she speaks loudly, gaining everyone's attention. She smiles hopefully as she stares down at us.

“They could have made that book themselves!” Joka claims.

“No, it’s incredibly old and powerful. They couldn’t have made this.” She’s strategic too as she passes it to the demon elder who is also more likely to believe us.

He starts looking it over while the other elders either glare at Eve or stare at us.

“There is a way to know,” the light fae elder speaks up. Her voice is soft but it carries.

I don’t miss the way Eve grimaces, but she doesn’t say anything. The elders all stare at each other, weighing this mystery option up.

Do you guys know what this is? I ask through the bond.

A chorus of nos comes back to me and now I’m nervous. What could this be that they don’t know about it.

Finally, the light fae elder speaks again, “there is a signal fated mates have that chosen mates do not. If you have... it, it would prove you are fated mates. For me, that would be enough proof the information in this book is correct.”

“It would give the world hope to find their fated mates, something more precious than gold to us,” Eve adds. She sounds hopeful it’s true.

“What is this test?” Nic asks and his voice doesn’t betray how nervous this makes him.

That doesn’t help me feel better.

“It won’t be easy but this is the only way,” Eve starts, but she’s interrupted.

“We can’t tell you what the test is until it’s complete, it could skew the results,” Joka announces.

The other elders look conflicted but don’t contradict him.

I don’t like this. Jeremy says.

I don’t either but I don’t see another choice. Nic says.

I don’t either. We need them to believe us, if we have to go through a test, then that’s what we will do.

We don’t say anything to contradict them, so they take that as agreement.

“Let’s begin then,” Monit says.

Eighteen

Aly



One second, I'm with the guys in the chambers, the next, I'm alone in an empty room. Monit must have cast a spell that separated us.

Monit appears before me suddenly. "Try to relax."

Then his hands are on my head and there is only burning pain. It sears through all my nerve endings until it feels like my brain is about to burst.

Memories stream through me too quick to identify them.

"A memory spell, oh I'm sorry Aly. This is going to hurt," his voice says but I can't identify where it's coming from.

The pain doubles until the point I feel like I'm going to pass out. But something is stopping me, keeping me conscious.

I watch the memories as he does, almost like I'm seeing them through water. They stop when I meet the guys for the first time at the bar except this time, it's different. There are details that were erased the first time I met them, things I couldn't remember.

Kiran called me his mate, both of the twins eye's changed color when we touched and Nic's eyes looked like swirling magic. They zero in on the moment each guy noticed we are mates but I didn't see their reaction each time. Jeremy wasn't looking at me and I hadn't even met Jay yet when he knew.

There was something pulling me back to them, even though I didn't feel the mate bond, because my gene wasn't active, I still wanted to be with them.

The memories are ripped away and the burning comes back tenfold. I feel strong arms catch me as I collapse from the overwhelming, searing pain.

Nic

I'm in a room alone, waiting to see what comes next but nothing does. It's dead silent as I wait and wait.

I'm about to yell out when I feel it, soul crippling agony coming from my mate. She is in anguish and I'm nowhere near her to help. Is this the test?

The pain briefly stops and wonder comes down the bond before it starts up again, worse. I fall to my knees, her agony is so strong.

It ends abruptly and I can tell she is unconscious.

My voice echos back to me as I shout for my mate. "Aly!"

There are no exits in this room, I'm trapped. What if this was some trick? What if they separated us, so they could get to

Aly?

How could I be so stupid?

I start gathering power in my hands to blast through this room when Monit shows up.

I'm about to blast him but his words stop me.

“Calm now Nicoli, she is okay. Let me do your test so you can go be with her.”

“You'll take me to her after the test?” I ask.

I don't really trust him now, but this is my best option. I have no idea where she is being held or how to get there. They are elders, they could defeat me in seconds if they wanted to.

“Yes, I will. Try to relax, fighting me will only make this worse.”

“Let's get it over with then,” I say.

He steps before me and places his hands on either side of my head. I feel the prodding but before I can object, he's doing a memory dive into my head.

He ruffles through my memories quickly, clearly searching for something in particular.

There is a burning sensation that only gets worse as he digs deeper into my mind. I try to relax, the more you fight a memory dig, the more painful it is.

He stops the night we met Aly, while we are sitting at the bar. I'm listening to Kiran and Jay talk about finding their mate.

I'm shocked that they share a mate but even more than that, I'm jealous. I didn't want to admit it at the time but it's clear looking back on the moment.

Aly walks up and I see her approaching Kiran. She's the most beautiful girl I've ever seen and I'm begging the universe that she's not Kiran and Jay's mate. The chances that she could be theirs and mine are a million to one and I think I'm already obsessed with this girl.

She gets close enough for my magic to sense her as she says hello to them and it's the moment my world changes. My magic immediately identifies her as my mate and I'm up and out of my seat quicker than I thought possible.

She gets lost staring into my eyes and I never want her to look away.

It fast forwards some until I'm watching Aly fall into Jeremy's lap. He's glaring at Jay as his eyes go dark with hell fire.

The memory is sucked away as I'm returned to the present. My head is on fire but it's not enough for me to pass out.

I'm about to ask why Aly's was so much worse when it hits me.

"She had a memory spell placed on her. You had to dig deeper. You did it anyway?!" I demand.

"We had to know for sure," he says, looking slightly sympathetic.

“You could have checked our memories and left her out of it!” I’m furious. Digging through her mind, past that block, must have been excruciating. No wonder she passed out.

“When you meet your fated mate, your eyes change. You did not see it like she did, already I have confirmed four of you are her fated mate. But her eyes, they did not change when she met you.”

As much as I hate him right now, it’s important that he knows the truth.

“She hadn’t triggered her gene yet. Hunters don’t feel the pull of the bond on their own until they trigger their gene. They can still mate, but they don’t recognize us on sight like we do them. It’s in the book if you want to check.”

“Thank you, Nicoli. You can take care of your mate now.”

I’m flashed into another room where Aly is laying on a bed. It’s a white sterile room, probably some sort of infirmary.

I hurry over to her and hold her as she recovers from the effects of the memory dive.

Jay

Something is wrong and I’m trapped in this stupid room. I’ve tried everything to get out but the walls are impenetrable and there are no doors or windows. I know my mate is unconscious and my wolf is ripping at the seams to get to her.

Someone is going to pay for the pain I felt Aly in.

“Hello Jay,” the voice of the stupid mage elder says behind me.

I flip around to see him standing there way too casually for my liking.

“Take me to Aly now.”

“First the test, then I will allow you to see your mate,” he says back like that’s completely reasonable.

“No! No test! Aly is unconscious and hurt somewhere and I will not stand here while she needs me.” I’m furious. I can feel my fangs in my mouth and my eyes flash wolf as he fights to be free. He wants to tear him apart.

“Then I will have to do this the hard way,” he says as he materializes right next to me. Before I can do anything, his hands are on my head and I’m immobile.

It feels like he’s pulling my brain apart as he looks through my memories. I try to push him back out, but he digs his claws in deeper. It feels like actual claws have gripped my brain. It’s excruciating.

No matter what I do to fight him off, he stays rooted in my brain.

My wolf is still snarling within me but now there is no way out. Monit has complete control over me. Is this what he did to Aly?

He finally stops digging and focuses in on the moment I smelled Aly for the first time. In the memory, my wolf surges forward and I know my eyes flash gold.

I hop into her path and say, “hey there!”

The memory is ripped backwards until I’m back in the room alone with Monit.

“I think we have everything we need now. Thank you, Jay.”

I’m about to rip him apart when he snaps his fingers and I’m in a room with Aly and Nic.

I charge forward to see Aly is waking up. She groans in pain and I want to kill someone again.

Nic rests his hands on her and I’m sure he’s healing her. I feel some relief down the bond as he works.

The other three appear in the room together and race toward the rest of us.

“What happened?” Jeremy demands, staring down at Aly’s half conscious form.

“They did a memory dive on her but the spell blocking her memories meant they had to dig deeper. That’s why it was so much more painful than what they did to us.”

Nic looks up at me. “Although you don’t look much better. Did you fight it? That makes it significantly more painful.”

I look down to see my hands are shaking and I feel sweaty. If I had to guess my face is pale too.

I look over at Jer and the twins, but they look fine, just worried.

“You guys didn’t fight it?” I ask.

How did they know it would make it worse? I was fighting to get back to my mate.

“They never came for me. One second I was in a room alone worried about Aly, the next I was here,” Jax explains.

Kiran and Jer agree. I guess when he said they got what they wanted from me, he meant they were done.

Aly is finally sitting up and looking better from Nic’s healing. Jer nicks his thumb and presses it against her lips.

When she goes to object he cuts her off, “do it. We are all worried about you. Help us feel better.”

She complies and more color comes back to her cheeks. She finally looks like herself again.

Nic turns and heals me next, just enough that I don’t look like a wreck anymore.

“So, what was the test?” Kiran asks.

“It was about when we met Aly,” I say, not sure what was so significant about it.

“They told me that when you meet your fated mate, your eyes change. They were looking for the memory of that happening. Of course, Aly is the one who saw that most so her dive was more intense,” Nic explains looking furious at what happened.

“If you’re ready, the council will see you now,” a voice says, coming from all around us.

There is no one to follow, so I'm not sure how we are supposed to get back to the chamber.

Aly stands up and Nic immediately wraps his arms around her. When she shows she can stand on her own again, he looks us all over before replying.

“We are ready.”

We're transported out of the room and in front of the council again.

Nineteen

Aly



We land in front of the elders and I'm standing on shaky legs. Nic is trying to hold me up but I don't want to look weak right now, so I brush him off. Nic healed me, I'm just shaken from everything that happened.

"The council has decided to believe you," the mage elder says.

My knees almost give out in relief. They believe us? They believe us! This is incredible. That makes what I just went through worth it.

"Thank you for coming forward, so we can find mates again," the shifter elder says.

She sounds truly grateful and clearly excited about the possibility.

"You should know the whole council was not in agreement that the races should mix," the dark fae elder says arrogantly, looking pointedly at Kiran and Jax.

I can feel their anger, most likely thinking about what their parents went through.

“But, it was undeniable what we saw in your memories. We were able to confirm four of your eyes changing, and we could deduce Jay’s from his wolf surging forward like it did, even if no one actually saw. We didn’t need to see all of yours once we had the needed information,” Monit says.

The guys are furious. I know we all hate them for the test they put us through, mostly me. I’m not sure there will be forgiveness any time soon.

“So, can we expect your help to convince the hunters of this truth?” Nic asks. He sounds so strong and confident, standing there with his shoulders back. Like there was never a doubt we were telling the truth.

“Yes,” Monit responds. His attitude has flipped. I guess he really just needed to know we were telling the truth before he sided with us.

I feel relief surge through our mate bond and my legs almost give out again. We have help, this is going to be over soon.

“We must spread word about this revelation. For our people and so the hunters start feeling doubt before they are confronted,” the demon elder says.

“Are we sure we want to include the hunters? If our races start mixing on their own, surely they will find more mates. They are our enemies,” Kia the light fae elder says.

She’s not malicious, only cautious but it hurts all the same.

Before one of us can speak up, Eve does.

“They won’t be our enemies if we are intermingled, this is a way to find peace!”

“Plus, their women outnumber ours, it is very likely that they are the missing piece. The reason bonds have not been randomly found on their own,” Roner the demon elder says.

Yes! Go Roner and Eve! I’m so glad they realized that on their own. It gives it more validity.

“This is true. We must include the hunters,” Monit says.

Kia nods like this is acceptable reasoning but Joka is still sitting there in silence, brooding.

“Then it is decided, we shall spread the news,” Roner says.

Nic speaks up, “it could be dangerous for us if our names are included. Would the council be willing to leave us anonymous? We have been through so much already.”

Roner and Kia look put out by this request. I’m sure they were hoping to spread our identities far and wide as proof. Eve and Monit look understanding so hopefully they advocate for us.

“I think that is acceptable. You have done a great service to us by coming forward, we will respect your wishes,” Eve announces.

They start talking about how best to approach the hunters, and we leave them to it. I know they have years more experience when it comes to this type of thing.

Once they have the beginnings of a plan, they turn their attention back to us.

“You will be summoned when it is time. Do not expect it to take long,” Roner announces.

“There is one more thing,” Nic says. When they don’t respond he forges ahead, “a three thousand year old vampire who goes by Ryan is after us because of our bond. We were hoping the council could help in our hunt for him.”

We could really use their help here.

They share a look before returning their attention to us.

“We will take over the hunt. He is very dangerous, you are not to go after him,” Monit declares and I can tell his word is final.

There is no use arguing for our own vengeance. At least he will be taken care of.

“You are dismissed,” Roner declares and the door opens behind us again.

We turn and speed walk out of there, ready to be done and go home. That was terrifying, but in the end, we got what we wanted. We had to go through a lot to get it.

As soon as we are far enough away from the building, Jeremy says, “I can’t believe they did that to Aly.”

He’s not even celebrating our win, just upset for me. I feel loved.

I can feel their annoyance but I don't want us to get stuck on this.

“Yes, it sucked, but it's over now. We got what we wanted and I'm completely fine.”

Nic gives me a look like he knows I'm lying but wants it to be true. No one wants to feel like the council of elders is our enemy.

“Promise?” Kiran says, stealing my attention.

“I promise,” I say, grabbing his hand and squeezing it. “Let's get out of here.”

They circle around me and I take us all back to the house on campus.

“So, now we wait until we hear from them again?” Jax asks.

“Yes and right now, I want to hold my mate and make sure she is okay,” Jay says.

He picks me up and carries me bridal style to the stairs.

I look up at him and ask, “is Anna home?”

His senses will be able to tell me without having to look.

“No, she's gone again,” he says, but he doesn't linger on it. He's completely focused on me.

The rest of the guys are trailing behind us, apparently not wanting to be apart either.

I'm tossed on the bed and someone presses into my back from behind. The tight planes of his chest make me shiver as

he brings his lips down to my neck. I could tell those lips anywhere. Nicoli keeps his pace while kissing from my ear to my shoulder then licking his way back up.

Suddenly, I feel two hands start running from my ankles up my leg and to my thighs. The touch is so light and teasing. I tilt my head down to see Jay kneeling before me. When we make eye contact, he bites down on my thigh and leaves a mark.

When he bites down on me again, I feel my pussy clench. I want more, I need more. As if reading my thoughts Jay picks me up from behind my thighs and throws me back down on the bed.

Instantly, I feel two sets of hands holding my wrists and legs down while one mouth teases my nipples through my dress.

“Sorry baby girl, this dress has got to go,” Jeremy whispers in my ear as he pulls the dress over my head.

Now that I am laying before these five men with only my bra, panties and heels on, I feel nervous. The heat in their eyes amplifies as they all take me in.

Ajax and Kiran share a look before releasing their holds and flipping me onto my hands and knees. My panties are ripped from my body in one strong pull and my bra is released.

Kiran whistles, “baby do you know how bad we want you?” I whimper in response.

Ajax leans forward to whisper, “you were made for us, Aly.”

A tongue runs up my slit and I almost scream in relief at the contact. Ajax’s tongue dips in, then finds its way up to my clit. He swirls around it until I start to squirm with how badly I need more.

“Uh, uh, uh Princess, let Jax take his time enjoying that pussy of yours.” Nicoli reaches for me and holds me still. I moan in frustration until I feel two hands roughly grab my chest.

When two mouths start sucking on my nipples I realize it’s both Jay and Kiran. One of them pulls me into their mouth while the other retreats and blows cold air at me. They continue this torture back and forth while I get so close to the edge.

I know I’m going to come soon, when I realize Jeremy is the only one not touching me. I peer up to see him standing at the foot of the bed watching. His eyes are hungry for me. When we make eye contact he mouths, “come,” and I come apart instantly.

I feel my pussy clench and my toes curl. I come so hard my eyes squeeze shut and I see stars behind my lids.

The guys relent and become gentle in their kissing, sucking and licking of my body. When I open my eyes I see Nicoli staring down at me with so much heat. I am instantly ready for more and feel myself grow even wetter.

Staring into his eyes I beg, "I need you." I make eye contact with the rest of my guys. "All of you."

"Don't worry baby girl we've got you," Jeremy says. Jay sits in front of me. I am picked up by Jeremy and Nicoli and brought right down on Jay's cock. He sinks into me slowly and I feel deliciously stretched.

Jay kisses me furiously and I feel his tongue slid into my mouth. While he runs his hands all over my body he slides down the bed until he is laying flat on his back with me sprawled on top of him.

I hear something pop open behind me and feel a cool, wet finger push into me from behind. When they lean forward to kiss my lower back, I groan. My noises spur him on, and he licks up my spine to my shoulders.

It feels so good that I writhe all over Jay.

Jay growls, "fuck Jer, she fucking loves it. Don't stop."

Abruptly, the fingers are removed and I feel empty. Then the tip of Jeremy's cock presses against my tight hole.

"Relax baby girl," soothes Jeremy as he presses into me. The stretching feels amazing. I can feel their two cocks rubbing against each other, only separated by a thin wall. I feel his piercing hit me in one of my most sensitive spots and I moan in response.

When he is fully seated in me, the guys really start to move. They alternate pushing in and pulling out until it feels so good that I am screaming for them not to stop.

A hand lifts my head and kisses me deeply. I love Nic's lips on mine but there is something else I want instead.

"Give me your cock," I demand. Nicoli complies and bring my lips to the tip and I run my tongue across it. He jerks in response and I take pity on him. I bring him fully into my mouth and suck hard. I hollow my cheeks and run one of my hands up and down his shaft.

I know exactly how Nic likes it and within minutes I feel his dick grow harder in my mouth. He grabs the back of my head and yells out while he comes down my throat. I swallow him greedily and give him one last lick as he pulls out of my mouth.

He backs up and joins Ajax where he stands watching me and pumping his dick in his hand.

Kiran takes his place and brings his delicious cock up to my lips. He lets me lick him before thrusting in and fucking my mouth. I swirl my tongue around his tip. He tightens his hand in my hair and pumps into me.

All three men sync up and are thrusting in and out of me in a tantalizing rhythm. I feel another orgasm building and with each thrust I am brought closer to the edge. I come hard around my men. Jeremy finishes in my ass while I come around him. He withdraws from me and I feel empty without him.

"Fuck baby girl you feel too fucking good," Jeremy sounds awed and a little dazed. I know the feeling. This is so intense, I am surprised I haven't collapsed.

“You up for more Aly?” I hear Ajax ask from behind me. He has taken Jeremy’s spot and I want him inside me now.

“Yes, please,” I moan out in response.

Swiftly, Ajax presses into me from behind and picks up where Jeremy left off in the rhythm. “Yes, fuck, Jax,” I scream out around Kiran’s cock between my lips.

The vibrations from my screams must have put Kiran over the edge because then he is releasing in my mouth. I love the sounds of pleasure he makes when he comes and I feel the familiar building inside me again.

Ajax and Jay speed up and I look back down at Jay as he leans up to bring me into a deep, heated kiss. He brings his lips down, kissing and nipping my neck.

Jay bites down on my neck and I get swept up in the pleasure, pain mix. Ajax and Jay swear when I come around them one last time, and they come with me. I milk them dry with the clenching of my pussy. This orgasm is so intense I can’t help but collapse after.

Ajax pulls out of me then gently lifts me into his arms and off Jay. I examine the room and there is pure satisfaction on each of my guys faces. It must be reflected on my own because their faces turn smug.

“That was amazing,” I say.

They all smile at me.

“Yes, it really, really was.” Kiran brushes the hair off my face and behind my ear.

I bask in the bliss for as long as I can until I'm about to fall asleep.

"We needed that," I say. I'm more relaxed after connecting with my mates. Our bond just feels safer.

"Yes we did." Nic picks me up and presses me against his chest, cuddling with me.

All my guys get in bed and we just enjoy each other as we fall asleep.

Twenty

Aly



We are sitting around the kitchen table as a group when Anna brings up the same thing for the third time. We filled her in on everything that happened with the council and now, we wait to hear from them again.

“Anna, you can’t come with us to face the hunters. You need to stay here safe. This could be a trap and you aren’t trained,” I try to reason with her.

If looks could kill, I would be dead. She’s staring at me like I’m personally responsible for everything but I’m just trying to be reasonable.

“You’ve been training me!” She tries.

The guys are staying quiet, letting me handle this but I know they feel the same. They don’t want *me* going and I’m a fully trained hunter. Anna is just a baby vampire.

“I know but it’s not enough. We have more to work on. Please, trust that I’m doing what’s best here.” My voice is pleading. I don’t want her anywhere near this.

Her shoulders drop and I know I’ve won.

“I just want to be there for you, you’re going to be in danger and I hate that.”

My love for this girl only grows. She’s incredible, and I am so lucky to have her in my life.

“Thank you. I love you so much, but this is best.”

She nods, finally accepting my words. The guys think it’s finally safe to join the conversation.

“We will make sure this place is safe. I’ve been casting spells every day to protect it and Aly is planning on leaving Bailey here with you. He can protect you,” Nic explains.

Bailey hears his name and trots into the room, giving Anna a lick on her hand.

Anna leans down and pets him in thanks, giving him lots of scratches. Even now that we know he’s an extremely dangerous Athermy familiar, he’s still just a puppy to us.

Jay drops some eggs and toast on the table for breakfast, and we all dig in.

* * *

We are walking to the science building when I reach up to fiddle with my necklace but it’s missing.

“Shit!” I turn to look at the ground behind me, hoping it just fell off.

“What’s wrong?” Anna asks, looking around too.

Before I can answer, Nic says, “her charm is gone! I didn’t notice until now. We should get out of here.”

“We should find it,” I counter.

Jeremy starts walking back the way we came. “5 minutes max.”

I do not want Nic to have to make me a new one. How could I have lost it? We should charm them to stay on like my parent’s.

Of course, the universe decides to punish me for losing my charm.

An excited voice that I unfortunately recognize says, “Al is that you?!”

The guys all tense around me and I can hear Anna scoff. At least he won’t recognize Anna with her charm on.

I turn around, ready to blow my ex, Jason off, and see he’s with Marc too. This is not going to go well.

“It’s been forever!” Jason says.

The guys are surrounding me now and subtly trying to push me along, mostly because we don’t need anyone to know I’m here. We are in hiding.

“Ya, long time. Well, see ya later.” I turn to leave, but he doesn’t accept that.

“We were so good together Al and I hear you’ve been hanging out with a group of guys.”

Marc interrupts Jason, “these aren’t even them. How many guys are you hanging out with?”

I want to punch him in the nose. Should I? I could, I really could. I imagine the guys are itching to hurt him, but they're showing restraint, so I should too.

"I'm taken, I've got to go." Once again, I turn around to leave.

He grabs my arm, whipping me around, and he leans in to kiss me. I freeze in shock. This is the absolute last thing I ever expected him to do. His lips barely press against mine before he's being ripped away.

Jeremy has Jason pressed up against a wall with his arm across his neck. He's choking him out in broad daylight, we do not need this kind of attention.

"She didn't ask for that, and she definitely didn't want it. Don't go around forcing your wants on girls!" Jeremy demands, his voice hard, like ice.

Jay has Marc pinned down on the cement as he holds a hand on his throat. I'm sure his wolf is pushing hard to get out right now.

Shadows are cropping up all around us and blocking out the sun. It's completely unnatural and I know it's thanks to Kiran's rage.

I turn to Nic immediately, hoping he still has his wits. "Do something!"

"Like kill him?" He growls as he stares Jason down with fury in his eyes. He's probably planning his death as we speak.

“No. Nic we need to get out of here. This isn’t good. We are in danger like this, I don’t have my charm on!” My words are frantic. I need him to listen to what I’m saying.

Jay is growling and Jason is turning blue. People are gathering around us and staring. Jason and Marc are both on the basketball team which makes them recognizable.

We need to go. Now. I’m leaving, I shout down the bond. Hopefully the idea of me being alone, away from them will pull them out of their anger enough to walk away.

I grab Anna’s hand and drag her away, towards her next class. I know they’re following me but I imagine both guys got a quick beating before they left.

As soon as we get far enough away Anna opens her hand and shows me my necklace. “I found it right before Jason tried to kiss you. What a fucking creep!”

I quickly grab it from her and put it back on. “Thank you so much for finding it!”

Kiran comes around the corner of the building, grabs me and kisses me like he’s trying to erase Jason’s lips from mine. He devours my mouth, grabbing the back of my head and pressing himself against me.

“Gross!” Anna says, breaking in. It’s probably a good thing, that was going to escalate fast.

The other three come around the corner and surround me, passion and aggression coming off in waves. Jay nuzzles into my neck, marking me with his scent.

“Try to keep it together, I still have class.” Anna rolls her eyes at them.

I can't wait until she has guys of her own to deal with.

I look around at each of them. There is no calming them down. At least kissing me seemed to help Kiran. Maybe I should kiss them all.

“Some asshole just kissed our mate in front of us. There is no calming down,” Jay growls as he says it.

I remember how I reacted when Kate hit on the guys and that was before we were even mated. I understand how they're feeling.

“We aren't going to class. Let's go home,” Jeremy demands.

I'm not doing that to Anna and I'm not letting my loser ex win.

“No. We go to class. Please, for me? I don't want Anna to miss it.”

I get stiff nods in return.

We start heading into the building. This is going to be a long class to get through. Jay, Nic and Jeremy are all touching little parts of me, trying to calm down.

Kiran is walking next to Anna, he looks back at all of us, then Anna and returns to us. He lets out the biggest sigh I've ever heard. “I'll take Anna to class. Don't go far and you three fucking owe me!”

I move forward and wrap my arms around Kiran's neck. "You are the best mate and an amazing friend to these guys."

"I know," he whispers, leaning in to kiss me again.

Before our lips can connect, Anna grabs Kiran and drags him away. "We are going to be late!"

Jay throws me over his shoulder and the four of us find an empty classroom next door. Nic blasts the lock with magic, I hope ensuring our privacy.

"I should have killed him," Jeremy grumbles.

"It's not kill worthy," I say trying to be reasonable.

Jay growls again and Jeremy makes a noise of disagreement.

"He kissed you! Our mate! Right in front of us!" Nicoli raves.

"I know and I'm sorry I froze instead of punching him right in his nose. I just really didn't see it coming!" I feel horrible that I let it happen.

"Whoa, this is not your fault. He kissed you! You shouldn't have to anticipate some asshole coming after you." Jay grabs me and holds me against him, pouring sincerity down the bond.

I relax, they aren't mad at me. I know it's not my fault but I feel so wrong about it all.

"You're ours aren't you Aly Kat?" Jay says, wrapping his arms around me.

“All ours.” Nic confirms, pressing against my front.

“We need to remind everyone about that,” Jeremy demands.

Nic flips my skirt up and rips my panties off my body. He lowers his pants just enough to free himself before pulling us both to the floor.

“Say you’re ours,” he demands.

“I’m yours,” I whisper and Nic immediately impales me on his cock.

He thrusts all the way inside me with no hesitation.

Jay kneels and presses against my back running his fingers through my wetness before playing with my ass. He pushed two fingers in me and scissors them, making sure I’m ready for him. He doesn’t give me long to adjust.

“All ours.” He removes his fingers and instantly pushes into me, causing a pleasant burn.

“Fuck yes, I belong to you.” My voice is breathy and mixed with a moan.

“Yes you do. All ours. Everyone else can fuck off.” Jeremy steps up to me and brushes his pierced tip against my lips.

I obediently open my mouth, so he can push inside me and twist my tongue around him. He lets me play a second before thrusting all the way to the back of my throat.

“You’re being owned right now Aly Kat.”

They all find a rhythm, taking over my body and every sense I have. Lips are kissing my throat, hands are fisted in my hair and when a thumb starts circling my clit I feel my whole body tense.

“She’s ready. She wants to come for us,” Jay groans and I know it’s incredibly tight for him.

Nic leans forward and I can feel his lips brushing against my ear. He nibbles on the lobe before whispering, “come.”

I detonate on them, screaming around Jer’s cock in my mouth. Thank fuck it’s muffling me since we are in a classroom on campus.

I reach forward and roll Jeremy’s balls in my hand making him curse up a storm and come down my throat.

“Swallow every drop Aly Kat,” Jay whispers in my ear.

Jer groans at his command before stepping back.

Nic and Jay pick up their pace, slamming into me. I reach my arm around my back and grab Jay’s neck.

He groans, and grips my waist tighter. When his hand grips my ribs, rubbing against Jeremy’s mark, it sets me off again.

I know Jeremy can feel my pleasure amplified down our bond as he groans.

Jay growls as he comes deep inside me. As soon as he pulls away, Nic lays me down on the floor with a hand behind my head as he mercilessly pounds into me.

We come together with Nic's forehead pressed against mine.

I stay there, helpless to move until the guys help me get dressed and we all get presentable again.

Nic wraps his arms around me from behind. "She's going to have to walk around all day with our come dripping out of her."

"Marked with our scent." Jay groans like that's the best thing in the world.

"And making sure everyone knows she's ours," Jeremy says, leaning in to kiss me.

I smile at their possessiveness. "You could clean me up with a spell."

Nic's smile is downright filthy. "I could, but I won't."

Class is almost over you better finish up. Kiran says down the bond.

Of course he can't help himself and sends it to Ajax too, who stayed home today.

Why aren't you together? Jax sounds worried and I feel bad.

We were just reminding Aly she's ours. Jay says

It's Jax and I's turn when we get home. Kiran announces and a surge of heat runs through me.

I want that. I want my twins.

Twenty One

Aly



Anna has been hiding in her room, it feels like she's avoiding me. Things are awkward between us since I know she's struggling and not talking to me about it.

I knock on her door, listening for moment.

She opens it and gives me a confused frown.

“What's up, Aly?” She asks.

“I just wanted to check in. You've been sneaking out and I'm worried about you. Both your physical safety and how you're doing mentally.”

She sighs but opens her door, leading me in and sitting on the bed. “I'm trying to connect with my old life. I'm seeing old friends, even as this new person I'm forced to pretend to be. But I'm fine, I promise. Sorry I've been sneaking out, I just didn't want to be protected.”

What can I even say to that? Of course, she doesn't want to be constantly followed by the guys and I. Anna has always been a social butterfly and that's not going to stop just because she's a vampire or in danger.

“Okay, I believe you. I’m sorry you’re struggling. If it helps to go see friends, I completely understand. You don’t need to sneak out. You can protect yourself.”

She hugs me tight and I feel like we made a breakthrough. I just want what’s best for her.

“I wanted to mention something else,” Anna says.

I smile and wait for her to continue.

“You could get an inside perspective on the hunters by talking to your parents. I think you should utilize it.”

Duh. She’s so right. We need to take any advantage we can get.

“You’re so right! You’re so damn smart, A. I’m going to go tell the guys, so we can go now! Thank you.”

I give her a huge hug, both of us using our enhanced strength. It feels like a perfect moment, I don’t want it to end. But we have no idea when the elders will call, so if we want to do this, we need to act right away.

I leave her room and head downstairs to see the guys gathered around the TV in the living room.

“Anna gave me a great idea. I think my parents can give us some insight into how to convince the hunters to believe us when we go see them,” I say.

The reaction is much better than last time. After they helped us get the amulet, the guys have all trusted them more. Not completely, but they are proving themselves to us.

“It would be helpful,” Kiran says.

“They could provide insight,” Jax adds.

Jeremy stays quiet but I know, he knows I’m right.

“Then let’s go and get this over with,” Nic says.

All the guys gather around me and wait for me to transport us.

I can’t help laughing. “I should probably call first. Let me see a burner phone Nic.”

He hands me one and I sit on the couch while it rings. Bailey hops up and pretends to be a lap dog, crushing me.

“Hello,” my mom’s voice says down the line.

“Hey mom, can we come over to talk?”

“Sure! Now works if you would like.” She sounds excited. I can’t stop my lips from quirking into a small smile.

“Okay, be over soon.”

I hang up and walk back over to the guys, transporting us to their safe house.

We land in the yard and my mom is waiting at the back door for us. My dad joins her as we walk up.

“How are you?” I ask them.

They look a lot better than the times I’ve seen them before. They’ve been living in their safe house after they helped us. The best part is, they’ve stayed right here. I was a little worried they would run and be a problem for us, but they’re

being reliable. Nic hasn't felt any changes in their intentions for us.

“We are good. How's Anna? Is the amulet working?” My mom asks.

I smile. “Yes, it's working. Thank you again for your help.”

We just kind of stand there in their living room awkwardly. We are still trying to figure out our relationship now.

“So, what are you here for?” My dad asks.

My mom elbows him and his expression is sheepish. I can't help laughing. We are all walking on egg shells here.

“Relax. We just came to get your advice. You have time to talk?” I ask.

My mom gestures to the couch before sitting on one of the arm chairs. I sit with Nic and Jeremy next to me, the other guys spreading around the room.

“What can I help with?” Mom seems grateful for the chance to be helpful. I can tell she's trying and another piece of my chipped heart heals.

I tell her all about the meeting with the supernatural elders and our plan to go convince the hunters of our truth. She looks more and more nervous the longer I talk.

“I don't know about that honey. To be honest, we only believe you because you're our daughter... and that wasn't

even enough at first. It's not how we were raised. The idea that hunters have mates, and they're other supernaturals is crazy."

Without me having to ask, Jax leans forward and hands my mom the book.

She opens it and peers inside, shuffles through the pages but I can tell she's not sure where to start.

Ajax hops up from his spot on the floor and stands behind my mom. He opens the book to different pages while explaining how this used to be normal. How someone destroyed this information. I actually think my parents are more convinced. This book is our main weapon in proving ourselves.

We get to the part about hunters not feeling the tug of a mating bond until their gene is triggered and my mom almost drops the book.

She looks up at me in shock, mouth open, eyes wide shock.

"What is it?" I ask, wondering what caught her attention so much.

She's trying to gather herself so my dad answers for her. "The hunter gene is not triggered until after you're mated. It's the way of our people. Yours was a mistake Aly."

I'm not completely sure what that means, but Nic knows. "You close the bond."

Everyone in the room seems to understand the revelation, except me.

“What’s going on?” I ask, frustrated to be left out.

Jax turns to me and explains, “when you meet your mates and mate them, there’s a chance you haven’t met them all yet. Not all fated mates are friends like us. Even if it’s a chosen mate, you could still add more to your bond, until, you close it. You close your bond so no one else can be added. With fated mates, it happens automatically. It’s what happened with your marks after mating me.”

Of course a blush forms at that and Kiran laughs at his twin.

“But I’m guessing in the hunter mating ceremony, they close the bond so no other mates can be found,” Nic adds.

My parents are lost in thought but slowly they come out of it and nod.

“We would never have realized without this information. It’s not spelled out to us like that,” my mom explains.

They share a moment before turning back to me.

“We believe you. It makes sense and this is the information you’ll need to tell other hunters to make them believe you too. It’s too coincidental not to be planned.”

Oh shit! They believe us, and they actually think other hunters will too?! This is amazing! Everything is coming together for us!

I can feel joy down our bonds. All of us want to be free from this threat.

“Thank you so much!” I say and I even start to move towards them for a hug.

It’s instinct, I’ve spent so much time with my guys and Anna that I’ve gotten comfortable with casual hugs, but it’s not something my parents and I ever did.

I stop awkwardly and put my arms back down. My mom is staring at me, like she’s trying to decide what to do.

Slowly, she moves towards me and gives me a soft hug. It’s awkward, but we can work on that. It means a lot to me that she’s trying.

“There’s something else I wanted to ask you,” I say once she steps back.

I can tell she’s trying to be encouraging but it’s not natural on her face.

“Why did you guys put the memory spell on me and send me to the human world? Wasn’t there a risk of all this happening?”

My mom thinks about it for a second before answering. “We didn’t know the reason behind the rules, so we didn’t realize there was a risk of you meeting your fated mates. We wanted you to have something we never did, a normal childhood.”

I can’t help but look at her like she’s crazy. She thinks I had a normal childhood? We moved around more than anyone I know, and I was raised by my aunt! Who hated me.

She reads my expression and laughs but it's sad and dejected. "We tried. We couldn't help our jobs, we had to move around based on where we were..." She pauses, looking around at the guys. She looks remorseful. "Where we were hunting. Your aunt was supposed to raise you but she hated that her role as the second born was to raise the children until they were of age. We thought you were having a good childhood, better than we had, but we never made sure.

"We had to train you, it was our duty, but we made you forget it so you could go to school and eventually college. It wasn't the normal way, but we tried, for you."

I'm actually a little choked up. They may not have done it well, but they were trying and at this point, that counts for a lot.

Nic pipes up, giving me a minute to gather myself, "who put the spell on Aly? It was really advanced."

"The hunters have mages on staff, we used one of them."

What mage would help the hunters? That seems suspicious, something we may need to look into when we can.

"Thank you," I say softly.

Jer wraps his arm around me, tugging me to his side and offering me comfort. My parents both give me small smiles and nod their heads.

We say our goodbyes and head home, a little more hopeful about our chances.

Twenty Two

Aly



I kneel in front of Bailey and try to convey my wishes to him. I haven't actually done this before, so I'm not sure how it'll work.

“Bailey, sweet boy, I need you to stay with Anna and protect her while we're gone. No matter what you feel from me or the guys, I need you to stay here.”

I can feel his confusion. I'm not sure what that means but I keep trying.

“Will you stay here with Anna?” I ask.

I get reassurance from him down our bond. I think that means he understands me, I guess we will find out.

Jay comes in and kneels down next to me.

“Do you think it's working?”

I shrug my shoulders. “I think so, as much as I can.”

“I'm sure it is. It's how the familiar bond works. You need to trust it and Bailey.”

I lean over and kiss his cheek. “You're right, thank you.”

“I was wondering if you might want to get some energy out? I know we are all feeling restless while we wait to be summoned. There’s a basketball hoop in the backyard?”

That sounds... like exactly what we need. The guys could use some competition and an outlet for any pent-up aggression. I don’t mind having a little fun and seeing my guys get all sweaty. I should make them play shirtless.

“That sounds great. Let’s do it!”

Jay’s answering smile is huge, his dimples peeking out.

“Guys! Let’s play some basketball,” Jay shouts through the house.

My mates make their way downstairs, gathering around us.

“That’s so random Jay,” Jeremy says.

“I love it!” Kiran exclaims, wrapping an arm around my shoulder.

“I think this is an outstanding idea. A little normalcy is good for us.” Nic conjures up a basketball.

“Anna, do you want to play?” I ask, shouting upstairs.

Her head peeks around the corner of the stairs. “Nah, I’m good. You guys have fun!”

She goes back to her room and I leave her to it.

We head outside to the backyard which is thankfully fenced in because we don’t need to draw any attention to us.

“I’m going to cast a concealment spell... just in case things get supernatural.” Nic does some movements with his

hands before turning around to face us.

“I call Aly!” Kiran and Jax yell at the same time.

Jeremy, Jay and Nic look disgruntled but really, the twins are the losers here.

I burst out laughing. “Why? You should know I’m terrible!”

They all stare at me like I’m dense. Clearly, they didn’t want to be on my team for my basketball skills.

“Okay, I accept. But, you guys have to play shirtless.” They all immediately rip their shirts off, making me smile. Man, I love my guys. “Perfect.”

Nic tosses me the ball, making me start. Jay immediately comes up to guard me with a big goofy smile on his face.

Jay lets me dribble past him before wrapping his arms around me from behind and nuzzling my neck.

I pass the ball to Kiran before yelling, “this feels like a foul!”

“Fair play!” Nic shouts, guarding Kiran.

They both take it seriously. Kiran fakes Nic out before passing it to Jax who makes a jump shot.

Kiran tosses the ball to Jay. “You’re up, dog.”

Jay rolls his eyes. “Okay, fairy.”

The guys joke and play around with each other. I actually make a few baskets while Kiran and Jax hold the other three

back. To be fair, they're all way taller than me, so I didn't have much of a chance.

Jeremy is coming toward me and I use a little of my hunter speed and strength to get around him and make a layup.

I opened the flood gates with that.

Jay uses his speed to go around Kiran who uses a strand of darkness to trip him up.

The game gets competitive as the guys get into it. I'm proud I'm holding my own. I enjoy rubbing up on my sexy men and their yummy abdomens.

"Okay, it's game point," Nic says, tossing the ball to Jax.

If we get this point, we win.

I'm by the net with Jeremy defending me. He's basically standing in front of me, blocking me as an option.

Jax passes to Kiran who sends it back to Jax with a nod. He avoids his defenders, keeping the ball to himself.

I'm startled when Kiran comes behind me, picking me up. Jax tosses me the ball and I slam it through the net, dunking on Jeremy.

I give a whoop and slide down Kiran's body, giving him a winning kiss. Jax comes up on my other side and I give him one as well.

I turn to face the other guys who are fighting their own smiles. I don't think they mind losing this way, even when they got competitive with the guys.

“Good game!” I say, showing them my best winning smile.

Jay lifts me up on his shoulder, like I’m MVP. “Next time, I call Aly.”

“We have a lot of next times in our future to switch up the teams,” I say sweetly as he sets me down.

I plan to have a lot of fun with my guys in our future.

Jeremy leans forward with a wink to whisper in my ear, “you’ll pay for that later.”

Nic steps forward and kisses my cheek when a letter appears in front of him. It drifts down into his hand, like magic.

He unfolds it and shows me as he reads it. It’s a message from the elders.

“It’s time, we have an hour to get ready.” Nic squeezes me tight.

We all share looks of sorrow, not ready to face the real world. It was fun to enjoy ourselves for a little.

I squeeze hands or give hugs then we all gather ourselves and our strength and head inside to get ready. It’s time to face the hunters.

Twenty Three

Jay



We've been summoned by our elders, it's time to face the hunters. We were able to get a message to them about the conversation we had with Aly's parents. If they say it's the key information to turn the tide in our favor, then we need to listen. I can tell the elders were reluctant to accept help from hunters but it's the best chance we have.

We have been spending all the time together that we can, nervous for how today is going to go. Basketball earlier was the most fun we've had while we wait.

We're gathered outside the facility. There are mages surrounding it, prepared to cast their spells. Behind them are fighters from all the races except for dark fae. They are mysteriously absent. I can't say I'm surprised based on the way Joka reacted.

I'm nervous as hell. I never imagined I would walk willingly into a hunter facility and here I am doing it for the second time. All to keep my mate safe.

I would do anything in this world to keep Aly safe. Hopefully by the time we leave here, we are all safer.

Our parents came again and while I would rather not see them at risk, I know they're doing it out of love. I respect that. It's clear how much they care about us and Aly by extension.

I know the mages are communicating in some way as we make our way to the entrance. They all start chanting a spell to freeze the hunters inside. I know it's not ideal to start a friendly conversation with what could be seen as an attack, but we didn't think they would listen to us on their own. They're more likely to fight first, ask questions later. We need them to hear us out if we want this to work. And we really want this to work.

The mages can only hold their spell for so long and once it's done, we will be like sitting ducks here. We have the means to fight but it's not what anyone wants.

The mage elder, Monit, gives the signal, and we all go inside.

Every single hunter is frozen in place, staring daggers at us as we make our way inside. We need to make this quick.

Eve, the shifter elder takes over. "We come in peace, please hear us out. Our races have been served a great injustice as we have all been lied to. It has come to our attention that our species are meant to inter-mate as the fates have planned it."

I'm prepared for shocked gasps or cries of outrage but I forgot they're all frozen and unable to react.

“Hunters have fated mates, and they are within the other supernatural communities. We have been convinced of this truth and come to you with the knowledge in hopes that we can find peace moving forward as a unit. A fated mate is something to be loved and cherished,” Eve continues, “this four thousand year old book proves that once upon a time, this was the norm. This copy was protected from a mass spell that took the information from us.”

I can see the hunters struggling against the spell. It's only a matter of time until they break free.

Aly told Eve what her parents said, the way to make hunters believe this. It's time to use it.

An older looking hunter in a black robe breaks free enough to talk. “Lies! This is all lies, and we will not fall into your trap. As soon as we are free, you will be dead!”

“An elder,” Aly whispers.

That's not a good sign. The elder sounds crazed as she rants on about the unity and sanctity of the hunter race. It's not a good look.

The hunters around the room can move their eyes and many of them are staring at her in confusion. Have they never seen this side of their elder?

Before I can stop her, Aly steps forward and puts herself out there for everyone.

“It’s true. I am proof. I’m a hunter, my parents are both hunters and I have found my fated mates among the other races.” Her voice is strong and confident but I can feel how nervous she is down the bond.

Like that was our cue, the five of us move forward and surround her the best we can. The hunters are now staring at Aly and most of them are not friendly.

“You!” The same elder shouts. “You are a disgrace that has been sentenced for death. They will not believe you. You’ve come back to be killed.”

“I am only trying to help everyone know the truth. Who wouldn’t want to find their soul mate or mates? This is a chance for peace and happiness among the races. Give it a chance!” Aly shouts.

“Never! The hunter race is too good for worthless mates who make us weak! We. Are. Never. Going. Back.” She shouts.

Jackpot.

“Back? You, You did this? You erased this information from the world?!” Aly shouts.

Another elder gets free enough to shout, “shut up Athina! She has clearly lost her mind and will need to be helped by her people. Do not listen to her now in her old age.”

Even I can tell she’s grasping at straws but the damage has been done. Hunters are looking around trying to gauge what others are thinking.

“If they did this, they would need the help of magic users,” Aly whispers to us.

“But how? Why would a mage help them with this?” Nic whispers back.

“They’re being forced. My mom said they have mages on staff, I don’t think it’s by choice.” Aly sounds horrified.

A hunter breaks free and steals our focus as she asks, “wouldn’t some of us have felt the mating tug like this one did if this is true? We would know!”

She doesn’t sound sure, more like she’s asking for an explanation while still holding onto her beliefs. Time to drop the information we got from Aly’s parents.

“Hunters don’t feel the pull until their gene is triggered and once you are mated you won’t feel the pull of a fated bond. That’s why it’s not felt with hunters fighting supernaturals. You don’t trigger your gene and start fighting until after you mate with a chosen bond. What you don’t realize is the hunter mating ceremony closes your bond so you won’t feel any more tugs. It’s been orchestrated to stop this without you even knowing,” Aly explains, voice strong and loud.

Every hunter in this room is thinking about their own mating ceremonies, I guarantee it. It’s the same reaction Aly’s parents had when we discussed it. They’ve been played and now they know it.

Aly leans over to Eve and whispers something. Eve nods before talking to someone next to her.

“What was that?” I whisper.

Aly responds, “a hunch.”

I don't have a chance to follow up because the crowd starts breaking free and getting restless. They're not sure who the enemy is, but they're ready to fight one.

“Attack! What are you doing standing around?!” A different elder screams to the crowd.

We all tense, ready for battle but it never comes.

Someone stands on a table and gains everyone's attention. “No! It all makes sense. The strict rules for our children, the mating ceremonies, why we can't trigger our gene until after we are mated! You've been hiding our fated mates from us, and we won't stand for it.”

The crowd cheers, encouraging the person and it's clear they all agree. I can feel Aly's relief down our bond. This is it, this is safety and freedom and our future.

The problem is, Elders don't become elders for no reason. They're strong.

One elder uses a blast of energy to attack the surrounding people. Another must use their mind manipulation to cause the adjacent hunters to fight. It turns into chaos as the elders cause it.

“We have worked too hard for this! You will not have mates! The fated mates of a hunter can kill them and that is a weakness we will not allow!” One screams before cutting a mage down near them.

I tense, afraid this is going to shift their opinions but apparently they want mates bad enough not to care. They keep fighting against their elders, the other supernaturals in the room pitching in to help subdue them.

It’s looking good for us. We were pretty damn nervous to come here and put ourselves and our mate at risk. I was afraid of what I would have to do to keep us all alive. I would do anything to protect Aly.

Twenty Four

Aly



“This is enough! We will not stand for this!” One of the hunter elders screams before launching a spear towards us.

It’s flying straight for my face, I only have enough time to throw my hands up and close my eyes. But the pain never comes.

I look up to see my view blocked by someone’s back. What is happening? I don’t understand what’s going on until Jay drops to the ground before me.

The spear is sticking out of his stomach from a bleeding wound. He’s pressing his hand against it but I can see he’s losing blood fast. He looks ghostly pale already.

“Jay!”

I drop to my knees and add pressure around his wound. Should I pull the spear out? Or am I supposed to leave it in to stop the bleeding? Why can’t I remember!

He let’s out a pained groan and stares at me. His eyes are screaming in pain and I don’t know what to do.

We are completely surrounded by hunters and I know they don't have the power to heal.

Nic! Or Jeremy! They can heal him. Where are they?

I look up to see they're being held back by more elders. Kiran, Jax, Nic and Jer are. They're using them as hostages against our army and the angry hunters.

I need them safe and I need them here now. I gather all my power and demand they get released.

For the first time, I can feel my mind manipulation power working as it slithers over to the elders and into their minds. I push more and more power into it, until I'm empty as I demand over and over that they release my mates.

Unbelievably, it works. The elders slacken their grip for a moment and it's all my guys need to escape. Instead of fighting their captors, they push away and head towards us, leaving them to be dealt with by the surrounding mob.

I focus back on Jay and he looks terrible. Blood is dribbling out of his mouth and I can feel our mate bond weakening. Instead of the strong cord that normally connects us, it's more of a thread.

"Stay with me Jay, they're coming. Nic is going to heal you as soon as he gets here so you need to hold on."

"Aly..." His voice comes through wet and strained. "I love... you."

He thinks he's dying. Hell, he is dying, but he won't die. He can't die. If I lose him, if I lose any of my mates I won't

make it. I don't know how to survive without them anymore. They are my world, my everything.

“No. You fight Jay. Fight for me, I won't survive this world without you so don't make me try.” My voice is demanding but I'm not sure I'm making sense to him anymore.

He starts coughing as much as he can, little drops of blood flying as his breathing starts stuttering out.

Our mate bond is flickering and I feel like my soul is leaving my body.

Nic slides in on the other side of Jay and places his hands on his chest. I know he is pumping healing magic into Jay but I don't know if it'll be enough.

“It has to be enough. It has to be,” I whisper chant to the universe.

I set my hand on Nic's arm and start pumping any magic I have left into him but I'm on empty myself.

“You are not dying today Jay!” Nic shouts.

Jeremy finally joins us, with Kiran and Jax. He immediately starts giving Jay his blood but I don't think Jay can swallow.

“Press your blood into his wound!” Jax shouts.

I don't think any of us are thinking clearly with Jay laying on the floor dying between us because we haven't pulled the damn spear out yet.

The healing is finally working because Jay doesn't look as pale.

I look up to Jax. "Should we pull the spear out or is it too soon?"

Ajax is examining everything, takes it all in, then says, "take it out."

Kiran leaps into action immediately. He slowly and carefully pulls the spear out before tossing it behind him.

I vaguely notice that the elders have been subdued and the supernatural elders have taken control. They're talking to everyone. All I care about right now is Jay.

"Keep talking to him Aly," Jeremy demands as he presses on Jay's stomach.

I lean close so he can hear me. "Jay, you listen to me. You aren't going anywhere. We are at the end. This is our happily ever after and you can't miss it. There will be no happiness without you in my life. You're my sunshine, always making me laugh, cheering me up and keeping things light when we need to. Who will help Kiran make things fun around here if you're gone?"

His color is slowly improving and my heart almost jumps out of my chest when he finally opens his eyes.

"Thank fuck!" I shout.

Pressing my forehead to his, I just breath in the fact that he's alive. I can feel out mating bond slowly building back up, and he comes back from the brink of death.

My surroundings start to come back slowly. The room is talking about the future. Weapons are down and there's no more fighting. The hunter elders are subdued in the corner.

My mate is going to live.

Thank you universe.

Nic leans back like he's finished treating Jay and Jeremy pulls his hands back. I search his stomach for any signs of the fatal wound but it's all smooth skin. There's blood everywhere but he is healed.

There's a puddle of blood and it's coating all of us. I want to go home and get it washed off me. I'm not sure I'll be able to relax while I'm covered in my mate's blood.

Eve the shifter elder makes her way over to us after Jay finally sits up. I refuse to move from right next to him as I grip his arm like if I let go, I might lose him.

"You did wonderful," she praises us before turning her attention to Jay, "I'm so happy you are okay."

I can tell he's still feeling weak, so I respond for him, "thank you."

"We can handle the rest here if you would like to get home. I'm sure you would like to enjoy feeling safe again surrounded by your mates. I did want to tell you that Aly was right. They had mages in the basement being held captive. We are helping them recover now," she says.

"Thank you for telling us. We would appreciate getting to go home," Nic says, standing up.

Nic, I don't have any magic left. I confess through our bond.

I can't transport us back without magic.

I've drained my blood magic on Jay. Jeremy adds before Nic can ask.

I can't share my energy back because I'm drained too. We will see if my dad can transport us and if not there's probably a mage here who can. I'll handle it. Nic says.

It's probably not fair to let Nic handle everything when he's as drained as me but I see Kiran and Jax go with him, so I let it go. I'll have to thank him profusely later for always taking care of things.

There's no chance I'm leaving Jay's side so Jeremy stands up and keeps watch over us. I know we are both feeling exposed here on the ground but Jeremy won't let anything happen.

The guys come back with Nic's dad, Jonah, in tow. He looks tired but not as exhausted as us, so hopefully he can transport us home.

"Let's get you out of here," Jonah steps forward and I feel the signs of being transported.

I have to close my eyes to avoid feeling sick, I'm weak without my magic. I'll need to spend days surrounded by my mates to recover.

When I feel grass under me, I open my eyes to see our house on campus.

“I’m going right back. I will see you all soon.” He disappears, leaving us behind.

Nic comes and lifts me up. My protest dies on my lips when he glares at me for trying. Even if he’s exhausted, he still wants to take care of me.

Kiran and Jax help Jay and we all head inside.

Bailey jumps on us the minute we get in the door. Licking and sniffing us all.

Anna collapses onto the couch in relief. “You’re back and you’re okay! You are all okay right? I was so worried because Bailey was going crazy. He did listen to you, though, and stayed to protect me.”

I try to reach for Bailey to give him thanks but Nic doesn’t budge. Jeremy helps me by giving him some scratches behind his ears.

“We are okay, we have a lot to tell you but for now we need showers, sleep and time to recover. Glad you’re safe Anna.” Nic heads right to the stairs, and we do just that.

Twenty Five

Aly



One month later

People are finding their mates and it feels like a miracle in our world. The mages who were forced to keep the spell in place reversed it once they were healed. They're being taken care of by the supernatural community, but I imagine they are going to need years to heal the damage and mental strain they were forced into.

Since the spell has been reversed, more than just hunter pairings are finding their mates. It seems like it had an unintended side effect of blocking more than just hunter matings. Since hunters have been finding their mates right and left, they fully believe in us now. They revolted against the elders who were still alive, imprisoning them. The idea that some of them had mates who were killed or that they may have even killed them themselves, didn't sit well. Imagine that.

It's a beautiful thing seeing all the fated mates who are finding each other, but it's not all perfect. Some people are still holding onto race superiority and the idea that they shouldn't mix, but who cares what they think.

Best of all, we aren't in danger from the hunters anymore and the guys' fear about what their own communities would say is gone. Of course, Ryan is still hanging over our heads but the elder council has promised to deal with him swiftly. Anna has been able to control the sire bond with her amulet, so for now, we are taking it as a win. I'm hoping his vendetta is gone now that the elders have been taken care of, they are technically responsible for his loss after all.

My parents are still staying under the radar, but we are planning a visit next month, so I have high hopes for our relationship going forward. Better than that, the guys are all coming around to them and overcoming the hate in their hearts for the trauma we went through. It's all been very healing.

I'm still worried about Anna and how she's doing. She's putting on a brave face and seems under control but I can't help worrying about how often she's gone. I think she is coming to terms with being a vampire and what that means, I just hope she knows she can always come to me for anything.

Anna should be able to finish out the year strong and graduate in the spring. The guys and I have enrolled for next year to make up for all the time we missed. I'm excited to have a normal year with them, where we can enjoy college and our relationship. I can go back to worrying about small things

like ex boyfriends and mean girls instead of my mates or I dying. It should feel like a breeze.

Right now, I'm sitting in our living room staring at my best friend and trying to make her see reason.

"Anna, stay here with us. You just need to finish the semester and you're done. It's almost over!" I say.

Anna looks at me like I'm dense, I don't appreciate it. "Aly, I love you but I want my own space. I feel like I'm intruding on you and your mates!"

It's stupid, she's not. I know there is more to it but I've already tried to convince her. She wants to be on her own and who am I to stop her.

"You'll still come over all the time, right? This will be our first time living apart since freshman year." My voice comes out sad even though I'm trying to be strong.

"Of course! We will watch Big House together every week and it'll be great. And you can enjoy being with your mates as you start your happily ever after!"

I lean forward and hug her, it feels like goodbye, but she's only moving across campus.

"You're my best friend," I whisper.

She squeezes me tighter. "And you're mine. Forever."

"And ever!" I add.

"You girls are being dramatic," Nic can't help but call us out.

I can feel the amusement of all my guys as they come in the room. They gave us the illusion of privacy but I'm sure they heard every word.

I roll my eyes and ignore him, that doesn't even deserve a response.

Jay has Anna's bag in his hand which he sets by the door before coming over and hugging Anna. They all pile on, making her promise to call them if she needs something. I know they're protective of her and it's sweet.

After she's done with them, Anna comes over one last time and gives me another hug before heading out the door to her new place. There wasn't really anything to move since she only had a bag and her coffee machine here, so we made sure the place was fully furnished. Still, it's weird to see my stylish best friend leaving with only one bag of clothes. I'm sure she'll have it all replaced soon.

Bailey is whining at the door after Anna.

"It's okay pup, she'll come back to visit you soon," I say, giving him a pat on the head.

Kiran comes over and snuggles me, wrapping himself around me from behind. "She's just moving down the street."

"I know, but it feels like she's separating herself from me. And I'm not completely convinced she's okay after everything. I want to be there for her," I say.

Nic steps in front of me and brushes hair back from my face. "I know, and she's probably not fine but if this is what

she needs to get better then we have to respect that. We will still check in on her all the time, I promise.”

I nod, and he leans in to give me a sweet kiss. I’m completely surrounded by my guys and everyone is safe, I need to enjoy how far we’ve come and embrace the future we have ahead of us.

“Now, let’s talk about something fun. What should we do this summer before we have to go back to school?” Jay asks with a big goofy smile on his face.

All eyes turn to me and I can’t contain my smile. I have five devoted mates who want to make me happy. We all came out of this alive and together, I’m incredibly lucky.

“We should travel. Think of all the cool places we can go with my power,” I say, watching them all for a reaction.

“I love it!” Jax is the first to say. I’m sure he’s planning out logistics in his head as we speak.

“Can we go somewhere tropical, like the Bahamas? I want to see Aly in a bikini,” Kiran says, squeezing me tighter against him.

I’m surrounded by enthusiastic nodding as eyes caress my body. I’m sure they’re all imagining it and I don’t mind one bit.

“Of course, and Paris. I want to go somewhere romantic!” I add.

My guys press in tighter around me.

“Anywhere we are all together will be romantic,” Jeremy whispers and my panties melt.

Damn is that boy smooth.

Jeremy leans in to kiss me, devouring my mouth and proving his words right.

“We have the place to ourselves,” Kiran whispers, brushing his lips against my ear before nibbling on my neck.

“We should take advantage,” Nic confirms.

He brings a hand down to my thigh, slowly sliding it up under my skirt and brushing his fingers against my panties.

Someone else’s hands brush my shirt over my chest before grabbing handfuls of my breasts.

Suddenly, I’m pushed down onto the couch, all my guys surrounding me.

Hands are plucking at my nipples, gripping my thighs and running circles around my clit. It’s maddening and not enough. I reach out and grab the first bulge I find, wishing there weren’t clothes between us.

“Strip,” I beg.

Lips land on my neck as they slowly unbutton their pants around me. I’m dying at the slow strip show I’m receiving until finally I get what I want.

I reach out and put the first cock I find in my mouth.

“Fuck,” Kiran groans.

I use my hands to grab two more, wanting them all so badly.

I pull my mouth off Kiran and move to Jax, wanting him just as bad.

Nic kneels in front of me, lining his mouth up before blowing softly. He licks me over my panties and I'm going to scream because I want his mouth directly on me.

I buck my hips a little, hoping he understands my message, so I don't have to take my mouth off of Ajax and beg.

"So impatient, you want more Princess?" Nic asks and I can feel his lips moving against me as he talks.

I send my desperation down the bond, and he laughs darkly at me.

My panties are ripped off my body and his tongue spears inside me. He doesn't take it slow, sucking and nibbling before adding one finger inside me. He moves his head side to side, licking me from top to bottom before leaning back and blowing.

I'm so close, I want to come so badly. He uses his other hand to spread my lips apart, getting deeper. He adds another finger before curling his hand and whispering, "come."

I detonate around him, loudly moaning around Ajax's cock in my mouth.

He pulls out cursing. "I want to come in your pussy Aly."

Fuck. His dirty talk is so damn sexy.

The guys strip the rest of their clothes as I'm moved to the floor and flipped onto my knees, staring up at my perfect mates.

Jax takes a step back letting Jay go first.

Jay slides under me, moving me, so I'm hovering over him. He lines up with my pussy, dragging his tip over my entrance before pushing inside.

He bounces me on top of him before pulling me to a stop. I try to fight him, wanting more movement, but he holds me still.

Jeremy kneels down in front of me, bringing his cock to my lips and demanding entry. I open wide for him and take as much as I can, breathing through my nose and swallowing around him.

I try to move again once Jeremy has found his rhythm fucking my mouth but Jay holds me still.

Someone presses against my back, licking and kissing down my spine before grabbing my ass with both hands.

"Fuck, you are so damn sexy," Kiran says, confirming he's the one behind me.

"Yes, she is," Jeremy says without stopping his movement.

"Jay, hold her open for me."

Jay takes over for Kiran without hesitation, grabbing both cheeks and spreading them.

I feel the cool spread of lube on my ass before Kiran starts to push into me. He goes slow, savoring every inch as he stretches me out for him.

I know he can feel himself pressing against Jay through my thin wall. Finally, I feel his hips meet my ass as he fits himself all the way inside me.

“Fuck,” Jay and Kiran groan at the same time.

Then, they start moving. Jay and Kiran pump into me, alternating their thrusts until I’m a whimpering mess between them.

I look over to my right and see Nic and Jax watching while griping themselves and it pushes me over the damn edge. The guys go crazy, pumping even harder before I feel them both start coming inside me.

I hum around Jer, setting him off as I make all three of them come in me.

They slow down their thrusts, enjoying the moment before pulling out of me.

Jax and Nic step up and start petting me softly, giving me a minute to recover. They maneuver me on my side, so I’m facing Ajax.

“Jax has already claimed your pussy, so I’ll take your ass,” Nic says, lining up behind me.

He pushes into me, before wrapping around me from behind. He kisses my neck and nibbles my ear while Jax kisses

my lips. His tongue dances with mine while I feel him line up and push into me.

It's a tighter fit from this angle, especially considering Jax's size. I feel completely surrounded by them as they work my body between them.

My body is pushed to the edge when Jax sneaks a hand between us and plays with my clit. With Nic involved, my body is trained to need one thing before I can go over that edge.

"Please Nic," I beg, breaking away from Jax's lips.

"Do you want to come Aly?" Jax whispers, sharing a look with Nic.

They both pick up their pace, hitting every damn nerve inside me until I'm whimpering between them.

"Come."

I see stars as blinding pleasure overtakes me body. I think I may actually black out for a second while they both finish inside me.

I lay, blissed-out and surrounded by all my mates, amazed that this is my future.

A girl could get damn used to this.

Twenty Six

Anna



After the night at Fieldhouse

I sneak out of the house again, leaving Aly and her mates behind. They're sickeningly cute and while I'm so happy for her, I feel alone. I was dating Ryan before he attacked and turned me. I can't help but wonder if he was using me the whole time. Why go through that?

I'm worried Aly is suspicious of why I've been gone so much but I think she'll believe me when I tell her I was trying to hang out with old friends to connect with my old life. I hate lying to her but I can't tell her what's really going on.

Truth is, I feel pretty far from my old life. I'm a completely new person than I use to be.

I make my way back to Fieldhouse, the bar I always loved to party at.

No one taught me, but compulsion came easy. The first time was an accident but now I've been using the new skill to

my advantage. Honestly, I'm loving being powerful, it's everything else that sucks.

I walk right up to the bouncer and compel him to let me in. He opens the door immediately and the people still in line complain. I find a spot by the bar and scope out the room.

I'm looking for someone in particular and it's not hard to spot him. The guy who aggressively came onto me last night.

He's being a disgusting pig to another girl. I'm about to step in when the bouncer does, throwing him out of the bar.

I follow him outside and watch as he drunkenly starts walking away.

I wait until he goes around a corner, away from prying eyes.

"Hey there," I say, gaining his attention.

The playboy who harassed me turns around and gives me a slimy smirk. He looks me over like I'm his next meal, little does he know, he's mine.

I walk closer to him and run a finger down his chest. His smirk grows even slimier, he thinks he's about to get laid. How wrong he is.

I step up right next to him and lean in like I'm going to kiss him, before surging forward and biting into his neck.

* * *

Anna's story is coming next and book one in her series is up for [pre-order](#) now!

Want to talk about it? Join D.M. Page's brand new reader group on [Facebook](#)!

About the Author

Thank you for reading the Brickstone University series! The fact that you have read my book means so much to me. I'm a newer author and I hope you really enjoyed the book. If you enjoyed the story and want to hear more, consider writing a review! Reviews are essential to helping more people find books they will love and are the best encouragement for me to keep writing! I look forward to reading what you thought of my story!

Keep up to date with me by subscribing to my mailing list or following me on social media. I have also started a [Facebook](#) group you can join! Anna's story is coming next and book one in her series is up for pre-order now!

I am an indie author living in Colorado with my fiancé and my dog Bentley. She is my favorite writing companion but she loves to distract me when I'm in a groove. I have always loved to write and had stories rolling around in my head, so I recently decided to write some books and see where it takes me. Thanks for joining me on this adventure!

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Also by D.M. Page

Changed

Anna's story

[Pre-order](#) now!

Anna's life has been completely changed when her ex-boyfriend changed her into a vampire in an attempt to kill her best friend. Now she's trying to piece her life together and move on in a new reality. But her ex is still out there and needs to be brought to justice.

Enter the team of men assigned to do just that. Does a turned vampire have fated mates and could these guys be hers?

This is a medium burn, paranormal, reverse harem, meaning she doesn't have to choose and book one in the series. The story changes POVs between the main character and her men. The steaminess factor will go up as the series goes on and is intended for 17+. This book ends on a cliff hanger

D.M. Page



CAPTIVE

FORGOTTEN GODS
BOOK ONE

Captive (Forgotten Gods Reverse Harem Romance)

On [Amazon](#)

I was a normal girl, until one day I wasn't. The very same day, men stole me away and held me captive. They imprisoned me with four guys, all with powers of their own: Apollo, Ares, Hephaestus and Hermes. They keep me sane while we plot our escape. But will we make it out alive?

This is a medium burn, paranormal prison fantasy, reverse harem. The story changes POVs between the main character and her men. The steaminess factor will go up as the series goes on and is intended for 17+. This is a short novella for the first book, 30,000 words and ends on a cliffhanger