

Chapter 6

Garret

It was a Hell of a day. Dylan found his mate, I made basketball captain, and once again, my sister was the talk of the school. I'd been in the showers after gym class, minding my own, when I'd overheard the news.

"You think he likes her?" Jaden's voice echoed in the room.

"Nah. Not for real anyway. Everyone knows Jasper only likes girls for one thing." Erik replied.

"I don't know man. Samantha said he was getting pretty cozy with her."

"Cozy?"

"Yeah, he was smiling at her shit. She said he never smiles like that."

"Huh. Maybe their mates."

"Pfft!" Jaden laughed. "Jasper and Violet? No way! Everyone knows how the Purity Queen is. She'd reject him in a second! He's been with half the school!"

"Yeah, but half the school have been with other guys. Violets a virgin." There was silence for a minute. "A hot virgin. I'd do her."

"Same. Those tits..."

I'd ended my shower before they went any further. Their faces went pale as soon as they saw me, both muttering apologies. I got the Hell out of there after that. Now, sadly, I had nothing better to do than think as I drove home. Vie opted to go to Brianne's after school to get the details on her and Dylan. And Dylan himself went with them, unwilling to be away from his newfound mate. It was amazing, I thought, that only this morning he was heartbroken over my sister, and now he had eyes for nobody else but Brianne. Typical Dylan, always the drama king.

I frowned as I thought. Of course I was happy for Dylan, he was my best guy friend. But truthfully, I'd been hoping Vie was his mate. Goddess knows who the guy is that's her other half.

"Maybe their mates."

Eriks voice ran through my head again and my hands tightened on the steering wheel. Jasper couldn't be her mate, could he? I knew him, too well. He was a self-centered, selfish, egotistical asshole who didn't care about other people's feelings. Jasper Cole was the reason I, like my sister, was also waiting for my mate. Although I wasn't as 'pure' as she was. My heart clenched in my chest as the memories, never from far the front of my mind, came flooding in.

I'd had exactly one girlfriend my whole life. Sophia Chang. The love of my life, we met at the beginning of high school. She was so beautiful, with her long blond hair, kind brown eyes and a smile that lit up the whole room. When she talked, you just had to stop and listen. When she laughed, it was like a symphony of bells. Sophia was incredibly smart too. When I hadn't been doing so well in science, she was the one to step up and offer to tutor me. A couple of sessions at her house, and the sweetest first kiss under the apple tree in her backyard, and we were a couple.

I thought she was super sweet, not wanting to broadcast our relationship to the public. She'd told me she didn't want to be seen as the girl who was dating me only because of my future title. And I'd been happy to oblige her. It was a reasonable request, after all. We'd spent the next eight months going for walks in the forest, swimming in the lake, going to the beach, having precious intimate moments under the stars. Sophia wanted to wait for her mate, though I never doubted it was me. We were perfect for each other, perfectly connected on every level. Our love of books, our shared passion for art. And she was always there to support me, to lift me up in my moments of doubt about my future. She made me believe I could become the Alpha my dad wanted me to be.

And then, like waking up from a nightmare disguised as a dream, everything was gone. In the span of one night, one party, my life and my heart, were shattered.

I turned the car carefully around the corner, lost in the wave of memories.

The music blaring. The lights dimmed. Classmates and friends laughing and drinking and having fun. Somewhere in the chaos, I'd lost Sophia. It had been a while, hadn't it? Excusing myself from our friends, I'd gone to look for her. Room after room I searched. Checked all the bathrooms. I even checked outside. The one

place I hadn't thought I'd find her though, was in the farthest room of the house. In bed. Naked.

With Jasper Cole.

I clutched the steering wheel tighter still as my heart shattered all over again. Tears brimmed my eyes and I fought to keep them back; The last thing I needed was to hit a tree or something. But the sounds playing in my head, the sounds my Sophia was making under another man... it might as well have been happening beside me, it was so clear. She was getting pleasure from someone else. She was giving herself to someone who wasn't me. She was betraying everything we had. And she was enjoying it.

Her face played in my mind the second she realized I'd entered the room. Shock, embarrassment, sadness. I'd been frozen in place as she pushed Jasper off, stuttering over her words trying to give me excuse after excuse for this tragedy. Finally, she'd simply lowered her head, tears streaming down her face, and whispered "I'm sorry." Those words brought me to the reality of the situation. Jasper had left already, which was for the best. In those two minutes standing like a statue, I'd come up with approximately a hundred different ways to murder him.

"It's over."

I'd choked those words out, my heart impossibly breaking more, and ran. Sophia followed, or tried to. I was out of the house and in my car probably before she was dressed again. I'd sped home, running lights and stop signs. And immediately went to my sister's room. One look at my face, and Violet had understood. That night we curled up in her bed, huddled together, just like when we were kids. If one of us had a bad dream, we would simply crawl in with the other, comforted by our twin's presence. Mom and Dad use to give us shit, after a certain age, but they didn't understand. I had a familial connection with Violet that exceeded even Dad's connection with Aunt Thara. Violet had been with me since conception, she understood me better than anyone. We shared a womb, then a crib, then a room before we got our own. But the knowledge that she was always there if I needed her, just a couple doors down, made it easier.

I'd told her everything. Between breaking down multiple times, I'd managed to sob out the whole story. Everything except who Sophia cheated on me with; At the time, I couldn't bear to say his name. I thought I'd lose whatever control I had left. Vie had listened, soothing me, reassuring me. Letting me cry my heart out. I spent the week

sleeping on Vies floor, waking her up more often than needed with my tears. And each time, she would sit beside me, and listen, get me water if I needed it, or simply rub my back as I sobbed.

Only once did she ask who the other guy was, but I never told her. Now I wish I had. As I pulled into the pack house, and parked beside my mom's green mustang, I thought maybe I should. It had been almost a year since my break-up with Sophia; I avoided her like the plague at school. But I couldn't stand it if my sister's mate turned out to be Jasper. If Violet knew it was him, she would reject him on sight.

In the back of my mind, a little voice was calling me selfish. I paused with my hand on the door. No, this was different. Jasper was the reason for my despair.

But is he even her mate?

I groaned. My conscience just wouldn't shut up. Irritated, I opened the door, slamming it shut behind me. Swinging the keys around my finger as I walked, I tried to really think it through. Was it worth starting up so much drama right now?

"Hello Garrett."

Looking up, I met Gamma Luke's eyes. I considered him my uncle, along with Ben, even though we weren't related by blood. His mate, Miguel, was standing beside him, smiling politely at me. I nodded at them.

"Hey. What are you doing here?"

"Had some business to go through with you Dad." He held up a stack of papers. "I'm telling you Garrett, I can't wait until you take over. I can finally retire." He sighed happily.

Beside him, Miguel laughed. "And what will you do in retirement? Admit it, you would be bored to death."

"You know me too well." Luke grumbled. I laughed with Miguel.

"Maybe I'll keep you on as my assistant or something. And give you plenty of paperwork to do." I joked.

"Ugh! No, I'd rather be bored to death, thanks."

"I'll keep the offer open, in case you changed your mind." I slapped his shoulder as I passed.

"Oh, your dad is looking for you. He's in his office." Luke called after me.

"Thanks."

Starting up the stairs, and wondering for the billionth time why Dad didn't put in an elevator, I tried to clear my mind of my own problems. It wasn't easy, reliving my worst memories only minutes ago. Mom and Dad still knew nothing about my relationship with Sophia, or how it ended. Not that I didn't trust them, but my humiliation wasn't something I wanted everyone to know. Violet, I knew, would never tell anyone. And, there was something about my parents, the Alpha and Luna no less, knowing I'd been played for a fool that left my guts twisting in knots. As future Alpha, I should have known better.

Reaching our floor, I admired the art on the walls as always as I walked to my Dad's office. Over the years, I'd helped him acquire new pieces from various artists that were now scattered around the packhouse. My particular favorite was an abstract piece hanging in the foyer, of bright yellows, blues, and reds smeared across the canvas in utter pandemonium. There was no rhyme or reason to the streaks of color, leaving one's imagination open to run free.

I knocked on the door, three quick raps.

"Come in."

I pushed open the door and met my dad's-tired eyes. His short black hair was messy, probably from him running his hands through it.

"Hey Dad."

"Garrett. Come sit." He gestured to one of the vacant chairs. I sat casually, setting my backpack down beside me.

"Luke said you wanted to see me?"

Dad leaned back in his chair, resting his hands on his desk.

"Yes. I wanted to talk to you about your birthday coming up."

"Alright."

He met my eyes. "You'll be eighteen."

"No shit? You remember how old I am?" I feigned surprise. The corner of his mouth twitched in a smile.

"Don't be a smartass."

I chuckled in response. "Go on."

"With your birthday so close, I think it's time we talk about mates. Your future mate, specifically."