

Chapter 0055

Skylar

Choruses of 'Sky,' 'Skylar,' and my various nicknames are being shouted behind me, but they don't follow. I don't know if they are respecting what I want or if Sierra is keeping them back, but I just need to walk away and cool off. I walk into my back door and through the kitchen straight to my room. I glance at the clock as I go to the bathroom. It's after midnight, so at least the fight happened after my birthday, technically. I flip on the light and notice I look ridiculous in the mirror. All my make-up is gone, but streaks of black remain under my eyes from my crying fit earlier, my ponytail is loose and drooping to one side as the ends are still wrapped around my neck like a noose. My shirt and jeans are a darker color and plastered to my body and dripping from the pool. I quickly take everything off, dump my clothes in a pile to deal with later, my new jewelry is in a pile on the counter and jump into the shower, feeling really cold all of a sudden. I let the water get as hot as possible and once I have scrubbed my body until all of the skin is bright red I just let the steam enter my lungs and soothe my muscles and I cry.

I just let out everything I have left. I will lose them, just like I knew I would. They will hate me for being weak and letting all of this go on for so long. For lying to them about the whole situation and then yelling at them. I haven't been able to find a way to make the bullying stop and any one who has tried to help by going through the right channels, to the 'right' people have been removed from the school. Either they transferred or they were suspended and not seen or heard from for weeks and when they come back, they are a completely different person treating me like the problem. It hurts and it sucks, it's why I stopped trying to befriend people in the first place. But the only place I allow myself to feel the pity is here in the shower. No one will ever know that they got to me, but I'm not sure how much more I can take and all alone again. That hurts the most. It only took months, months for those guys to get close to me. To break down my emotional walls, the connections wrapping a tight web around my heart and tangle to a point where it might kill me to remove it. I have to let them go though. I do not want to tell this story and it will drive its wedge, secrets always do, and they will walk away from me like every other person who has tried to help. And, I won't make Sierra choose. She is just as close to them as I am. It is easier for me to walk away, I have been doing it forever. I am just one

person, easily replaced.

I climb out of the, now cold, stream of water, towel off and head to my room to find something to sleep in. Once I lay in bed, I just stare at the ceiling for hours. I can't sleep going over the whole fight in my head. How mad at me they all were, the look of disgust at the marks on me, the imperfections. I'm just a weak little girl to them, damaged and broken. I can't even take care of a simple bully or, I guess, bullies. I never know who it is who grabs me, but it is decidedly male. Their scent is masked somehow, even my wolf can't find it if I bring her forward. I am positive about who instigates it, but I can't prove anything, which is one of the main reasons I never go to anyone. It's just my gut feeling and I can usually place it with something she has said earlier in the day, or the previous day. She makes threats all the time, but nothing that would be considered more than teenage girl empty words trying to sound tough. She never trains, meaning most people probably think she's weak, which in a one-on-one fight, I probably could kill her in a matter of seconds. But, I have no obvious reason to challenge her. I have even gone as far as sneaking in and looking at the camera footage at school to try and find me getting pulled into a closet and leaving bloody and bruised or her and I interacting at all. But she is so good the footage with

the attacks on me are never there. They are either being erased or she is just that good at covering her tracks and knowing where the cameras are placed. The only time Kaley let herself be known was when she put the silver powder in the wounds from the whip. She wanted me to know it was her that time.

FLASHBACK Last spring, right before the summer break.

I had been grabbed and pulled into a janitor's closet, as usual. But, instead of getting smacked or punched, my hands and feet were bound with rope, a gag was wrapped around my mouth and something shoved over my head. I truly thought I was going to die, this was going to be the last memory I had. After my head was covered, we just stood there, I had no idea why. I tried to struggle, but that earned me a punch to the side of the head. We kept standing there until I heard it. The faint sound of the bell. They had timed this so I would miss the last class of the day and since I didn't talk to anyone, no one would miss me, including the teacher. They waited another few minutes after the shuffle of feet had died down, my head hurt and keeping track was hard, then I was shoved forward and heard the sound of the door open. A large, painful hand was on each upper arm dragging me forward. The black cloth didn't let any


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light in and I didn't think to try and keep track of which turns we were making as we went. Something I made note of later, beat myself up for, and prompted me to really start working on individual senses and tracking. I have never been, nor will ever be, captured like that again.

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