

11 | You're Bipolar

All through the night, there were strange sounds outside my door. Footsteps would open pace back and forth in the hallway, accompanied by canine sounds. Sometimes low and inconsistent growling, sometimes indistinct snarls, and other times quiet whimpering.

One time there was scratching on the walls. It was in short and frenzied strokes, no doubt tearing all the way into the insulation.

On multiple occasions the doorknob would jiggle, like something was holding it from the other side. But it never did open. The pressure would let up a mere minute or so. Then all of the sounds would leave until they returned a couple of hours later in a different, unprecedented pattern.

I wake up for about the fourth time, this time to morning sunlight illuminating the curtains from behind.

My stomach voices its dissatisfaction with a long, drawn out gurgle. The empty feeling in it is torturous.

Either it's my cruel imagination hoping to taunt me, or I smell food cooking. The sweet aroma of French toast in particular.

As if on cue, the doorknob twists and swings open, making me jump out of my skin. Riot strides straight towards me, making my heart thump out of control.

He looks miserable. Disheveled reddish brown hair, dark semicircles tainting the skin beneath his eyes. His broad shoulders, usually held high, are slouching and his mouth is pressed into a thin, emotionless line.

Avoiding my eyes with his own, he holds out a large open palm to me. "Hands."

With the razor blades at the ends of his fingers, he cuts the ropes. The red, irritated, burning skin hurts and looks just as bad as last time, if not worse.

"Food's downstairs if you want it," He says before exiting the room, this time leaving the door open behind him.

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Mate.

That's a funny concept.

I've heard so many stories of what a mate is suppose to be. How everything is suppose to be perfect and taken straight from a story book.

Maybe I'm just being skeptical-- hell, that's exactly what I am, but this is far from what everyone promised. One moment he acts like he cares, cleaning my wounds so gently, and then the next I'm being tied up like a dog.

Nonetheless, I couldn't pass up the offer of food. I lingered a bit in the room before going a mere inch. When I stepped out of the room, the hallway was found in a mess. There were places on the carpet that were shredded to threads. Long claw marks were carved messily into the wall, fluffy pink material leaking out. A chill went down my spine at the sight before turning away.

My nose acted as a guide as I made my way down the stairs following the sweet aromas. It lead me to the kitchen, golden sunlight spilling in through the sliding glass door and the window above the sink.

I walk in just as Riot is sitting a plate filled with food on a wooden framed glass table. He barely glances at me before leaving the room.

What the hell is wrong with this guy?

Hurting to voice my annoyance, I ignore the strange behavior and sit down in front of the plate, not hesitating to start eating. My eyes widen at the burst of flavor.

I don't bother taking my attention from the syrupy goodness, not even when hearing him re-enter the room. I sense his presence move to the opposite end of the table, sitting down across from me.

The only sound besides the silence is my fork occasionally tinging against the plate. When I get ready to cut another bite, I feel him staring at my hands.

"They'll heal," I reassure him. Once I speak he finally gives me the eye contact my wolf has long been demanding.

He nods his head, his eyes refusing to leave mine. In that instance he looks somewhat vulnerable, like a child after they were caught doing something they shouldn't be. It makes me want to leap across the table and hug him, telling him over and over again that I'll be alright.

Eventually I look away and down at my food, but feel too uncomfortable to eat now.

I don't know what the future holds, whether I'm expected to live here with him or not. Or am I just his hostage? Maybe he planned to use me for ransom. That would make sense as to why he cared so much about what I meant to Nathan: the closer we are, the bigger the reward.

But yet again, that same controversial word comes to mind.

Mate.

There's no doubt about it. Riot and I are mates. Will he accept that though? So far, he's doing a shit poor job at it.

"Why won't you tell me your name?"

I look up again to study him. There's a sort of desperation on his expression, emphasized by the dark circles on either side of the bridge of his nose.

He couldn't have gotten much sleep last night. Judging by the restless sounds that were outside my door and the condition of the hall, he went through a torture beyond imaginable.

I lay my fork down. "The same reason you don't reward a dog with a treat for a trick he hasn't done."

If he wants to tie me up like an animal, then two can play at that game.

The familiar rumbling starts in his chest again and his fingers turn white as they grip the edge of the table.

"You're weird," he mumbles whilst studying me suspiciously at an angle.

He's calling me weird? The one who went out of his way to invade my pack and drag me away to an unfamiliar forest is acting as if I'm the pest?

"You're bipolar," I retort, leaning back in my chair and crossing my arms to watch him with the same skeptical gaze he's sending my way.

Seconds turn into minutes, and minutes into hours as we sit there in an unspoken staring context. The longer he stares at me the louder my heartbeat sounds in my ears. The longer I stare at him the more I want to feel the touch of his skin on mine.

He starts to squirm slightly in his chair, in visible discomfort.

He breaks first.

A grin cracks my lips when he pushes his chair back harshly as he stands up, growling to himself. My head turns with him as he walks over to the glass door leading to the outside.

"Come on." He slides it open and steps outside, stopping and looking back to make sure I'm coming.

Slowly, I rise to my feet, following him out the door and sliding it closed behind me. "Where are we going?" I question, on high alert once again.

He begins walking straight into the woods, which isn't surprising since the cabin is in the middle of a forest.

"I need to let my wolf out and if I leave you alone you'd run away." He doesn't pay attention to me as he answers, looking straight ahead as if I'm not even there.

He needs to let his wolf out? That must have been what all the commotion was last night. His wolf is restless and by fighting it he's only tormenting himself.

"Riot," I say. He falters on one step but quickly covers it up, like he almost stopped in his tracks but didn't. He looks over at me as if to ask a silent 'what?'

"Oh nothing," I continue nonchalantly, facing forward apathetically, "I was just seeing how it felt to say my mate's name. How does it feel, Riot?"

It occurs to me that that's the first time I've openly acknowledged the mate bond between us. It's not like it's a secret because he has to feel it too, but still, something about it feels reserved. Maybe it's because he ignores all of the mutual sensations that I know he feels. Or maybe it's because I'm just a hostage he's waiting for the right chance to get rid of.

I glance over at him out of the corner of my eye. He comes to a dead stop, a clawed hand swinging up to stick into a nearby tree. His form is shaking almost violently. His beautiful copper eyes have darkened tenfold, all the way back to the obsidian color I've grown used to.

"Tell me. Your name." He orders with a clipped tone, his voice distorted in a snarl.

I pause for a minute, thinking carefully. He's always had a sort of baleful aura about him. But this, this is on a new level. A level that could— would— be potentially life threatening.

"No."

He suddenly doubles over in a fashion that I've seen way too much. He's losing control, and it's only a matter of seconds before his body morphs into that of a wolf's— a seething one at that.

I don't stick around to witness the shifting. My feet are pounding against the ground in the opposite direction as soon as my brain processes what's happening— and registers the fact that I caused it.

A wolf is easily faster than a human. A human sprinting at full speed still wouldn't stand a chance against a wolf just jogging. Four legs are better than two, I guess. With that in mind, I shift into my own wolf without even slowing down.

The wind blows through my cream colored fur, blessing every hair with a cool caress. My paws thud against the ground rhythmically, the crisp air circulating through my lungs.

This is what freedom feels like.

Excluding the fact that a seething, irate beast is sure to be on my trail, it feels liberating. Nathan never understood that, not even when we were silly. A waste of time even. He never did understand. But I guess when your parents serve everything to you on a golden platter, the small things become irrelevant.

The frantic and multiplied flapping of wings overhead makes me trot to a stop. Crows are fleeing in abundance from the direction I'm heading in, caring their shrill warnings as they go back the way I came.

I look around the unfamiliar setting, searching for whatever could have scared them. The brush is so thick in this area of the forest that anything could be hiding in the grass.

My ears perk at the sharp snap of a stick ahead. Instantly my eyes land on a figure standing among the undergrowth.

"Adrienne?"

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Thank you so much for reading! Don't be afraid to leave your thoughts in a comment, I love reading them.

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