



Whizz

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Category: LGBT+

Description: Some scars run too deep, but perhaps Dylan could find solace in his biker bear.

Secrets. It's Whizz's duty to uncover them for the Grizzly Reapers MC, but he harbors one dark secret of his own. When a rescue mission leads him to Dylan, Whizz doesn't know what to think. Despite the horrors Dylan endured during his abduction, he remains Whizz's ray of sunshine. But some monsters don't know when to stay down, and Dylan's old tormentor wants him back. Whizz failed the most important person to him once, and he won't allow it to happen again.

Darkness. Dylan had nearly succumbed to the darkness after his entire world was turned upside down. With no friends or family to turn to, he had nothing to look forward to until a certain biker bear broke his chains. Whizz cautions him that nothing good will come from their relationship, but Dylan believes Whizz is worth the risk.

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Page 1

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The Past

My sleep was shattered by a series of howls. I jolted awake in our dimly lit cabin, my heart hammering against my ribcage.

Those weren't ordinary howls. A shiver crept down my spine. I glanced at the window.

The pale moon hung in the sky, bloated and sinister. I knew I had to investigate.

My senses were on full alert. I closed my eyes for a moment, focusing on my supernatural hearing.

Sure enough, there it was again – a chorus of haunting howls, distant but unmistakable.

My mind raced as I tried to piece together the puzzle. Wolves?

It was possible, but there was something otherworldly about those cries that sent a cold, prickling unease skittering across my skin.

Werewolves then? I swung my legs out of bed, my bare feet meeting the cool wooden floor.

I hesitated for a moment, the weight of fear and curiosity holding me back. But I wasn't paralyzed for long.

I knew I had to find out what was causing those howls, if only to ensure Jake's safety.

My hand fumbled around the nightstand until it found the cold handle of my father's old hunting knife.

In the moonlight, I could see the outline of Jake, my younger brother, still sound asleep in the bed across the room.

My heart raced as I slipped into my coat and reached for the shotgun hidden under the bed.

Something wasn't right, and I needed to find out what it was.

I eased open the cabin door, the hinges barely creaking, and stepped out into the chilly night air.

My breath billowed in front of me as I scanned the trees, my grip tightening on the gun.

My senses were on high alert, every rustle of leaves and snap of a twig making me jump.

What had disrupted our quiet life? Our family lived in the heart of the woods.

With our alpha father juggling two to three jobs, it was up to me to take care of Jake.

Our alpha father's genes had been passed down to me, while Jake had taken after our late omega dad who passed away shortly after Jake's birth.

"Whizz?" Jake's voice, groggy and soft, cut through the darkness like a knife.

The name on my birth certificate was William but Jake had given me the nickname Whizz, because he told me I was brilliant with computers.

I liked the name, so kept it.

I spun around, and there he was, rubbing his eyes and blinking against the cold.

"What's going on?" Jake asked me.

I silently swore, my heart pounded as I tried to think of something to say. I couldn't let Jake get involved in this; he was too young.

At eighteen, I was considered an adult. It fell to me to take control of the situation.

"Hey, Jake," I whispered, trying to keep my voice calm.

Any sign of panic and Jake would be even more worried.

I continued, "I heard some noises outside. Probably just a raccoon or something. I'm gonna go check it out, okay? You stay here."

Jake's eyes widened. "Can I come with you?" Jake asked.

I hesitated, torn between wanting to protect him and wanting him to stay safe inside.

Before I could respond, Jake neared me, his small frame shivering in his pajamas.

"No, Jake, it's not safe. Just stay here," I urged, hoping Jake could hear the plea in my voice.

"But what if you need help?" he countered, his gaze steady on mine. For a kid of

thirteen, Jake could be incredibly mature at times.

I let out a sigh, well aware that Jake wouldn't easily back down. Stubbornness was a trait that seemed to run in our family.

My thoughts turned to our father, Wade, who was once again working through the night at the factory.

When a shifter lost their mate, they often lost the drive to keep going. Even though it had been years since we lost our omega dad, Jake and I knew that Wade still carried that grief.

It was sheer stubbornness that pushed Wade to face each new day. The least I could do was take care of my younger brother.

"Okay, but remember, stay quiet and stick close behind me. Understand?" I told him, my tone firm and no-nonsense.

He nodded excitedly. Jake likely saw this as some kind of adventure.

I was mildly irked by that realization initially, but I quickly brushed it aside.

Our cabin didn't offer much in terms of entertainment—just an old television, though living so far from town meant getting a decent signal was often a struggle.

As I turned to take the lead, he sidled up next to me.

Our footsteps carried us through the woods, every step measured and alert.

Jake's breath formed faint puffs of mist in the chilly night air as he struggled to keep up with my longer strides. My grip on the shotgun remained steady.

"Hey, Whizz?" Jake's voice trembled, breaking the silence.

I slowed my pace and glanced back at him. I wondered if he regretted coming out to the woods with me.

It wasn't too late to turn back.

"Yeah?" I asked.

He gave me a small smile. "You know, it's my birthday tomorrow."

I blinked, caught off guard by the sudden shift in topic.

"Yeah, I know," I said.

He brightened up, his voice growing more animated. "I was waiting for dad to text or call but maybe he's busy. I thought you forgot as well. But you didn't, did you?" Jake asked.

I forced a smile, relieved for the distraction.

"Of course not, Jake. I left your present on the coffee table back home."

His eyes lit up like stars in the night sky. "Really? Can I open it when we get back?"

I chuckled softly, ruffling his hair. "Sure thing."

Deciding there was no immediate threat yet, we made our way back to the cabin.

Jake practically tore the hastily wrapped package open.

His joy was infectious as he pulled out a gleaming necklace with a bear claw pendant hanging from it.

"Whizz, it's beautiful!" he exclaimed, holding it up.

I grinned at his excitement, my worries momentarily forgotten. "I'm glad you like it, little buddy," I said.

He rushed over to me, throwing his arms around me in a tight hug. "Thank you, thank you! I'll wear it forever!"

As I hugged him back, a pang of guilt hit me.

I had to protect him, even if it meant facing whatever threat had brought me out here in the first place.

But for now, in this moment, his happiness was all that mattered.

Jake and I sat cross-legged on the living room floor, surrounded by a pile of cookies and a jug of milk.

The dim light of a lantern flickered, casting dancing shadows on the cabin walls.

Jake's eyes sparkled with excitement, his earlier apprehension replaced by a childlike joy that was infectious.

"Another cookie, Jake?" I asked, offering the plate his way.

His grin widened as he eagerly accepted the treat.

"Thanks, Whizz! This is the best birthday ever!"

I chuckled, popping a cookie into my mouth. I was planning on running to town the following day to grab some groceries and cook Jake his favourite dishes.

We weren't exactly the most popular kids in school. Solitude suited me but Jake was my exact opposite.

I once asked him if he was sad he had no friends.

He told me it didn't matter, because he had me. I had felt immensely sad for him then, but also incredibly touched.

I told Jake it was only a matter of time before he found friends who understood him.

"Glad you're enjoying it," I told him.

The cookies quickly disappeared, and the milk jug grew emptier with every passing minute.

Jake's energy began to dwindle, I could see his eyelids drooping.

He finished the last of the milk with a contented sigh, and I helped him stand up.

He yawned widely, rubbing his eyes with his tiny fists.

"Okay, Jake," I said. "Time to hit the sack."

He nodded sleepily, his excitement now giving way to exhaustion.

I tucked him into bed, making sure the blankets were snug around him.

His eyes were already half-closed, his smile fading into a peaceful expression as he

succumbed to sleep.

I stood there for a moment, watching over him. But then, as if on cue, the haunting howls reached my ears again.

A chill crept down my spine, and I glanced out the window, the moonlight casting a sinister glow on the world outside.

I took a deep breath, torn between the responsibility of guarding Jake and the gnawing curiosity that urged me to uncover the source of those chilling cries.

I knew I couldn't ignore it any longer. With one last look at Jake's slumbering form, I slipped out of the cabin, my father's gun once again gripped tightly in my hand.

If I ran out of bullets, I could rely on my grizzly half to lend me his aid.

The forest enveloped me in darkness as I ventured out, the trees casting eerie shadows that seemed to dance with every rustle of the leaves.

My steps were cautious, my grizzly half on high alert as I followed the sounds, trying to determine their origin.

My mind raced, the howls growing louder with each step I took.

I realized then that I had only returned to the cabin earlier to appease Jake, to create a moment of normalcy in the midst of something unsettling.

But now, the truth demanded my attention – there was something out there.

The forest seemed to close in around me as I ventured deeper into its depths, my steps cautious and calculated.

Each rustle of leaves, each snap of a twig, sent my heart racing.

The moon's pale glow offered little comfort, casting long shadows that seemed to twist and contort with every movement.

Instinct made me look back. My breath caught in my throat as I caught a fleeting glimpse of the cabin's outline through the trees.

It felt distant, almost like a mirage, and a chill slithered down my spine.

For a moment, the woods felt like a maze of uncertainty, and my heart pounded with an unnerving realization.

I had covered some ground, drawn further away from the cabin than I'd initially intended.

Panic threatened to take hold, my mind a whirlwind of thoughts as I tried to calculate the path back.

The moonlight played tricks on my vision. The howls, now closer, held a sinister symphony that sent a shiver through my very core.

My fingers tightened around the gun, sweat forming at my brow as I struggled to keep my breathing steady.

Each step felt like a gamble, every second spent away from the cabin amplifying the dread that had taken root within me.

And then it hit me, like someone had punched me in the gut. I hadn't thought about what leaving Jake behind could mean.

The whole time, I was so focused on what was out there, that I didn't even realize what I had done.

I had put him in danger, and that hit me hard.

My mind had been so caught up in this mission that I didn't get how much I'd messed up.

By the time I returned to the cabin, he was gone.

I never saw Jake again.

Page 2

Source Creation Date: July 17, 2025, 7:10 am

The last bell had chimed, signaling the end of another day at the kindergarten.

I watched the children leave, their laughter lingering in the air. With a sigh, I locked up the school, my footsteps echoing in the empty hallways.

Living in a quiet, small town like Greenfield had its upsides, but sometimes, it could feel pretty lonely.

I had only moved here a month ago, trying to escape the mess of a three-year-long relationship with my ex-boyfriend, Sam.

Before this, I'd always lived in the city. I figured a change of scenery and some peace and quiet would be good for me.

But I didn't see the loneliness coming.

Back in the city, there were plenty of shifters and other supernatural types around, but here in Greenfield, they were pretty scarce.

I could count maybe a dozen, tops. And as far as I knew, I was one of three omega shifters in town.

The local shifters kept to themselves mostly, which made me feel like a bit of an outsider.

I got along okay with the other teachers at the kindergarten, but we weren't exactly best buds.

Putting aside my lack of social life and any hope of dating, what I was really looking forward to tonight was some good old downtime in my apartment.

As I walked along the streets, the soft glow of the streetlights guiding my way, I couldn't help but feel a little better.

It was a short walk from the school to my apartment.

A strange feeling pricked at me, like something wasn't right. My shifter instincts kicked in, telling me to stay alert.

It was weird because I'd never felt unsafe since moving to Greenfield.

The town had been peaceful, and I hadn't felt threatened until now. But as the evening set in, a new kind of fear crept up on me.

My heart raced, and I couldn't help but keep glancing around, trying to figure out what was causing this unease.

Every little noise made me jumpy—the rustling of leaves, a distant creak.

It was like there was someone or something watching me. The whole vibe had changed.

My steps echoed weirdly in the silence, making me even more nervous. It was like I was being followed, and I couldn't shake the feeling.

I debated heading back to the school, but part of me wanted to figure out what was going on, even though fear had its grip on me.

Keep going, I told myself.

I glanced over my shoulder, catching a glimpse of movement in the shadows. My pace quickened, my heart pounding as I turned a corner.

The hairs on the back of my neck stood on end when I heard low, menacing growls behind me.

Fear clenched my gut, and I forced myself to keep moving, the growls growing louder and more persistent.

My apartment building finally came into view. I practically leapt up the steps, fumbling for my keys with trembling hands.

Just as I stepped into the building's dimly lit lobby, relief washing over me, a cold sweat broke out on my forehead.

But my heart sank when a black van pulled over at the curb, its engine humming ominously.

My gut told me to get to my apartment and lock up tight. I sprinted up the stairs, taking two at a time, my heart hammering in my chest.

Panic surged as I fumbled with the key, finally getting the door open and slamming it shut behind me.

Leaning against the door, I tried to catch my breath, my mind racing. Who was after me? Why?

The questions bounced around, each answer more confusing than the last.

Moonlight caught my eye, and I saw the van's dark shape outside, waiting like a predator.

My fingers shook as I grabbed my phone, but then it hit me. Who could I even call for help?

Amber, my sister, was the only family I had left, but we weren't close.

Friends were non-existent in Greenfield, and the other teachers at the kindergarten were more like colleagues.

I felt trapped, staring at the screen.

I could call the local sheriff's office, but what I was going to tell them? That I suspected someone was stalking me?

I had no evidence. For all I knew, my paranoia had kicked in. Maybe the van wasn't here for me.

Calling the local sheriff's office seemed like a logical step, but doubt gnawed at me. What exactly was I going to say?

That I had a hunch someone might be following me? It sounded crazy, even to my own ears.

There was no concrete proof, just a gut feeling, and I could already imagine the skeptical look on the officer's face.

I paced around my apartment, phone in hand, wrestling with the decision. It felt like a leap into the unknown.

What if I was just being paranoid? What if the van's presence was purely coincidental? I had no real evidence to back up my suspicions.

I found myself peering out the window again, my eyes locked on the van's silhouette.

Anxiety gnawed at me, twisting my insides into knots. Maybe it was just a vehicle passing through, an innocent occurrence.

Maybe I was blowing things out of proportion, letting fear get the best of me.

Torn between calling for help and dismissing my fears as baseless, I weighed my options.

A part of me wanted to play it safe, to report the situation to the authorities and let them decide. But another part of me hesitated, unsure if I was overreacting.

I took a deep breath, my fingers tightening around the phone. It was a tough call, but I realized that my safety came first.

Even if I sounded crazy, it was better to be safe than sorry. With a nod, I dialed the number, my heart racing as the call connected.

"Greenfield Sheriff's Office, Deputy Lawson speaking. How can I assist you?" a calm voice answered on the other end of the line.

"Hey, Deputy Lawson. This is Dylan," I began, my voice a mixture of uncertainty and tension.

"Dylan? What can I do for you?" he replied, sounding attentive.

I cleared my throat, trying to put my thoughts into words.

"I know this might sound a bit odd, but I think someone might be following me."

There was a brief pause before he responded.

"Following you? Can you give me some more details?"

I glanced out the window, seeing the van still parked outside.

"Yeah, there's this black van parked outside my apartment. It's been there for a while now, and it's giving me a bad feeling."

"Understood," Deputy Lawson said calmly. "Do you recognize the van or anyone in it?"

"No, I don't. It just feels strange, you know? Like it's watching me," I explained.

"Alright, Dylan. I'll send someone over to check it out," he assured me. "In the meantime, are you in a safe place?"

I glanced around my apartment, feeling a bit more secure within its walls.

"Yeah, I'm inside. Thanks," I said.

"Stay on the line with me, Dylan," he instructed. "I'll dispatch an officer to your location. Can you describe the van?"

I provided the details I could remember about the van's make and model, and we continued talking as I kept an eye on the vehicle outside.

Deputy Lawson's reassuring presence on the phone helped calm my nerves somewhat, but the unease still lingered.

"Alright, Dylan. An officer is on the way to your location. Just stay inside and keep

your phone nearby. If anything changes or if you see any suspicious activity, let me know immediately,” Deputy Lawson advised.

”Thank you, Deputy. I appreciate your help,” I said with genuine gratitude.

”No problem, Dylan. We’re here to ensure your safety. We’ll get to the bottom of this,” he assured me.

I lay in bed, staring up at the ceiling, unable to sleep. Every little noise seemed amplified in the quiet of the night, keeping me on edge.

I tossed and turned, trying to get comfortable, but my mind was racing.

The last movie I’d watched, a kidnapping thriller, hadn’t been a great choice before bed.

The tension from the film had followed me into the dark.

I pulled the covers up and closed my eyes, but the images of the movie wouldn’t leave my thoughts.

Shadows seemed to morph into threats, and every sound made my heart skip a beat.

I let out a frustrated sigh, knowing it was just a movie. Still, the scenes played over and over in my mind.

I turned onto my side, staring at the faint light of the alarm clock, hoping time would pass faster.

I realized that sleep wouldn’t come easy tonight. The room felt suffocating, and even the rustle of sheets sent my nerves into overdrive.

I closed my eyes, trying to relax, but the movie's scenarios kept looping in my head.

I shifted again, growing more tired and frustrated. Sleep seemed impossible, and I knew the movie had stirred up my imagination.

With a sigh, I turned over and closed my eyes, determined to push past the unease and find some rest, despite the movie's lingering effect.

The night had been tough. I couldn't sleep as every sound seemed magnified. It wasn't until dawn broke that I finally caught a bit of rest.

Outside my apartment building the next morning, Officer Mitchell arrived, looking like he'd rather be somewhere else.

"Morning," I greeted, unsure how to approach his gruff demeanor.

"Morning. You're the one who freaked out about a parked van?" he said bluntly.

"Yeah, that's me. Sorry about that," I admitted.

He just nodded. "Checked it out. No problems. Just a van."

"Thanks," I said, appreciative despite his manner.

He walked away without another word, and I headed to the kindergarten. The town was waking up, and the morning sun cast a warm light over everything.

Taking a shortcut through an alley, I hoped for a more normal day.

But when I turned the corner, my stomach dropped. The same black van was back, parked near the entrance.

It hit me like a punch to the gut. It was a clear reminder that my concerns weren't baseless.

I stared at the van, an uneasy feeling settling in. Whatever was going on was far from over.

The noise of the kindergarten in the distance faded as the van's presence took over.

"Just ignore it and keep walking," I told myself.

Keeping my head down, I clutched at the strap of my backpack and hurried past the alleyway.

I could almost out of the alleyway when I heard faint footsteps behind me.

A shiver crept down my spine but I forced myself to keep walking.

"Hey," someone said behind me, a gruff voice with a bit of a growl to it. "You dropped something."

I turned and saw a tall, muscular man holding out my ID. A shifter, my rabbit half told me.

A blue baseball cap obscured his face but I glimpsed dirty blond hair under his cap and hawklike features.

There was a vivid tattoo on the left side of his neck, a red claw mark. I hesitated.

Part of me wondered if this was some kind of trap, then decided I was being ridiculous.

This shifter was just being helpful... although I knew all the shifters living in Greenfield by sight and I'd never seen him before.

My suspicions returned.

"Keep it," I whispered, about to turn around but it was too late.

I bumped into a solid wall of muscle. Another shifter. This was one big, menacing and covered in old rake marks. The same tattoo graced his neck.

His arms felt like steel as they closed around my body.

I opened my mouth to shout for help but he closed one hand around my neck and squeezed until the oxygen ran out of my body.

Dizziness swamped me and I saw stars. Then darkness.

Page 3

Source Creation Date: July 17, 2025, 7:10 am

DYLAN

I wokeup with a pounding headache, disoriented and surrounded by darkness. Blinking against the dim light, I realized I was in an unfamiliar and dilapidated house.

Panic surged through me as I tried to move, only to discover I was tied up, my wrists bound tightly.

The sharp sting of rope against my skin made me wince, and I struggled to remember how I had ended up here.

Glancing around, my heart sank as I saw two other figures beside me.

They were fellow omegas, bound like I was, their faces etched with the same confusion and fear that I felt.

My mind raced, desperately trying to piece together the puzzle of where we were and why we had been brought here.

My eyes darted to a broken window, a view of dense woods outside. Were we in the middle of nowhere?

Dread settled in my stomach as I considered the implications. The isolation amplified the danger, and questions swirled in my mind.

Who were our captors? Why had they taken us? My mind raced to find answers and formulate an escape plan.

I strained against my bindings, testing their strength, but they held firm.

I kept my movements subtle, not wanting to draw attention to my efforts.

My gaze flicked to the door, and I wondered if I could make a run for it when the opportunity arose.

My heart hammered in my chest, the urgency to escape overwhelming.

As I glanced back out the window, my thoughts spiraled. The men who had cornered me in the alleyway, they had matching tattoos.

Were they connected to this somehow? Were they part of some gang?

A shiver ran down my spine as I considered the possibilities, the danger of my situation becoming more real with every passing moment.

Suddenly, the door creaked open, and I froze. Four figures walked in, their presence casting a menacing shadow over the room.

My heart raced as I tried to read their expressions, to gauge their intentions.

My heart nearly stopped when I saw the blond shifter, the one with the baseball cap, walk into the room.

I recognized him from that alleyway, and dread tightened its grip on my chest.

Should I speak up? Ask him why he brought me here? But before I could gather my courage, another omega, his voice shaking, spoke out.

"I don't know who you are, and I don't care. But if you don't take me back to my

father, there'll be hell to pay," he said, a quiver in his tone.

The room fell silent, tension hanging in the air. But one of the captors quickly moved, shutting down the omega's words with backhanded slap.

Fear clenched my gut as I weighed my options. Speaking out now might escalate the situation even further, so I opted to keep quiet, watching and listening as events unfolded.

The blond shifter, the apparent leader, stepped forward and addressed us.

"No one will find you here. Consider yourselves permanent guests of ours," he said.

His words sent a chill down my spine, the gravity of our predicament sinking in.

Permanent guests? My mind raced, trying to comprehend the situation we were in.

But before I could process any further, one of the shifters grabbed me by the arm, his grip firm and unyielding.

My heart raced as panic surged through me. Was this it? Were they going to take me somewhere even more isolated, more dangerous?

I couldn't afford to be complacent. As he started to lead me towards what I presumed was the basement, an intense determination ignited within me.

I had to escape. I had to find a way out, even if the odds were against me. My hands were bound but not my feet.

In a split second, as my captor's grip loosened slightly, I jerked my arm away and bolted.

Adrenaline surged through my veins, blocking out the noise around me as I sprinted towards the nearest exit.

Every footfall echoed in my ears, and I could feel the eyes of the others on me. But I couldn't look back, couldn't hesitate.

The thought of being trapped, of being subjected to whatever fate awaited us, pushed me forward.

I sprinted up the stairs. But as I reached the top, my path was abruptly blocked by the blond shifter, a sinister smile twisting his lips.

He looked at me with cold amusement, as if he were savoring my attempt to escape.

"Where do you think you're going?" he taunted, his voice dripping with mockery.

I panted, my heart racing, as I weighed my options. I was well aware of my own vulnerability in this situation.

My mind raced through the possibilities: fight, flee, or comply. The grim reality was that I was overpowered, outnumbered.

For now, biding my time seemed like the best strategy.

"Nowhere," I managed to breathe out, my voice tense.

He gestured with a nod for me to turn back, his eyes fixated on me.

Reluctantly, I slumped my shoulders and began to retrace my steps, heading back towards the other captor who was waiting below.

As I descended the stairs once more, my anger and frustration simmered beneath the surface.

I felt like a pawn in their twisted game, and it was infuriating. But for now, I knew that playing along was the safest path.

The alpha waiting for me pushed me into a room, a cell devoid of windows, lit only by a single dim light bulb.

My heart sank as I took in the surroundings. The air was thick with a horrid smell, and it became clear to me that something had died here.

My stumbling feet met resistance as they brushed against something on the ground.

I gasped as my hand met something cold and hard—old bones. Panic threatened to rise within me as I realized I was standing in the midst of a grim discovery.

A chilling realization hit me as I touched the remains. A skeleton. The truth was inescapable, and a small, involuntary scream escaped my lips.

My initial fear was replaced with a rush of foolishness. I was being irrational. These bones could be anything—human or animal.

I took a step back, trying to regain my composure. But then something caught my eye—a glint under the bones.

Curiosity overriding my fear, I reached down and picked up a metal necklace, its pendant in the shape of a bear claw.

The cool metal warmed in my hand, contrasting with the eerie surroundings.

My fingers tightened around it. I pressed it close to my chest, as if it was a talisman that could protect me from my captors, from whatever grim future that faced me.

WHIZZ

As my fingers danced across the computer keyboard, I reached for a potato chip.

Venom, my lead alpha, and the President of the Grizzly Reapers MC, needed this information about a potential client.

Usually, I was quick with requests, but that evening I was a little distracted. My concentration was broken by my ringing cellphone.

Glancing at the caller ID, I felt a surge of surprise and a twinge of nostalgia as I saw the name "Marc" flashing on the screen.

Marc, was an old friend who shared a pain that only a few could understand—the pain of searching for a missing loved one.

I answered the call without hesitation.

"Hey, Marc. Long time," I said.

"Whizz," he greeted. "I know it's been a while, but I need your help."

I leaned back in my chair, the familiarity of the conversation settling over me.

"Of course, Marc. What's going on?" I asked.

His sigh crackled through the phone line.

"It's happening again. The disappearances. In Greenfield and Stone Valley. This time, a kindergarten teacher named Dylan Riggs was taken in Greenfield and Mitch Osborn, an accountant from Stone Valley.

My heart skipped a beat, my fingers stalling on the keyboard. Disappearances.

Just like what had taken my brother, just like what had taken his.

The words echoed in my mind, a haunting reminder of the endless nights spent hacking into databases, chasing leads that always seemed to vanish.

Marc was a private investigator. He was good at his job just like I was. During his free time, he continued his search for his missing brother.

"Are you sure?" I asked cautiously, my mind racing.

"Positive. I've been following the news, connecting the dots," Marc explained. "These young men, they're vanishing from their homes, Whizz. Just like how Jake and Tommy?—"

I finished the sentence in my mind, a heavy silence settling between us. Just like how our brothers had disappeared.

The memories of our shared pain surged to the surface.

I had come to terms with the possibility that I might never find my brother, that the answers might remain elusive forever.

But I couldn't deny that the news struck a chord within me.

"You think there's a connection?" I asked, my voice quiet.

"Maybe. It's too coincidental to ignore," Marc replied, his tone a mix of frustration and hope.

Marc continued, "I've hit a wall with my own investigation. You're the best hacker I know, Whizz. If anyone can find out what's happening, it's you."

I leaned forward, my fingers tapping rhythmically against the desk. A tangle of emotions knotted in my chest—fear, doubt, determination.

The thought of diving back into the world of investigations, of following the digital breadcrumbs, was both daunting and familiar.

"Marc, I've hit dead ends before," I confessed. "But for what it's worth, I'll look into it."

"Thanks, Whizz. I appreciate it," he said, gratitude evident in his voice.

As we ended the call, I stared at the screen, my mind already racing with possibilities.

Disappearances in two towns, a string of broken families left with no answers. Could I finally bring closure to my own search and help Marc find his brother?

I stared at my computer screen a moment longer, then decided I would finish the job at hand first.

Throwing myself at the task, I found a series of connections that illuminated the client's past affiliations and activities.

After compiling the details, I printed my report out and sought Venom.

The noise of the MC clubhouse hit my ears as soon as I left my room.

If my best friend Piston was around, he'd drag me out of my room and convince me to have a beer or two downstairs.

But Piston was with his mate and nieces tonight.

I wasn't certain if Venom was still in his office at this time of the evening. Seeing the lights in the room, a wave of relief filled me.

I knocked on the door.

"Come in," came Venom's usual disgruntled voice.

I entered, placed the information he requested on his desk, then took a seat. Venom raised one scarred eyebrow.

Normally, I left after handing him my report. This time I lingered, because I had a request to make of him.

Venom picked up the stack of papers and went through it quickly.

"Good work, Whizz," he said. He set them aside then looked at me. "You want to talk about something else?"

I nodded. "I'll be taking a few days off, starting tomorrow. Three at the most," I said.

Venom furrowed his brows. This wasn't the first time I'd taken some time off from the MC.

Only Venom and I knew about Jake. I couldn't even bring to tell Piston about my missing brother. Some wounds simply ran too deep.

“You have a new lead?” Venom simply asked.

I nodded, debating whether I should tell him about Marc’s call. In the end, I did.

There was no point keeping secrets from Venom and I trusted him without reserve.

When I was at the lowest point in my life, Venom appeared, telling me he had a use for my talents.

Over the years, Venom and the MC had become the family I never knew I needed.

Being in the MC, helped me retained my sanity and stabilised my grizzly half, who had never recovered from Jake’s abduction.

“Do I have your permission?” I asked.

“Of course. Do you need backup? Take Piston with you,” Venom suggested.

“No,” I automatically said. “Piston has been through a lot these last few months. It’s a simple investigation. I can do it on my own.”

“Very well,” Venom said. “Best of luck, Whizz. I hope you find something.”

Page 4

Source Creation Date: July 17, 2025, 7:10 am

I stared at the map on my laptop screen skeptically. Greenfield and Stone Valley—two small towns, apparently linked by a series of vanishings.

Marc's call had sparked a glimmer of hope, but I couldn't help feeling wary. Countless times, I'd followed leads that turned into dead ends.

My time in Greenfield didn't yield much. The kindergarten where Dylan Riggs worked seemed normal, and his coworkers knew nothing.

Questioning didn't get me far, and the whole thing felt like chasing a ghost.

Sighing, I sat in a plain coffee shop, my laptop open. Uncertainty filled me, and I wondered if I was caught in yet another wild goose chase.

Had I been lured into another puzzle without answers?

I decided to visit Dylan Rigg's neighbor. She had a fuzzy memory of that night, mentioning distant screams.

It wasn't much, and I thanked her, trying to shake off disappointment.

Mounting my Harley, I headed to Stone Valley, knowing the truth lay somewhere between these two towns.

I made my way to the building where Manuel, Mitch Osborn's fiancée lived. Manuel had been expecting me.

Manuel's eyes were red-rimmed, his face etched with a mixture of sorrow and frustration.

I could see the pain he was carrying, the weight of uncertainty that had settled on his shoulders.

As I approached him, I offered a sympathetic nod.

"Hey, I'm Whizz," I introduced. "We spoke on the phone last night."

He looked up, his eyes briefly locking with mine before he nodded in acknowledgment.

"I'm Manuel. Thanks for coming, man," he said.

Stepping into Manuel's apartment, I was immediately hit by a sense of disarray.

Clutter seemed to dominate the space, with scattered clothes and various objects strewn across the floor and furniture. Manuel was a mess since Mitch's disappearance.

As I navigated through the clutter, I couldn't help but notice the framed photographs that adorned the walls— that of Manuel and Mitch.

My heart ached for him. While I didn't have a special someone in my life at the moment, I knew shifters mated for life.

Manuel cleared the sofa, creating a space for us to sit.

He turned to me and asked, "Want anything to drink? Beer?"

I considered it briefly but shook my head.

"Just water," I replied, understanding the importance of staying clear-headed for this meeting.

There was no room for distractions or clouded judgment.

He disappeared into the kitchen and soon returned with a glass of cold water, setting it down on the coffee table between us.

We settled onto the sofa. I noticed Manuel's hands fidgeting nervously.

I could also see the gratitude in Manuel's eyes, his hope that maybe, just maybe, someone could shine a light into the darkness that had consumed his life.

"I want to help, Manuel," I reassured him.

His voice trembled slightly as he began recounting the events of the night Mitch had disappeared.

"We were just hanging out at home after work, nothing out of the ordinary. Mitch mentioned he was craving ice cream. I was tired and the convenience store was only a block away, so I let him go on his own."

Manuel paused, his hands clenching and unclenching as if reliving the moment.

He resumed, "But then I decided to tag along because I realized we were running low on toilet paper. I knew Mitch's usual route, so I caught up to him in an alleyway."

He hesitated before continuing, his expression a mixture of anguish and frustration. "And then out of nowhere, these guys appeared. Werewolves. They grabbed Mitch,

and before I could react, they forced him into a van.”

My brows furrowed. ”Did you see anything specific about the van? Any distinctive features?”

He looked at me. ”Yeah, it was unmarked, black. But I managed to snap a photo of the license plates before they sped off.”

My interest piqued. ”You have the photo?”

Manuel pulled out his phone and showed me the blurry image.

The license plate numbers were visible, though it would take some work to enhance the image and decipher them fully.

”This is valuable, Manuel,” I said, my tone earnest. ”It could be the key to finding Mitch and the others.”

I couldn’t help but form a connection in my head. These kidnappers had a pattern.

They usually targeted victims who didn’t have many family and friends.

Dylan Riggs’ co-workers knew little about his social life. For all they knew, it was practically non-existent.

As for Mitch Osborn, he was an orphan and considered Manuel his only family.

Maybe I was still clinging to the hope I would find Jake, but I was determined to help Manuel.

”I hope so. I just want him back, you know?” Manuel was telling me.

"I understand," I reassured him. "We're going to do everything we can to get to the bottom of this."

As I spoke, I could feel a spark igniting inside me.

Maybe I would never find Jake, but at the very least, I could help Manuel and the others like him.

When Jake had been taken, I was young and alone. Now, I had resources at my disposal. Venom and the MC also had my back.

"Manuel, I'll take this photo and work on enhancing the image," I explained. "We'll decipher those license plates and find out more about the van. With this lead, we might finally have a breakthrough."

He nodded, his grip on the phone slightly loosening as a small smile tugged at the corners of his lips.

"Thank you, Whizz. Thank you for helping us."

I gave him a reassuring smile. "We're in this together, Manuel. We'll find out what's happening and bring your fiancé back," I told him.

As I left Manuel's apartment, I realized I shouldn't have made him that promise.

It was cruel to give someone false hope, only to have it dashed later on but I couldn't help myself.

I saw a little of my old self in Manuel, and those like him.

Sitting in front of my computer, I stared at the blurry image of the license plate that

Manuel had managed to capture.

I had a special software tool, one that had helped me crack numerous cases, and I was hoping it would work its magic once again.

With a few clicks, I fed the image into the software and watched as it worked its digital wizardry.

Lines and shapes began to sharpen, and the previously illegible characters slowly became more defined.

It was a tense moment, like waiting for a jigsaw puzzle to reveal its final picture.

As the image cleared, my heart skipped a beat. I could make out the numbers and letters, and it sent a shiver down my spine.

The van was registered to Gregory Hicks, a werewolf and an ex-con.

I quickly pulled up Gregory's file on my computer. His record was extensive, filled with a list of offenses ranging from theft to assault.

The most alarming entry, however, was a charge of kidnapping in the past.

My gut twisted as I read that the charges had been dismissed due to lack of evidence.

Gregory Hicks had a history, and it wasn't a good one. But what sent a chill down my spine was the realization that he had managed to evade justice in the past.

It meant he was cunning, dangerous, and not someone to be taken lightly.

Digging deeper, I began searching for any properties under Gregory's name. It didn't

take long for me to hit a lead.

He had inherited an old estate from his grandfather in a small town called Crimson View.

The pieces were starting to fall into place. Gut instinct told me I had finally hit the jackpot after years of searching.

An unfamiliar and dangerous emotion surfaced in my chest. Hope.

I knew I had to tread carefully. The van, Gregory's criminal record, and now the old estate—it was all connected.

I thought of Dylan and Mitch's disappearances, even Jake's.

They all shared similarities I couldn't ignore. Terrible excitement hummed in my veins.

If Gregory was the culprit I'd been searching for all this time, then he couldn't have been operating alone.

Most likely, he had a crew with him. I breathed in and out.

One thing was certain. I needed to head to Crimson View, but first I needed Venom's advice.

I left my room and went in search of Venom. He wasn't in his office. Mayhem, our VP, informed me Venom was in the garage.

The rumble of engines and the clank of tools filled the garage as I made my way to where Venom was tinkering with his motorcycle.

The scent of gasoline and oil hung heavy in the air, a familiar and comforting aroma.

Venom looked up as I approached, his face partially obscured by the shadow cast by the bike's headlight.

He raised an eyebrow, a silent question in his gold eyes.

I took a deep breath before I spoke. "Venom, I think I've finally got a solid lead on the missing omegas."

He set down the wrench he'd been holding, his attention fully on me now. "Tell me," Venom urged.

I relayed everything I'd discovered: the van registered to Gregory Hicks, his criminal history, and the old estate in Crimson View.

Venom listened in silence, his expression thoughtful.

When I finished, he leaned against his motorcycle and folded his arms.

"It sounds like you have a real lead," he remarked. "It'll be dangerous to go alone."

I nodded, the weight of my findings pressing down on me.

"I know, but I can't just sit back and do nothing. There's a high possibility Dylan and Mitch are still alive and are being held in Gregory's estate."

Venom's gaze didn't waver. "You still insist on going alone?" He asked.

I hesitated, my pride and determination warring with the rational voice in my head.

"Yeah, it's a personal matter. I don't want to drag a fellow MC member into my mess," I pointed out.

He regarded me for a moment, his expression unreadable. Then he sighed and pushed off the bike.

"Whizz, you might think it's personal, but there's no way of knowing what you might be walking into."

His words hit home. I knew he was right. This was bigger than just me. I couldn't let my pride blind me to the dangers ahead.

With a reluctant nod, I conceded, "Alright, I'll take Piston and one other biker with me."

Venom's eyes softened, and he clapped a hand on my shoulder.

"Good. Remember, we're family, and we've got your back. Happy hunting, Whizz. I hope you find the answers you seek."

After my conversation with Venom, I returned to my room. I grabbed my cell phone.

After taking a deep breath, I dialed Piston's number. The seconds felt like hours as I waited for him to answer.

"Whizz," Piston's voice crackled through the line. "What's up?"

"Piston, I need to talk to you," I began, the weight of my words sinking in. "I've got a lead on the missing omegas, and it's pointing to Crimson View."

I finally opened up to Piston about Jake. There was a brief pause on the other end.

“You’re heading to Crimson View? Alone?” Piston asked, his voice laced with concern.

I could hear the worry in his tone, and it warmed my heart.

Piston and I had been through thick and thin together, and he was always there when I needed him.

“Yeah,” I replied, “but I don’t want to drag you into this.”

Piston didn’t miss a beat. “Whizz, we’re brothers, and we’ve faced danger together before. Someone’s gotta watch your back, and I’m not letting you go alone,” Piston said.

A sense of gratitude washed over me, and I managed a small smile. “Thanks, Piston. You’ve always had my back,” I said.

Piston chuckled. “That’s what brothers do.”

Then he added, “Hey, you remember Nitro? He rode with us before. He’s tough, and he’s always up for a challenge. I think he might want in on this.”

I considered it for a moment. The more allies we had, the better.

“Alright, bring him along. The more people we have on this, the greater our chances,” I said.

But there was a question that had been gnawing at me, a question I had buried deep within for years.

I took a deep breath, my voice hesitant.

"Piston, do you think... do you think there's a chance my brother Jake is still alive?" I asked.

Piston's response was solemn. "Whizz, there's always a chance. You can't give up hope."

My heart ached with a mix of emotions—hope, doubt, fear.

I had lost hope a long time ago, but hearing Piston's words reignited a spark of possibility.

With a reluctant nod, I agreed, "You're right. There's always a chance."

We ended the call with the promise to ride to Crimson View the next morning.

As I hung up, I pulled out an old photograph from my wallet—a picture of Jake, our dad and me.

The last family photo we'd ever taken. Shortly after Jake had disappeared, our dad died of a broken heart, leaving me alone in my guilt.

I stared at it for a moment, and whispered, "Jake, I really hope you're still alive."

Page 5

Source Creation Date: July 17, 2025, 7:10 am

WHIZZ

Crimson View lay before us as we parked our motorcycles at a nondescript motel on the outskirts of town.

The sun dipped below the horizon, casting long shadows across the landscape.

The small town felt quiet and eerie. It almost felt like a ghost town.

Piston, Nitro, and I checked in, stashed our gear in the rooms, and headed out on foot to stay under the radar.

We had a mission, and it was crucial that we didn't attract any unwanted attention.

As night fell, we made our way through the woods, following a narrow path toward the outskirts of town.

Darkness crept in, and the air was thick with tension. We were all keenly aware of the gravity of our mission.

We finally arrived at Gregory Hicks' estate, the old house looming in the distance.

The property was surrounded by a rusty iron gate, but there were no guards posted at the entrance.

It seemed as if the place had been intentionally left abandoned, perhaps to deter unwanted visitors.

Our group split up with silent nods. Piston and Nitro took the direct approach, heading toward the front door.

I, on the other hand, chose a more covert route, slipping around to the back of the house, which led to the kitchen.

As I reached the back door, I heard hushed voices inside. I steeled myself and pushed the door open just enough to slip inside unnoticed.

Inside, I stumbled upon a shocking scene. Two burly werewolves were seated at a table, playing cards.

Their laughter filled the room, a stark contrast to the omega curled up on the floor, crying softly.

Anger surged within me at the sight of his distress. Without bothering to use stealth, I stepped forward.

"Hey," I growled out, my voice cutting through the air.

The werewolves turned to look at me, their faces shifting from amusement to surprise.

Before they could react, I whipped out my knife as I lunged towards the nearest werewolf.

The werewolf groaned in pain, clutching his wounded shoulder, I didn't waste a second.

With a swift motion, I pulled out my gun and aimed it at the other werewolf who was lunging at me in the midst of shifting forms.

A single shot rang out in the room, and the werewolf howled in agony as the bullet found its mark.

He collapsed to the ground, writhing in pain.

But there was no time to revel in my small victory. I could hear the sounds of a fierce struggle coming from another part of the house.

Piston and Nitro were fighting off more of these werewolves, and I knew I couldn't let them down.

Realizing I was at a disadvantage in my human form, I made a snap decision. I shifted into my grizzly form, my muscles bulging and fur bristling.

The second werewolf recovered quickly despite being shot. He came at me with a snarl, his claws bared.

We clashed, going for each other's throats in a savage battle, a dance of primal fury.

The room seemed to shrink around us as we grappled, each of us desperate for victory.

Despite his tenacity, I found an opening. With a powerful swipe of my paw, I knocked him off balance.

He stumbled back, and I seized the opportunity, clamping my jaws around his throat.

His struggles grew weaker until they finally ceased. I released the lifeless body and looked for the other wolf.

The first werewolf, still nursing his wounded shoulder, must have realized the tide

had turned against him, because he was halfway out the door leading outside.

With a growl of frustration, he turned and bolted for the nearest exit, clearly choosing flight over fight.

As the fleeing werewolf disappeared into the night, I felt a surge of adrenaline, ready to give chase.

But then, a small, trembling hand clutched at my pant leg, pulling me from my momentary distraction.

I looked down to find the crying omega, forgotten in the midst of the chaos.

”Are... are you here to help us?” the omega stammered, his eyes wide with hope.

I shifted back to human and quickly donned by ruined clothes.

“Us?” I asked. “There are others, aren’t there?”

The omega nodded and peered at me closely, as if trying to discern something.

It was then that I recognized the face—it was Mitch, Manuel’s missing fiancée. The relief that washed over me was palpable.

”Mitch?” I ventured, my voice low.

For a moment, there was silence, as if he was gauging my intentions.

Then, as if a dam had broken, he spoke. “Yes, I’m Mitch. How do you know my name?”

“From Manuel, he’s been so worried about you,” I answered. “We’re here to rescue you and the others.”

Mitch’s eyes filled with gratitude, and he pointed toward a hidden door in the kitchen.

“There’s a basement down there. It’s not good. But that’s where they’re keeping the others,” Mitch said.

Piston and Nitro arrived just in time, and I quickly assigned tasks.

“Nitro, stay with Mitch. Make sure he’s safe,” I instructed.

Nitro gave me a hurt nod. He took off his jacket and placed it over Mitch’s thin shoulders.

Piston and I made our way to the basement door, a heavy dread settling in my chest.

As we descended the rickety stairs into the dank and dark underground, I couldn’t help but hope that this would be the place where I’d finally find Dylan... and my brother.

DYLAN

Exhaustion gripped me, and my empty stomach grumbled painfully.

I’d refused to touch the food they’d given me, convinced it was drugged. I felt weak and famished, but caution won over hunger.

Then, a gunshot from above, followed by a commotion of growls and screams, jolted me upright.

I held the bear claw necklace I'd found close to my chest, uncertainty tugging at my heart.

Were the werewolves fighting each other, or was this just another cruel twist of fate?

Voices in the corridor outside my cell brought renewed hope.

"Did you find Gregory Hicks?" one voice inquired.

Gregory. I thought of the blond-haired alpha and shivered.

Lately, I'd been his favorite and I kept wishing he would get bored of me soon. Death was a better alternative than being Gregory's toy.

"No," came the reply. "I questioned one of the werewolves thoroughly. He told me Gregory took half his crew. They were hunting down another omega."

My heart raced, but I dared not let my hopes soar too high.

Rescue felt like a distant dream in this nightmare but I knew these were definitely not Gregory's men.

Then, the cell door slowly creaked open, revealing two bikers. I swallowed.

My animal half warned me they were both grizzly shifters. Alphas.

"We're not here to harm you. We've come to free you and the others. It's safe now," said the first biker.

I eyed them warily but saw sincerity in their faces. Still, I couldn't afford to be careless.

The one with dark hair and intense eyes approached me and I backed away. He knelt in front of me and gripped my hand, the one holding the necklace.

A growl spilled from his lips and every muscle in my body locked in place.

“Where did you get this?” he demanded.

He took my shoulders and shook me. Dizziness swamped me.

The dark-haired biker’s questions made me apprehensive, but then his friend chimed in, “Whizz, you’re scaring him.”

The man, apparently called Whizz, seemed to soften. He released me. Whizz sank down to his knees in front of me.

His eyes, once filled with anger, now held an unmistakable grief and hidden pain.

Without thinking, I reached out and touched his cheek. I expected him to recoil, but to my surprise, he only placed his hand over mine, his grip gentle.

Whizz spoke, his voice heavy with the weight of memories. “I once gave my brother a necklace just like that for his birthday... the day he disappeared.”

I could hear the sorrow in his voice, and for some reason, I found myself thinking that he wasn’t as threatening as I’d first assumed.

I also couldn’t help but feel a touch of envy.

Whizz seemed like he’d been through hell to find this place, all for someone he cared about deeply.

I wished I had someone like that in my life, someone who would go to such lengths for me. But my selfish thoughts didn't sit right with me.

Surrounded by these people who had risked so much to save us, I felt guilty for dwelling on my own loneliness.

In a moment of vulnerability, I reached out and hugged him, my voice barely a whisper as I told him about the pile of bones in the cell, and how I'd found the necklace.

"I'm sorry I took it," I admitted. "But it was my only source of comfort during all this."

In that strange moment, it felt like a bond had formed between us, forged in the darkness and shared pain of our experiences.

"I didn't mean to hurt you," Whizz murmured.

"You didn't," I said softly.

After breaking away from the hug, I reached for his hand and carefully placed the necklace into his palm, closing his fingers around it.

Whizz gently pressed the necklace back into my hand. "It belongs to you now," he said.

A hint of smile appeared on his lips and for a moment, I was struck by how handsome he was, even in the dim glow of my cell.

"I can't take away something that's become important to you," he said.

Before our moment could linger, Piston interrupted us.

"Hey, Whizz, there are more cells to open," he reminded, his tone practical.

"Four of the six cells here are occupied...." I said. I then took a deep breath. "The dungeon used to be full."

Whizz furrowed his brow.

"What do you mean? What happened to the other prisoners?" he asked.

"They've been sold," I replied with a heavy heart.

Then, the memory of Mitch, an unlikely friend I made during this ordeal, resurfaced.

"What about Mitch?" I asked, suddenly worried.

Realising they probably didn't know what I was talking about, I described what Mitch looked like.

Piston assured me, "Mitch is safe upstairs."

Relief washed over me after hearing those words. I had been worried out of my mind when one of Gregory's men grabbed Mitch from his cell a few hours ago.

It seemed that Piston had sensed something brewing between Whizz and me.

He offered to free the other prisoners, leaving me to watch as Whizz examined the bones still scattered in the cell.

I wondered what he was thinking, and if those bones really belonged to his missing

brother.

Then he turned to me and offered his hand. Dizziness washed over me, and I swayed, but Whizz effortlessly caught me before I could collapse.

As Whizz carried me in his arms, I couldn't help but feel a sense of closeness and safety that I hadn't felt in a long time.

I snuggled against him, my head resting on his chest, and the warmth of his body seemed to envelop me.

In the dimly lit kitchen, Mitch's presence was a reassuring sight.

We sat down together on the floor, our shoulders brushing against each other as we watched the bikers bring more of our fellow captives to safety.

I turned to Mitch. "Are you hurt?" I asked him.

He shook his head, his eyes locked onto mine. "I'll be fine, Dylan."

Then, Mitch shared with me that the bikers knew Manuel, his fiancée, and that Manuel had played a role in orchestrating this rescue.

As we sat there, surrounded by the chaos of our rescue, I couldn't help but think about Whizz.

There was something about the way he had carried me out of that basement, the way he had looked at me with concern, that made my heart flutter.

It was as if, in the midst of this harrowing ordeal, a spark had ignited between us.

I didn't know where it would lead, but one thing was certain: I was no longer alone, and I had Whizz and his friends to thank for that.

Page 6

Source Creation Date: July 17, 2025, 7:10 am

WHIZZ

As I glanced around at the rescued omegas gathered in the kitchen, it was clear that trust wasn't something that came easily to them, and why should it?

They had been through hell, and skepticism was a natural defense. But then there was Dylan, wearing Jake's necklace with a sense of reverence that touched me.

I couldn't help but feel a connection with him, and when our eyes met, he flashed a small, appreciative smile.

It was a moment that left me momentarily frozen.

Before I could dwell on it further, Piston's voice interrupted my thoughts.

"Lenny will be here soon," he informed me.

I nodded, knowing that our fellow biker would be arriving shortly.

Dylan's voice broke through the uncertainty, asking, "What's going to happen to us?"

Turning my attention back to Dylan and the omegas, I explained to them, "Another member of our club will be here soon. We're going to take you to our MC compound where you'll be able to contact your worried families and friends. We'll make all the necessary arrangements for your safe return."

Glancing at Dylan, I added, “You’ll be safe, Dylan. We won’t let anything happen to you. We’ll take care of you all, I promise.”

As the rescued omegas began to talk among themselves, I couldn’t help but wonder if any of them would make a run for it, their trauma driving them to flee from any perceived threat.

I hoped they’d understand that we were there to help, not to harm.

Relief washed over me when I heard the low rumble of a truck engine outside.

Lenny had arrived with the truck we would use to transport the omegas to safety. It was time to get them out of this place.

We ushered the omegas outside, and I watched as Mitch and the others climbed into the truck, clearly eager to put this nightmare behind them.

But when I turned to look at Dylan, he surprised me by saying, “I want to ride with you.”

A small smile tugged at my lips. Dylan was certainly forward, and I found myself liking that about him.

I could feel Piston’s raised eyebrow directed at me, his silent questioning clear.

Without hesitation, I grabbed a spare helmet and helped Dylan put it on, ensuring it was secure.

As I stood back, I couldn’t help but notice how thin and bruised Dylan looked.

Anger welled up inside me as I thought of the werewolves responsible for their

ordeal.

We hadn't managed to rid this operation of all its members; Gregory and his cronies were still out there.

But for now, my focus was on bringing Dylan and the others safely back to Moon Burrow.

Dylan settled behind me as I revved up the motorcycle.

"Hold on," I told him.

"I won't let go," Dylan answered in his wonderfully soft voice.

As we hit the road, I could feel Dylan's grip loosen slightly, and I glanced over at him.

He had fallen asleep during the long ride. It was understandable; he must have been exhausted, both mentally and physically, from the ordeal he'd been through.

Our group made a pit stop at a drive-through to grab some food for the hungry omegas, ensuring they had something to eat before continuing on to Moon Burrow.

It was the least we could do for them.

Finally, we returned to the MC compound, and I could see that the other omegas looked a little overwhelmed and scared as they exited the truck.

But then, Mitch broke away from the group as he spotted his fiancé, Manuel.

Tears welled up in Manuel's eyes as they reunited, and the couple hugged and kissed.

"I've been so worried," Manuel whispered, his voice trembling with relief. "I never thought I'd never see you again."

"I've never lost hope," Mitch replied. "The thought of seeing you again, being with you, that's what kept me going."

It was a heartwarming sight, and it seemed to ease the tension among the other omegas.

They relaxed a bit, seeing that there was hope for a reunion with their loved ones.

Piston stepped forward, smiling.

"Alright, folks, we've got a warm meal waiting for you inside, and you can take a long, hot shower to wash away all the bad memories. If you'd like, we can help you contact your friends and family right away. Whatever you need, we're here for you," Piston said.

Dylan didn't go with the others, he simply leaned his head against my shoulder. I couldn't help but wonder why he had grown close to me.

Was it because I had helped rescue him? It seemed likely, considering the situation.

Yet, I also understood that there was more to it than that. Our connection felt deeper somehow.

Regardless of the reasons, I was going to do what I could for him.

"Don't worry," I told him, reaching for his hand and giving it a reassuring squeeze.

I wondered if I was being too forward but Dylan didn't seem the least bit scared of

me. In fact, he held onto my fingers tightly, as if he didn't want me to let go.

"We'll do our best to return you to your loved ones," I told him.

Dylan's expression turned somber, and I remained silent, giving him space to gather his thoughts.

After a moment, he spoke, his voice carrying a hint of sadness. "I... I have no one waiting for me. I have a sister, but we haven't spoken to each other in 5 years."

Hearing Dylan admit he had no one waiting for him made me realize how alike we were in some ways.

No, I corrected myself. Perhaps I had started out alone, but the MC had become my family now.

"You have me now," I said.

I couldn't help but wonder if I had said too much, if my words had crossed some unspoken line. But I meant them.

Dylan wasn't alone anymore, and I was determined to be there for him, no matter what lay ahead.

DYLAN

The room I had been assigned to was surprisingly spacious.

The bed I lay on was surprisingly comfortable, a stark contrast to the cold, hard floor of the cell I had become accustomed to.

But even in this relatively safe haven, my mind refused to find solace.

Travis, the other rescued omega, lay sprawled out on the bed beside me, his rhythmic snores serving as a haunting reminder of my inability to find rest.

His face, free from the worry lines that had etched themselves onto mine over the past weeks, was relaxed in slumber.

How I envied him.

I turned my gaze away from Travis and stared at the ceiling, my thoughts wandering into the depths of my own personal hell.

Memories of that grimy cell, the overpowering stench of decay, and the constant fear that gripped my heart came rushing back with every attempt to close my eyes.

The room was eerily silent, save for Travis's snores, and the walls seemed to close in on me.

Every creak of the floorboards outside the door sent a jolt of panic through me, a painful reminder of the horrors I had barely escaped.

My fingers instinctively traced the necklace that belonged to Whizz's brother, a small token of hope that had somehow kept me going.

I knew that I couldn't stay awake forever, but the thought of surrendering to sleep was just as terrifying as the nightmares themselves.

My body ached for rest, for an escape from the horrors that plagued my dreams, but the fear of reliving those moments was paralyzing.

Travis's snores continued, blissfully unaware of the inner turmoil that consumed me.

I lay there, eyes wide open, trying to distract myself. Memories of my life before the nightmare began surfaced, like fragile rafts in a stormy sea.

I thought of the kids I used to teach, their laughter and innocent curiosity.

But even those pleasant recollections felt distant, as though I were viewing them through a foggy window.

And then, unbidden, thoughts of Whizz drifted into my mind, like a lifeline thrown into the turbulent waters of my thoughts.

I wondered what he was doing at that very moment. Was he laughing and drinking with his MC brothers downstairs or in his room with his computers?

My mind replayed the ride back to Moon Burrow, the warmth of Whizz's body pressed against mine.

It had been an oddly comforting sensation, despite the circumstances.

Was Whizz single? Was he seeing someone from the MC? The idea of him with a partner sent a pang of jealousy through me, although I had no right to feel that way.

I couldn't help but think of Mitch and Manuel, their tearful reunion serving as a stark reminder of the kind of love that could withstand the darkest of trials.

I wondered if I would ever find a love like that, one strong enough to weather the storms of life.

A small, almost wistful smile tugged at the corners of my lips as I considered the

possibility, even if it seemed like a far-off dream.

But then, a harsh wave of self-doubt crashed over me. Why would someone like Whizz, strong and capable, want a broken omega like me?

The scars, both physical and emotional, ran deep, and I felt like damaged goods.

I had no reason to believe that someone like him would see anything worth loving in someone like me.

Restlessness gripped me like a vice, squeezing any remnants of sleep from my tired body.

I couldn't bear to lie there any longer, listening to Travis's deep snores as he slumbered peacefully.

Without wanting to disturb him, I quietly peeled back the blanket and slid out of the bed, my feet meeting the cool floor.

As I tiptoed out of the room, the dimly lit corridor stretched before me, mysterious and unfamiliar.

The idea had come to me like a flicker of hope - maybe a walk would tire me out, perhaps clear my mind, or even lead me to Whizz.

But now, standing there in the hallway, uncertainty gnawed at me. I didn't know the rules of this place, where I was allowed to wander and where I was not.

I had no clue where Whizz might be within the sprawling MC clubhouse.

My brief moment of bravery was giving way to hesitation.

The quiet murmurs of conversations and laughter from the clubhouse members resonated in the distance, further underscoring my unease.

Each door along the corridor seemed like a portal to an unknown world, and I felt like an intruder in this tight-knit community.

Should I proceed with my impromptu quest to find Whizz?

Or should I retreat to the familiarity of the shared room, even if it meant lying awake in restless contemplation once more?

My heart was already in my throat, and when the deep growl sliced through the air, I felt my whole body jerk in response.

Fear and instincts told me to flee, to run from this new, imposing presence. But something was different about this shifter.

A rabbit's sixth sense, perhaps. His aura didn't scream danger; it whispered caution.

Slowly, I pivoted to face the source of that voice, and my breath hitched as my gaze traveled up.

This bear shifter was a behemoth, a towering mass of muscle, dark hair, and golden eyes that bore into my very soul.

Every instinct I possessed screamed at me to flee, to run for my life. But his demeanor was oddly calm, and his one raised, scarred eyebrow held a curious, yet intimidating, expression.

As I gathered my wits, I found my voice.

"Do you know where Whizz's room is?" I asked, my words trembling slightly.

I couldn't let my nerves show. Finding Whizz was my purpose at this moment.

He regarded me for a moment that felt like an eternity, his golden eyes piercing through me.

Then he replied, "Fourth floor. You won't miss it."

A surge of relief and excitement rushed through me as I thanked him, gratitude evident in my voice.

Before I could think further, curiosity overcame me, and I blurted out, "What's your name?"

The grizzly shifter's lips quirked into a faint, almost rueful smile. "Venom," he answered simply.

I nodded, absorbing this unexpected encounter. Then I turned and made my way to the staircase.

Only later did it dawn on me that I had just conversed with Venom, the lead alpha, and the President of the Grizzly Reapers MC.

Page 7

Source Creation Date: July 17, 2025, 7:10 am

Standing outside Whizz's door on the fourth floor, I couldn't help but feel a wave of curiosity wash over me.

Why did he have an entire floor to himself? Did his role as the MC's hacker warrant this level of privacy and space?

I knew so little about Whizz, and every detail, no matter how small, interested me.

From what I'd seen, Whizz certainly didn't fit the stereotypical image of a hacker, at least not the one I had in my mind – a nerdy guy in a hoodie, hunched over a computer in a dimly lit room.

No, Whizz was different, and in the short time I'd known him, he'd left me with a thirst to unravel more about the enigma that was Whizz.

As I debated whether to knock or not, my thoughts swirled with questions. What did Whizz like to do in his spare time?

Did he have any hobbies or interests beyond hacking? And what about his past? What had led him to the MC? His missing brother?

I wished we had more time to get to know each other. After all, time was something I now had in abundance, no longer confined to that horrible cell.

With a sudden resolve, I ran my fingers through my hair, trying to look presentable, and lifted my hand to rap on the door.

The sound of my knuckles meeting wood echoed in the hallway.

There was a moment of silence before I heard footsteps from the other side of the door.

Whizz's grumpy voice seeped through, sounding rather annoyed, "It's late, whatever it is, tell me tomorrow."

His irritation was palpable, and I found myself torn between making some lame excuse to leave or persevering despite his annoyance.

What could it hurt to talk for a few moments longer? I decided to take a chance.

"Sorry for disturbing you," I began, my voice soft and apologetic, "I just... well, I thought we could talk. Get to know each other better, maybe. But if you're busy or tired, it can wait."

My heart raced as I awaited his response, unsure of how he'd react to my intrusion into his solitude.

Whizz's eyes widened as he took in the sight of me standing at his door.

A flicker of surprise danced across his features before he quickly composed himself.

Running a hand through his dark hair, he spoke, his voice holding a hint of curiosity, "Dylan, I wasn't expecting you."

My mouth went dry as I realized that Whizz wasn't wearing a shirt, clad only in loose jogging pants.

His muscled chest was on full display, adorned with an array of tattoos. My mouth

went dry.

For a moment, I was almost tempted to reach out and touch his chest. But before I could even think about it further, Whizz took a subtle step back, as if to give me space.

“Come on in,” he said.

My mind raced, and I stammered, “I... I don’t want to bother you.”

Whizz’s response was swift and warm, “You’re always welcome to my den.”

I hesitated for a moment, torn between retreating to my room with Travis’s snoring or taking this unexpected opportunity to spend time with Whizz.

A part of me didn’t want to be alone, not tonight.

With a tentative step forward, I entered Whizz’s room, my heart racing.

The door closed behind me, and I couldn’t help but wonder if this was a mistake or a chance to get to know the man who had rescued me from that hellish place.

I glanced around Whizz’s room in fascination. The space was filled with computers and electronic equipment, making it look like a hacker’s haven.

A bed was tucked away in one corner, while gym equipment occupied another.

In front of a large TV, there was a comfy armchair, and multiple game consoles were scattered about.

“Venom mentioned I won’t miss your room,” I commented, realizing why the entire

fourth floor belonged to Whizz. "This space is your work area as well."

Whizz seemed genuinely surprised. "You spoke to Venom?" he inquired.

I nodded and shared, "Yeah, he was kind enough to direct me to your room."

Whizz raised an eyebrow. "Did he scare you?" he asked.

I shook my head. "I thought he was scary at first, but he's actually a nice guy underneath, isn't he?" I asked.

Whizz laughed at that, a warm and genuine sound that filled the room. It startled me for a moment, but then I couldn't help but smile.

I wondered if I could make Whizz laugh again; it was a sound that made the room feel lighter.

I realized that my words had dispelled the initial tension in the air. Whizz seemed more relaxed now.

He asked, "Do you want a drink?"

I nodded, admitting, "I'm a little thirsty."

Whizz headed to a mini-fridge near the gaming and living room area. He opened it and presented me with options.

"I've got orange juice, water, or beer if you want something stronger," he said.

I opted for a beer. Whizz handed me a cold can and opened one for himself.

He cleared a blanket and a pile of books and controllers from the armchair, inviting me to make myself at home.

Sitting down, I took a sip of the beer, savoring its familiar taste. It had been a while since I'd had a beer, and it felt strangely comforting.

"This beer is good," I said, studying the label.

Whizz nodded, taking a sip from his own can. "It's from a local brewery. The bars in Moon Burrow all stock it up."

I looked at Whizz, a sense of curiosity creeping in.

"I didn't manage to get a good look at the town while we were driving to the MC compound," I said.

He smiled. "I could show you around, but only if you intend to stay here a little longer," he said.

His words left a warm feeling in my chest, and I couldn't help but smile back at him.

As I sipped my beer and Whizz said, "Sorry, that was insensitive and presumptuous of me."

Quickly, I added, "No, it wasn't."

Realizing he might have picked up on my hesitation, I decided to share a bit of my feelings.

"I don't really relish going back to Greenfield. It never did feel like home," I said.

A thoughtful silence fell between us. I wondered if Whizz was as nervous as I was.

Maybe he wasn't as put together and confident as I thought.

Moments later, he broke the silence by asking, "Is there something you needed?"

His question made me realize that I never really told him why I was here.

I hesitated for a moment before confessing, "I can't sleep. I'm afraid of having nightmares."

"I get it," Whizz replied softly, setting aside his own can of beer. "Nightmares can be relentless. You're safe here, though. I promise nothing will harm you."

It was an oddly comforting feeling, knowing that he didn't judge me for my vulnerability.

The room seemed to close in on us, the low hum of his computers providing a soothing backdrop to our conversation.

I took another sip of my beer, appreciating the way its bitter taste contrasted with the sweetness of the moment.

Whizz's gaze remained steady on me, his dark eyes filled with a depth of emotion I couldn't quite decipher.

As Whizz offered me his bed for the night, I couldn't help but feel a tinge of disappointment.

Part of me had hoped for a more intimate connection, something that went beyond mere conversation.

But, as I considered it more, I realized that perhaps I wasn't quite ready for that yet, not after the trauma I'd been through.

"I'd like that," I found myself saying, my voice soft, as I accepted his offer.

I climbed into Whizz's bed, feeling the cool sheets against my skin.

As I lay there, I couldn't help but watch Whizz return to his computer chair, his silhouette illuminated by the glow of the screens in front of him.

Whizz caught my glance and flashed me a reassuring smile. It was a small gesture, but it eased some of the uncertainty that had been churning inside me.

I closed my eyes, allowing the weariness to settle in, and let my thoughts drift.

My attraction to Whizz was undeniable.

There was something about him, a combination of strength, kindness, and a hint of vulnerability, that drew me in.

But at the same time, I knew I needed to tread carefully.

I wasn't sure if I was ready for anything beyond friendship, and Whizz deserved someone who could give him their all.

As sleep slowly began to claim me, I decided to take things one step at a time.

For now, I would simply cherish the connection we were building, grateful for the comfort it provided in the midst of my nightmares.

The future could wait; tonight, I was safe and content in Whizz's presence.

The next morning, I woke up feeling surprisingly rested, my night free from the torment of nightmares.

A soft snore caught my attention, and I quietly slipped out of bed to investigate.

There, slumped on his desk, was Whizz, asleep with the faintest of smiles on his face.

I couldn't help but smile too. I wondered what he was dreaming about. Me, perhaps? Probably not, but it was a nice thought.

I grabbed the blanket from the bed and draped it over Whizz's shoulders.

He'd stayed up all night to ensure I could sleep peacefully, and I wanted to offer him the same comfort.

As much as I wanted to stay in that moment, I remembered my plans for the day.

Travis had mentioned that his older brother was picking him up, and I wanted to bid him farewell and wish him the best of luck.

After all, we had shared the pain of our hellish ordeal, and it felt right to say goodbye.

I searched Whizz's cluttered desk for a piece of paper and found a sticky note and pen.

With a brief message of thanks, I left it on his desk and quietly exited the room.

As I made my way back to the room Travis and I had been assigned, I spotted Travis dressed and ready to go in the corridor.

He seemed relieved to see me.

"There you are," Travis exclaimed. "I was worried you ran away or something."

I assured him that I was fine but explained that I hadn't been able to sleep much last night.

"Where did you go?" Travis asked.

I hesitated, not wanting to share the fact that I'd spent the night in Whizz's bed.

So, I told a white lie, saying that I'd fallen asleep in the corridor. Travis laughed, and it was a relief to see him finding moments of happiness again.

I asked him about his brother, and Travis mentioned that he was only ten minutes away and that he was thinking of grabbing a quick bite in the kitchen.

I realized I was still in my boxers and shirt, but the bear shifters had kindly provided some spare clothing, even if it was all a bit oversized.

"Wait for me," I said, and quickly dressed in jeans, tightening them with a belt.

We headed downstairs for a quick breakfast, joining the other omegas at one table.

Finally, a honk from outside signaled Travis's brother's arrival.

I accompanied Travis, and he introduced me to his brother. We exchanged hugs and well wishes, and I wished him good luck in the days ahead.

Travis reminded me to stay in touch and jotted down his home number using a pen on my hand before he left.

It felt good to know that, despite our painful past, I had made a true friend, someone I

could lean on and who would do the same in return.

Page 8

Source Creation Date: July 17, 2025, 7:10 am

WHIZZ

I woke with a start, the sound of a door slamming shut jolting me awake.

I rubbed my eyes, half-convinced that the appearance of Dylan in my room last night had been nothing more than a dream.

But as my senses sharpened, I detected the lingering scent, one that didn't belong to me.

I was usually a private person, guarding my personal space with care. Yet, last night, I had invited Dylan into my den.

Rising from my bed, I instinctively reached for the blanket that had kept him warm.

I couldn't help myself. I sniffed it, imprinting his scent to my memory.

As I approached the bed, I could still see the indentation where Dylan's body had rested.

I stood there, holding Dylan's blanket, my thoughts a chaotic whirlwind.

What was I doing? It was absurd, almost intrusive, to be sniffing his belongings like this.

A small voice in the back of my mind warned me that Dylan might freak out if he discovered what I was up to.

I found myself lost in thought, pondering the chemistry between us.

Maybe it was just my imagination, or perhaps it was the adrenaline from the rescue mission playing tricks on me.

Either way, I couldn't deny that Dylan had a certain appeal.

Shaking my head to clear my thoughts, I decided that it was best not to overthink things.

After all, Dylan had been through hell, and he probably wasn't in the right headspace for romance.

And honestly, neither was I. I wasn't exactly relationship material.

With a sigh, I folded up Dylan's blanket and placed it back where I found it.

Maybe Dylan was better off finding someone else, someone who could give him the care and attention he deserved.

I decided a cold shower was the best way to clear my head.

The water helped wash away any lingering thoughts of romance and kept my focus on the here and now.

After the shower, I quickly dressed and glanced at the pile of work waiting for me on my desk.

It seemed endless, but it was a welcome distraction.

However, curiosity got the better of me, and I couldn't help but wonder how Dylan

was doing. Then I saw his note and smiled.

As I made my way downstairs, my thoughts briefly drifted back to our unexpected encounter last night.

But as I reached the bottom of the stairs, I nearly collided with Venom.

His eyes bore into mine. "How was your night, Whizz?"

I couldn't help but notice the hint of amusement in Venom's voice as he casually asked about my night.

It was pretty clear that he had some inkling about Dylan's surprise visit last night.

Rather than delving into the details or wondering how he knew, I simply shrugged it off.

Denying it would just make things awkward, so I decided to keep it simple.

I replied, "Well, Dylan knocked on my door, and he ended up crashing on my bed. Nothing more to it."

My words came out in a bit of a rush, and I realized I was starting to overexplain.

So, I decided to cut it short before I dug myself into a deeper hole.

I breathed a sigh of relief when Venom gave my shoulder a reassuring pat.

"I know," Venom said with a knowing look in his eyes. It was a relief that he wasn't prying further into the situation.

Venom then mentioned that Dylan was downstairs with Travis. Right. Dylan mentioned Travis in his note.

I had almost forgotten that I was the one who had contacted Travis's older brother, Gordon, to pick him up.

Dylan probably wanted to have one last chat with his friend before he left.

I gave Venom a quick nod before heading downstairs in the hopes of catching up to Dylan.

I arrived just in time to catch the moment when Dylan, Travis, and another shifter were outside the MC building.

The third shifter, tall and golden-haired, shared a striking physical resemblance to Travis.

I figured that had to be Gordon, Travis's older brother.

Deciding to stay in the background, I watched as the three of them traded words.

However, both Travis and Dylan noticed me standing there.

Dylan approached me, his hand gripping my arm, and introduced me to Gordon with pride in his voice.

"He's the one who led the rescue mission," Dylan said, giving me more credit than I was comfortable with.

I nodded, a little embarrassed by the attention, and admitted that I was also the one who had contacted Gordon in the first place.

“Oh, I didn’t know that,” Dylan mumbled, blushing a little. He looked adorable.

Gordon extended his hand, which I shook. “It’s nice to finally put a face to the voice on the phone,” Gordon said.

To my surprise, he gave me a quick, appreciative hug.

”Thank you for saving my brother,” Gordon added.

Travis got inside Gordon’s car. I stood next to Dylan, both of us silently watching Gordon’s truck as it drove out of the compound.

My mind wandered back to a conversation I had with Dylan.

I remembered the sadness in his eyes when he admitted he had no one waiting for him.

It tugged at my heart, and I couldn’t help but glance at him, wondering if he secretly wished he had a family member or a close friend who would pick him up today.

I realized how little I knew about Dylan, and a pang of curiosity hit me.

What were his likes and dislikes? What was his favorite music, his go-to dessert?

But then, I reined in those thoughts. Delving into personal territory could be dangerous.

Dylan had been through enough, and it wasn’t the time to pry into his life. Maybe, if he wanted, he’d share those details with me on his own terms.

DYLAN

The palms of my hands started to sweat, and I couldn't help but wonder if Whizz could somehow sense how nervous I was.

It was strange, really. I had expected not to get any sleep the night before, given how anxious I felt, but somehow, I had fallen into a deep, dreamless slumber.

It was a welcome change because, during my time in that cell, sleepless nights had been the norm.

I'd spent countless hours worrying about what might happen to me, fearing the worst, and wondering if my captors were going to sell me off like some commodity.

I startled a bit, my thoughts scattering like leaves in the wind when I heard Whizz calling my name.

"Sorry," I stammered, "I got distracted there for a moment. What did you say?"

Whizz didn't seem impatient at all. Instead, he smiled at me, a smile that sent my heart racing in a good way.

"You want to head back inside? It's cold out here," Whizz said.

"Alright," I agreed.

As we made our way towards the door, I decided to take the opportunity to ask Whizz if he'd eaten breakfast.

That must have been why he was down here and not in his room, I deduced.

Or perhaps... had he been looking for me after finding my note? The thought made me feel warm all over.

"Did you come downstairs to get something to eat?" I asked Whizz, trying to sound casual but failing miserably.

I didn't know what had possessed me to add, "Or were you looking for me after you saw my note?"

My heart hammered in my chest, and I swallowed hard. Was I actually flirting with Whizz?

I'd only been in one serious relationship before, with my cheating ex-boyfriend Sam, and I wasn't sure if I was being too forward.

Whizz didn't hesitate with his response, and that was one of the things I liked about him. He always meant what he said.

"I was looking for you," he replied, his voice carrying a hint of something that made my cheeks flush.

It was refreshing, a stark contrast to the constant lies that my ex-boyfriend Sam had spun in the past.

"Let's have breakfast together?" I asked.

"Sure," Whizz replied.

We both headed to the kitchen, and to my surprise, I found Piston manning the grill.

Spotting us, he gave Whizz a thumbs-up sign. I felt my cheeks flush for no apparent reason.

Whizz yanked Piston's sleeve to one side and hissed, "Don't be so obvious, idiot."

There was a fondness in Whizz's voice that didn't go unnoticed. These two were close, I realized.

I turned my attention to Piston. "So are you the cook for the MC as well?" I asked.

Meanwhile, Whizz grabbed two plates and loaded them with pancakes, bacon, and eggs.

"I am indeed, in charge of breakfast today," Piston said.

"We take turns doing chores in the clubhouse," Whizz added. "Even the President and Vice President have to clean toilets, if it's their turn."

I was taken aback by their system but also impressed.

"Thanks for the meal," I said to Piston as he handed me a plate.

Whizz gestured for me to grab some coffees from the coffee machine. I complied, and we made our way back to the eating area outside.

We ate for a while, and I couldn't help but notice that Piston was actually a decent cook. The food was delicious, and the coffee helped wake me up.

As we savored the meal, Whizz finally broached the topic I had been pondering.

"Do you know what you'll do next?" he asked.

I put down my fork and looked at him. I had thought about it quite a bit.

I knew the other rescued omegas would eventually be heading back to their homes, and I couldn't stay here forever.

“I guess I need to move on, like the others,” I said.

But before I could voice my thoughts, Whizz interrupted me.

“Who told you that?” he asked, his gaze intent on mine.

I fidgeted with my knife and fork, feeling a little embarrassed.

“Well, no one, really. I just assumed...”

Whizz cut me off gently. “You’re wrong,” he said. “You can stay here as long as you like. And if you ever decide you want to move out of the MC clubhouse and find a place in town, I can help you with that.”

I was taken aback by his offer. It was unexpected and incredibly kind.

Maybe there was more to Whizz than met the eye, and I was beginning to realize that I wanted to get to know him better.

“I do like the idea of staying in Moon Burrow, but there are things I needed to take care of in Greenfield,” I said. “I need to contact my old landlord to sort out my belongings, and I also need to reach out to the kindergarten where I used to work.”

As I outlined my plans, I felt a growing unease.

Returning to Greenfield was something I was both looking forward to and dreading.

It was the place where I had been abducted, and even though I knew the chances of it happening again were slim, I couldn’t shake the fear.

Whizz must have noticed my trembling hands, because he reached across the table

and gently touched my hand.

It was a simple gesture, but it offered me comfort. It was as if he understood my fears without me having to voice them.

"Dylan, you don't have to make this trip on your own," Whizz said, his words slowly sinking in.

The idea took a moment to register, and then it hit me.

"Will you come with me?" I asked, unable to hide the excitement in my voice.

"Of course," Whizz replied without hesitation.

My heart swelled with gratitude and happiness, but a hint of guilt crept in.

I felt selfish for making such a request, knowing how much work awaited Whizz.

I hesitated, then added. "I appreciate it, Whizz, but I don't want to burden you. You've got so much to do here."

"Don't worry about that, Dylan. We all need a break sometimes. When do we leave?" Whizz asked.

Relieved and excited, I pondered on his question.

"How about tomorrow? I want to get this over and done with," I said.

The prospect of having Whizz by my side eased my anxieties about returning to Greenfield.

“I just need to inform Venom about my absence but there shouldn’t be any problems,” Whizz answered.

Page 9

Source Creation Date: July 17, 2025, 7:10 am

I woke up that morning with a flutter of excitement in my chest. Today was the day of our trip.

It might not be a full-fledged road trip, but the thought of heading back to Greenfield, a place that held so many painful memories, had transformed into something else entirely when Whizz offered to come along.

I had been staying in the guest room at the MC clubhouse, the one I used to share with Travis.

I had less nightmares lately and sometimes, Whizz would let me sleep in his bed. It was an unexpectedly nice gesture.

As I stepped outside the clubhouse building, I half-expected to see Whizz on his Harley, but he surprised me.

Parked nearby was a pickup truck, and Whizz was waiting by it.

"I didn't realize you had a truck," I said to Whizz with some surprise.

Whizz gave me a wry grin as he replied, "It's not mine, actually. I borrowed it from Venom."

My eyebrows shot up. "Is that a good idea? Borrowing a truck from Venom?" I asked, concerned.

Whizz shrugged nonchalantly.

"As long as we return it in one piece, it should be fine. Besides," he added with a grin, "this truck can easily fit all your things."

I couldn't help but chuckle at his confidence. Whizz then walked over to the passenger door and opened it for me, just like a gentleman.

"Shall we?" Whizz asked.

My heart raced as I glanced at the open door and then back at Whizz. There was a playful spark in his eyes that sent a thrill down my spine.

"Well, with an offer like that," I teased, stepping closer to the truck, "how can I resist?"

I shot him a huge smile before climbing into the passenger seat.

Whizz closed the door and sauntered around to the driver's side, giving me a wink.

"Glad to hear it," he said with a grin, and then he hopped into the truck.

As I fiddled with the radio, the familiar twang of a country music station filled the truck's cabin.

A smile crept onto my face as I recognized some of the older songs, and I couldn't help but sing along.

Whizz glanced at me, an amused glint in his eyes.

"You're in a good mood today," he remarked.

I shrugged, still grinning.

”Yeah, well, it’s all thanks to your presence. If I were doing this alone, the vibe would be completely different,” I said.

He chuckled, and the warmth of his laughter filled the truck.

It was nice to see Whizz in a lighter mood, and I hoped our trip would continue to be filled with moments like this.

As we reached Greenfield hours later, my mood turned somber.

The memories of my time in captivity and the fear of returning to this place weighed on me.

I knew Whizz had noticed my growing silence, but he didn’t press the issue.

”Where to first?” Whizz asked gently.

I took a deep breath and gave him directions to the kindergarten where I used to work.

”Hey, Dylan, what made you decide to become a teacher?” Whizz asked.

I hesitated for a moment, contemplating how much to reveal, but then I decided to share.

”Well,” I began, ”I grew up in foster care, and one of my foster parents was a kindergarten teacher. They influenced me a lot, and I wanted to make a difference in kids’ lives, just like they did.”

Whizz nodded, showing genuine interest.

”That”s cool. What was it like, being a kindergarten teacher?”

His questions about my old job put me at ease, and I started to open up more.

I told him stories about the kids, the challenges, and the joys of being an educator.

It was a world so different from the one I had experienced during my captivity.

As we approached the school, Whizz”s voice turned serious again.

”What are you planning to tell the school about your disappearance?”

I sighed, realizing this was a question I needed to answer carefully.

”I”m not sure yet. I might just say I had a personal emergency and had to leave abruptly. I hope they”ll understand,” I said.

Telling them the truth would definitely lead to police involvement and that was the last thing I wanted.

Walking into the school with Whizz by my side provided a strange sense of security.

He waited patiently outside the principal”s office while I had a conversation that I”d been dreading.

As I entered Principal Marshall”s office, my nerves started to get the best of me.

The meeting, however, turned out to be far smoother than I”d anticipated.

Principal Marshall, a middle-aged man with a friendly disposition, listened attentively as I explained my absence.

I didn't delve into the specifics of my ordeal, but I gave a credible account of a family emergency.

Surprisingly, Principal Marshall was incredibly understanding.

He shared that he'd faced his own family crisis a few years back, which explained his empathy.

As if nothing had changed, he offered me my old teaching job back.

I considered the offer for a moment, appreciating the principal's kindness.

"Thank you for the kind offer," I said with a smile, "but I think I'll take a little break from teaching for now."

We shook hands amicably, and I left his office with a sense of closure.

Exiting the school's main office, I found Whizz standing there, engrossed in his phone.

When he saw me, he pocketed the device and rose to his feet.

"All good?" he asked, concern etched on his face.

I couldn't help but smile, feeling a weight lifted off my shoulders.

"Yeah, surprisingly. Principal Marshall was understanding, even offered me my old job back."

Whizz nodded, supportive as always.

”That”s great. But I guess you have other plans now?” he asked.

I met Whizz”s eyes and nodded.

”Yeah, I think I need a bit of a break.”

As we left the school grounds, my heart felt a little lighter, and I was grateful to have Whizz by my side.

Our next stop was my old apartment, and I couldn”t help but feel a bit apprehensive about it.

The whole ordeal with my landlord, Mr. Hill, could go either way. I knocked on his door, and to my surprise, he was home.

Mr. Hill, a stern-looking man in his fifties, regarded me with a mixture of surprise and curiosity as he opened the door.

I expected the worst, thinking that he might have disposed of my belongings to make room for a new tenant.

But then Mr. Hill said something that I never anticipated.

”I”ve kept your things,” he informed me, his tone softer than I remembered. ”They”re in the storage room, just in case you ever came back for them.”

Relief washed over me. Maybe not everything in my past was tainted with bad memories.

I thanked Mr. Hill profusely for his kindness, and we headed to the storage room together.

We spent the next hour moving furniture and the rest of my belongings downstairs.

I was genuinely touched by Mr. Hill's organization; everything was boxed up neatly, making the process smoother.

However, as I hefted a box of clothes into the truck bed, exhaustion began to take its toll. I started panting, my muscles aching.

Whizz, ever perceptive, noticed my tiredness.

"I'll get the rest of the stuff," he said, his tone leaving no room for argument.

Whizz didn't even look the least bit tired, which was a little unfair.

"But I can't let you do all this alone," I protested.

He shook his head.

"You've already done plenty, Dylan. Just relax for a moment," Whizz said, his voice firm.

I nodded, giving in, and wiped the sweat from my brow. Whizz glanced across the street to a convenient store.

"Why don't you get us both something to drink?" Whizz suggested.

A cold drink sounded perfect, and I realized I was parched.

"Yeah, that sounds good," I replied, grateful for the brief respite.

I headed to the convenience store and gathered some essentials: chocolate bars, chips,

and two sodas.

As I approached the cashier to pay, I couldn't help but notice that he looked vaguely familiar. He squinted at me for a moment.

"Haven't seen you around lately," he remarked casually.

I didn't want to reveal too much, so I offered a simple explanation. "Yeah, I've been on vacation," I said.

After paying, I left the store with my purchases, but as I stepped outside, an uneasy feeling washed over me.

It was as if my animal instincts were going haywire. I couldn't shake the sensation that I was being watched.

My heart raced as I hurriedly crossed the road, my footsteps echoing loudly in my ears.

I scanned the surroundings, looking for any sign of Whizz, but he was probably still inside the apartment building.

I couldn't shake the feeling of being watched, and I wondered if my paranoia was getting the best of me.

Suddenly, I heard hurried footsteps behind me.

Panic surged through me, and my grip on the brown paper bag containing my purchases tightened.

Without thinking, I broke into a run, my thoughts a jumble of fear and confusion.

Part of me wondered if this was all in my mind, if there was no one actually following me.

I turned into an alleyway, hoping to lose my pursuer, but to my horror, I found myself at a dead end.

Memories of my kidnapping came flooding back, and I could feel my heart pounding in my chest.

With a deep breath, I turned around to face my pursuer.

It was a large, muscled red-haired shifter, and a chill ran down my spine.

I had seen this guy before - he used to be one of the guards at that hellish place.

I desperately hoped I was hallucinating, that it was some horrible trick my mind was playing on me.

But then I saw that familiar red claw tattoo on his neck, and the reality hit me like a ton of bricks.

"How did you break out of your cage, little rabbit?" he sneered, his voice dripping with menace.

Fear knotted my stomach, but I had to gather my courage.

"How did you find me? Were you just waiting for me to return to Greenfield?" I asked.

I hated how my voice trembled a little.

Whizz had explained to me how Gregory Hicks had targeted his victims, and I couldn't help but wonder if that was what had happened to me.

I had no family, save for a distant and uncaring sibling, and very few friends. Well, had, in the plural sense. Now I had Whizz.

The wolf shifter chuckled darkly, his eyes locked onto mine.

"Look at you, asking all sorts of questions. Where did you find all the courage?"

His words sent a shiver down my spine, but I couldn't let fear paralyze me.

Hope surged in my chest as I spotted a familiar figure behind the menacing red-haired wolf shifter.

It was Whizz. This time, it wouldn't be a repeat of the horrors I had endured before.

"Make this easier on yourself and come with me," the wolf shifter growled, his voice dripping with malice.

"He's not going anywhere," Whizz's calm voice cut through the tension.

The wolf shifter's eyes narrowed as he spun around, likely to confront Whizz.

But before he could react, Whizz's fist connected with his jaw in a solid punch. The wolf shifter stumbled back, clearly caught off guard.

"Whizz," I exclaimed in relief.

"Sorry I'm late, that dining table of yours is heavy," Whizz replied.

The wolf shifter, in contrast, was visibly enraged. He lunged back to his feet, but it was clear that he was no match for Whizz.

I watched in awe as Whizz faced off against the wolf shifter.

The red-haired wolf growled menacingly and lunged at Whizz, his claws bared.

Whizz sidestepped with an agility that surprised me. His movements were fluid and precise, like a seasoned fighter.

Whizz struck back with a swift punch to the wolf shifter's midsection.

The impact was like thunder, causing the shifter to stumble back. His lips curled into a snarl, revealing sharp teeth.

But Whizz wasn't done. He followed up with a quick jab to the shifter's jaw, snapping his head to the side.

I winced at the sickening sound of the impact. The wolf shifter fell to the ground, dazed.

Whizz didn't hesitate. He leaped onto the fallen shifter, pinning him to the ground.

With one hand on the shifter's throat, Whizz growled, "You're not going to hurt him again."

The wolf shifter's struggles grew weaker as Whizz maintained his grip. It was clear who was in control of the situation.

Whizz partially shifted his left hand to claws and without hesitation, cut the wolf shifter's throat.

Whizz stood up, avoiding the blood spray, then he looked at me, expression grave and unreadable.

Then I realized he didn't want me to see him killing that wolf shifter.

"Let's get out of here," Whizz suggested.

"What about the body?" I asked.

"I'll get someone from the MC to take care of it," Whizz said.

Page 10

Source Creation Date: July 17, 2025, 7:10 am

Sitting on the edge of the motel bed, I couldn't help but overhear Whizz's hushed conversation on the phone.

His words sent a shiver down my spine, and I realized the depth of what he had just done for me.

After he hung up, Whizz turned to me, his expression calm.

"The body is taken care of, Dylan," Whizz said in a reassuring voice. "There's no way it can be traced back to us."

The relief that washed over me was palpable. It was like a huge weight had been lifted from my shoulders.

For a moment there, I had been envisioning Whizz behind bars because of me, and the thought had been unbearable.

Whizz moved to sit beside me on the bed, his piercing gaze locked onto mine.

"What's bothering you?" he asked gently, as if he could read my thoughts.

I hesitated, my gaze dropping to my fidgeting hands.

"It's just... all of this, Whizz," I admitted, my voice barely above a whisper. "Everything you're doing for me. I don't want you to get into trouble because of me."

Whizz reached out, placing a hand on my shoulder, his touch warm and reassuring.

"Dylan," he said softly, "I told you before, I won't let anything happen to you.

I met his gaze, and in those intense eyes of his, I found a sense of safety and belonging that I had been missing for so long.

And in that moment, I realized I wouldn't trade it for anything in the world.

Whizz pulled me into a warm, reassuring hug, and I welcomed the embrace. It was amazing how just his presence could make me feel so safe.

However, I knew I had to address something that was lingering in my mind, something I couldn't ignore.

"Whizz," I began hesitantly, my voice muffled against his chest. I continued, "would it have been better if you brought that wolf shifter in for questioning instead of... well, you know?"

There was a brief silence, and I could feel Whizz's grip on me tightening just slightly.

"I scared you back in the alleyway, didn't I?" Whizz finally asked.

I leaned back slightly to look up at him.

Whizz's expression was conflicted, as if he was worried that I might see him differently now.

He didn't want me to witness that violent side of him, the one he used to protect, not harm.

I shook my head, reassuring him.

"No, Whizz," I said softly, "you didn't scare me. I understand that being protective is part of an alpha shifter's nature. The difference is that you use your strength to protect others, not to hurt and intimidate them like those wolf shifter captors did."

Whizz's eyes softened as he gazed down at me, and a small, grateful smile tugged at the corners of his lips.

In that moment, I knew that I had made the right choice when I decided to trust him.

I couldn't help but tease Whizz.

"You know, you still haven't answered my question," I said in a playful tone.

Whizz's gaze met mine, and he sighed, his expression softening as he spoke.

"I got so angry, Dylan," Whizz admitted. "I couldn't think. All I knew was that if that wolf shifter had laid a hand on you, I was going to end him."

His words sent a strange warmth through me, even though I felt a pang of guilt for feeling that way.

I wasn't normally bloodthirsty or vengeful by nature, but those wolf shifters had put me through hell.

Their cruelty and brutality were etched in my memory, and the thought of them facing justice in one form or another didn't seem entirely unwelcome.

A wayward strand of hair fell down my face and Whizz automatically tucked it behind my ear. I curved my lips upward to a smile.

"I hate to bring this up," Whizz began, tone somber, "but did you recognize that wolf shifter?"

I nodded, my heart tightening in my chest. I felt vulnerable, exposed, as I explained how I had this eerie sense of being stalked after leaving the convenience store.

I recognized the shifter as one of the guards from the house, the vivid red claw tattoo etched into my memory.

"That tattoo," Whizz muttered, his brow furrowed in frustration. "It's probably a pack or gang tattoo. I can't believe I never noticed it before."

I reached out, my fingers lightly tracing his face, trying to soothe the lines of worry on his forehead.

"You don't have to be so hard on yourself," I told him. "You've done so much for me, for all the rescued omegas."

Then, in a daring moment fueled by the intensity of our emotions, I leaned in and kissed him.

I wasn't sure how Whizz would react. At the very least, he didn't seem repulsed by my kiss.

In fact, Whizz settled his hand on the back of my neck and I liked that he took charge of the situation.

He returned my kiss with another. The next one was rough, full of need. I moaned when Whizz released me, resting his forehead against mine.

"Dylan, you drive me crazy," Whizz murmured.

His confession made my heart beats quickened. My palms were sweaty. I couldn't remember the last time I was this nervous.

"After what you endured, I should be giving you space not doing...this," Whizz began.

"I kissed you first," I pointed out.

"And you should've known better," he pointed out.

"Don't treat me like I'm fragile," I snapped. Then softened my voice as touched his cheek.

I continued, "Whizz, I know what I want. I want you."

My pulse raced as I watched gold swallow both of Whizz's irises.

It wasn't just his human half I was talking to. His grizzly side had also come out.

"You're dangerous, Dylan," Whizz said.

We fell on each other like hungry animals. I fumbled for his jacket, then his shirt. Whizz peeled off my clothes in a hurry.

In no time at all, we were both naked on the bed. I was lying on my back and Whizz was on top of me, straddling me.

A thrill crept down my spine.

"I shouldn't be taking advantage of you," Whizz said.

I could see doubts still clouded him. My laughter caught him off-guard I think.

“Whizz, I took advantage of you tonight,” I said. “Now kiss me. Please.”

That last word did the trick. Whizz lowered his mouth to mine. Heat washed down my throat.

The scent of him was so intoxicating. He closed his hand over mine, holding them instead of restraining them.

Whizz spoiled me with more kisses. Pretty soon, we were both hard for each other.

“I want you in me,” I whispered. “Help me forget everything they’d done to me. I want to replace those bad memories with good ones.”

Whizz lifted my legs over his broad shoulders. He released my hands, kissed me again. This kiss was tender and sweet.

Then he pushed one, two digits inside me. I moaned, clutching at the sheets.

Omega shifters were self-lubricating and I was already wet and willing for him.

Whizz entered me, slow and steady. I moaned, aware of how large he was, how he wonderful he felt inside me.

Once Whizz pushed past the thick ring of muscle, it became easier.

Finally buried hilt-deep in me, Whizz slanted his mouth over mine, his kiss deep.

Then he began to move, slow, wonderful strokes at first before picking up at the pace at my pleas.

The pressure inside me began to build. My balls drew in tight against my body.

It felt like a part of my soul, my inner rabbit, drifted to touch Whizz's ferocious grizzly...and it felt amazing.

The next time Whizz pushed inside me, I arched my back and whimpered. Whizz grinned at me, then kept aiming for my prostate.

The next time our bodies joined, I climaxed. My vision blurred. The world fell away from my line of sight as I came, screaming out Whizz's name.

Whizz wasn't far behind. After pumping in and out of me a few more times, he erupted, filling my ass with his seed.

He collapsed next to me, tugging me close to him. We lay there for a moment, as the sweat of our bodies cooled and our hearts beat as one.

Closing my eyes, I rested my head against his chest. Finally, I could speak again.

"I hope you didn't regret that," I whispered.

Oh no. Maybe I shouldn't have spoken at all? Whizz only smiled as he stroked my hair.

"Of course not. I would treasure our first time. Always," he said.

I could get used to this, I thought. Ending the nights with Whizz by my side and seeing his face the first thing in the morning.

Whizz was so good, so perfect. Did someone as tainted as I, deserve someone like him? A dark voice in my head whispered.

Whizz touched my cheek, frowning. He rubbed at the single tear that slipped down my eye.

“What’s wrong? Did I hurt you?” He asked, concerned.

“No,” I whispered. “Sorry, it’s me.”

I couldn’t believe how emotional I had just gotten.

It was embarrassing, and I needed to change the topic before things got even more awkward.

Clearing my throat, I asked, “Are you hungry?”

Whizz glanced at me and nodded.

“Yeah, I could eat. We haven’t had dinner yet,” Whizz replied.

“We passed by a diner earlier. You want to head there?” Whizz asked me.

I thought for a moment then shook my head.

“Nah, how about we stay in instead? We can order room service,” I said.

That sounded like a more comfortable option.

“Sure, room service it is,” Whizz agreed.

Whizz reached for the hotel room phone and asked, “So, what do you feel like eating?”

I contemplated for a moment.

"A burger and fries sound nice, along with a vanilla milkshake," I said.

Whizz nodded as he relayed the order to the person on the other end of the line.

"Got it, one burger, fries, and a milkshake coming right up. I'm having the same," Whizz told me.

I smiled. "Thanks, Whizz. I'm going to take a quick shower while we wait for the food," I said.

Whizz nodded again, and I hurried into the bathroom, hoping that the warm water would help me regain my composure.

I needed some time to process my emotions, and I was thankful that Whizz was being so supportive through it all.

The shower left me feeling rejuvenated, the hot water having washed away my earlier emotional breakdown.

The tantalizing scent of food wafted through the room, reminding me of how hungry I was.

Whizz was already settled on the bed, flipping through TV channels, his relaxed posture making me smile.

"My turn to shower," Whizz announced, looking up from the remote.

He got up and headed for the bathroom, and I heard the water start running shortly after.

While he showered, I made my way to the small dining table where our room service meal was laid out.

The sight of the burger, fries, and milkshake made my stomach growl impatiently.

Whizz didn't take long in the shower, and before I knew it, he was back in the room, freshly dressed and ready to join me for our meal.

As we settled on the bed with our plates, I reached for the TV remote and began scrolling through the channels.

"I found a rom-com. How about this?" I asked, selecting the movie and glancing over at Whizz.

He smiled and nodded, taking a bite of his burger.

"Sounds perfect. This is nice too, isn't it? Hanging out, I mean," he replied, his eyes warm and inviting.

I couldn't help but agree with a contented sigh as I took a bite of my own meal.

We ate in comfortable silence, occasionally sharing a laugh or a comment about the movie.

It was a simple moment, but I loved every minute of it as much as the sex earlier.

Once we finished our food, we set aside the plates and nestled into the cozy hotel bed, pulling the covers over us.

The sheets smelled fresh, I realized. Had Whizz called in housekeeping while I was showering?

Smiling, I leaned against Whizz's shoulder and soon fell asleep.

Page 11

Source Creation Date: July 17, 2025, 7:10 am

I woke up in the dimly lit motel room, and the first thing I saw was Dylan lying peacefully next to me, his features softened in slumber.

A warm smile crept onto my face as I took in the sight of him, his steady breathing and the way his hair fell gently over his forehead.

It was a wonderful sight and it filled me with a sense of contentment.

As I lay there, I couldn't help but picture more mornings like this, waking up beside Dylan, sharing tender moments together.

Sure, yesterday had been a terrifying ordeal when someone had tried to take Dylan away, but it had also brought us closer.

In a way, it had made me realize just how much I enjoyed spending time with him, getting to know him better during this trip.

I didn't want this journey to end and yet my beeping phone reminded me of my duties back in Moon Burrow.

Sighing, I grabbed my phone from under the pillow and saw multiple emails and texts from some of my MC brothers and Venom.

Deciding I would take care of them later, I put my phone on silent mode again.

None of the messages needed my immediate attention.

"Good morning, Whizz," Dylan's soft voice greeted me.

The morning light streamed through the curtains, casting a warm glow on his face.

He looked gorgeous, his eyes still sleepy but filled with a hint of mischief. Hints of his skin peeked at me from the comforter.

I couldn't resist the temptation. Leaning in, I sneaked a quick kiss, feeling his lips against mine.

I remembered how amazing it felt when I claimed him the night before. Dylan's cheeks flushed a delightful shade of pink as he pulled back, looking a bit surprised.

"Is something wrong?" he asked.

I shook my head, a smile playing on my lips.

"Nothing's wrong, Dylan. Everything's perfect," I told him.

It seemed he didn't want this mini holiday to end either.

I knew we had to return to Moon Burrow today, but I was determined to make the most of our time together.

"Hey, how about breakfast at that diner we spotted yesterday?" I suggested.

"Sounds great, Whizz," Dylan answered. He cleared his throat and shyly asked me. "Do you want to shower together?"

I grinned. "How could I say no?"

After a long, refreshing shower, Dylan and I and checked out of the motel. We then made our way to the diner we'd seen the day before.

The place had that comforting smell of breakfast foods and coffee that made me feel right at home.

We managed to snag a cozy booth by the window.

Dylan looked at me with a smile that lit up the room, and I couldn't help but smile back.

There was something about this breakfast that felt special.

We glanced at the menu, but our eyes kept finding each other, like we had a secret between us.

When the waiter came to take our orders, our hands brushed under the table, and it sent a little jolt of excitement through me.

Dylan and I both ordered coffee and waffles. Our conversation felt effortless, which surprised me.

Normally, I was awkward around most people but with Dylan I felt right at home.

I took a sip of my coffee, then turned to Dylan and asked, "So, what are your plans next?"

Dylan paused for a moment, his brow furrowed in thought.

Finally, he looked up and said, "I think I'd like to stay at the MC clubhouse for a few more days, at least until I can find a job."

I nodded, understanding. “What kind of job? Teaching again?”

Dylan’s eyes brightened as he replied, “Yes. I’ve always had a passion for working with kids.”

A smile tugged at the corners of my lips. With his warm personality, I could imagine Dylan was great with kids.

”That’s great to hear. Moon Burrow has a few kindergartens, and even though it’s the middle of the school year, there might be some job openings.”

Dylan’s face lit up with hope

”That sounds perfect. I’d love to give it a shot.” Dylan fidgeted with his napkin, then said, “Whizz, I just wanted to let you know that once I manage to secure a job, I’ll be moving out of the MC clubhouse. I plan to look for an apartment in town.”

I looked at him and nodded. I could understand his need to have a place he could call his own.

“Dylan, you know you can count on me for help with moving anytime, right? I’ll be there,” I said.

A warm smile across his face.

”Oh, I know you will. You’re handy when it comes to carrying and moving heavy boxes and furniture, aren’t you?” Dylan asked in a teasing voice.

I chuckled at his words, the banter between us lightening the mood. ”You got that right. I’ve got muscles to spare,” I said.

I was genuinely happy for Dylan, knowing that he was taking steps toward a future that he wanted.

Sure, I'd miss having Dylan nearby but he probably didn't want to live at the MC clubhouse forever.

As we sat at the diner, our conversation had been relatively light and easygoing until Dylan's question changed the mood entirely.

"What about you?" he asked, his tone sober.

I grew silent for a few moments, my gaze dropping to my coffee cup.

Memories of Jake's disappeared swirled in my mind as I contemplated how to respond.

Finally, I took a deep breath and said, "Remember the bones we found in your cell? I asked a friend of mine who works in forensics to help me identify them."

Dylan reached across the table and gently took my hand in a gesture of comfort, his touch grounding me.

I cracked a pained smile, grateful for his support.

"Honestly," I admitted, "a part of me hopes those bones belong to Jake. I've been looking for him for so long, it's terrible, wondering and worrying all this time."

I paused, my thoughts heavy with guilt. "I know that makes me sound selfish," I said.

Dylan shook his head, his eyes filled with understanding.

”Whizz, I’ve overheard Piston and Venom’s conversation once. It sounds like you’ve been doing this for a long time, investigating disappearances. You’ve helped so many people,” he said.

His words touched me deeply, and I couldn’t help but smile.

It was reassuring to know that even though my quest to find Jake had consumed me, Dylan saw the bigger picture and appreciated the impact I’d had on others.

I couldn’t help but reflect on the special connection I shared with Dylan. I had always struggled with opening up and confiding in others, but with him, it felt different.

Was it because Dylan was special? The word ”mate” came to mind, and it sent a shiver down my spine.

It was a word filled with weight and commitment, one that had frightened me for a long time.

Yet, the chemistry between Dylan and me was undeniable, and I couldn’t ignore it.

Dylan had just gone through hell, and I knew I wasn’t in any fit state to become anyone’s anything.

My life was a mess, filled with unfinished business.

Yet, despite all my flaws and insecurities, I could imagine if Jake were still alive, he would tell me not to let Dylan go.

The thought of losing Dylan was terrifying.

As I looked into his eyes, I realized that maybe, just maybe, it was worth confronting

my fears and embracing this connection between us.

Dylan deserved nothing less.

"If the bones do belong to Jake, what will you do next?" he asked, his voice hesitant.

Dylan's question hung in the air. I leaned back against the booth, taking a moment to gather my thoughts.

"You know," I began, "I've thought of this moment a lot. I always pictured the best-case scenario, that I'd find him alive somehow, and we'd have a happy reunion. But deep down, I knew that was just a fantasy of mine."

A heavy silence settled between us, and I stared down at the coffee in my cup, as if it held the answers to all the questions I had carried for so long.

Finally, I broke the silence.

"I'll burn his bones and take his ashes back to our old cabin. I'll bury him next to Wade, our dad," I said.

Tears welled up in Dylan's eyes, and it was clear he was sad for my sake. I hadn't meant to make him sad.

"I'll come with you, if that helps," Dylan offered.

My throat tightened, and I replied hoarsely, "I would like that."

Dylan's offer was a comforting gesture, a reminder that I wasn't alone. I met his gaze and managed a small, grateful smile.

”Thank you for the kind offer, Dylan. It would mean a lot to me,” I admitted.

Page 12

Source Creation Date: July 17, 2025, 7:10 am

The drive back to Moon Burrow was a quiet one. The landscape passed by in a blur, and I occasionally sneaked glances at Whizz.

His expression was thoughtful, and I wondered if he was lost in his own thoughts about Jake.

I found myself rubbing the necklace around my neck sometimes. An unconscious gesture, but one that offered me comfort.

Eventually, he noticed my sidelong glances and flashed me a reassuring smile.

It eased some of the tension that had settled between us, and I decided not to press the topic of Jake further.

It was clear that Whizz had a lot on his mind, and I didn't want to add to his burden.

Hours later, we arrived at the MC compound. It seemed Whizz had called ahead because his friend Piston was there, waiting for us.

Piston and Nitro stepped forward, ready to lend a hand.

Without wasting any time, they helped Whizz unload my furniture and boxes from the truck, carrying them up to my room.

As the last of my things were unloaded and placed in my new space, I thanked Piston and Nitro for their help.

Their assistance made the transition much smoother.

Feeling a little tired from all the unpacking, I decided to sit down for a moment in my room.

It was still surreal to think that I was back in Moon Burrow and that I had Whizz's support through it all.

As I settled into a chair, I heard footsteps approaching outside my door.

The voices were familiar—Whizz's and another biker's, Venom.

"How was the trip?" Venom asked Whizz.

Whizz's response was calm and collected.

"It was fine, although one of Dylan's old kidnappers was there."

My heart skipped a beat at the mention of the terrifying werewolf.

"The werewolf was tracking Dylan?" Venom inquired.

Whizz's voice carried a hint of seriousness.

"More like lying in wait for him. I guess Gregory Hick's group finally found the empty house and cells. My guess is, he sent some of his men out to the places where they abducted the victims. I already sent out warnings to the omegas we'd rescued and their families," Whizz explained. "Piston and Nitro had also volunteered to check on all of them."

My heart raced as I listened in.

Whizz had acted so normal and chill during our trip that I hadn't realized he had also made such arrangements to protect those he had helped rescue.

It was clear that he was always one step ahead, and the realization filled me with awe.

A small, quiet voice inside me spoke up. It was my rabbit half, and it whispered, "He's a good one, Dylan."

I couldn't help but agree with that assessment.

Whizz was unlike anyone I had ever met, and perhaps, I thought, he was too good for the likes of someone like me.

Did I deserve such a wonderful mate?

It was a question that continually gnawed at me, but for the first time in my life, I wanted someone so badly that my heart ached.

The connection I felt with Whizz was undeniable, and it was something I couldn't ignore.

Part of my decision to leave Greenfield wasn't just about safety; it was also about seeking a fresh start in a new place.

If I moved to Moon Burrow, I'd have the chance to get to know Whizz better, to explore the possibilities of us.

It was a risk, but one that felt worth taking for the chance at something truly special.

As I sat alone in my room, I realized that no one was talking outside anymore.

Had Venom and Whizz finished their conversation? I debated whether to leave my room and knock on Whizz's door.

Was it too forward of me to do that?

Maybe Whizz wanted some time alone; after all, we had been inseparable during our entire trip.

Chewing on my lower lip, I contemplated my next move. I decided to take a shower, hoping it would help clear my mind.

But even after the shower, I was still indecisive about what to do.

Then it struck me—maybe I could bring Whizz dinner. It would be a good excuse to stop by his room and check on him.

Proud of myself for finally coming to a decision, I headed to the kitchen.

Once there, I felt a little shy about asking the cook on duty for some food.

After all, I was just a guest at the MC compound, not a resident. But I mustered up the courage and approached the cook.

To my relief, it was someone I knew.

“Hungry?” Nitro asked.

“I um, actually wanted to bring Whizz some dinner. He'd done so much for me you see,” I said.

“Sure, grab whatever you like,” Nitro said. “We're having bolognese and hotdogs

today. That's all I can make, you see."

"Thank you, Nitro," I said, grabbing two plates.

With the food in hand, I made my way up to the fourth floor.

I was trying to figure out how to knock on Whizz's door while holding two plates of food.

Before I could decide, I noticed that the door was ajar. Whizz had forgotten to close it properly.

I silently thanked my good luck and gently pushed the door open.

Inside, I froze when I heard Whizz emit a soft growl, a sound filled with frustration and grief.

He was talking to someone, and it dawned on me that he must be on the call with his friend from forensics.

My heart sank as I realized the timing of my arrival wasn't ideal. I stood there, torn between backing out and doing what I had come for.

Whizz had been there for me all this time, and it was time for me to reciprocate in some way.

If he wanted me out, I would leave without hesitation.

Taking a deep breath, I announced, "Whizz? I'm coming in."

I pushed the door open and stepped into Whizz's room, hoping to offer some comfort

or assistance, even if it was just a small gesture.

I gently closed the door behind me and turned my attention to Whizz.

He sat there, staring at his cellphone in hand, as if he hadn't heard me speak or even noticed my entrance.

I couldn't begin to imagine the state of mind he was in at that moment.

Quietly, I set the plates of food on Whizz's desk, trying not to make any sudden movements that might startle him.

Back in the diner, Whizz had mentioned that he was anticipating the bad news that the bones belonged to his brother, Jake.

But hearing that confirmation must have been a different and far more difficult matter.

I knelt down in front of Whizz's computer chair, waiting for him to notice me.

His gaze remained fixed on the phone screen, tears glistening in his eyes. I felt a lump in my throat, overwhelmed by the depth of his emotions.

Finally, Whizz hastily wiped the tears from his eyes and blinked at me, as if only just realizing I was there.

"Dylan, what are you doing over there?" he asked, surprised.

In response to Whizz's question, I didn't offer an explanation. Instead, I rose to my feet, moved closer, and climbed onto Whizz's lap.

Without hesitation, I wrapped my arms around him and gave him a warm, comforting hug.

Whizz responded immediately, pulling me close and hugging me tighter, as if he didn't want to let me go.

We stayed like that for a while, finding solace in each other's embrace. In that moment, words were unnecessary.

"I'm so sorry, Whizz," I finally found my voice.

"Me too. I thought I was ready for the news, but I wasn't. Dylan, I failed him. I failed to save my brother," Whizz whispered.

Seeing Whizz like this wrecked me. I always thought of Whizz as invincible.

When he saved me the first time and the second time in Greenfield, he was like my white knight. A hero in my eyes.

Right now though, he was vulnerable and raw.

I reached inside my shirt and pulled out the necklace that had once belonged to Jake.

"I have a confession to make," I said.

"A confession?" Whizz asked.

"On bad nights, I held onto this necklace and found some solace in it. Maybe Jake's spirit had been with me in that cell, watching over me," I said.

Whizz smiled, and I could tell he liked that thought. But he still carried the weight of

his guilt.

“Whizz, think of Mitch and Travis, and all the people you saved while looking for your brother,” I told him. “You made a difference in their lives. In my life.”

”Do you think Jake would’ve been proud of me?” he asked in a voice that cracked with emotion.

”I’m sure he’s looking down on you right now, smiling,” I said. ”He’s probably telling everyone in the afterlife what a great and awesome big brother he has.”

Moved by my words, Whizz hugged me again, his embrace tight and warm. Then, he leaned in and kissed me gently.

”Thank you, Dylan,” he whispered. ”For those kind words.”

Page 13

Source Creation Date: July 17, 2025, 7:10 am

Gregory Hicks sat in the ruined kitchen of the old house, his eyes fixed on the clock that hung on the cracked wall.

He had been waiting for another call from Dawson, the wolf shifter he had sent to Greenfield.

Time seemed to stretch endlessly as the minutes ticked by, but the call he had been anticipating never came.

Anxiety gnawed at him as he wondered what could have gone wrong.

Dawson had been given a special task, one that was crucial to their plans, and failure was not an option.

Dylan Riggs was going to be the key to his retirement. Gregory had a wealthy buyer lined up for that omega.

If he could retrieve Dylan, then the other missing omega wouldn't matter. Gregory could have shouldered the rest of his losses.

At least that was what Gregory had thought when he sent Dawson to Greenfield just in case Dylan would appear there.

When Dawson called him earlier and reported he had sighted Dylan, Gregory's hopes had gone up. Mark had always been reliable.

He knew what needed to be done and always deferred to Gregory for instructions.

Dawson was the ideal foot soldier in his operation.

Now, Gregory still couldn't shake the feeling that something had gone terribly amiss in Greenfield, just like it did in this house.

When Gregory and his crew returned to their base, they were met with a shocking sight.

The place had been ransacked, and it was empty of their valuable merchandise.

All the cells had been left open. Some of the furniture in the house were trashed.

Gregory felt a surge of anger that he hadn't experienced in a long time.

Their operation had been streamlined and perfected over the years, and this breach was a severe blow.

The base still carried the old scent of bears—grizzly shifters, to be precise.

They hadn't bothered hiding their presence, which meant they wanted Gregory to know they were responsible.

He couldn't allow his group to be seen as weak; in this ruthless world, the strong devoured the weak.

His grandfather had taught him that lesson well.

Gregory clenched his fists, his jaw tight. He knew he couldn't let this offense go unpunished.

He would track down the grizzly shifters responsible and make them regret crossing

him.

This theft would not go unanswered, not if Gregory had anything to say about it.

Late afternoon had slowly transitioned into late evening, and there was still no call from Dawson.

Gregory's frustration deepened as he considered the possibility that something had happened to Dawson.

The enemy they were dealing with was no amateur, and the fact that Dawson hadn't checked in was troubling.

Gregory decided to check the rest of his messages, hoping for any sign of information or success.

However, what he found was disheartening. The members of his crew he had sent out on various missions had all reported failures.

They mentioned they felt they were being watched and Gregory told them to pack up and return to base.

It was clear that the enemy group they were up against was composed of professionals.

Gregory knew that they were facing a dangerous and skilled enemy, and he needed to regroup and come up with a new plan.

The setbacks were frustrating, but he was determined not to let this enemy group get the upper hand.

Gregory knew that before he could take any decisive action, he needed crucial information about the enemy he was up against.

Going into this blind would be a grave mistake, and he couldn't afford any more failures.

He started devising a plan to gather intelligence on his adversaries. He would need to find their weaknesses, vulnerabilities, and any gaps in their defenses.

Gregory understood that knowledge was power, and he was prepared to do whatever it took to uncover the details he needed to turn the tide in his favor.

The rumble of a truck engine outside drew Gregory's attention away from his thoughts.

He swiftly left the kitchen, only to find Thomas helping a severely injured Finn out of his truck.

"What happened?" Gregory demanded, his concern evident in his voice.

The wolf shifters in his crew weren't known for being pushovers, so seeing one of them in such a state was concerning.

Had Thomas and Finn bitten off more than they could chew?

"Finn got too close to one of our targets," Thomas explained in a rush. "Then, out of nowhere, this biker appeared and tore into him. Neither of us noticed he was there."

Gregory's blood ran cold as Thomas continued the story, and together, they brought Finn into the kitchen to tend to his injuries.

The word "biker" hung in the air, and Gregory couldn't help but ask again, a sense of dread forming in his gut.

"Describe him to me," he said. Gregory tried to keep his voice steady because he was still the alpha here.

"What did he look like, and what was he wearing?" Gregory demanded.

"Gregory, Finn's bleeding out on your kitchen table. He needs medical attention," Thomas blurted.

Gregory growled and the sound echoed in the kitchen. Thomas paled and wisely, did not point out Finn's condition again.

Finn was just being a baby. He wouldn't die from those wounds.

Thomas did his best to recount the details. As he described the biker's appearance and the patch on his jacket, Gregory's heart sank.

Gregory had been hoping his guess was wrong.

He didn't need to hire a specialist to investigate the group that had stolen from them. The description fit all too well.

They were up against the Grizzly Reapers MC, a group that Gregory had hoped to avoid crossing paths with at all costs.

Gregory found himself with two difficult options. He could walk away, abandoning the current operation and starting fresh at a different base.

It would mean leaving behind the stolen goods and kissing his long-awaited

retirement goodbye.

As he considered this option, his inner wolf howled inside him in disagreement.

The idea of letting the grizzly shifters, this MC of monsters, get away with what they had done was inconceivable.

Gregory had invested too much time and effort into his operation to let it crumble without a fight.

He made his decision. The grizzly shifters had to pay, and Gregory was willing to do whatever it took to ensure they faced the consequences of their actions.

Retirement could wait; revenge was a dish he intended to serve cold.

Page 14

Source Creation Date: July 17, 2025, 7:10 am

Isat in the MC clubhouse, sharing a beer with Piston. The familiar hum of activity in the background provided a comforting backdrop to our conversation.

"I'm sorry to hear about your brother," Piston said, his tone filled with genuine sympathy.

I nodded, taking a sip of my beer.

"Yeah," I replied. "I always expected it, but it still stings, you know? To know I'll never see Jake grown up."

Piston looked at me, a hint of hesitation in his eyes. "Why don't you ever talk about him, Whizz?"

I sighed, running a hand through my hair. It was a question I had heard many times before, and it never got any easier to answer.

"It's just... too hard," I admitted.

Talking about Jake brought back memories and emotions that I often found overwhelming.

Some wounds were best left untouched.

"Tell me about the werewolf who attacked Travis," I asked Piston, wanting to change the topic.

It had been the right move sending Piston and Nitro to check up on the rescued omegas and their families.

The recent events had me on edge, and I needed to know more about our adversaries.

Piston leaned forward, ready to share his account.

"I was keeping an eye on Travis and his brother," he began. "They were having lunch in town, nothing out of the ordinary. But then, I noticed a dark blue car with a different state license plate following them at a distance," Piston said.

I listened intently as he continued, recounting the details of what he had witnessed.

"The moment Travis' brother entered a hardware store, that's when it happened. The wolf shifter in the car behind them jumped out and tried to nab him right there on the street," Piston said.

My fists clenched involuntarily as I imagined the scene.

"And what did you do?" I asked him.

"I intervened," he said. "I clawed at the wolf shifter, and he was injured. The second wolf shifter in the car grabbed his companion, and they drove away in a hurry."

"I debated going after them," Piston admitted, his brow furrowed with uncertainty. "But Travis looked distraught, and his brother ran out of the store. I explained what happened to them."

I considered Piston's words and decided I would have done the same in his situation.

Going after the two wolf shifters would have been foolish, because who knew how

many Piston would be up against?

“Travis was unhurt?” I asked, a wave of relief washing over me at the thought that at least nothing bad happened to Travis.

Piston nodded in response.

”Yeah, they both decided it was best to leave town for a few months. Travis has a good brother,” he added.

I agreed with a nod. That was most likely the best solution.

“I should probably send word to the other omegas,” I said out loud.

“Good idea. Tell them to leave town until things calm down and we deal with this group,” Piston said.

He glanced at me and asked me the question that had been on both our minds. ”We will take care of this group, won’t we?”

I met his gaze. ”We will,” I replied firmly. ”The world would be a better place without these wolf shifters.”

”Let me know when you have more information,” Piston said, wrapping up this particular topic.

He knew I probably needed more information on Gregory Hicks’ group before I would make any new moves.

Then, he shifted gears. ”I heard you’re heading back to your old hometown to bury Jake’s bones, and that Dylan’s coming along?”

I nodded in response, somewhat surprised that this information had reached Piston so quickly.

"Yeah, that's the plan," I confirmed. "But may I ask where you heard that?"

Piston chuckled, a knowing look in his eyes.

"Oh, here and there," he replied casually. "You and Dylan being an item isn't exactly a secret, you know."

I couldn't help but groan.

Rumors had a way of spreading like wildfire within the MC, but I knew that the bear and raven shifters in our compound meant well.

Still, the thought of everyone knowing our business made me uneasy.

Piston must have noticed the thoughtful expression on my face because he leaned in and asked, "What's bugging you, Whizz?"

I confided in Piston about the thoughts that had been troubling me.

"After everything Dylan went through," I began slowly, "I can't help but wonder if things between us are moving too fast."

Piston considered my question for a moment before asking, "Have you talked to him about it?"

I nodded, my thoughts drifting to the conversation I had had with Dylan.

"I did," I replied. "But Dylan doesn't think we're moving too quickly. He believes

we're progressing at the right pace."

I took a deep breath, trying to put my feelings into words.

"It's just... I'm scared," I admitted, not liking the vulnerability in my voice. "I've never felt this way before, Piston. When Dylan's in danger, I become possessive and angry. I can't control my grizzly side, and it scares me."

I went on to describe how I had lost control when dealing with the wolf shifter who had nearly kidnapped Dylan in Greenfield.

"The last time I lost control of my grizzly half like that was when Jake was taken," I confessed. "What if I end up hurting Dylan unintentionally?"

Piston patted my shoulder reassuringly.

"You won't, Whizz. Dylan's your mate. Hurting him is the last thing you'll ever do," Piston said.

I appreciated his comforting words, but I couldn't help but be curious.

"Is this how you felt when you started dating Linus?" I asked. Linus was Piston's vampire mate.

Piston chuckled and his eyes had gone a little misty. He was probably recalling the past.

"Yeah, pretty much," he admitted. "It's natural to have doubts and fears at the beginning. But you'll figure it out together. Have more confidence in yourself, Whizz. In you and Dylan."

"Thanks, Piston," I said

Finding the old cabin where Jake, our dad, and I once lived had initially seemed like a daunting task.

Fortunately, with the help of GPS on my phone and the memories etched in my mind, it was easier than I had anticipated.

I had borrowed Venom's truck once more for this journey, the same vehicle we had used for our last trip.

I suspected I was just dreading this task, because in a way, my search for Jake had finally come to an end.

Dylan, ever cheerful, tried to make things lively by talking about everyday and mundane topics.

I appreciated his effort, and the sound of his voice brought a much-needed lightness to my mood.

"Sorry, am I talking too much?" he asked, sounding concerned.

I shook my head, a small smile playing at the corner of my lips.

"No," I replied, my gaze fixed on the dirt track that led into the woods. "I like the sound of your voice, and I enjoy hearing about your job interviews."

As we continued our journey, I couldn't help but feel somewhat distracted by my own thoughts.

However, I realized that Dylan had shared something important with me earlier, and I

wanted to be present for him.

"So, you think the principal of that school would call you back?" I asked, turning my attention to Dylan.

He smiled, a glimmer of hope in his eyes.

"I hope they would call me for a second round of interviews," he replied.

Dylan went on to share his positive impressions of the school and the staff he had met during his interviews.

Hearing the passion in his voice put a smile on my lips. It wasn't hard to picture Dylan in a classroom full of energetic kids.

Another unbidden thought came to my mind, that Dylan would make for a good parent.

Don't go down that road, I reminded myself. Dylan and I had just started dating. It was too soon to think about that far in the future.

"You know," he continued, "back when I was still stuck in that cell, I couldn't imagine going back to my normal life. But now, I'm excited to work with kids again."

We had reached our destination, and I cut the engine. I reached over the console to give Dylan's hand a reassuring squeeze.

When he looked at me, I could hear the rapid beating of his heart.

"I'm proud of you, Dylan," I told him sincerely.

Dylan appeared puzzled by my words.

"For what?" he asked.

"For deciding to take the next step forward," I replied with a warm smile. "Most people can't do that after what you've been through."

Dylan's cheeks flushed, and I couldn't help but find him even more adorable in that moment.

Maybe I should offer him more compliments like this, I thought, just so I could see him blush.

"We should celebrate once you get the job. Maybe I can buy you dinner? A new work bag or shoes?" I asked.

"What about rewarding me now with a kiss?" Dylan asked shyly, his eyes sparkling with anticipation.

I couldn't help but grin in response to his request, and I leaned in to oblige him with a tender kiss, savoring the sweetness of the moment.

As we parted, our smiles mirrored each other's.

During moments like this, I was reminded of how lucky I was to have met him.

Exiting the truck, the mood shifted to one of solemnity.

I opened the back seat and retrieved the box containing the urn of Jake's ashes, cradling it with care.

I noticed that Dylan had turned his attention to the old cabin, which now stood dilapidated and worn away by time.

My breathing was surprisingly even. I had thought that seeing it would bring up old feelings of dread, guilt and anger.

Now I only felt...empty.

"You and your family used to live here, Whizz?" Dylan asked softly, his voice filled with curiosity and empathy.

I nodded, my memories of those days vivid in my mind.

"Yeah," I began.

I then told Dylan about how my dad used to juggle multiple jobs to make ends meet.

"It was my job to look after Jake," I said.

I had one job and I failed, I didn't add, because I didn't want Dylan to be sad. He knew the story.

Together, we walked behind the cabin, and there, nestled in the quiet of the woods, was another grave. My father's.

Back then, I couldn't afford him to get him a lot at the cemetery, I figured I'd bury him here.

"Can you hold this a moment?" I asked him

Without hesitation, Dylan agreed, his expression filled with understanding.

With the Jake's urn safely cradled in Dylan's hands, I returned to the truck and retrieved two shovels. Then I made my way back to Dylan.

As I marked a spot next to my father's gravestone, we began to dig.

The earth was unyielding at first, but with each stroke of the shovel, it gave way.

I could do this, I reminded myself. I was alone when I buried my father but this time, Dylan was with me.

Dylan didn't know it but he provided me the strength I needed.

"Whizz, can you tell me about the night Jake was taken?" Dylan asked. He quickly added, "You don't have to if it's too painful."

I paused for a moment, considering Dylan's request. The memory had been a well-guarded secret, one I had kept hidden deep within me for so long.

But as I looked into Dylan's eyes, I realized that maybe it was time to share it with someone.

No, Dylan wasn't just someone; he was my mate, the better half of my soul. I didn't want to keep any secrets from him.

Dylan stopped shoveling, setting the shovel aside to give me a comforting hug.

"Let me help you shoulder this pain, Whizz," he said, his words touching my heart in a way that no one else ever had.

I began to recount the painful memories of that fateful night, sharing with Dylan what I remembered.

As I spoke, I could see tears welling up in his eyes, but he didn't interrupt me. Dylan was a good listener.

It surprised me how revisiting the past, even the most painful parts, felt like it was healing rather than reopening old wounds.

We continued to dig, the work not particularly strenuous.

All I had to bury was the urn, but even so, it felt as though a well had opened up within me, releasing a flood of emotions and memories.

As we worked, I began to share stories of Jake from our childhood. I told Dylan about the silly moments, the sad ones, and the joyful ones.

I wanted him to know who my little brother had been.

"Dad took Jake's disappearance badly," I said sadly. "He died of a broken heart six months after Jake was taken."

"I'm so sorry, Whizz," Dylan whispered, his sympathy palpable.

"At first, I was so angry at my dad for giving up so quickly, for leaving me all alone." I paused, taking a breath. "But then I realized I was angry at myself most of all. For a long time, I blamed myself for destroying my own family."

We sat down on a fallen log, finding a moment of respite. Dylan leaned his head against my shoulder, providing comfort without words.

"Whizz, you were only a kid back then, barely an adult," Dylan said softly. "Fate dealt you an unfair hand."

I nodded in agreement.

"It took me a long time to understand that," I admitted, my gaze fixed on the ground.

I expelled a breath, feeling a sense of release.

I continued, "Dylan, it feels like I've been searching for answers for a long time. Although a part of me is sad things ended this way, another part is relieved I'm able to lay Jake to rest. My dad can rest easy now."

I took Dylan's hands in mine. They were so warm.

"I wouldn't have imagined doing all this on my own," I told him. "It would've been too much. But because you're here, it's easier. Thank you for coming with me."

"Thank you for bringing me here," Dylan said.

He leaned in and kissed me softly on the lips.

Thanks to Dylan, I had finally found closure. I watched, amused as Dylan parted from me and faced the graves.

"You guys can leave Whizz to me. I'll take good care of him," Dylan said.

I laughed, unable to help myself. Dylan turned to me, smiling. He held out his hand to me and I took it and let him help me up.

The necklace I had given Jake on his birthday all those years ago, gleamed in the hollow of Dylan's throat.

In a way, finding Jake had led me to Dylan.

Dylan was Jake's farewell gift to me and I silently made a promise to my brother that I would take good care of Dylan as well.

Page 15

Source Creation Date: July 17, 2025, 7:10 am

I had assumed that after we buried Jake, we would return to Moon Burrow, our mission complete.

However, when Whizz suggested that we stay the night at nearby inn or motel, I agreed with him.

As I began to look for decent motels in the area, Whizz drove us to a nearby joint where we ordered take-out to enjoy later.

"The Lemon Soda Inn looks decent," I told Whizz, showing him the pictures of the room and the property on my phone screen.

Whizz nodded in agreement, his eyes focused on the images.

With our food in hand – burgers, fries, and shakes – we made our way back to the truck.

After inputting the inn's directions into his phone's GPS, we set off towards our destination.

We arrived at a charming-looking property on the outskirts of town, the Lemon Soda Inn.

The bed and breakfast was a white building with hanging flower baskets and a cute picket fence.

After parking the truck, we made our way into the building. The inside of the inn was

decorated with antique furniture and warm lighting.

A kind old woman in her sixties greeted us from behind the counter. She checked us in with a friendly smile.

"Since there aren't many customers tonight, I'll give you our best room," she said.

We thanked her and with the key in hand, we made our way to our room, take-out bags in tow.

As we settled into our room, the fatigue of the day began to catch up with us. We spread out on the comfortable bed, ready to enjoy our dinner.

I couldn't help but notice that Whizz looked relaxed for the first time that day.

I popped a fry into my mouth while Whizz surfed through the TV channels, eventually settling on an action movie.

It felt nice, just relaxing with Whizz. I found myself lost in a daydream, picturing the two of us chilling in the living room of our own home after a hard day at work.

Maybe in this dream, I could surprise Whizz with dinner and his favorite dessert.

My cheeks heated up as I realized how far my thoughts had wandered.

Whizz and I were only beginning to get to know each other, and here I was, already imagining us playing house together.

It was way too soon to be thinking about such things, and I mentally scolded myself for getting ahead of myself.

After we finished our meal, I gathered the trash into one bag, preparing to dispose of it properly.

“I’m going take a shower,” Whizz said, slipping out of bed.

“I’ll pick the next movie,” I said.

“You could join me, you know,” Whizz said with a wink.

He took off his jacket and his shirt.

My mouth went dry and I couldn’t help but admire the hard muscles on his chest, arms and shoulders.

Whizz didn’t wait for my reply. He entered the bathroom but left the door open.

I had no intentions of refusing his invitation. I was out of my clothes in minutes and soon joined him in the bathroom.

I gazed admiringly at Whizz as he closed his eyes under the shower.

Rivulets of water ran down his hair, his body. As if he could sense my presence, he opened his eyes.

“Come here,” he said.

I went, like a puppet on a string. A willing one. I ducked in the shower, glad it could fit both of us.

Whizz turned off the water, then bent his head to kiss me. Gripping his shoulders, I kissed him back with equal passion.

I loved the feel of his slick body against his mind, his hardening cock rubbing against my own.

Whizz trailed down his fingers down my chest and ribs as he took my mouth.

When his fingers finally reached my dick, I moaned. Whizz worked me until I was thick, the cock head glistening with pre-cum.

“Whizz, I want you in me,” I whispered.

Whizz turned me by the shoulder, so I was facing the wall. I spread my legs willingly for him.

“Please,” I said.

Whizz slid two digits in me and seeing I was wet, he gripped me by the waist and entered me.

I gasped, savouring the feel of Whizz’s dick inside me.

“So good,” I murmured.

Whizz pumped in and out of me, settling on a rhythm which suited both of us. I gripped the tiled wall, panting as he reduced us both to needy animals.

“Touch yourself,” he ordered and I did as he asked.

The next time Whizz entered me, he brushed against my prostate.

I arched my back, crying out. Whizz kept aiming for the spot and I continued working my prick.

It didn't take long for me to reach climax. At Whizz's next stroke, the pressure building inside me burst open.

I came, painting the wall with my cum.

Whizz entered me a few more times, before filling my ass with his seed. He groaned, then bit me on the neck.

I gasped as he didn't let go.

I could sense my rabbit half, waking inside me. Whizz was drawing him out. I knew what was happening.

Whizz was giving me his mate mark and I wanted it so badly.

"Yes," I whispered, sensing his grizzly side, merging with my rabbit half.

He held my hands, as his teeth pierced skin and hit bone.

The mate bond flared to life between us, and appeared like beautifully and silvery threads.

I turned, facing him after Whizz pulled his mouth back.

"Bite me back," Whizz told me and I did, leaving a smaller mark right above his heart.

When the deed was done, we stared at each other for a few quiet moments. Whizz opened his mouth, but I put a finger to his lips.

"Don't tell me you regret what you did," I told him.

Whizz shook his head. “No, but I should have asked you first.”

“Whizz, I knew what I wanted the moment you set me free from my cell. You,” I said simply.

I leaned forward and kissed him on the mouth. Whizz held me close, kissing me back fiercely.

When I pulled away, I let out a nervous laugh.

“Actually, now I’m wondering if it was me who took advantage of you. You were grieving earlier and?—”

“Hush,” Whizz said, kissing me again. “This is a celebration.”

“Of what?” I asked.

“A new chapter of our lives,” Whizz said, smiling.

I couldn’t help but agree.

A week had passed, and now we were having breakfast at my new apartment.

It wasn’t anything grand – just a small studio space – but it was mine, a place I could call my own.

When I had first invited Whizz over to see it, his reaction had overwhelmed me.

He had turned to me, hugged and kissed me, and then he simply said he was proud of me.

Whizz had no idea just how much those words meant to me. I was truly moving on and the future looked promising.

In the present, I hummed a soft tune while I flipped pancakes on the stovetop.

Whizz worked on making toast, and the whole scene felt remarkably domestic and normal.

Finally, we sat down to eat, and I couldn't help but find my fingers gently rubbing Whizz's mate mark on my neck.

After our trip to Greenfield, it had felt like we'd taken a significant step in our relationship.

Whizz smiled at me from across the table, and I couldn't help but return the smile.

"Are you nervous about your first day at work?" he asked, genuine concern in his eyes.

I shook my head, feeling surprisingly calm about the prospect.

"The last time I dropped by the kindergarten, another teacher introduced himself. His name is Kyle, and he's an omega shifter like me. He's also a new hire," I explained. "I think I'm going to fit in just fine."

After breakfast, we both got ready for the day ahead. Whizz insisted on driving me to the kindergarten, even though it was just a short 30-minute ride away.

"I can take the bus, you know," I teased him, though deep down, I didn't mind his occasional possessiveness. It made me feel cherished.

We left the apartment and walked over to where Whizz had parked his Harley.

He grabbed two helmets from the compartment under the motorcycle seat and helped me secure mine in place.

I could do it on my own, but Whizz occasionally liked to fuss and I let him.

"Do you have everything you need?" Whizz asked.

"Right here," I said, patting the new leather work bag that Whizz had surprised me with a few days ago.

I had been delighted when he handed me the present casually. It made me feel really special.

"I feel like a kid on my first day at school," I joked. "But I'm good, Whizz. Really good."

Whizz regarded me for a moment, understanding the underlying meaning of my words – that I was adjusting to my new life in Moon Burrow.

He nodded and then said, "Get on."

Half an hour later, we arrived at the kindergarten, which was located in Three Hills, not Moon Burrow as I had originally hoped.

None of the schools in Moon Burrow were hiring, so I settled for this one instead.

As I dismounted from Whizz's motorcycle, I noticed a blond-haired guy in his twenties waving at me. Kyle.

Handing Whizz his helmet, I grabbed my bag and walked over to him.

"Hey, Dylan. Principal Adams assigned me today as your guide," Kyle said with a friendly smile.

I couldn't help but think about how it was always hard being the new guy at work.

Principal Adams had mentioned during my interview that some of the older teachers had been with them for years.

It was a relief to have someone my age like Kyle whom I could relate to.

Even though we'd only spoken briefly in the school corridor after my second interview, we seemed to vibe well.

Having a friendly face on my first day would make the transition into this new environment a lot smoother.

"Nice," I said.

I heard familiar footsteps behind me and turned to see Whizz approaching.

Strangely, Kyle's expression paled a bit when he saw Whizz. Maybe he was just uncomfortable around alpha shifters he hadn't met before.

Or it could be Kyle didn't have the best experience with them. Either way, I tried not to think much about his reaction.

Whizz must've also noticed Kyle's discomfort, because he introduced himself.

"You must be Kyle," Whizz said, extending a hand.

"This is Whizz, my boyfriend," I said.

It still felt odd, introducing Whizz as such. The mate mark felt warm on my neck and I corrected myself.

"My mate, I mean," I said.

Whizz seemed pleased by my choice of words, because he was grinning so handsomely.

Kyle quickly hid his earlier reaction with a warm smile.

"Don't worry, I'll take good care of Dylan and show him the ropes," he assured Whizz.

"Shoo, I'm good here," I said to Whizz. To Kyle, I said, "He likes to hover sometimes."

"I think it's cute," Kyle said.

"I guess that's my cue to leave," Whizz said. Then he added, "You forgot to give me a kiss."

I laughed and leaned in to kiss Whizz on the cheek.

With a final nod, Whizz got back on his motorcycle, and I couldn't help but notice Kyle watching our interaction too keenly.

Maybe I was overthinking it. I hadn't gotten much sleep last night, because was I was too excited about my first day.

”Sorry about that,” Kyle said. ”I just broke up with my boyfriend recently. Watching you two reminded me of him.”

“That sucks,” I said.

“Shall we?” Kyle asked quickly.

“Let’s,” I agreed. “I’m excited to meet the kids.”

Page 16

Source Creation Date: July 17, 2025, 7:10 am

DYLAN

I grabbed my lunchbox and headed towards the staff room, I was planning to eat my lunch there.

Just as I was about to step inside, I heard Kyle's voice calling out to me. "Dylan! Hey, come over here!"

Kyle waved from the benches near the playground, and I couldn't help but smile. I changed course and headed over to join him.

As I settled down on one of the benches, Kyle asked, "So, how's it going? How are you liking your classes?"

I took a bite of my sandwich before replying, "The kids in my class are great. They're so enthusiastic and eager to learn."

As I nibbled on my ham and cheese sandwich, I noticed Kyle eyeing my bag of chips.

Without hesitation, I offered him some, and he graciously accepted.

Between bites, Kyle asked, "So, where did you work before this place?"

I hesitated for a moment, considering how much to share.

"I was at a kindergarten in Greenfield, but I had to take some time off for personal reasons," I said.

It was a vague but truthful answer. Kyle was friendly, but I wasn't ready to spill the details of my recent trauma to a relative stranger.

Kyle nodded in understanding and then shared his own story.

"I used to teach in a kindergarten in the city. I moved here due to some boy troubles and family stuff. My stepbrother, my own family, needed me, so I decided to come back."

"That's really nice of you," I said.

We soon finished our lunch, realizing it was almost time to head back to our classes.

As we gathered our things and stood up, Kyle asked, "Hey, would you like to grab a coffee after classes sometime?"

A warm smile spread across my face. "I'd like that," I replied.

I told Kyle to go ahead, as I'd forgotten my lesson plans in the staff room.

As I hurried down the school corridor, the hairs on my arms stood on end.

A shiver ran down my spine, and I felt an eerie but familiar sensation, as if someone were watching me.

I glanced around, but the fading echoes of children's laughter and the distant murmur of voices were the only sounds.

My rabbit half, always alert to danger, didn't sense an immediate threat.

Still, the feeling of vulnerability gnawed at me.

I had grown accustomed to the protective presence of Whizz and his bear-shifter MC brothers, and perhaps I'd taken their shield for granted.

Now, I had to get used to being on my own again.

I reached the end of the corridor and glanced out the school windows, where the late afternoon sun cast long shadows.

There, next to a car parked nearby, I saw a shadowy figure. Panic surged through me as I struggled to make out any defining features.

Fear gripped my heart, and I knew I couldn't ignore this unsettling presence any longer.

My heart pounded in my chest as I continued to watch the shadowy figure from the safety of the corridor.

Every part of me screamed to get away from the windows, to run to the safety of the staff room, or to call for help.

But another thought held me back.

If I told Whizz about this, he'd come rushing back for me, even if it turned out to be a false alarm.

His protectiveness was a reassuring comfort, but I couldn't rely on it forever.

I needed to learn to stand on my own two feet, to regain my confidence.

It had been months since I escaped that horrible ordeal in that house, and I'd convinced myself I was over it.

But now, as fear coursed through my veins, I realized that maybe I needed more time.

Maybe my mind was still playing tricks on me, conjuring up threats where there were none. But I couldn't take that chance.

With trembling hands, I slowly backed away from the window, my eyes never leaving the shadowy figure outside.

I needed to be cautious, to ensure my safety, even if it meant facing my fears alone.

"Dylan, did you get your lesson plans?" It was Kyle.

I let out a sigh of relief.

Kyle must've noticed something on my face because he asked, "Is everything alright?"

I hesitated for a moment, my heart still racing. Should I confess what had been haunting my thoughts? Finally, I decided to share.

"I thought someone was watching me," I said.

Kyle's brow furrowed with concern, and I couldn't help but feel worried that he might think I was delusional or a raving lunatic.

I took a deep breath, trying to calm myself before explaining further.

"I'm worried about an old stalker," I blurted.

It sounded ridiculous but that was the only thing that I could think of on the fly.

Kyle followed my gaze, looking out the window into the parking lot. I watched as he scanned the area, trying to see what I had seen just moments ago.

The seconds dragged on as my anxiety continued to build. Finally, he turned back to me, his expression confused.

"What figure? There's no one there, Dylan," Kyle replied.

I blinked in surprise. My heart pounded in my chest as I struggled to comprehend what was happening. Had I imagined it?

The chilling sensation of being watched still clung to my skin, but if Kyle couldn't see anything, then maybe it was just my paranoia playing tricks on me.

I rubbed my temples, feeling a headache coming on.

"Maybe I'm just overreacting," I mumbled, more to myself than to Kyle. But deep down, I couldn't shake the feeling that something was terribly wrong

WHIZZ

I was doing research on a rival MC for Venom when my phone buzzed and interrupted my concentration.

I glanced at the screen, and "Marc" flashed in bold letters.

My heart sank a little as I answered, knowing that Marc's last lead had taken me nowhere but to the grim discovery of Dylan and Jake's old bones.

We hadn't found any clues about his missing brother, Tommy.

"Hey," I greeted him, guilt already gnawing at my insides.

"How you doing, Whizz?" Marc asked.

I sighed, leaning back in my chair and rubbing my temples.

"I just took a trip back to my old family's place. Had to bury Jake next to our old man."

There was a heavy silence on the other end of the line, as if Marc was trying to find the right words.

I could almost feel his pain through the phone.

"Damn, I'm sorry to hear that," he finally said.

I appreciated his condolences but knew there was more to discuss.

"Yeah, it's been tough but Dylan, one of the omegas we'd rescued, has been a huge help." I paused, then continued, "I haven't stopped looking for Tommy. I promise, Marc, we'll find him."

Marc fell silent for a few moments and all I could hear was his breathing. I could tell something was wrong.

I'd known Marc for years, and he was always the guy who had a handle on his emotions.

He didn't get rattled easily, which made me all the more concerned.

"Hey, Marc, talk to me," I said, trying to keep my voice calm. "What's wrong?"

There was a frustrated growl on the other end of the line before Marc finally spoke.
"Whizz, it's bad."

I furrowed my brow, my curiosity piqued. Marc didn't usually reach out unless it was related to our MC business.

"Alright. What's going on?"

I could sense Marc's frustration as he took a moment to compose himself.

It wasn't like him to lose control like that. It made me uneasy, waiting for whatever bombshell he was about to drop.

"A few days ago, you sent me all the information you had on Gregory Hicks and his gang," Marc said.

"That's right," I answered.

"I've been keeping tabs on them, Whizz."

I let out a slow breath, realizing that there was more to this conversation than met the eye.

Marc's earlier loss of control now made sense; something about this situation had gotten under his skin.

I stayed quiet, waiting for Marc to continue.

I knew he would tell me what was really eating at him when he was ready, and until then, I'd be here, ready to listen and help in any way I could.

“There’s been two new abductions in Stormriver. Two brothers went missing last night, as they were closing up their family store,” Marc said.

My heart sank. I grabbed my laptop and entered the address into the search bar.

Stormriver was not far from Crimson View, where we had managed to rescue Dylan and the others from Hick’s old estate.

I clenched my jaw, feeling the grizzly, half-feral part of me jolt awake. I understood now the reason behind Marc’s frustration and anger.

We had put in the work, risked everything to dismantle Hicks’ operation, and it seemed like we had succeeded.

But instead of running away and going into hiding, Hicks’ group had started a new operation. They sure had nerve.

“Damn it,” I muttered under my breath.

“These people are like cockroaches, Whizz,” Marc said, his voice heavy with frustration. “They don’t know when to stop.”

I couldn’t help but nod in agreement, even though Marc couldn’t see me.

Hicks and his gang had proven to be resilient, relentless, and utterly ruthless.

“They’re a damn plague,” I muttered, my anger simmering just beneath the surface. “If they’d been there at the Crimson View property, me and my MC brothers would’ve taken care of them permanently.”

Things would have been so much easier, if that happened, if Piston, Nitro and I

managed to end every member of Hick's gang in one fell swoop.

That didn't happen though.

"I know, Whizz. But you and your MC brothers prioritized the safety of the rescued omegas. I would've done the same thing in your shoes," Marc told me.

Dylan and the other survivors had been through hell.

Ensuring their safety first had been a given, even if it meant letting the rest of those rats scatter.

It didn't mean we would leave Hicks and his gang alone; it meant we needed to regroup and come up with a plan to wipe them out for good.

"They won't escape justice forever," I said, an edge of my voice. "We'll find them, Marc, and this time, they won't slip through our fingers."

"Whizz, don't do anything rash," Marc warned. "I can hear the fury in your voice, but Hicks is smart and careful."

I rubbed my temples, struggling to keep my emotions in check.

Marc had a point, but I couldn't help the simmering rage that burned within me.

Hicks had made a grave mistake by continuing his operations. He should have known when to stop.

"Something is bugging me, Whizz," Marc said. "It feels like Hicks is taunting us, issuing a challenge to whoever closed his operations in Crimson View. I have a feeling he's trying to find out who's responsible for his missing merchandise."

I knew Marc was right, that we needed to approach this with caution and intelligence, but it was hard to think past the blinding rage that consumed me.

My thoughts drifted to Dylan, my brave mate who had fought so hard to move forward.

He'd found an apartment, secured a new job, and was finally beginning to heal. Dylan was learning to live again. And now, this had to happen.

I clenched my fists, my anger boiling over.

"It pisses me off, Marc. Hicks doesn't get to ruin everything Dylan and the other survivors are working hard for. They should be able to continue rebuilding their lives without fear," I said.

"I know, Whizz. We'll get through this, and we'll make sure Hicks pays for what he's done. But we have to be smart about it, for the sake of everyone involved," Marc said. "Will you promise me you won't do anything rash until we have more information?"

"Fine," I mumbled, unhappy about my decision.

Page 17

Source Creation Date: July 17, 2025, 7:10 am

WHIZZ

Dylan and I had been looking forward to this date night for a while. We started with dinner at a cozy little diner, tucked away on a corner street.

The atmosphere was warm, despite the diner being crowded. As we settled into a booth, I couldn't help but admire Dylan's smile.

He looked a lot happier these days.

We looked at the menu together and I asked him what he wanted to order.

"I don't have a particular preference. I'll get whatever you're getting. Maybe we can share a few dishes?" Dylan asked, playful look in his eyes.

"Deal," I agreed.

Our date started on a lighthearted note and I hoped the vibe would remain for the rest of the evening.

Over burgers and milkshakes, we talked about our days.

I asked Dylan how work was going, genuinely curious about how he was doing at the kindergarten.

Dylan took a sip of his milkshake before answering, "It's been going pretty smoothly, Whizz. Thanks to Kyle, actually."

He chuckled. Dylan continued, “He’s been a huge help and he’s great with kids. We’ve become good friends.”

I smiled, happy to hear that Dylan had someone he could rely on at work. But something niggled at the back of my mind.

Kyle had entered Dylan’s life rather suddenly, and I couldn’t help but wonder about his true intentions.

I cared deeply for Dylan’s well-being and safety, so the idea of doing a background check on Kyle crossed my mind.

It wasn’t that I didn’t trust Dylan’s judgment, but in my line of work, caution was second nature.

As we walked from the diner to the movie theater, the evening air was cool and nice.

We strolled hand in hand down. The town lights danced around us, and in that moment, it felt like nothing else mattered.

We finally reached the movie theatre.

“What are you in the mood to watch?” I asked him, sliding a possessive hand across his shoulders.

Dylan leaned against me, studying the screen to see what was currently showing.

I didn’t care what we were watching, as long as I got to spend a quiet moment with my mate.

We eventually decided on a recent rom-com, something light and entertaining.

As we sat in the dimly lit theater, I should have been more focused on the plot, laughing at the jokes, and holding Dylan's hand.

But my mind kept wandering to Hicks' new operation, like an unwelcome shadow lurking in the background.

Dylan shifted in his seat, the glow from the movie screen casting a soft light on his face.

His smile was warm, his eyes filled with anticipation, and his hand rested in mine.

He deserved my full attention, yet my thoughts remained divided.

I made an effort to concentrate on the movie, laughing when Dylan did, whispering jokes and comments to each other.

But every now and then, my gaze would drift to the phone in my pocket, as if expecting some crucial information to come in.

Dylan nudged me gently, his expression a mix of concern and amusement.

"Hey, Whizz, everything alright?" Dylan asked.

I snapped my attention back to him, offering a quick nod and a reassuring smile.

"Yeah, just got a lot on my mind. Let's enjoy the movie," I answered.

But the truth was, I couldn't shake the nagging feeling that Hicks' new operation was brewing, potentially bringing danger to our doorstep once again.

My duty was to protect Dylan's safety and ensure no other omega endured what he

did.

As much as I wanted to focus on our date, my mind remained preoccupied with the dark cloud looming on the horizon.

Two hours later, the movie had come to an end, and the credits rolled on the screen as the lights slowly came up.

I turned to Dylan, a smile gracing my lips.

He gave me a quick, sweet peck on the cheek, and his warm breath brushed against my ear as he whispered, "I've really enjoyed myself tonight, Whizz. You should take me out on more dates like this."

My heart swelled with affection for him, and I leaned in to steal a gentle kiss in return.

"Absolutely. I promise we'll do this more often. I'll think of something fun for the next one," I answered.

As we left the cinema and walked back to where I had parked my motorcycle.

The night air was crisp, and the normally sleepy little town of Moon Burrow felt wide awake.

But just as I was about to suggest we head home, Dylan surprised me. He suggested, "How about some late-night ice cream?"

I grinned, charmed by his spontaneity. "Late-night ice cream it is."

We wandered the streets until we found a cozy ice cream parlor that was still open.

Dylan stood before the colorful array of ice cream flavors, his brow furrowed in concentration.

He was always so indecisive when it came to ice cream, and I couldn't help but chuckle.

"Can't decide again?" I asked him.

He looked over at me with a playful grin. "You know me too well, Whizz. It's always such a tough decision."

I thought for a moment and then suggested, "How about we share two sundaes? That way, you get to try two flavors."

Dylan raised an eyebrow, his eyes dancing with amusement.

"What if I can finish one on my own?" Dylan asked.

I winked at him. "I bet you can, but it's more fun this way."

As we dug into our sundaes, the conversation shifted to the movie we had just watched.

We discussed the plot, our favorite scenes, and the actors' performances.

It felt like we were just two people in love, enjoying the simple pleasure of each other's company.

The ice cream was soon devoured, and as we finished, Dylan touched my arm and said, "I'm here, whenever you're ready to talk."

His patience overwhelmed me for a moment. I was tempted to spill everything about Hicks. But I hesitated.

I didn't want to ruin the good mood, the carefree atmosphere of our date night.

I leaned in and gave him a sweet kiss, whispering, "I promise I will, Dylan, when the time is right."

DYLAN

I woke up in the soft, familiar bed, my senses slowly returning to me as I stretched and yawned.

Rolling over, I expected to see Whizz lying next to me, his strong arms wrapped around me, but the spot beside me was empty.

I frowned, the warm memories of our date night from the previous evening still fresh in my mind.

It had been an incredible night, and I couldn't help but wonder what had been bothering Whizz.

He had a way of keeping his emotions locked up tight, like a closed box that I couldn't always pry open.

Since Whizz had given me his mate mark, I'd been able to catch glimpses of his emotions from time to time, but it was always irregular and never the full picture.

Last night, I had tried to coax him into opening up, but it had been to no avail.

With a sigh, I finally got out of bed and wandered to Whizz's work desk. It was

covered in papers and notebooks, a reflection of his tireless dedication to the MC.

As I was about to turn away, my eyes caught something on a post-it note.

I picked it up and smiled, reading it aloud to myself, "Went for a morning jog. I'll return with breakfast."

I reminisced about that one time I asked him to take me along on his early morning jog.

The memory made me smile; he was like a force of nature, and I had struggled to keep up.

After a few attempts, I decided it was best to build up my stamina my own way, even though he'd been more than willing to help me.

I finally decided to send him a text message. I began the search for my phone, but finding it wasn't an easy task.

Whizz's room was a constant mess, but he stubbornly argued that only he could make sense of the organized chaos.

After a few minutes of rummaging through the piles of clothes, books, and various gadgets, I finally found my cell phone, lying unnoticed beneath the bed.

To my chagrin, the battery was dead. I knew Whizz wouldn't mind if I borrowed his charger, so I plugged it in and left the phone to charge.

While I waited for my phone to come to life, I wandered over to Whizz's main computer. I figured I could send him an email instead of a text.

As I turned on the computer, it prompted me for a password. Unsure of what I was doing, I entered a few combinations.

On the third try, I entered my own name and birthday, never expecting it to work.

To my surprise, the computer unlocked, and I couldn't help but chuckle.

"For a talented hacker, you have such a simple password," I muttered to myself, my amusement growing.

My intention had been to log onto my email, but something caught my eye.

Whizz's recent search history. My heart raced with trepidation as I began to browse through it.

Why was Whizz doing a search on Kyle, of all people?

As I read through the search results, questions swirled in my mind. What prompted Whizz to be suspicious of my new friend?

Had something happened? It was so unlike Whizz to be secretive about his activities.

My curiosity piqued, I debated whether I should dig deeper or wait for Whizz to come back and explain.

I couldn't deny that my heart ached with concern, and I needed to know what was going on. But at the same time, I didn't want to invade Whizz's privacy.

As I waited for Whizz to return, anger festered within me.

We were mates, connected on a deeper level than most, and it stung to think that

Whizz might be keeping something from me.

I couldn't understand why he had been searching for Kyle, and it bothered me more with each passing moment.

Half an hour later, the door swung open, and Whizz stepped into the room, his sweaty, well-defined form glistening under the thin shirt and jogging pants he wore.

Ordinarily, the sight of him would have distracted me, but not this time.

"Morning," he greeted me, walking over, seemingly oblivious to my mood.

I didn't waste any time in getting to the point. My voice was steady but edged with frustration.

"Why were you looking Kyle up?" I asked, not bothering to sugarcoat the question.

I had considered being sensitive about the situation, but I had changed my mind.

Whizz could be possessive at times, but he had to trust me to make my own judgments about people.

Whizz's expression shifted from casual to surprised as his eyes fell on the computer screen.

His jaw tensed, and he paused for a moment before finally meeting my gaze.

There was a hint of guilt in his eyes as he sighed and began to explain.

"Your friend Kyle is not who he claims to be," he said, and it took a moment for his statement to fully sink in.

Whizz continued, “Dylan, there”s no record of him at all in the paranormal government registry. How he managed to secure his post at that school is also suspect.”

I felt my chest constrict as the words registered. Kyle, the friend I’d trusted and brought into my life, might not be what he seemed.

Whizz divulged more information on Kyle, and although I knew I should be paying attention, my mind was clouded by fury.

I had never been so...angry.

Finally, Whizz paused and observed, ”You”re really pissed-off about this.”

The way he spoke with a hint of guilt only fueled my rage.

”You shouldn”t have kept your suspicions from me. Is this why you were distracted last night?” I demanded.

Whizz hesitated, and through our mate mark, I felt the guilt that he couldn”t hide. It was a stark reminder of how deeply connected we were.

The thought that there was something else he had been keeping from me hit me like a punch to the gut.

I couldn”t stand that he had kept something from me, and I pressed on, my voice growing tighter and more furious with each word.

“What else were you hiding from me?”

My rabbit side urged me to calm down, to listen to Whizz and understand that he had

his reasons, but I ignored it.

“Dylan, I need you to calm down,” Whizz said.

“Don’t tell me to calm down,” I snapped, my anger flaring. “We’re mates. We shouldn’t be hiding secrets from each other.”

Whizz didn’t immediately respond, but after a moment, he began to explain about Hicks’ new operation.

As he spoke, the flood of information overwhelmed me, and I struggled to process it all.

“I can’t deal with this, with you right now,” I blurted out, my chest heavy with the weight of my emotions.

I knew that if I lingered, I would say hurtful words that I’d come to regret. The only option for the moment was to retreat.

“I need to think,” I snapped, my voice sharp.

Without another word, I gathered my clothes and my charging phone, then left Whizz’s room.

The door closed behind me.

I needed time alone to sort through my thoughts and emotions, to figure out what had just happened and how to move forward.

Page 18

Source Creation Date: July 17, 2025, 7:10 am

Isat at the bar area of the MC clubhouse, nursing my fifth bottle of whiskey, trying to numb the chaotic thoughts that had consumed my mind.

As a shifter, I wasn't easily affected by alcohol, but I was determined to try and drown my problems, even if it meant downing the a few bottles.

Nitro, the bartender on duty, had been giving me sympathetic glances for a while, but I brushed them off.

I didn't want anyone's pity. I wanted to wallow in my frustration and disappointment, even if it meant getting drunk.

As I lifted the bottle to my lips for another swig, a tap on my shoulder made me pause.

I turned to see a familiar face – Piston.

He asked, "Is this seat taken?"

I glanced at the empty stool next to me, then back at Piston, shaking my head. "Nah, it's all yours."

Piston pulled up the stool and sat down. He gave me a concerned look.

He didn't say anything right away, just watched me for a moment before finally speaking.

"Rough day, huh?" Piston asked.

I sighed, the alcohol on my breath heavy. I couldn't remember the last time I was in such a state.

"You could say that," I said.

Piston nodded, his own drink in hand. "Want to talk about it?"

I hesitated for a moment, then decided to let out some of the frustration and worry that had been eating at me.

With Piston sitting beside me, I felt a bit less alone.

After some cajoling, I finally opened up about my first real argument with Dylan, the shock of him walking away while I tried to explain my side of things still fresh in my mind.

He listened intently, letting me spill my frustrations and worries without interruption.

When I had finished, I looked at him, searching for some insight.

"Was I really in the wrong?" I asked.

Piston didn't hesitate with his response.

"Keeping secrets from your mate is a huge no. If I did the same to Linus, he would've given me the cold shoulder for weeks," he said.

I sighed, knowing he was right. The thought of Dylan being mad at me for weeks was something I couldn't bear.

I felt a pang of guilt for not trusting Dylan enough to confide in him earlier.

I knew I had to make things right and find a way to rebuild the trust that had been damaged.

"Do you think I've already screwed things up with him?" I asked, my voice laced with doubt.

Piston leaned in closer, he gripped my shoulder.

"Whizz, every relationship reaches a rocky point sooner or later. It's how you handle it that matters," he said.

His words hit me hard. He was right. I couldn't just wait for Dylan to come to me.

If I wanted to mend what I broke, I needed to make the first move.

Piston continued, "You shouldn't wait for Dylan to approach you. Take the initiative to go up to him and apologize. Explain why you did what you did, and make it clear that you want to work things out."

I nodded, his advice was sound. It was time to swallow my pride, to set aside my fears and uncertainties, and go to Dylan.

I spent some time at the bar with Piston, discussing how to win Dylan back.

We hammered out a plan that would hopefully help me mend my relationship with my mate.

I raised my glass to him and said, "Thanks for listening, brother."

Piston gave me a nod. "Anytime, Whizz. I've got your back."

We drank a little while longer, then I made my way to Venom's office.

As luck would have it, our MC President was there when I knocked on the door.

"Problem?" Venom asked, never one to mince his words.

I got straight to the point, telling him about what Marc had uncovered regarding Gregory Hicks' new operation.

"These rats don't know when to stay down," Venom said with a growl.

He leaned back in his chair, studying me intently. "What do you intend to do next?"

I explained that I wanted to hunt Hicks and his men down, but Marc had advised me to wait.

We didn't have enough information to work on, and charging in without a solid plan could lead to disaster.

Venom's expression softened, and he nodded approvingly.

"Marc is wise, Whizz. The old you would've come to that same conclusion eventually," he said.

There was a hint of reproach in Venom's voice, a tone I didn't particularly appreciate, and it stirred anger within me.

But I knew I couldn't let my emotions get the best of me, not in front of the MC President and my lead alpha.

I took a deep breath and finally confessed, "Dylan's involved in this, Venom. I promised him I would protect him. What if Hicks and his men go after Dylan again?"

"I know it's hard when your mate's life is at stake, but you need to be patient, Whizz. We'll get these bastards sooner or later. You have the full support of the MC," Venom said.

His words were both reassuring and calming.

I felt a sense of relief knowing that I had the backing of the entire MC, and I finally managed to calm down.

"Thanks, Venom," I said.

Leaving his office, I felt like a huge weight had been lifted off my shoulders.

As I headed back to my workspace to complete a few research requests, my thoughts kept drifting back to Dylan.

I couldn't shake the feeling that he was at work right now, perhaps thinking about our fight earlier, just as I was.

With those thoughts weighing on my mind, I decided to leave the MC clubhouse early.

I needed to see Dylan, to make amends and let him know how much he meant to me.

I hopped on my motorcycle and revved the engine, the powerful rumble under me a comforting presence.

I rode into town and stopped by a flower store, choosing a dozen daisies, Dylan's

favorite flowers.

I knew that this simple gesture might not be enough to make up for our argument, but it was a start.

With the flowers in hand, I headed towards Three Hills, intending to surprise him.

I didn't have to wait long. Half an hour later, I spotted Dylan talking animatedly to a blond-haired omega. Kyle.

My frown deepened as I watched them, the memory of the information, or rather the lack of information, I had dug up on the mysterious Kyle resurfacing.

There was something about the way Kyle's records had been manufactured that immediately set off alarm bells.

Who or what was Kyle hiding from? I knew that it was possible I was just being paranoid.

It was common for people to create new identities for themselves, especially if they had a troublesome past.

That didn't necessarily mean he was connected to Hicks in any way. Still, I couldn't shake the suspicion that hung over Kyle.

It bothered me how easily he had inserted himself into Dylan's life, and I was determined to get to the bottom of it.

My thoughts on Kyle vanished the moment Dylan turned and saw me. His face lit up as he broke away from the conversation with Kyle and ran up to me.

It was as if he had momentarily forgotten that we had had a fight.

Dylan's smile, however, dropped when he reached me, replaced by a look of uncertainty.

He asked, "What are you doing here?"

I offered him the bouquet of daisies. "I'm here to pick you up. I figured we could have dinner together. These are for you."

I could see the tension in Dylan's face melt a little as he took the flowers.

"Flowers don't make everything better, Whizz," he reminded me.

"I know," I said, my voice gentle. "But I hope it's a start."

I took a deep breath and finally apologized for my actions.

"I never intended to hurt you," I told him. "But I promise I won't ever lie to you or keep anything from you again."

I wanted Dylan to understand that I was committed to making things right between us, to rebuilding the trust we had lost.

Our relationship was too important to let it crumble over a mistake, and I was determined to prove that to him.

Dylan's embrace was unexpected, and it took me by surprise.

He hugged me tightly and whispered, "Mates should trust each other. I trust you with everything I am, you understand?"

I couldn't help but smile as I rubbed his back.

"I do," I replied

"I love you so much," Dylan whispered.

"Same here," I answered. "Let's start over?"

Just as we were about to continue our reconciliation, Kyle interrupted us. "Dylan, everything alright?" Kyle asked.

We reluctantly parted from our hug as Kyle approached, and his presence immediately set me on edge.

I couldn't shake the feeling that something was off about him, something I couldn't quite put my finger on.

"I mentioned our fight to Kyle," Dylan told me. "But we're good now, Kyle. It was all a misunderstanding. Right, Whizz?"

I managed a nod in acknowledgment, unable to bring myself to be friendly.

The sense of distrust lingered, and I couldn't shake the feeling that there was something about Kyle that I needed to keep a close eye on.

"We'll get that coffee another day," Dylan told Kyle. "I promise."

"I understand. You guys have a good time," Kyle said.

He seemed like a genuinely nice guy, and I couldn't help but feel a twinge of guilt for my suspicions.

Wait a moment. Maybe Kyle was just that good an actor that he could easily fool everyone?

Dylan got behind me on my motorcycle, wrapping his arms around my waist, fitting against me as if he always belonged there.

"He's a great guy, Whizz," Dylan said, breaking the silence. "I hope you give him a chance."

I sighed, not wanting to push or convince Dylan of my suspicions regarding Kyle.

Kyle had quickly become an important part of Dylan's life, the first real friend he had made since his rescue.

I didn't have it in me to take that away from him.

Still, my gut instincts told me that Kyle might not have entirely honest intentions toward my mate.

"I'll try," I replied but the truth was, Kyle had placed himself on my personal list of people to watch out for.

"How do you intend to make it up to me?" Dylan asked in a teasing voice, his mood shifting.

I grinned. "You'll just have to find out."

Starting the motorcycle's engine, I revved it to life, and we rode back to Moon Burrow.

I had special plans for tonight. It involved a nice dinner, maybe a movie or two, then

Dylan and me getting naked.

d and him make up.

Page 19

Source Creation Date: July 17, 2025, 7:10 am

I woke up, and instead of being in Whizz's messy room at the MC clubhouse as I initially expected, I found myself in my own apartment.

I blinked for a moment, disoriented, until I saw Whizz next to me in bed, snoozing peacefully. The sight brought a smile to my face.

Our makeup date last night and makeup sex had been amazing. Whizz had gone out of his way to make it special, and it had worked.

I realized I couldn't stay mad at him for long, not when I saw how much he cared about us.

I reached out, my fingers lightly tracing Whizz's face. He didn't stir, either faking sleep or genuinely that worn out from our evening together.

The tenderness of the moment was abruptly interrupted by the sound of a ringing phone.

I recognized Whizz's ringtone, and as much as I was tempted to ignore it, I couldn't help but think that the call might be important. I glanced at Whizz, who was still snoring softly, then let out a sigh.

I groaned as I started looking for the phone, but it seemed to elude my grasp, continuing to ring relentlessly.

Finally, I gently shook Whizz awake.

He let out a soft growl in response but quickly lost his irritation when he saw me.

"Woke me up early for some morning fun?" Whizz teased with a knowing grin.

Amused, I shook my head and pointed out the ringing phone, making it clear that something else was demanding our attention.

Whizz eventually helped me search for it, and we finally found it under the bed, ending the persistent ringing.

I debated making a quick breakfast for both of us before we headed to work.

There was still plenty of time, but my plans changed when I noticed the way Whizz's face tensed as he uttered Marc's name.

A chill ran down my spine, knowing that Marc's call could only be about one thing—Gregory Hicks.

Had Whizz's friend found more information about Hicks and his new operation?

I couldn't help but remain where I was, eavesdropping on the conversation.

Whizz didn't seem to mind, as he didn't ask me to give him some space. He truly meant what he said about not keeping any secrets from me anymore.

Pleased by this newfound revelation, I continued listening in, but the mood turned sober as we heard what Marc had to say.

Marc sounded both panicked and angry as he spoke on the phone.

"They appeared in Greenfield last night," Marc said, his voice tight. "They took

another omega as he was coming home from work. I can't just stand by and watch any longer. I'm pursuing them."

I felt a chill run down my spine as I heard this, realizing that Marc was risking himself to track down Hicks' men.

"Are you insane, Marc? This isn't the protocol we established," Whizz said.

I tapped Whizz on the shoulder, and he turned to look at me.

Silently, I mouthed, "Calm down."

He took a deep breath and nodded curtly, acknowledging my message.

Whizz turned his attention back to Marc and said, "Tell me everything."

Marc began to explain the situation, starting with how one of his sources in Greenfield had spotted one of Hicks' men in town.

Concerned, Marc had driven out to check it out, which was what had set all of this in motion.

"That doesn't explain why you went after them on your own. You should have called me first," Whizz pointed out. "You're a great private investigator, Marc, the best, but you're not a fighter."

"I lost my cool after seeing one of Hicks' men making a video call to one of their allies," Marc admitted.

Both Whizz and I could hear Marc's heavy, heaving breathing on the phone.

"Whizz, the guy this werewolf called. It was Hicks he called, but there was a second guy next to Hicks. It's Tommy," Marc explained.

"Tommy, your missing brother?" Whizz asked, sounding puzzled.

He shook his head and gripped the phone tightly in his hand. I knew this was a sensitive topic for Marc.

"Marc, Tommy disappeared the same time Jake did," Whizz said gently. "You don't know what he looks like now."

"I know it's him, Whizz," Marc responded, his frustration coming through in his voice. "Are you done lecturing me? Are you going to help me deal with these bastards or not?"

Whizz let out a deep breath and made a quick decision.

"I'll be right there. Wait for me, and don't do anything rash until then. Can you promise me that, Marc?" Whizz asked carefully.

It took a few moments for Marc to answer him.

"Fine, I can wait. I did call you, and I'm aware of my limits," he admitted. "I have no intentions of getting myself killed."

"Good, I'll see you soon," Whizz replied before ending the call.

He turned to me with a serious expression.

"This smells like a trap," I pointed out.

Whizz nodded. "I'm aware, but I can't abandon Marc," he explained.

Through the depth of our mate bond, I could sense Whizz's worries, his determination to head out and back up Marc despite the danger.

I knew him well enough by now to understand that there was no way I could stop him.

I cupped Whizz's unshaven cheek, drawing his attention, and looked into his eyes.

"Promise me you'll be extra careful and that you'll call for backup if things get too risky?" I asked.

Whizz took my fingers in his and kissed them, his lips warm and reassuring.

"I promise I'll return with Marc safe," he answered.

I watched from my apartment window as Whizz got on his motorcycle downstairs.

It felt like Whizz knew I was keeping an eye on him, and he looked up, giving me a reassuring wave.

Waving back at him, I tried to muster a smile, but my stomach was tied in knots.

I had confidence in Whizz's abilities, but the impending decision I was about to make felt like a betrayal.

I couldn't sit idly by and let Whizz fight my battles for me all the time. I knew what it felt like to need to take control of your own destiny, like Marc did.

Once Whizz's figure disappeared down the street, I picked up my own cell phone and

dialed Kyle's number.

It didn't take Kyle long to answer. After just two rings, he picked up. I couldn't help but wonder if he had been anticipating my call.

"Dylan, hey, I wasn't expecting to hear your voice the first thing in the morning," Kyle said in a cheerful tone, but there was something about it that felt a bit fake.

I took a deep breath, the stakes high, and asked, "Kyle, I'm calling to ask about that coffee. Would you like to have breakfast together before work?"

My heart raced with anticipation. If Kyle said yes, I would have the opportunity to uncover the truth about him and hopefully put Whizz's suspicions to rest.

But if he said no, I might have to wait a long time for another chance, and I wasn't sure when that would be.

Whizz was already wary of Kyle and considered him a potential threat, so today was my best chance to get to the bottom of this.

Kyle and I had arranged to meet at a diner in Three Hills that I hadn't heard of before.

Kyle claimed it was popular with the locals, but when I stepped into the somewhat dingy diner 40-minutes later, I couldn't help but notice the sparse number of customers.

The waiter gave me a suspicious side-eyed look that set my instincts on edge.

Every fiber in my body was screaming for me to abandon this half-cocked plan. Even my rabbit half urged me to run out the door immediately.

Despite my reservations, I spotted Kyle sitting in a corner booth near the bathroom. He waved me over.

"Dylan, over here," he called.

I hesitated for a moment before walking over and taking a seat. To my surprise, Kyle had already ordered two coffees, which sat steaming in front of us.

I poured some milk into my cup and took a cautious sip, only to wince at the bitterness.

Kyle chuckled at my reaction. "The coffee's a little bitter, but it sure packs a punch, doesn't it?"

"It sure does," I replied, trying to keep the conversation light.

After the same waiter who had given me a side-eyed look earlier took our orders, I attempted to focus on our discussion.

When I invited Kyle for breakfast, I hadn't been sure about the rest of my plan. How was I going to get Kyle to talk about his past?

"I have to admit, I was surprised by your call earlier," Kyle said, breaking the silence. "I didn't think that overprotective mate of yours would allow it. He doesn't seem to like me all that much."

I felt a surge of loyalty to Whizz and felt compelled to defend him.

"Whizz isn't that bad," I immediately said.

"Of course, you'd say that, especially after everything you've been through," Kyle

said absentmindedly, his words sending alarm bells ringing in my head.

"What do you mean, "after everything I've been through"?" I asked, my heart pounding.

I had never told Kyle about my prior abduction.

I had only mentioned that before Whizz, I had a bad experience with an ex-boyfriend, a safe enough lie.

Kyle's face briefly showed panic, and I watched as he attempted to cover his mistake with a nervous laugh.

It was evident that Kyle was afraid of something, of revealing the truth perhaps.

"Oh, I meant your ex. He must've done a number on you. I know mine did," he said, trying to play it off. But his earlier slip had not gone unnoticed.

I couldn't help but think about the information Whizz had compiled on Kyle.

Whizz had not only speculated that Kyle had lied about his identity but had also concluded that he might be working for Hicks.

I sincerely hoped Whizz had been wrong about this. Before I could delve deeper into my thoughts, Kyle abruptly stood up.

"If you'll excuse me, I need to head to the men's room," he said.

Without waiting for a response, Kyle brushed past the scowling waiter who had taken our orders earlier.

"Your food," the waiter said curtly, delivering our orders.

Curiosity got the better of me as I watched the waiter entering the men's room as well.

Why had the waiter followed Kyle? Was there some connection between them that I wasn't aware of?

My animal instincts couldn't detect that the waiter was a paranormal; he seemed human, which meant he wasn't a direct threat to me.

I decided to rise from my seat and quietly follow them into the men's room.

Inside, I overheard Kyle and the waiter engaged in a heated argument.

"Norris, I can't do this after all. Dylan's a good guy. Surely, Gregory can find another replacement," Kyle's desperate voice reached my ears.

My heart sank as those words confirmed that Kyle was indeed in league with Hicks.

"He drank that coffee, didn't he? Your work here is done. Let us handle everything else. If Gregory heard you second-guessing his decisions, you're in for a world of hurt, Tommy."

Tommy. The name struck a chord, but I couldn't quite place it.

As I watched, the omega pretending to be Kyle looked over Norris' shoulder, and his face turned ashen when he saw me standing by the door.

My instincts screamed at me to run, to leave now, but my feet felt as if they were stuck in place, and I couldn't move.

"Dylan, you shouldn't have followed me here. You shouldn't have asked me out for breakfast," Tommy whispered, his hands covering his face as if he could erase what had just occurred.

It struck me that once he shed the facade he had been playing, Tommy was a shattered soul, much like I had been before Whizz rescued me.

I finally managed to shake off my paralysis, but as I turned to leave, my vision blurred, and my body felt unbearably heavy.

Tommy mentioned something about the coffee, and a chilling realization struck me.

I knew there were drugs that could affect paranormals.

Hicks had used them before to keep us compliant. Before I could retreat further into the diner, Norris lunged towards me.

His movement was a blur, and he held a gun in his hand. But he didn't use it to shoot me; instead, he used it to knock me out cold.

"Mission accomplished. Help me move his body," were the last words I heard Norris said, before passing out.

Source Creation Date: July 17, 2025, 7:10 am

WHIZZ

I didn't care that I was breaking the speed limit. I had to get to Marc as fast as possible.

When it came to his missing brother, Tommy, Marc could be reckless, despite his typically level-headed nature.

Greenfield was ahead, a place I never thought I'd return to, and it seemed that Hicks' men were once again attempting an omega abduction.

Dylan had been right; this situation smelled like a trap, but who was the intended victim? Was it me, Marc, or did Hicks know our identities?

I wasn't going into this alone. I'd already sent Piston and Nitro, sharing Marc's location with them in case things went south.

My GPS indicated that I was nearing the coordinates Marc had given me.

For a brief moment, I feared Marc had grown impatient and left, but then I saw him waiting by his car on the side of the road.

Relief washed over me as I pulled up next to him.

"What took you so long, Whizz?" Marc's voice carried a mix of impatience and anxiety as I pulled up.

I shot him a quick look. "I came as fast as I could, Marc. And I've got two of my MC brothers on the way."

I knew it wasn't the time to linger on my arrival. I asked him for the details, puzzled as to why we were in the middle of nowhere.

My gaze swept the vast cornfields on both sides of the road, and it struck me as an unusual place for something to go down.

"Alright, Marc, what's going on? Why are we here?" I asked.

Marc's eyes narrowed, and he gestured to the east. I squinted in that direction, trying to decipher what he was pointing at.

After a moment, I spotted it — an old farmhouse in the distance.

"Stan Chaney," Marc said, finally providing the name of the abducted omega.

I nodded, and then inquired about the plan, emphasizing that Marc had invited me into this situation.

Marc paused for a moment, taking in a deep breath before explaining the urgency of the situation.

"We don't have time for discretion or scouting. I overheard Hicks' wolves talking about moving the 'product' tonight," Marc said.

"Then we go in hard and fast, catch them by surprise. How many are we dealing with?" I asked.

I needed the critical information to form an effective plan.

Marc hesitated for a moment before replying, "Probably two. They tend to operate in pairs, as far as I've seen."

I contemplated the situation. It wasn't a lot to go on, but it matched what my research had suggested about Hicks' operations.

However, Marc's demeanor suddenly shifted, and his eyes turned a shade of yellow, a sign his animal half was peeking out.

"Damn it, Whizz. I knew I screwed up by following them and alerting them to my presence," he said.

"You haven't screwed up yet, Marc. We can still save Stan. Let's move," I said.

We continued through the cornfield on foot, our steps careful and quiet.

I retrieved two concealed guns from the hidden compartment of my motorcycle and handed one to Marc.

As we neared the farm house, the voices of Hicks' men grew louder. They weren't making an effort to be discreet.

I nodded to Marc, and we decided to split up, catching the werewolves by surprise.

I reached them first, silently weaving through the cornstalks, but before I could engage, Marc's gunshot pierced the air.

A sinking feeling washed over me as the loud report alerted them to our presence.

Both of the werewolves swiftly reached for their nearby guns, clearly anticipating company.

Their leader ordered, "Find out who fired at us. I'm going to guard the merchandise."

This was still salvageable. As one of the wolves moved to locate Marc, I would have a chance to handle the other.

The leader made a mistake of thinking they were only dealing with one intruder. After all, they'd only seen Marc. This was my chance.

The moment the remaining werewolf turned his back, I took aim and fired.

I aimed and pulled the trigger, but I missed the crucial first shot. The werewolf must have heard the gunshot echo through the cornfield.

He sneered. "It wouldn't be that easy," he said.

I didn't let his words deter me. As he began to level his own gun at me, I fired a second time.

I managed to get off a shot as he fired back, but it was too close for comfort. I ducked, adrenaline pumping through my veins.

He fired at me blindly until I heard an empty click. The werewolf let out a snarl of frustration and I could hear ripping and popping noises.

The werewolf was shifting. A bad move. I took that opportunity and shot him in the head. He died, with a shocked expression on his face.

It was too early to celebrate. Hearing a yell, followed by a gunshot in the distance, I remembered Marc. I ran towards the source of the sound.

I arrived in a clearing just in time to see Marc struggling against his opponent. I

struggled to line up a clear shot.

The stakes were high, but I couldn't shoot my friend.

It was as if Marc sensed my internal conflict. In a split-second decision, he kicked the werewolf away, creating the space I needed.

The werewolf was now exposed, and I didn't hesitate. I took a deep breath and fired. The bullet hit the werewolf in the chest, and he fell, incapacitated.

I shot him three more times, to ensure he was dead. We had one final task to do.

As we walked, our breaths still heavy, Marc asked me, "Is this what it's always like for you?"

I nodded. "Let's go save Stan," I said.

I helped Marc to his feet, and together, we approached the farm house, not knowing what to expect.

A sick feeling of dread settled in my gut, making me half-expect to find an empty room.

But instead, we found Stan, bound and gagged in the living room, his eyes wide with fear.

My relief was palpable as I rushed to his side, quickly freeing him from his restraints.

As I removed the last piece of tape from his mouth, I noticed a piece of paper stuck to him.

I plucked it off and read the message, and a cold shiver ran down my spine. Fear, the kind I'd never known, gripped me.

Marc asked what the message said, and I whispered the words that chilled me to my core: "They have Dylan."

DYLAN

I woke up, disoriented and groggy, my senses immediately telling me I was in a dark, windowless room.

Panic welled up within me as my heart raced, and my breathing grew shallow.

My mind raced, but I couldn't escape the sensation of déjà vu.

I remembered waking up in a similar situation not too long ago, a life of fear, captivity, and despair.

For a brief, terrifying moment, I almost believed that the life I'd built in Moon Burrow, with Whizz and our newfound happiness, had all been a figment of my imagination.

That Whizz had never been there to rescue me, and that my newfound freedom had been nothing but a dream.

Then a voice, soft and familiar, cut through the darkness.

"Take deep breaths, Dylan," he said.

As I took those deep breaths, I reminded myself that Whizz was real. He was out there, somewhere, trying to find me.

I touched the spot on my neck, where Whizz's bite marked me as his mate, and felt the faint, but still unmistakable, bond that connected us.

Then I closed my hand around the necklace that hung around my neck, the one that had once belonged to Jake.

"That belonged to Jake," the voice continued, curiosity laced with bitterness. "How did it come to you?"

I shifted my gaze, trying to find the source of the voice. My heart sank as I realized it was Kyle in the cell with me.

No Tommy. For a moment, anger swelled within me, making it difficult to form words.

I couldn't believe Tommy had betrayed us, and now I was stuck here with him.

My glare pierced through the dimness, and I could see the resignation in Tommy's eyes.

He seemed battered and bruised, even more than I was. I had to remind myself to calm down.

This wasn't entirely Tommy's fault. He'd never wanted to be part of this plan in the first place.

I eventually decided to answer Tommy's question. "I found it in my old cell, next to a pile of bones.

"I see," Tommy whispered. "Jake and I shared the same cell. Jake had been strong. He refused to cooperate with Hicks, while I had caved in to the pressure."

Tommy shivered, perhaps recalling the horrors he'd been subjected to.

Then he explained that Hicks had eventually allowed him out of his cell and had tasked him with errands for his group.

"Hicks called me after you and the others were freed," Tommy admitted. "He promised to let me go if I brought you in, but I knew it was a lie. Hicks was never going to release me."

As he spoke, a memory clicked into place. Tommy was Marc's missing brother, the name I'd heard earlier but couldn't quite place.

The puzzle pieces started to come together.

"You're Marc's missing brother, aren't you?" I finally said.

Tommy sat beside me, his eyes widening with astonishment, he grasped my hands and asked urgently where I'd heard that name.

I took a deep breath and shared with him the incredible dedication that both Whizz and Marc had shown over the years.

They had never stopped searching for their missing brothers, their love and determination pushing them forward.

"He's alive," Tommy whispered in disbelief, his voice trembling with emotion. "Hicks told me that Marc forgot about me, but he's been looking for me all this time?"

I nodded firmly, my heart warmed by the thought of the reunion that awaited Tommy and his brother.

I genuinely believed that Whizz and Marc would find us and rescue us.

"He never gave up, Tommy. He recognized you, even after all these years," I said.

Tommy's eyes glistened with unshed tears, and he squeezed my hands in gratitude.

I hated what I was about to do next, but given the temporary alliance I'd formed with Tommy, I knew I had to seize the opportunity.

With a heavy sigh, I asked Tommy to share everything he knew about Hicks' operation.

He was hesitant at first, but I assured him that with Marc and Whizz on our side, we had a fighting chance.

Tommy finally started opening up, and our conversation gained momentum.

However, our exchange was abruptly interrupted by the sound of approaching footsteps.

Tommy instinctively pressed a finger to his lips, and I nodded in understanding.

The cell door creaked open, revealing a werewolf I didn't recognize. It seemed that Hicks had hired new people.

The stranger pointed at me and coldly ordered, "You, with me. Hicks wants to have a word with you."

Tommy quickly interjected, demanding to know what would happen to him.

The werewolf replied, "He hasn't forgiven you yet."

As the werewolf focused his attention back on me, he sternly warned, "No funny business, or I'll shoot you."

I swallowed hard, my heart racing, and nodded in reluctant agreement. For now, it was better to cooperate and bide my time.

Source Creation Date: July 17, 2025, 7:10 am

DYLAN

I was led up a flight of stairs, my heart heavy with the knowledge that I was being taken further away from Tommy and the other omegas who were likely still confined in the basement.

I glanced back, my gaze briefly lingering on the open doorway to the basement, and then a nudge in my back from the werewolf holding the pistol jolted me into motion.

He gruffly ordered me to keep moving, and I could only nod, swallowing my unease.

Moments later, I found myself in the dining area, where Gregory Hicks sat. He was surrounded by an intimidating duo of werewolves, both armed to the teeth.

The one who had escorted me in gave me a forceful shove, and I fought the urge to flee, knowing I wouldn't get far with these odds stacked against me.

Hicks greeted me with a facade of cordiality, his lips curving into a twisted smile.

"Dylan, it's good to see you again," he said, his voice dripping with false warmth.

However, his expression soured as his gaze fell upon the prominent mark on my neck, a testament to Whizz's claim on me.

"I see the bear shifter who found you and who wrecked my operation wasted no time in making you his property," he sneered.

Hicks wasted no time telling me what his plans for me initially were.

“I was going to sell you to a very wealthy buyer. A collector. He told me he was only missing an omega rabbit shifter in his stable. You were going to be my ticket to retirement,” Hicks said.

A shiver of dread coursed through me, and I realized I couldn’t pretend to be scared and meek forever.

I met Hicks’s eyes and retorted, “Hicks, you should’ve run the moment Whizz dismantled your operation. You should have known better.”

Enraged, Hicks shot to his feet, his face contorted with fury.

In my heart, I knew it was a futile fight, but I couldn’t go down without resisting.

I attempted to fend him off, but the harsh reality that an omega shifter couldn’t match an alpha in strength and speed was undeniable.

“Boss, he’s here,” one of Hicks’s guards interrupted, and I was given a brief reprieve as Hicks redirected his attention to this new development.

I took a deep breath, bloodied and bruised, and decided to remain down.

“He?” I whispered, a sinking feeling in my gut.

Hicks’s sinister smile confirmed my fears.

“Why, your mate, of course. I left him a little bait, along with a message. I knew the chances of finding you unmated were low, so I settled for revenge,” Hicks hissed.

He “continued, I want to make him watch as I end you. You know what happens to mated shifters who lose their other half?”

“They commit suicide,” I answered, feeling numb.

The ache I currently was feeling would be nothing compared to the prospect of Whizz and I having no future.

I pictured Whizz’s agonised face after Hicks blew a hole in my skull and shuddered.

“Bingo,” Hicks said with a laugh. “Your Whizz would do me a massive favor by ending his own life.”

Hearing the sound of a single motorcycle engine outside filled me with despair.

Hicks mentioned leaving Whizz with some bait. That must be the kidnapped omega Marc and Whizz was trying to rescue.

Hicks also probably gave Whizz our location.

Whizz was probably so worried about me, he headed right for me and never even bothered with a plan.

I summoned all the strength I had left to shout. “Whizz, it’s a trap! Leave now!”

Hicks shut me up by kicking me violently in the ribs. I coughed out blood and grunted as Hicks ordered one of his men to tie me up.

I was too weak and tired to fight off the werewolf who dragged me to my feet and restrained my hands behind my back using rope.

He pressed a gun to my head and I could only watch, helpless as the sound of the motorcycle died down.

Whizz and Marc would enter the house any moment now.

Two more armed werewolves had joined us in the dining room. I swallowed, sweating profusely.

Whizz and Marc versus Hicks and his little army seemed like unfair odds. Believe in your mate, whispered my inner rabbit.

How was I suppose to take his words seriously? The moment Whizz and Marc ran in, they would be no better than walking targets.

After all I'd been through, after I'd work so hard to build a new life with Whizz—was this how everything would come to an end?

WHIZZ

I heard Dylan's shout of warning, but I paid it no heed. Marc and I had a surprise of our own.

As soon as we found Stan, Piston and Nitro arrived.

I updated them about the situation, and the four of us agreed to go after Dylan and Hicks.

Another MC member would also arrive to bring Stan back to the MC clubhouse, where he would be tended to.

Hicks and his people were expecting to go up against two shifters, not four.

I dismounted from my motorcycle, the engine's growl echoing in the desolate parking lot.

Marc followed suit. I handed Marc my gun, because I wouldn't be needing it for this plan.

Marc gave me a nervous look and asked, "Are you sure about this?"

"I'm sure," I firmly said.

The adrenaline coursed through my veins, sharpening my senses and clouding any doubts.

We had a score to settle, and I wasn't about to back down now.

I knew this plan was reckless, but it was the only shot we had. As I stood there, my heart pounding in my chest, I made the decision to go through with it.

I had to act as the bait, draw their fire away from Marc, Piston, and Nitro.

It was a dangerous gamble, and I couldn't help but worry about my MC brothers and Marc risking their lives as well.

With a deep breath, I started to undress, peeling off my clothes and casting them aside. My body tingled as I embraced the savage grizzly within me.

My bones cracked and reshaped, my muscles bulging and fur sprouting.

In moments, I had shifted completely.

Without wasting another second, I ran towards the house and burst through the front

door. Bullets whizzed through the air, their stinging bites cutting into my fur.

I roared in defiance, and the sound echoed through the house. The pain was a distant sensation, overridden by adrenaline and the urgency of our mission.

The scent of gunpowder, fur and fear filled the air as I charged forward, mowing down the first two gunners who had taken aim at me.

Their bodies crumpled like rag dolls, and the room was filled with shouts and chaos.

My nose guided me as I tore through the house, and I could smell the distinct musk of Hicks and his wolves in the living room.

But there was another scent, one that was familiar and irresistible. It told me that Dylan was there, in the thick of the chaos.

I couldn't let anything happen to him.

As I barreled into the living room, I saw the fierce faces of Hicks and his men, the eyes of the wolves who had caused us so much trouble.

And in the midst of it all, there was Dylan, his eyes wide with surprise and relief as he saw me.

"Foolish bear. Do you think you could end me and my pack alone?"

The words were spat out by a tall, muscular golden-haired werewolf, and I instantly recognized him as Hicks from the pictures I had on him.

Hicks stood confidently, surrounded by his men. But my focus was drawn to the figure behind Hicks, holding Dylan at gunpoint.

It was another werewolf, and the sight of my bruised mate nearly made me lose my cool.

I clenched my massive grizzly fists, fighting the raging anger that surged within me.

This was no time for recklessness; we had a plan, and it was time to execute it.

I wasn't alone in this dangerous confrontation; Marc was right behind me, and I knew Piston and Nitro had stealthily entered the house via the back door.

Hicks, sensing the danger I posed, pointed a gun at me. At the same time, Dylan's voice rang out in a frantic warning.

I could hear the desperation in his tone, the fear for my safety.

But there was no turning back now. In the midst of the chaos and tension, Marc, Piston, and Nitro entered the tiny space.

Gunshots echoed, mixing with growls and shouts.

The room was filled with a swirling storm of violence and conflict. I locked eyes with Hicks.

I told Marc, Piston and Nitro that he was mine and they wouldn't interfere.

Hicks didn't hesitate. With a snarl of frustration, he grabbed Dylan by the neck and dragged him out of the living room, leaving his werewolves to deal with us.

Enraged by his cowardice, I knew I had to act. I couldn't let him get away with Dylan.

Without a second thought, I ran after them, my heart racing and my muscles coiled with tension.

Hicks managed to bring Dylan just outside the house, into the untidy yard.

He had a gun pressed against my mate's head, and the threat of death hung in the air like a heavy storm cloud.

My body tensed, and I came to an abrupt halt, knowing that any wrong move on my part could cost me Dylan's life.

"Not another step," Hicks warned. "I've been waiting for this moment for a long time."

I met Dylan's gaze, and in that intense, fearful moment, understanding passed between us.

He knew I had to act, to do whatever it took to protect him. And I was prepared to do just that.

As the tension reached its peak, Hicks suddenly pulled the trigger, and the deafening roar of the gunshot filled the air.

My heart felt like it had stopped. But at the last possible moment, Dylan stomped on Hicks's left foot, expertly ducking aside.

The bullet went haywire, missing its intended target.

Dylan dropped to the ground, gasping for breath, while I was already in motion, barreling toward Hicks.

I speared him through the chest with my claws. Hicks dropped his gun. Then I went for his throat and watched the life bled out of him.

I dropped Hicks' body. To my surprise, Dylan ran up to me. He turned around and I cut through the rope holding his hands together.

Dylan then enveloped me in a tight, trembling hug.

I held him close, my heart aching at the sight of his tears.

Wondering why he was crying, I gently pulled back from the embrace, keeping my hands on his shoulders.

I decided it would be better if I shifted back to my human form. Although it hurt as a few bullets had found their mark, I began the painful transformation.

In moments, I stood before him in my human form, my body bearing the stinging reminders of the battle we had just endured.

I returned his hug, and with my thumb, I wiped away the tears that stained his face.

"Dylan, why are you crying?" I asked.

Dylan sniffled and looked into my eyes, his own red and swollen.

"I'm glad it's all finally over," he whispered, his voice breaking.

We remained like that for a little while, just holding each other.

But then Dylan's expression shifted, and he told me about Tommy and the other omegas in the basement.

"We need to help them," he said.

Before we could take any action, a voice behind us broke the moment.

"We're on it," someone said.

It was Piston, and he was with Marc, who walked up to Dylan.

"Did you say Tommy?" Marc asked urgently.

Dylan nodded, and without wasting another moment, Marc and Piston rushed back into the house to free Tommy and the other captives.

"We did good here, didn't we?" Dylan asked.

He sounded exhausted. I nodded, a smile tugging at the corners of my lips.

"I knew you would come back for me," he said.

"Of course, you're my mate. I'll always find you."

"I love you so much," he confessed.

A surge of warmth washed over me, and I pulled him into my arms, holding him close.

"Me too," I whispered into his ear.

Page 22

Source Creation Date: July 17, 2025, 7:10 am

"Can I really be here?" I overheard Kyle asking Dylan, a hint of disbelief in his voice.

I had to remind myself, it was Tommy, not Kyle. Tommy, Marc's long-lost brother, had finally come home.

All four of us, Marc, Tommy, Dylan, and I, had taken a drive out to my old family cabin in the woods.

Tommy had known Jake during their captivity, and it meant a lot to him to visit Jake's grave.

It was a somber occasion, a bittersweet reunion of sorts. We stood under the oak trees. The forest around us seemed silent and serene.

As Tommy gazed down at Jake's grave, I watched from a respectful distance. This moment was deeply personal for Tommy.

According to Marc, Jake had been more than just a fellow captive; he had been a friend.

Dylan put a hand on Tommy's shoulder and gave it a comforting squeeze.

Two months had slipped by since we'd finally rid ourselves of Hicks and his crew for good.

As I watched Dylan and Tommy, I couldn't help but silently marvel at how far they had come.

Dylan had officially moved in with me at the MC clubhouse, and we had spent countless hours transforming it into a cozy and space.

I'd cleared out some of my stuff, sold a few things I no longer needed, and made room for him to bring in his personal touches.

Both Dylan and Tommy had resumed their teaching positions at the kindergarten in Three Hills.

They both seemed content with their jobs.

I slipped my hands into the pockets of my jacket, but my heart skipped a beat when I couldn't feel the ring there.

Panic bubbled up within me, and I quickly searched my other pockets.

"What's wrong?" Marc asked, his brow furrowing as he noticed my distress.

I groaned inwardly. "I forgot something important," I admitted.

I had to make this right, but I needed some help.

Stepping to one side, I quickly sent a text to Piston, hoping that my friend would come through for me.

The four of us had planned this special dinner at the cabin, and I intended to propose to Dylan during dessert.

The atmosphere was perfect, the setting intimate, and the moment just felt right.

But all my planning would go to pieces if Piston didn't see my message and didn't

arrive on time with the ring.

As we continued to the cabin, I couldn't help but steal glances at my phone, anxiously awaiting a response from Piston.

As the cooking got underway, my anxiety only intensified.

Dylan and Tommy had insisted that Marc and I leave all the cooking to them. Marc and I promised we would handle the washing and cleaning afterward.

It seemed like an eternity, the minutes dragging on, but finally, my ears perked up at the sound of a motorcycle engine outside.

"Go," Marc told me. "I'm glad your friend came through for you."

With a quick nod, I made my way to the front door.

As I swung open the door, I was taken aback by the sight of Nitro standing there, his motorcycle parked nearby.

"Piston was busy with some family stuff," Nitro explained, "so he sent me in his place."

Relief washed over me, and I couldn't help but smile.

"Do you have it?" I asked him.

"Of course," Nitro replied, reaching into his pocket.

With a triumphant grin, he pulled out the engagement ring and handed it to me.

"Whizz, who's at the door?" Dylan's voice called out from the kitchen.

I had to think fast. Quickly, I concealed the ring and responded, "It's Nitro. He's here on some MC business."

The lie rolled off my tongue smoothly, and I hoped that Dylan wouldn't sense anything amiss.

"If he's not in a rush, invite him for dinner!" Dylan called back.

My gaze flicked to Nitro, who was grinning broadly, clearly amused by the situation.

I didn't know him as well as Piston or the other bikers but he'd proven himself a reliable ally during several missions together.

I was about to say that Nitro had other commitments, but before I could respond, Nitro beat me to the punch, his voice carrying back to the kitchen.

"I'd be happy to stay!" he yelled.

Dinner was an interesting affair, thanks to Nitro.

He kept teasing and flirting with a shy but clearly interested Tommy, causing Marc to shoot him murderous glares every so often.

It was evident that Marc was protective of his brother, and he clearly didn't believe that Tommy was ready to date again.

However, Marc needed to give Tommy a chance to make his own decisions, no matter how uneasy it made him.

As we moved on to dessert, I took over, serving everyone slices of pie a la mode.

The anticipation was palpable, and I couldn't help but watch Dylan intently as he picked up his spoon and grabbed a scoop of ice cream.

"Oh," Dylan complained, his brow furrowing in confusion. "There's something hard in my ice cream."

"Go see what it is," I told him.

Dylan raised an eyebrow at me but complied, fishing out a ring with a spoon. His gasp of surprise was music to my ears.

"Is this what I think it is?" Dylan asked, his eyes widening in realization.

I picked the ring from the table, quickly cleaning the ice cream off it. Then, I got down on one knee in front of him, holding the ring up for him to see.

"Dylan, will you do me the honor of being my husband?" I asked.

I rose to my feet, my heart hammering with uncertainty. Dylan hadn't said a word, and the silence stretched on.

Doubts crept in, and I couldn't help but wonder if I had made a mistake, if maybe Dylan didn't want us to tie the knot.

The two of us were already officially mated, but I wanted him to be my spouse.

But then, as I was about to speak, Dylan stood up from his chair and stepped closer to me, wrapping his arms around me in a warm, tight hug.

"Yes, I'd like to marry you," Dylan finally said. "I love you so much, Whizz."

A wave of emotion overcame me, and I held him even tighter.

"I love you, too," I said.

I slid the ring onto his finger, sealing the promise we had just made. Then I kissed him, tender and sweet.

THE END

Page 23

Source Creation Date: July 17, 2025, 7:10 am

TOMMY

I dreamt I was in a dark and windowless cell. The cold seeped into my bones, and I shivered uncontrollably.

In the dim light, I could barely make out the outline of a figure huddled in the corner.

Fear surged through me as I stumbled toward it. Him.

"Hey, wake up!" I called out, my voice trembling.

I grabbed the person's shoulder and shook it with all my strength. There was no response, just an eerie silence that filled the air.

With a growing sense of dread, I reached for the man's wrist, fumbling for his pulse.

My fingers pressed against his skin, searching desperately for a sign of life, but there was nothing.

Panic welled up inside me as I realized he was gone. He lay there, lifeless and unmoving.

As I sat back on my haunches, a creaking sound echoed through the cell. The door, which had been previously hidden in the darkness, slowly began to swing open.

My heart pounded, torn between the invitation to escape this hellish place and the lurking fear that it might be a trap.

Trembling, I peered into the corridor beyond, unsure of what to do next. Then I looked back at the lifeless body in the cell and swallowed.

Would I end up like that one day, forgotten and abandoned in this horrible place?

The thought sent a shiver down my spine, and made me take another glance at the open door.

Taking a deep breath, I made my decision and stepped out into the dimly lit corridor.

Immediately, I heard frightening howls and angry voices. My instincts kicked in, and without hesitation, I broke into a sprint.

The corridor seemed to stretch on forever. My breathing grew labored as I went onward, but something felt off.

I turned a corner, and then another, only to find myself facing the same familiar spot again.

Panic washed over me as I realized I'd been running in circles.

My heart pounded in my chest as I continued to run, praying for a way out of this awful maze that seemed designed to keep me trapped.

Then, as if summoned by the dread building in my gut, I saw him approaching.

The monster who had torn me from my old life and thrust me into this living nightmare. Gregory Hicks.

Hicks walked toward me with an air of cold, calculated confidence. Like always, he always seemed so big and intimidating to me.

With his pale hair and dark blue eyes, he looked every bit like a golden prince, but I knew deep down, he was rotten to the core.

"Tommy, you're not supposed to be out of your cell," he said with a twisted smile that sent a shiver down my spine. "I'm still angry with you."

My throat tightened, but I couldn't find my voice. Fear had a firm grip on me as I stood face to face with Hicks.

All my strength left me and I felt completely powerless.

"You're supposed to be dead," I managed to croak, hating the tremble in my voice.

It was my sad attempt at defiance, but I couldn't help it. The dread that had been building inside me for so long now threatened to consume me entirely.

Hicks widened his smile, a sinister expression that made my skin crawl, as if he knew a secret that I didn't.

He stepped closer, his bright blue eyes glued into mine.

"Didn't you know, Tommy?" he whispered. "I'm never, ever letting you go. You belong to me. Forever."

I gasped awake, my heart racing, and the transition from the nightmare was abrupt.

Without realizing it, I fell face down on the carpeting, my palms pressing into the rough fabric.

The sensation of the floor beneath me was a stark contrast to the cold, damp cell I had just escaped in my dream.

Groaning, I pushed myself up and sat back on my heels. I blinked several times to make sure I wasn't still trapped in that dank and dark place.

Sunlight streamed in through the windows of my older brother Marc's apartment, warming my face and bathing the room in a soft, golden glow.

My gaze wandered around the familiar surroundings, taking in Marc's worn-down furniture, the comforting sight reminded me I was back in the real world.

The nightmare faded, and I grounded myself.

Then I took a deep breath and forced myself to remember that I was alive and free. The past could no longer touch me.

Inhaling the warm air of the apartment, I willed the remaining fear to dissipate.

Just as I started to regain my composure, the sound of footsteps pulled my attention.

In walked Marc, still in his pajamas, the dark circles under his eyes and his disheveled hair evidence of a restless night.

His gaze shifted from me in my shirt and boxers, to the messy couch with its disheveled pillows and blankets, and then landed on the television I'd left on the night before.

"Couldn't sleep?" he asked.

I tried to shrug off the unease the dream had left behind.

"Just old nightmares," I replied, my voice steadier than I felt inside.

Marc's concerned gaze bore into me, and I couldn't help but inwardly groan.

I knew exactly what he was going to say next, and I had been anticipating this conversation for a while.

He was going to suggest that I put off moving into my new apartment in Moon Burrow because he thought I wasn't ready.

I steeled myself for an argument. Too many years of my life had been stolen and I spent those years, following someone else's orders.

Hicks stripped me of my own will and imposed his own.

I was more than ready to step out into the world again, to learn how to stand on my own two feet.

Moving into that new apartment was a symbol of reclaiming my life, and I couldn't allow fear or hesitation to hold me back any longer.

"Tommy," Marc began. "Maybe you should stay with me a little while longer. Just a month or two."

I had another reason for wanting to live on my own. It was to get to know a certain biker bear a little better.

Marc liked to hover, and while I appreciated his intentions, he needed to give me some room to breathe as well.

I sighed, genuinely grateful for my overprotective brother but I wasn't going to change my mind.

"Marc, I appreciate everything you've done for me, but I need to do this on my own. It's time for me to spread my wings," I said.

My inner magpie agreed.

Marc opened his mouth. Clearly, he wasn't done trying to dissuade me, but I couldn't let him sway me this time.

"I'm an adult now, Marc," I gently reminded him. "I'm capable of making my own choices."

"Are you?" he questioned, his words cutting deeper than I'd anticipated.

I flinched, remembering old memories best left forgotten.

Just when it felt like the conversation was taking a turn for the worse, I heard the reassuring rumble of a motorcycle engine from downstairs.

A wave of relief washed over me as I recognized that distinctive sound. Nitro had finally arrived, saving me from trading more painful words with my brother.

"My ride's here," I announced to Marc, trying to keep the conversation from getting more tense.

He turned to me with a worried expression. "Tommy, that biker bear is bad news."

I couldn't help but roll my eyes at Marc's overprotectiveness.

"Your best friend belongs to the same MC," I reminded him. "Nitro and Whizz, they helped you destroy Hicks' operation and rescue me."

Marc had no argument to counter that, so he remained silent.

Minutes later, the doorbell rang, and I welcomed the opportunity to escape the growing tension with my brother.

I rushed to answer the door, and there stood my biker bear, Nitro, wearing a heart-stopping grin that never failed to make my heart race.

At six-foot-three, Nitro practically towered over me, but I had never once felt unsafe with him.

His warm chocolate brown eyes met mine, and I couldn't help but notice his disheveled hair, probably from wearing his helmet during the ride.

I had a sudden, overwhelming urge to reach out and tuck away the strands of dark hair that had fallen across Nitro's face.

The temptation was so strong that my fingers almost moved on their own, but then I remembered Marc's watchful eyes, and I stopped myself.

It wouldn't be appropriate, not with my brother standing right there.

Besides, I reminded myself, Nitro wasn't really my biker bear. He wasn't my anything.

He was a friend who had seen me through some of the darkest days of my life. He was just being nice, offering me a ride to my new apartment and ensuring that I was safe.

And yet... I couldn't mistake the undeniable heat in his eyes as he looked at me.

Nitro had always been a bit flirty when we were alone, but he was perceptive enough to back off if he ever noticed that I was uncomfortable or shy.

Maybe I just wanted so badly to believe that after what I'd been through, there was an unspoken connection between us.

That would explain why there were butterflies in my stomach every time we were together.

"You look good, Tommy," Nitro murmured, his intense gaze raking over me, and a flush of warmth spread across my cheeks.

I couldn't help but feel a mix of embarrassment and exhilaration.

Nitro had a way of making me feel desirable, and all this time, I felt like an ugly, unlovable mess.

Right now, I wished we were alone so that I could fully savor his attention.

Then again, that was precisely why I wanted my own place—to be free from the constant scrutiny of my older brother.

I finally managed to find my voice, "You too."

I could hear Marc's audible groan behind me, no doubt exasperated by our flirting.

"You all packed?" Nitro asked, changing the topic.

I nodded and gestured to the belongings stacked in the corner.

"I brought Spike with me. He has a truck. We'll put all your stuff there," Nitro said.

"I heard your motorcycle, you know," I couldn't help but point out. But then, I cleared my throat, not wanting to sound too eager. "So I'm riding with you?"

Nitro let out a deep, sexy laugh that sent a shiver down my spine.

"You bet," he said with a wink. "I remembered you enjoyed our ride last time."

“Move, let’s get this over with,” Marc grumbled.

He had picked up one of my boxes. I exchanged a quick glance with Nitro, and together, we gathered the rest of my meager possessions.

I didn’t own much. After all, I had spent the majority of my life as someone’s prisoner, robbed of the opportunity to accumulate belongings or make a space truly my own.

In fact, I hadn’t even had the time to break in the new things I had brought with me.

Nitro and I made quick work of moving my belongings out of Marc’s apartment.

It only took two trips to bring everything down. As we stood by the door, ready to leave, I turned to Spike, Nitro’s best friend.

”Spike, thanks for helping out,” I said.

Spike, who I didn’t know all that well, gave me a mocking salute with a grin.

He was one of those people who always seemed to have a smile on his face, as if he were privy to a joke that no one else quite understood.

Nitro had assured me that he was a decent guy, and he did turn up and help.

Finally, I turned to Marc, who stood there, still silently fuming. I couldn’t let us part ways with him angry at me.

”Aren’t you going to wish me good luck?” I asked.

Marc glanced at me, his expression softening as he looked into my eyes. A wave of guilt washed over me in that moment.

While I had spent the last few years under the suffocating control of Hicks, Marc had never given up on searching for me.

He'd been relentless in his efforts to bring me back, and I owed him more than I could ever repay.

But I couldn't falter now. This was the right move for me, for my healing and my future.

"Good luck," Marc finally said.

He hesitated for a brief moment, then reached out for me.

I tensed instinctively, the trauma of my captivity leaving its marks.

But Marc quickly pulled his hand back, his expression tight, and I knew he understood why I reacted that way.

"Don't act like we're saying goodbye forever," I told him, trying to ease the tension.

"Come visit me at my new place, once it's decent."

"I'll do just that," he said with a nod. To Nitro, he said, "Take good care of him."

"I will," Nitro said. "I'll make sure nothing happens to Tommy."