

WILDFIRE

At the end of WHITE HOT, Nevada Baylor and Mad Rogan are at a mountain retreat. Rogan receives a text from Bug, his surveillance expert, which tell him that Victoria Tremaine is aware of Nevada's identity.

At the start of WILD FIRE (working title, had to put something here,) Nevada returns to her house about to break the news to her family and find Rynda Charles-Sherwood crying at her kitchen table, with bot her mother and her grandmother consoling her. Rynda was once Rogan's fiancé. Her mother, Olivia Charles, was one of the villains in WHITE HOT, who murdered Cornelius' (the animal mage) wife. Now Rynda's husband is missing. Her mother's actions made her into a pariah. Nobody is returning her calls, and so desperate and alone, she ends up in Nevada's kitchen.

Nevada agrees to look into disappearance of Brian Sherwood, even though her Grandmother warns her that putting beautiful, helpless Rynda in need of rescuing in close proximity to Rogan is a bad idea, which is confirmed when Connor walks into the kitchen and Rynda immediately hugs him, looking for comfort, even though she is conflicted about his role in her mother's death. Nevada feels bad for Rynda and plans to start her investigation first thing in the morning. Rogan also promises to help in any way he can.

Rogan informs Nevada that she has to make a decision, because Victoria Tremaine is in the city.

Once Rynda leaves, Nevada sits down with her family and tries to convince them that becoming a House is the only way they will survive the clash with Victoria Tremaine. Her mother is opposed to the idea, but she is outvoted. Nevada, Catalina, and Bernard sign the paperwork, requesting to enter the trials which will determine their magical rank, and Rogan takes Nevada, even though it's now late evening, to the registration office.

In the registration office, Nevada meets the Keeper of Records, who takes care of the formalities and schedules the trials within three-day time. There are other things to be taken

care of, such as DNA analysis, which will confirm that Nevada, Catalina, and Bernard are related. On the way out Nevada and Rogan encounter Victoria Tremaine, who is furious. The kindly Keeper informs Victoria that the paperwork filed now protects the Bayers from her interference and demonstrates his power, which is terrifying. Victoria Tremaine warns Nevada that she is making a huge mistake and tells Rogan that he thinks he has her granddaughter, but he will never keep her.

Rogan tries to get Nevada to spend the night with him, but she tells him that she has to be there for her family on this night.

In the morning Nevada and Cornelius, who now works for Baylor detective agency, visit BioCore, the pharmaceutical research company owned by House Sherwood. Brian Sherwood (Rynda's missing husband) is a herbamagos, a mage specializing in plants. In Brian's case, he concentrated on fungi in an effort to develop new antibiotics. Walking into Bio Core is like stepping into an alien world. Nevada meets with Brian's older brother, Edward, who assures her that Brian deals with stress by running away and that he will be back. The death of Rynda's mother was a big stressor and Brian and Rynda's son still hasn't demonstrated his magic.

The conversation and the prior talk with Rynda remind Nevada of the importance Primes place on selecting correct partner to produce magically powerful offspring. Rogan had previously stated that she and he may not be compatible and their children may not even be Primes. He warned that she would care and now that she is so close to becoming a head of her own House, she finds that she does care at least some.

Nevada realizes that although Edward lied when he stated he wants his brother back, he isn't behind the kidnapping and there is security footage of Brian leaving the building, which means that whatever happened to him happened on the way home. She drives the route, noticing a car which she feels might be following her, and finds a bent guardrail with a small smudge of silver paint on it that matches Brian's car color. She turns on her emergency lights and stops which prompts a policeman pull next to her to check if she is okay. The suspicious car drives past them.

The cop leaves and Nevada notices that there is a gas station across the street which has an indirect view of the road. She buys the security footage, reviews it, and sees a black SUV rear-end Brian, forcing his car into the guard rail. When Brian emerged from the car, two people stepped out of the SUV, tasered him, packed him into their vehicle, then one of them got into Brian's car and they left.

As she and Cornelius are about to leave the gas station, they see the same suspicious vehicle park next to Nevada's car. Nevada calls to Rogan for back up, but before she is able to say anything, a psionic mage steps out of the car and hits them with an attack of panic. Nevada manages to shoot him. Cornelius feels helpless and is very upset.

Cops arrive and so does Rogan and his lawyers. Nevada concludes that her grandmother must've been behind the attacks, but they have no evidence that would tie Victoria Tremaine to the scene.

While fending off the cops, Nevada receives a hysterical call from Rynda. The kidnappers called her cell and made a cryptic demand of "You know what we want. Give it to us or your husband dies."

Nevada and Rogan drive over to Rynda's, where Nevada quickly realizes that Rynda honestly has no clue what the kidnappers want. Rynda's house is filled with kid toys and framed drawings by her four-year-old son on the walls. Nevada interrogates Rynda about anyone who could possibly want to kidnap her husband and Rynda states that House Rio is Sherwood's biggest competitor. They receive the second ransom call, this time Nevada answers it, and tries to negotiate, but the kidnappers still don't disclose what they want. Rogan pushes to have Rynda and the children moved into his HQ. Nevada becomes really jealous. Rynda refuses to move, because she is a Prime and has her own security.

Nevada and Rogan return home.

The next day begins with a meeting from a specialist from one of the DNA Prime databases. The politics of DNA are very involved, and all the members of the household give a DNA sample. Next, Nevada contacts Edward Sherwood and convinces him to visit House Rio

with her and Cornelius. She eliminates them as suspects. Speaking with Edward reinforces her view that he didn't care for his brother.

Nevada and Cornelius return to Rynda's house and find a slaughter. Something has murdered the guards. Inside, Vincent Harcourt, a summoner Prime, has pulled a horde of monsters out of arcane realm and is threatening the children. Nevada manages to temporarily lock him in place with her power. Cornelius's animal magic works on one of the predators and he uses the creature to go after the rest of the summonings. As Nevada's hold on Vincent slips, Rynda unleashes an emotional storm, hitting him with everything a mother feels when her children are in danger. Unable to deal with it, Vincent runs off.

Rynda calls Rogan, who arrives and takes her and children to his HQ, which makes Nevada want to rip her hair out. Instead she concentrates on what Rynda told her: Harcourt said he wanted a file that was connected to Rynda's mother. Rynda still has no idea what is in the file or where it is.

Rogan wants Bug to review the contents of Rynda's computers, but Nevada bulks and tells him that she would prefer Bern to take care of it. He demands to know why and she tells him that since this is clearly connected to Olivia, it is serious and that she doesn't believe he is objective. He tells her that she is being ridiculous and needs to calm down, which is what every woman loves to hear when she is upset. They have a fight and Nevada stomps off to her house. She receives a phone call from the DNA expert, who explains that a query has been made with regard to her DNA from House Shaffer, one of the other Truthseeker Houses. He asks her permission to release the results. She says yes. Almost immediately she receives a phone call from House Shaffer, specifically from Garen Shaffer, who is eager to meet her. She reluctantly agrees.

Nevada tries to go to bed, but Rogan knocks on her window with a rock. They talk some more and she tells him about the inquiry. He gets pissy because he is certain the inquiry will be followed by a marriage proposal. He wants to know what her intentions are. She tells him that since files are connected to the conspiracy and at least one Truthseeker is involved in it (events

in BURN FOR ME), she wonders if this inquiry may be connected. He says that it's a flimsy excuse and that if she is shopping for a husband, she should just say so. She tells him he is being ridiculous and to calm down. It's just a query and she wants to know if Shaffer is friend or foe. She's never encountered another Truthseeker, except for her grandmother, and she wants to ask him some things about their magic. Rogan assures her that he is perfectly capable of handling her having private conversations with another man and stomps off.

The next day begins with a package addressed to Nevada and Rynda. The package contains a human ear, presumably Brian's. Rynda has another bout of hysterics and has to be held by Rogan. Nevada calls the DNA expert and asks him to run the analysis on the ear.

A ransom call comes in. Fearing that admitting not having the files will result in injury to Brian, Nevada bargains with the kidnapper, explaining that she will need time to get the files and freedom to move about the city. She gets twenty-four hours and no more ears or other body parts. She asks for proof of life and Brian is put on the phone. Afterward Rogan gets on the phone and tells the kidnappers that there will be repercussions for Harcourt's actions. The kidnapper tells him to do what he has to do. Rogan leaves.

Nevada is stuck. Bernard is still going through the files and so far, not finding anything. She feels she is spinning her wheels.

Nevada wants to reconnect with Rogan, but when she walks over to his HQ, he is gone. She asks where and Bug shows her the recording of Rogan destroying the Harcourt manor in a blaze of glory and manliness. Nevada is hurt that Rogan didn't tell her where he went but apparently told Rynda.

Nevada goes back to the warehouse. There is nothing to do but sit on her hands.

The doorbell rings and she finds an incredibly handsome man on her doorstep. He introduces himself as Garen Shaffer of House Shaffer. He would like to take her to lunch. She agrees.

Garen tests her during lunch and realizes she is a Truthseeker and probably a Prime. He is charming, urbane, and handsome. Also rich. He is trying his best to convince her that would

be a good match. She tells him they don't even know each other, and he says that in that case he would be delighted to spend as much time with her as he could.

As she returns home, an armored transport is teleported into the middle of the compound. Men in tactical armor explode out of it and one of them, in a reinforced suit, grabs Nevada and tried to drag her off. Leon shoots several of the attackers, but Rogan saves the day by crushing the transport. Nevada is hurt. Rogan freaks out and carries her to his HQ. She is attended by a medic and falls asleep on Rogan's couch.

She wakes up because her phone vibrates. It's a message from the DNA expert which tells her the ear is definitely not Brian's. Nevada realizes that Brian had to be involved.

She overhears Rogan and Rynda speaking. Rynda expresses her regret that their engagement collapsed. She wishes things had been different. Nobody would dare to touch her children if they were also Rogan's children. Rogan rebuffs her gently and reminds her that he had broken their engagement for a reason. He tells that they would've never worked out. Rynda agrees. She tells him that he is like wildfire: beautiful but violent and unpredictable. She is too afraid he would burn her. Rynda leaves the room and Rogan comes to check on Nevada. They have a hot moment, but Nevada's phone rings and it's Garen.

Rogan tells her she has to pick, because he can't handle it. He thought he could, but he can't.

Nevada walks home.

In the morning, the twenty-four-hour deadline has passed and they still have no files. Nevada asks Edward Sherwood to meet with her. He arrives and she and Rynda get him to admit that Brian resented Rynda because their children are not herbamagos Primes. He wanted a new wife, but he couldn't simply set her aside, because of her powerful mother and because he didn't want to split their finances and custody of the kids. Rynda is crushed. Edward admits that he loves Rynda; he always had.

Victoria Tremaine calls Nevada and tells her that they need to sit down and have a conversation. Nevada agrees to meet her in a public place, where they will be clearly seen,

provided an official from the registration office will be there to make sure nothing untoward happens. Victoria and Nevada talk, and Victoria attempts to persuade Nevada to join her and become part of House Tremaine. It's her heritage and her rightful place. She explains the story of how Nevada's father was born, which explains their odd powers and horrifies Nevada. Victoria admits to the two previous kidnapping attempts, one at the gas station and one with the armored transport.

Their conversation is interrupted by armed men, who are trying to grab Nevada. Victoria is incensed that someone dared to interrupt. The leader of the men holds out the phone and the speaker on the other end of the line tells Victoria that this is the way it has to be. That when she joined their movement, she knew it required sacrifice. Victoria tells him that duty and sacrifice are all fine and dandy, but this is family. Victoria starts killing people left and right. Nevada realized for the first time what she is truly capable of and joins her grandmother in her fight. They win, but Victoria is shot and wounded. Nevada packs her grandmother into an ambulance and gets a frantic call from her sister. Their base is under attack by a storm mage.

Nevada races back home to find an electric storm and a massive tornado. Rogan has built a wall and is physically holding the tornado back. It is a nightmarish scene. Nevada manages to make it to the warehouse, where Garen and the family are waiting for her. Rogan is hit by debris/struck by lightning and collapses. Nevada runs through the storm to him, ignoring the tornado and tried to pull him to safety. She can't.

Arabella leaves the safety of the warehouse, assumes her true form, and shelters them from the tornado. Rogan wakes up. Arabella due to her height is able to see the origin of magic. Rogan pulverizes the building where the storm mage is hiding.

Rogan's people search the ruin and find a complex magic circle, and some corpses, but none of them are Primes. The storm mage is gone.

Garen realizes that he would have to compete with Rogan and even if Nevada gives him her hand, Rogan already has some heart or some such romantic silliness. He leaves.

Rogan and Nevada have hot sex at Rogan's HQ. Afterward she tells him of meeting her grandmother and recalling the conversation makes her think of Rynda's house and the framed drawings on the wall. Rynda had told her that her mother loved the grandchildren and had the drawings framed. Nevada tries to leave Rogan behind, but he insists and they drive to Rynda's house. When Nevada takes down the drawings, she finds notes in the frames which detail the full extent of the conspiracy to overthrow current government and install the mysterious Caesar as a dictator.

The next day kidnappers call again and Nevada promises them notes in exchange for Brian's life. They demand that Rogan doesn't show up at the meeting. They are terrified of him. Nevada agrees. Rogan isn't thrilled, but when she mentions that Brian is unlikely to be at the meeting, he becomes interested. Nevada's theory is that Brian is in on the whole thing, and that they are meant to be killed at the exchange. Brian is too much of a coward to be present when someone put a bullet through his wife's brain. Rogan smiles and helps them plan their ambush.

The three Baylor sisters and Rynda go to the exchange point. A huge showdown ensues, during which Arabella fights Harcourt's summon and Nevada and Catalina destroy the storm mage. At the end of the fight Rogan appears and brings Brian Sherwood with him. Rynda lets him feel everything he put her through and Brian, escaping as he is, kills himself.

The conspiracy is exposed, although the identity of the Caesar is never discovered. Nevada and Catalina qualify as Primes. Rynda ends up with Edward, because she desperately needs to be loved.

Rogan proposes and Nevada says yes.

HEA