

Ava

Chapter 27

Ava felt her muscles relax, and a wave of relief washed through her whole body. Jared's hands were like magic on her sore body.

"That feels amazing," she said sleepily. "What is it?"

"A little something I get whipped up by a witch at home. Helps after hard training sessions," Jared answered. "If I had known it worked on humans, I would have given it to you sooner."

The fact that anyone with supernatural healing powers needed something like this made her feel anxious again.

She flinched when Jared touched a more painful spot on her back. It brought her mind back to the present.

"Sorry," Jared said.

"It's fine."

She let him put it wherever he needed to and closed her eyes. She'd hardly had any sleep with the early mornings and the pain in her body. This was the best she had felt in what seemed like forever.

"Turn over," Jared instructed.

She mumbled a protest, but Jared laughed and turned her over himself. It didn't feel as painful as she had thought it would. Keeping her eyes closed, she allowed Jared to continue his magic on the front of her body. He had dug up a bikini set from somewhere. She'd never worn bikinis because they exposed too much, but she was glad Jared owed some, for whatever reason. The tiny scraps of material allowed him unrestricted access as he moved his hands everywhere she needed him to.

She moaned when he started on her arm. She'd hurt her shoulder more with her duties in the kitchen, but now, the pain was almost gone.

"All done," Jared said when he finally stopped.

"Thank you," she said sincerely. "This is the third time you've saved me. I don't know what I can do to repay you."

"You don't need to repay me. Your company is like magic. No one ever really visits here unless I'm having a party," Jared sighed.

Did his pack members not live with him? He sounded a little sad when he said that. She remembered how upset he had been at the assembly about something the dean said. Something about last year's evaluations? What was his story? Though he'd had his hands all over her body, she

didn't feel they were close enough for her to ask such personal questions.

"Now, do you want to tell me what had those tears on your face? Besides the pain, that is," Jared said as he moved over to another lounge.

"It's nothing. Maybe I'm just homesick. I wanted to speak to my dad but I was in too much pain to wait in the queue," she sighed. "But thanks to you, I'll be okay to call tomorrow."

"You don't have to wait. You can use my phone."

She opened her eyes wide to look at him. He had a phone? Weren't those not allowed?

"All future Alphas have phones," he explained. "Landlines so the Academy can still restrict our usage if we misuse them. But on weekends, it's unlimited"

She sat up on her lounge and looked at him eagerly, Jared was saving her in more ways than he could ever imagine.

Moments later, an Omega came out of the house holding a cordless phone, and she could have kissed her. Jared had probably used their pack link to give her instructions.

"Thank you."

She didn't know why she was already blinking back tears as Jared stood.

“Take your time. I have things to do, and then I’ll see about feeding you.”

She eagerly dialed her dad’s number, which was answered on the first ring as if he had been waiting by the phone.

“Baby?” Alpha Roland said instead of a ‘hello’

“Hi, Dad,” she answered.

And then she burst into tears. She had so much she had wanted to ask him, to say to him, but just hearing his voice on the other end of the phone made her miss her father so much. Until now, she hadn’t yet faced the reality that she wouldn’t likely be taken back home.

“Shh. Don’t cry, Ava. Everything will be alright,” her dad said over and over again.

It was a while later when she could finally get some words out.

“I don’t think it will,” she sniffed. “I don’t even know why they’ve kept me here when they can see I’m not like them.”

“I believe you are, Ava. You know I always have. But say the word, and I will come and get you.”

“I don’t even know where I am,” she answered with a sob. “And besides, you know I won’t let you do that.”

Even after students left this place, the Council was still a thorn in the backside. If they punished her family, they would destroy her whole pack. She disliked most of them, but they were still her pack. She couldn't do that to everyone.

“You are more important to me than being Alpha,” her Dad said. I would do anything for you kids.”

“So why didn't you tell me?” she asked, her voice cracking.

The question had been on her mind with every blow she had taken.

“You know we can't say anything,” her dad sighed. “I'm sorry, Ava, I didn't want you to get more anxious. But I also believe I taught you everything you need to survive. Hold your head high Follow the rules like your brother said, but do not take shit from anyone. You're much stronger than you think; you just have to believe in yourself.”

That was a lot easier said than done. The more she opened her mouth, the more the other students targeted her. But she didn't tell him that as she let the conversation drift to other things. By the time she had spoken to all her brothers, she had a smile on her face for the first time since she arrived.

“Have you made any friends?” Caleb asked.

She smiled as Jared walked out of the house, followed by an Omega with a tray overflowing with food.

“Yes, I have.”

When she finally ended the call, Jared had fixed her up a massive plate of food.

“And you’re saying you do all this, but no one is lining up to live with you?” she teased as she accepted her plate.

“I don’t do this for just anyone,” he snorted.

“Then why me?”

Jared shrugged.

“There was someone last year... I guess I wish I’d helped him, too.”

He didn’t explain further, but she knew this was the incident that upset him when the dean mentioned it in assembly. Ja was only sad for a moment before he let a smile on his lips.

“Eat up. You need to get your strength up for next week.”

She started eating, but for the first time, she felt maybe she could do this. She just had to stick to her original plan: keep head down and put a filter on her mouth. She had already survived being beaten for a week. Surely it would be someone else’s turn next week?