

Ava

## Chapter 89

Zeke stood just inside the glass doors and watched Ava sitting by the pool with her knees drawn. She had showered and then prepared her own food, which she had eaten in her room as she had done the other night.

She was still pissed off with him. Her calling him Master and pretending to be submissive was a dead giveaway. How long was she going to keep this up?

“She’s completely messed you up.”

He turned to watch Derek approach and then looked back at his little human. Though a weight had been lifted off his shoulders when he told Derek and Myles who she was, it was still imitating him that they were here to witness all this. A little human had felled the mighty Ezekiel.

‘What are you two even fighting about?’ Derek asked in the mind link as he came to stand next to him.

‘I don’t know,’ he answered honestly.

He was frustrated. After waking up in Ava's bed the other morning and embarrassing himself after he'd dry-humped her like a human teenager, he'd expected she would at least let him back into her bed, Ava's door had been locked last night. She'd had her nightmares again, and he'd felt her need for him, but her locked door told him clearly that she didn't want him near her. He hadn't wanted to break down her door and scare her further.

But he wouldn't allow her to lock him out again tonight. Ava had impressed him tonight with her fighting skills and had eased his mind a little, but he knew how brutal the evaluations got. He needed to be near her tonight. He needed to feel her body heat. He needed to drown in her scent. He needed to mark her.

'Prince Gideon is on his way,' Derek said.

'Call me when he's here.'

With that, he opened the door and walked out to his mate. Ava didn't even turn to acknowledge him.

He sat down next to her and dipped his feet into the water. He liked doing this. It reminded him of the beach at home, but the smell of chlorine always ruined the illusion. Ava seemed to like it too, so maybe after the evaluations, he would take her to his favorite spot in the woods. A natural pool that no one else dared to visit because it belonged to Shadow.

"What are you thinking of?" he asked.

“Nothing.”

“Come on. Ava. You’re going to have to start talking to me. We don’t know what will happen tomorrow.”

Ava sighed and then turned her head to face him.

“I’m thinking of how I’m going to get out of this place. Every day brings us closer to when the Council will return, and I don’t want to be here when they do.”

He already had a plan for that. It was funny. He didn’t know what or how he would tell his father about the vampires or that he wouldn’t be mating the wolf he had chosen for him. But he knew how he would take his mate out of Phoenix Academy.

“As long as your plans don’t involve going through the forest. We can’t do that again,” he said.

That forest had felt like Shadow’s domain, but he never wanted to feel that pain again, and he didn’t want it for Ava. How had she even lasted in there that long! He had told Myles it was the bond, but Ava was nothing like he expected for a human. He was starting to think there was much more that he didn’t know.

“Let’s just worry about the evaluations for now.”

Before he told Ava the plan, he needed to set some things in place. He also had to know where Claire was and what she told the Council when they found her. He heard the other Omega in the dressing room. He’d

smelled her fear long before he heard her words. What had happened in town! Why was that wolf so terrified of his little human?

The other night when he tried to talk to Ava, he'd insisted she tell him how she was sure the Council knew what they had done. But his mate made some stupid excuse and escaped to her bedroom. He didn't like that she was hiding things from him, but he would make her talk after they survived the evaluation.

Ava looked back over the water and then sighed. He felt like he had said the wrong thing again.

“Yes, Alpha.”

His jaw tightened again. Every time Ava said that he felt like she was breaking off a piece of his heart, like she was rejecting him.

“If I'm doing something wrong you need to talk to me about it. You can't just close yourself away.”

“And what good would that do? Would you suddenly stop doing the very things that define you?”

“You don't know what defines me.” he told her.

Maybe that was the problem. His little human would remain skittish around him if she didn't get to know him. It was a human trait that he should have considered. He would at least have to get her acquainted with his good side before she got to know Shadow.

And that meant he probably wouldn't get to mark her tonight. She wouldn't accept him.

"You're right. I'm sorry" Ava said. "I guess I'm being hypocritical."

"I have a meeting in a little while, but maybe I can come to your room after?"

He saw the panic on her face.

"Just to talk. I feel like a lot has happened lately that needs clarification."

Myles walked out onto the deck at that moment before Ava gave him an answer.

"The vampires are coming up the driveway," he said.

"Why? What's going on?" Ava asked.

An Omega would never have asked that or inserted herself into a conversation between an Alpha and a Gamma. Since she had grown up in a wolf pack this was something she would know How had she been ranked in her pack?

"Pack business." Myles said before he walked back into the house

"He doesn't like me." Ava stated easily.

It didn't seem to bother her.

“He’ll come around,” he said as he stood “Come inside, I don’t want anything to happen to you while I’m occupied.”

Ava stood without protest and walked ahead of him into the house. She paused when she saw the vampires being let into the house. Gideon seemed to have bought the strongest in his nest as if he was expecting trouble. They were almost as big as he was but not as strong.

Ava looked at all of them without lowering her gaze. Most humans were drawn to vampires because of their allure. It was usually funny to witness, but he didn’t want Ava to shamelessly throw herself at them. He didn’t want her to feel that way about anyone other than him.

He was ready to throw the vampires out of his house when Ava carried on up the stairs without looking back. A frown formed on his face as he watched her. Was it the bond that had allowed her to resist them! Was it what had allowed her to resist the Councilor Andrel, too?

“So it’s true. You’ve got a human in your pack.”

He turned back to Gideon and ignored that question.

“Shall we go and it down? We have a lot to discuss.”

This meeting would cement things, for better or worse. He hoped he was making the right decision, or they were all screwed.