

Bad Love 323

Chapter 323

EMILY

For a second, I lay there, dazed and confused.

I've never experienced anything like what just happened between me and Axel.

But I'd barely come down from the impossible high when he got up and walked out, leaving me here feeling used and unwanted.

The cold air registers on my cooling skin and I shiver, quickly dragging my clothes over to dress myself before someone can walk in here and see me like this.

I thought what was happening between me and Axel was something special, something amazing.

That just maybe, somehow, we could get past all the things between us and become mated after all.

Except I can see now how lust clouded my mind and impaired my judgement.

I feel shame and embarrassment storm through me.

I can't believe how I let myself lose control like that. With a man who barely tolerates me and would kill me the second he discovered the truth of what I'd become after the horrible experiments the old Roberts Alpha and his son Liam conducted on me.

Axel had said I was required to begin my training again.

I don't completely disagree with him on that idea. I'd like to sharpen my skills once again, and the idea of training everyday-having some structure and routine, as well as something to look forward to-it's actually very appealing to me.

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I only wish I'd thought of it myself.

Now, Axel and Aaron will probably take the credit for any improvements training might bring me.

I'm going to do it, but I'm doing it for me, not them and not the pack.

But I don't want to start training now.

I can't. Not after what just happened.

I feel raw and disgraced.

As soon as Axel got to his feet, I could see the cold disgust swiftly returning to his features, but now it's even worse.

He obviously regrets what happened between us, and I can only wonder how much worse his treatment of me is going to be.

I shouldn't have done something so stupid like

trying to use a kiss to distract him.

I grew up around wolves, mated and otherwise.

I know exactly how out of control a male wolf can get around his mate, especially when they're not actually mated.

Axel might have rejected me, but his instincts would still be pushing me toward him.

I should've known getting so close to him-trying to trick him so I could win the challenge-would be dangerous.

I leave the underground facility, avoiding the curious gazes of other pack members I pass here and there.

It takes some sneaking and cleverness, but I manage to slip away so I can shift and run.

Once I'm free, I let my mind go quiet and my instincts take over.

I run and

not

Divorcio? -No es justo, Que hice mal?

burn or I'm starting to tire.

that

muscles

Solo me canse y quiero un juguete nues

Eventually, I realize I've left Rathborn lands behind me, and I'm coming up on the same hiking trail where I met Ronan.

I slow and then shift back, walking quietly through the trees.

I scent a presence a second before I emerge through the woods onto a small clearing next to the river.

Ronan is sitting there on a picnic blanket with a sketchbook in his lap and various pencils and other art stuff spread out around him.

I deliberately crack a twig underfoot, and he turns his head at the sound.

He smiles, and his eyes light up as soon as he sees

My heart thumps painfully in my chest as I try to remember the last time someone actually looked happy to see me.

“Hello there,” he says, before returning his attention to the page in front of him. “I was wondering if I’d see you again.”

I walk over and stand at the edge of the picnic blanket.

“I didn’t come here looking for you, if that’s what you think,” I reply sharply, but then internally wince at my automatic bitchiness.

Why do I treat everyone like the enemy?

Even people I actually like, or people I don’t even know?

However, Ronan only smiles.

“I definitely didn’t come here looking for you

ces, but the cuts me a sly

sideways look. “Actually, I kinda did, just don’t tell anyone.”

I can’t help but laugh at the light silliness of his words.

“There’s plenty of room on my picnic blanket, if you want to sit,” he says, clearing some of the art supplies out of the way.

I’m actually grateful to rest after running myself near exhaustion the past few hours.

“Can I see what you’re drawing?” I ask curiously as I lower myself onto the outer edge of the picnic blanket. I’m not sure if it’s rude of me to ask or not.

“Sure,” Ronan says easily, then tilts the sketch book toward me. “It’s nothing groundbreaking. I’m not exactly a gifted artist. I mostly do it for the enjoyment.”

He’s captured a picturesque still of the clearing framing the river. It’s actually quite beautiful.

“I think it looks amazing,” I tell him, looking at the detail he’s managed to catch. “I certainly couldn’t draw anything near that good!”

He smiles, though the expression is a little self-conscious. “Thanks.”

We fall into companionable silence. I watch how birds flit through branches that are beginning to bud beneath the warming spring sky, how the river is flowing faster and higher with the melt.

The air smells sweet and damp, and after a few moments, I realize I almost feel at peace for the first time since I was abducted ten years ago.

No one or anywhere else has brought me that.

Except I’ve found it here and now with Ronan.

I look over at him, and something stirs within me.