

Bad Love 324

Chapter 324

“What brought you out here today?” Ronan asks after the relaxing silence has stretched on for a while.

“More of the same,” I reply, bringing my knees up and wrapping my arms around them.

“Family troubles,” he surmises with a nod.

“Worse than that,” I mutter, feeling my cheeks heat as I remember what took place in the underground training facility early.

The thing I’ve been running from all day.

“There’s this guy, kind of a friend of my brother-” I start, but Ronan gives a quick laugh.

Not a mean one, more one of understanding and sympathy.

“Isn’t there always?”

Like last time we spoke-the first time I met him-I find myself opening up.

Not telling him any specifics, just some generalizations so he still has an idea of what I’m dealing with.

I’m not sure if that thing about it being easier to talk to strangers is true, or if it’s something about Ronan himself.

How he calmly listens and doesn’t judge me.

“I don’t think you deserve to be treated like that. It sounds like you need to find some way to be rid of this guy while your

brother is away,” Ronan says.

The idea is equally appealing and abhorrent to me.

Deep inside me, my instincts-my wolf-are already mourning the idea of Axel being gone from my life.

He’s my mate.

Even though he rejected me, even though he’s dangerous to me, I can’t escape that fact.

I can’t get rid of that small flame of hope fluttering inside me that maybe things could change, and I could have my happily-ever-after.

But it’s impossible.

And that part of me is pathetic.

Ronan is right.

I need to find some way to get rid of Axel.

Before he finds out what really happened to me during those years I was held captive.

Or worse, before my own stupidity or weakness puts us into another position like what happened in the training room.

The problem is, I don't even have the first clue how to get rid of Axel.

I need to brainstorm, and I probably need help.

It's getting late, and I've been gone a long time.

I'll be lucky if Axel hasn't noticed and doesn't come looking for me again.

Reluctantly, I get to my feet.

"Thanks for listening, Ronan," I say as he looks up at me. "I really needed that."

"Any time," he says with a smile. But then he seems to become unsure about something. "I could give you my number, if you want. That way if you need someone to listen, you don't have to rely on the chance that I might or might not be out here."

My heart skips a beat in a way it hasn't since I was a teenager.

"Thanks, I would actually really like that."

Ronan grins and then reels off his cell number.

I enter it into my phone, and then immediately send him a text message so he's got my number as well.

"Okay, I better run," I end up smiling after I say the words, because Ronan doesn't realize how true the run part actually

"It was nice to see you again, Emily," Ronan says, and it seems like he really means it.

It's so refreshing that someone sees me for who I am, not who I was or the things that've happened to me.

Or the mistakes I've made.

Obviously, Ronan probably can't be a real friend long term.

I still haven't been able to figure out if he's human or wolf. It's

like I can scent him, but it's somehow muddled or disguised, so I can't identify what I'm scenting.

I think it's probably just my own screwed-up sense.

But whatever the case, Ronan can't ever know the full truth about me, so we'll never be able to have anything real.

Right now, the fantasy, the escapism of it is all I need.

I shift and run back to the mansion.

When I return, I immediately go to find Jessica.

I need to talk to her about the Axel situation.

I'm not sure if I can get her on my side, because I know she'll follow Aaron and his decrees as Alpha to the grave.

But I don't have anyone else, so I have to try.

Jessica is in the office, frowning at the computer.

A glance at the screen reveals she's looking over the pack's accounts and expenses for the week.

"Oh good," she says, looking relieved for the interruption when

I sit down at the desk nearby. "Emily, you were always better at numbers than I was. I can't get the expenses to match up with what's in the account. Can you have a look over it?"

"Sure," I agree distractedly. "But first, can we talk?"

She seems to sense the gravity of my request and turns away from the computer to give me her full attention.

"Of course. What's wrong?"

However, before I can start explaining, Axel comes striding into the room, like a storm ready to unleash its rage.

His gaze lands on me, narrowed and furious. "Where have you been?"