

## Chapter 140

### To Be Whole Again

"I'm not a good person, Ava. I have a history of hurting the people closest to me, and I can blame it on my upbringing all I like, but the fact is that I've been grown a long time. Long enough to know right from wrong. And I'm done making excuses for myself, but I do swear to you that I'm learning."

"You're not giving yourself enough credit, Xavier," Ava replied. "You've done amazing things since the Alliance collapsed. And not just for your people, either. Hundreds of people have you to thank for helping to organize rescue efforts over the last five months."

"Because of you," he reinforced, his voice going gruff with repressed emotion. "Every single remotely fucking decent thing I've ever done has been for you because of you. Because you are a truly good person, Ava. And the strongest I've ever met. One day I will be the mate you deserve, Ava Davis."

Ava felt the breath leave her lungs as Xavier turned to look at her with a searing intensity.

"I don't expect you to want me the same way, but I want nothing more than to be worthy of being by your side."

Ava stopped thinking and started reacting. Placing a hand against Xavier's cheek, she brought her lips up to meet his and pressed a kiss to his mouth. Among the few kisses they had shared, this one was chaste in comparison, but it ranked among the best Ava had ever had in her life.

It wasn't just the physicality of the relatively simple act. But when Ava fit her lips against Xavier's, it felt as if a long-lost piece of her soul had finally snapped back into place. She felt it in the warmth rushing through her body, the elation stemming from Mia, and knew instinctively that all that she was feeling wasn't her own but that she was feeling the same euphoria flowing from Xavier and Alexandre through their mating bond.

It was a wholly unique and exhilarating emotion that she had never accessed before, could probably have never experienced if not for the fact that it was a moment in time that she was sharing with the male who had been created to complete her.

When they finally separated, Xavier let out a mystified laugh that quickly turned into a look so hungry that it sent a shockwave of heat coursing

straight through Ava's body, turning the moment of sweet connection into one of pure, unsatiated desire.

When Xavier spoke next, his voice came out deep and gruff, as if he were holding onto his animalistic nature by a thread, "It's taking everything I fucking have to ignore what the bond is demanding I do to you."

The overwhelming scent of wood ash and violets wafts through the air around them, making Ava dizzy with lust. She wanted to bathe in the scent of their bonding, languish in it. "What is it telling you to do, Xavier?"

"It's screaming at me to throw you down and mark every fucking inch of you," he said. "We've spent too much time apart, and the bond wants that to end. Hard and dirty and impossible to ignore."

"Then we shouldn't keep it waiting," she whispered.

They came together in a flurry, each fighting to press closer to the other. Xavier's broad hands slid their way down Ava's back to grip her ass, heaving her onto his lap.

She slipped her arms around his neck and linked her legs around his hips as he stood, their tongues tangling in a frantic, lust-filled dance.

Xavier stepped forward, slamming her into the wall behind them, and used his vice-like grip on his mate's ass as leverage to grind his thickening cock against her aching core. Ava panted as she rubbed her over-sensitized skin against his, desperate for skin-to-skin friction.

"I want to see you," Xavier growled, clearly feeling the same.

Feeling too breathless to answer, Ava simply obeyed, ripping her dress over her head and letting it fall where it may. Her bra came next, hitting the bedroom floor just seconds before Xavier let out a low snarl and whirled around, dropping Ava onto the bed. He pounced on her, shoving his face in between her breasts, taking the time to nuzzle one of her pebble-hard nipples before sucking it into the hot void of his mouth.

Ava groaned and fumbled with his belt buckle, loosening it enough to shove the offending fabric of his pants aside enough to free her mate's cock from his underwear. He pushed his hips into her hands and moaned in appreciation. His cock was thick and pulsing and seemed to fit perfectly into the curvature of her petite hands. The beating drive of the mating bond needing to finally, finally be consummated and seer need was enough to set Ava's pussy dripping. "I can't wait," She moaned. "I want you inside of me now, Xavier."

"Are you sure," he asked, uncertainty breaking through the fog of their lust for the first time.

Ava answered him by lifting her hips and sliding her panties down her hips, spreading her legs wide. Xavier stared down at her spread cunt as if it was the last thing he ever wanted to see, and it made her desperate to feel him fill it. "I want you, Xavier," she panted, grabbing his face and forcing his amber eyes to meet hers. "I'm choosing this. I'm choosing you."

A mix of pain and hope beyond imagining filled Xavier's expression, the emotion so heavy that he squeezed his eyes shut and lowered his forehead to Ava's, and they stayed there for several long, almost unbearably intimate moments just breathing one another in.

Then, Xavier cupped the back of Ava's head and swept her in for a punishing, telling kiss as he clutched her hip in his grip and slid home. Ava gasped and, for all the world, it felt as if time itself drew to a standstill.

Then, Xavier began to move, setting an achingly slow pace meant for her to adjust to the girth of him, but he underestimated her eagerness, how much she craved all he had to offer, the pleasure and the pain. Ava pressed her hips up, urging Xavier deeper, faster, harder. And, if he was surprised by her insistence, he didn't show it or ask questions; he simply gave her what she wanted.

Xavier picked up speed, encouraged by her sighs and moans, undeterred by her small hisses and gasps, the bond supplying him with every single electric jolt of ecstasy she experienced under his plundering.

Soon, all pretense of technique fell away as they both immersed themselves in the bond, following the flow of feeling sailing between their bodies. Pure primal lust. "Touch yourself, Quinn," Xavier panted, sensing Ava's ever-steady climb toward her precipice.

Ava brought one hand up to cup a breast, pinching and rolling her nipple between sweat-slicked fingers while her other hand skated down her body to circle her clit. She let out a keening moan, the pleasure almost too intense, the need to come riding her harder than she could remember.

"That's it, baby. Come for me," Xavier whispered, his face buried in the crook of her neck as he continued to chase the dragon of his own climax. "I can't wait to see you fall apart for me. It's all I've thought about for longer than you can imagine."

His words were enough to send Ava over the edge, her body tensing hard enough that her hips lifted from the mattress beneath her as her soaking pussy pulses around Xavier's cock. Even her climax was intrinsically different, somehow fuller, and deeper now that it lacked the biting edge of pain she'd always needed to get her there before.

"That's it," he panted. "Milk me, baby."

And she did, moaning his name as he refused to let up, drawing out Ava's orgasm and steadily guiding her into another one. Xavier dropped down

and found her lips, kissing her senseless, as he laid flush against her, pounding into her with short, deep thrusts.

Ava reveled in the sound of her own staccato moans, drawing her nails down her mate's back, drawing a hiss from between his clenched teeth as she marked him as surely as he'd done her. Xavier's thrusts became stuttered and jarring, one punch hitting Ava's cervix and sending her into another, more familiar, quivering tailspin.

This time, the contractions were enough to make Xavier shout a filthy string of curses as he clutched her tight to his chest and began to come deep inside his mate for the first time.

By the time he rolled to the side, they were both weak, sweaty messes. Now that the immediate urgency of the mating bond had abated, a loaded silence stretched between them. Neither was sure of the line they'd crossed or if there was any way to put that particular genie back into its bottle, even if they wanted to.

Ava was the first to breathe out a shuddering laugh, but Xavier quickly joined, both delighting in hearing their other half sounding lighter than they had in years. Xavier gathered Ava in his arms, his big body curling around hers.

And they stayed there, soaking up every last minute they had like this until it was time to board their flight and the rest of the world came crashing back in on them. That would all come soon enough, but for now, Ava and Xavier were simply Ava and Xavier.

Two halves that had seemingly been broken beyond repair, but had somehow, against all odds, found their way back to one another.

A mated pair.