

Chapter 15

An Anonymous Party: Part 2

Xavier stared down at her with a stony expression, but Ava could read his silent agitation. He reached down, grabbed her by the upper arm, and pulled her to her feet.

"Oy, Xav, we need to work on your taste in women, mate." Someone scoffed, but Xavier ignored them.

When Ava stood, she became unbalanced on her sky-high heels and stumbled. Her arm shot out and caught onto Xavier's sleeve to keep from tumbling back down to the floor. Some of the others saw her clinging to Xavier's arm and started ribbing him at Ava's expense.

"The clown doll's caught herself an Alpha!"

"You sure she's woman enough for you, Xav? We know you like it rough!"

"Nah, breaking them in is half the fun!"

The males continued to laugh and crack jokes, most of which featured Ava as the punchline. She stared down at her cleavage, rather than look Xavier in the face.

He gave her arm a shake, prompting her to meet his gaze, but she resisted. "Is this fun for you, having people mock and degrade you? I didn't realize you got off on humiliation so much."

Ava's head shot up at the scorn in his voice, "Is that right? So every time you show up and dick me around, that's just for your amusement, then?"

Ava was floored at the huge, swinging balls on this motherfucker to come and start lecturing her about letting a bunch of men treat her like shit when she was the one who'd placed her in this position in the first place!

If it weren't for him sending her to jail, she'd be getting ready to graduate from college by now. If he hadn't chased her down when she'd run from him, she'd probably be in California by now, fulfilling Layla's dream for the two of them. And if it hadn't been for him dragging her back to the Green Light Club to whore her out just to satiate his sick need for revenge, Ava wouldn't be standing in a room full of shitfaced man-children who considered shaming girls a forgivable pastime.

Too many times for Ava to count over the last three years, she'd reached deeper and colder levels of rock bottom. She'd been livid, scared, mortified, and disgusted with herself and everyone around her. Now, she was just done. Ava snatched her arm out of Xavier's hold and bent down, this time willingly dropping to her knees. She ignored the snide remarks from the court of detestable nobodies flung around the room, getting high off their own testosterone-enabled sense of self-importance.

With deliberate indifference, Ava picked up each and every dollar strewn across the floor, making sure to count each bill aloud.

"What are you doing, Ava?" Xavier asked snapped impatiently.

"My job." She cheerfully replied.

After she'd scooped up the final bill, Ava clutched the money to her chest like a teddy bear and turned to Jade the ringleader and gave him the most genuine smile she could manage to fake. "Thank you very much for my money, sir!" Xavier frowned at her display.

"Did you want another dance, Mr. Jade, sir?" She rose to her feet and walked over to the pig of a man, allowing her hips to sway back and forth with every step.

Ava didn't wait for an answer. When she reached where he sat, she climbed onto his lap and sat down hard on his crotch, "I promise I'll do better this

time." And she started to move, grinding her center over his lap as she rolled her hips in suggestive circles.

"Ava!" Xavier reached for her again, but instead of letting him pull her away from the stunned male, she leaned forward out of his reach and crushed her mouth to Ringleader Jade's. Despite his ugly words earlier, he returned her open-mouthed kiss with gusto. The room erupted in inebriated cheers.

When she pulled up, her vivid red lipstick was smeared across his lips and Ava knew she looked the same. Ringleader Jade shot Xavier a smarmy grin, "Tough break, Alpha Michaels! Looks like she likes me better than you." "Must be all your charm." Ava quipped with a smile and the moron laughed right along with her.

"Ava, what the fuck is happening with you right now?"

Ava looked back at him from over her shoulder, biting her lip coyly, "What, do you want a dance, too, Alpha Michaels?"

Xavier's face when hard and cold as granite for a spit second before he flattened his features back into the dispassionate façade he relied on to show the world how collected and tough he was. For once, Ava reveled in seeing that lapse in his armor in causing it.

"Enjoy it, Jade." He said with a bitter laugh and marched out of the suite.

"I think I just might," the male beneath her grinned wide as he glued his eyes to Ava's cleavage. In her revenge-drunk state, she had to admit that the noxiously bright lipstick complimented his tanned skin far better than her own pallid complexion.

"Earlier, you said you didn't like my makeup," Ava pouted. "But that's okay. It looks better on you, anyway." With that, she leaned down and licked her way from his chin to his mouth.

"Goddess," he moaned right before Ava slipped her tongue into his mouth. Wolf whistles snapped through throughout the room, as hands she wasn't completely sure belonged to Ringleader Jade clutched her rear.

The male ground his hips into hers as their tongues fought for supremacy over the kiss. She hated the taste of his tongue down her throat, but the cash she was on track to earn tonight would taste oh, so sweet.

She had a goal now and she knew what she needed to reach it. It was time to stop moping and take Madame Bella's advice seriously. This wasn't about the name-calling or the objectification and humiliation.

When the asshole she was grinding against tensed up between her thighs and let out a deep prolonged groan, he probably thought this encounter

was about him. But it wasn't. All of this was Ava, now, and getting what she needed to leave Xavier and his Pack behind for good.

Ringleader Jade collapsed back onto the sofa with a placid, overly pleased grin on his face, while his boys egged them on.

"Damn," this time, the lascivious voice came from the male sitting on the couch beside them. "Who knew the marionette was such a nasty little slut?"

Ava only smiled and reached over to kiss him, too.

Xavier drove his fist into the nearest wall the moment he was alone. "What the fuck is happening to me?"

He'd been in knots for weeks, ever since Ava came spiraling back into his life. He'd spent every moment since trying to reconcile the conflicting emotions blazing through him.

Whenever he looked at Ava he saw Sophia's face, and then her corpse. He saw his mother's despair and his father's disapproval and knew that Ava was at the heart of it. Being near her drew out his Alpha's instinct to punish...but it simultaneously warred with his need to protect.

Protect his mate. This cruel twist of fate was like a serrated knife to the heart every time he so much as thought about Ava and the situations he kept putting her through.

He didn't know how to sate the warring drives to both hurt and hold Ava Davis. That's why he'd chosen the Green Light Club as her final punishment. He couldn't stomach the thought of sending her back into the hole, not after seeing the shell of a girl that had come out.

He'd thought she'd be able to handle herself at the club - the hell-raiser he used to know would've handed those males' asses back to them on a gold-plated platter. With a few fleeting exceptions, though, the girl he'd known to spit fire when she spoke, and hit harder than a motherfucker, was gone and in her place was a trembling broken shell.

And that made him...angry. Whether it was because she hadn't been strong enough to survive the prison, or because he cared at all, he didn't know.

What Xavier did know was that if he didn't sort himself out soon...he'd destroy them both.