

## Chapter 3

### Getting Into Trouble Again

Ava wiped the dripping sweat from her brow as she slammed close the industrial-sized door on yet another mound of laundry. The Green Light Club never had less than a half-dozen heavy-duty washers and dryers running at any given time and the baby elephant-sized motors made the laundry room sweltering, even in the winter months.

Taking a swig from a water bottle, Ava thanked the moon for small favors that she had the fortune to be on laundry duty today. She could've been on toy duty again, and when you clean a sex club for a living, any night you don't have to wash anything by hand is a blessing.

Ava stretched her back, reasonably hydrated and ready to tackle the next task on her seemingly never-ending list of chores. Before she could grab the basket of silk sheets that needed to be steamed, the door to the laundry room slammed open. Audrey, another member of the cleaning crew came barging in. Ava sighed internally knowing full well that the human woman

was well on her way to another one of her infamous rampages. "Ava, you need to get to room 303, now." She hissed.

"I'm sorry?" There was no telling where Audrey's attitude stemmed from and in the three months Ava had known the woman, she knew the best way to react to Audrey's ego trips were to react as little as possible. "You. Room 303. Now."

"No, I got that part. Thing is, I'm not on the schedule to stage private rooms this week." Ava bent to pick up her clothes basket, "If a fire needs putting out, I'm pretty sure it's Bria's problem."

Audrey marched over and snatched the silks out of Ava's grip, "I don't see Bria, do I? And if that room's not set up in the next thirty minutes, you won't be seeing anything but the inside of a prison cell for the rest of your insignificant little life, fido."

"Bold words, human." Ava bared her teeth, an act that was admittedly way less intimidating than it had been a few months ago.

"I may be human, but at least I'm not a filthy criminal," she smirked. "Oh, and I just remembered 803 needs turning over, as well. Thirty minutes. Better hop to it if you don't want to end up back in the doghouse." With that, the other woman turned and stalked out of the room. No doubt to kick babies, or whatever she does in her free time.

Shaking her head, Ava was too tired to be pissed by Audrey's nasty words. It wasn't worth it. If the woman had balls enough to insult a werewolf to her face in the middle of a werewolf club, Ava knew she wouldn't blink at the thought of making good on her threats. The moon knew she'd seen it happen before.

For the most part, Madame Bella was an aloof mistress, far too caught up in whatever tawdry affairs made up the bulk of her workday to bother micromanaging the help. That left the senior workers to pick up the reigns, whether they'd been instructed to or not. Like every other institution, the Green Light Club had a strict hierarchy and as had apparently become the status quo, Ava was dirt last in the pecking order. Ava wouldn't be the first girl Bella had booted back to the dungeon with her tail between her legs, for becoming more trouble than she was worth. If Ava ever hoped to get out of this place, she needed to keep her head down and toe the line.

"For California," Ava sighed and grabbed a cleaning kit from the laundry room closet, considering her to-do list that had just gotten considerably more involved. The private room would have to be turned over like any standard room, any specialty objects would need to be thoroughly sanitized, but then she'd need to dress the room to fit whatever overly complicated fantasy that particular guest had requested. Needless to say, thirty minutes would be cutting it close. Ava made quick work of the first room, shaving 2 minutes and thirty-five seconds off of her personal record. The bed's thick coverings were hotel-ready, the pillows fluffed to perfection, and every whip and paddle stashed around the room practically sparkled. Exhausted, but reluctantly proud of her job well done, Ava set off to the eighth floor, hoping Gino was manning the elevator tonight.

The elevator opened and Ava immediately plastered on a fake smile, already resigning herself to the long ass trek up the club's winding staircase. "Eddy," she said in greeting. "Fancy a trip up to the eighth floor?"

As was completely expected, the snooty older man's lip hiked up in an unmitigated, and frankly unnecessary, show of disdain. "Not for you. Guests and esteemed personnel only."

"Yep," she didn't wait for him to finish, much less bother arguing. Ava knew from experience the stodge wouldn't budge. The old bastard got a sick sense of authority lording over the elevators, like he was god of the bellhops or something. There's a lot of that around here, Ava rolled her eyes as she got to trudging up the stairs.

About half-way up the twisting staircase, Ava became aware of the faint passionate moans filtering in through the stairwell walls. Over the last three months, Ava had heard and seen things she'd never even thought to dream up. Even though she happened to be a virgin, Ava was by no means a prude. Wolves weren't particularly demure by nature - all of that primal energy and whatnot- and Ava had never been an exception.

In the Before Times, she'd done her fair share of kissing and petting, and had even gone a bit further a time or two, but she'd never felt the need to complete the deed. Not with any of her previous partners, anyway. As far as she was concerned, those boys had only been petty dalliances, practice

for the one Ava had really wanted, the \*only\* male Ava had ever genuinely wanted. Great, now she felt mortified \*and\* stupid.

Ignoring her flaming cheeks, Ava continued up the stairs. She wasn't some blushing neophyte. She'd seen enough bumping and grinding in the last ninety days that she should really be better acclimated to it by now, but it was just...so... \*loud\*.

Turning a corner onto the final landing, Ava found herself suddenly confronted with the source of her ire - not drifting in from behind too-thin walls like she'd thought, but a couple openly and flagrantly feeling each other up in the vestibule. Ava blinked at the...veracity in which the male took his partner's mouth. Hard and thorough, the dominance he exuded thickened the air as he took the female's mouth. From what Ava could tell, the lustful moans boisterous enough to fill half a stairwell, seemed well earned.

Even so, as one of the male's large hands slid the female's bodice down to cup a voluminous breast, it was well past time for Ava to go. Voyeurism was a popular kink among the club's clientele, but peep shows needed to be paid for, so any staff caught gawking at the guests were either asked to turn in their aprons or join in and, at the moment, Ava had no interest in either scenario.

Thinking small thoughts, Ava tried to back away as inconspicuously as possible. The moment she moved; the male's eyes shot up to meet her own. \*Damn it\*, Ava thought bracing for an outburst. Instead of calling

her out, though, the male's glacier blue eyes held her own. Full lips kicked up into a lascivious smirk as he slid his mouth down his partner's throat and lower to take the tip of her breast into his mouth. The female gasped like a porn star and Ava took that as her cue to beat feet, finally breaking eye contact with the male.

"Who are you?" His voice was deep and cold. Ava had been spot-on when the word \*glacial\* first came to mind when he first looked at her. Everything about him was frosty from his perfectly coiffed pale blonde hair to those ice blue eyes. Ava didn't know who this man was or what his intentions might be, but she knew what it felt like to be sized up like prey. The more quickly she exited this confrontation the better. "Just room service, on my way to room 803," she threw him a contrite smile. "Sorry to interrupt, sir. I'll, uh, get out of your way and let you get back to it."

"Lucky you, I'm heading there myself," he says, pushing away from the blonde he'd been fondling. "Let me walk you."

The female scoffed and spun to level Ava with a look that could catch fire. \*Oh, found Bria\*, Ava wasn't so much shocked as annoyed. In a place like this, someone was always looking to shoot their shot. "Wait, we weren't done," she pleaded in a voice that was suspiciously a few octaves higher than Ava recalled.

"We are, though." He pulled a wad of cash from his tailored suit jacket and dropped it into Bria's outstretched hands, any hurt from the slight

immediately forgotten. With a satisfied \*hmp\*, she swished her way down the stairs without a second glance back.

Now alone with the strange male, Ava felt the full weight of his attention. "You look like you liked the show. If you're nice, I'll show you more."

Her breath hitched. She wasn't sure where this was coming from. Ava knew she was attractive, but three years in an underground cell followed by months of hard had taken its toll. Her naturally olive complexion had passed pale a while ago and could now only be described as \*sallow\*. While her hair was as long and wavy as it had ever been, the dark red tresses lacked any of their former body and luster.

The way this male looked at her, though, you'd think she'd just hopped of a runway. Or like she worked\* here. He stepped forward and, all of a sudden feeling far too exposed, Ava scuttled back, forgetting the precarious position she stood in, perched at the top of a very long flight of stairs.

Ava gasped as her weight shifted, her bucket of cleaning supplies crashing head over tea kettle down the steps below her. She was prepared to follow it when a solid arm whipped out, grasping Ava around the waist, and pulling her close. One moment she was falling and the next, she was staring into eyes like icepicks.