

Chapter 6

Kiss Me

From within her, Mia's hackles rose at his advance. Mia. Ava would bet anything that her proximity to Xavier had to be the reason why Mia was finally able to resurface. She wasn't nearly at the level she should have been, but even being in the same building as Xavier's Wolf, Alex, would be enough to start the bonding process. Mia's agitation at being near a potentially volatile mate, the extreme reaction Ava had to being touched by another male, the pieces were starting to fit together.

Now, Mia was wary of Xavier, unsure of his intentions. As he loped toward Ava with a single-minded purpose, she was inclined to agree. Ava opened her mouth to...admonish him, bargain with him, she wasn't sure.

Before she could do anything, Xavier crashed into her, pressing the entire rock-hard length of his body against hers, trapping her against the door.

Ava gasped and his mouth was on hers, claiming her lips completely.

A strong had snaked its way into her hair, holding her in place as his tongue explored her, no hesitance, only domination. Ava immediately forgot herself, leaning into the kiss and tilting her head back, practically begging for him to penetrate her more deeply. He growled and rubbed against her, the thick evidence of his arousal firmly pressed against her stomach.

Like a flood on a forest fire, Ava came crashing back into herself. What was this? What right did Xavier have to storm back into her life - the one he ruined - and start making demands?

Because, make no mistake, that's exactly what this was. He was staking a claim and something he hadn't earned, something he didn't deserve.

The mating bond was sacred among their people; Wolves went their whole lives without ever meeting their fated partner, and when a Wolf was lucky to stumble upon their other half, that connection was to be prized and protected at all costs. Xavier could never hope to uphold any duty to protect Ava, not when he was the one who'd shattered her in the first place.

What stung was that none of that even mattered because Xavier wasn't trying to upkeep his duties as her mate, he had no intentions of honoring her in any fashion.

The kiss he'd given her was brimming with passion and frustration, not an apology. Mating bond be damned, Xavier didn't want Ava, he wanted his prize. He was taking like he always did...he'd taken enough from her.

Ava took his lush bottom lip between her teeth and bit down hard enough to draw blood. Rallying what strength she could, Ava shoved Xavier back. Shock, more than anything, drove him back a few steps, but that bit of space was enough. Ava ran her hand across her mouth and glared daggers and the male's unrepentant face.

"Fuck you!" She shouted. "Fuck you, Xavier."

Ava panted at the force of her words. Years of heartache and hurt boiled down and spat with as much contempt as she could muster.

The room went still at her outburst; the group was already enrapt by their display, but now she'd overstepped on so many different levels. Staring at her silently, Xavier swiped his lip with a thumb, contemplating the red smudge he found there for a moment before he trained his eyes, flat with disgust, on Ava.

"You don't like this, Ava?" His lip curled in a nasty approximation of a smile, "I thought this was what you wanted?"

Ava almost felt she could choke on her rage; it was so strong. Curling her lip, she spit at his feet, "Don't flatter yourself. You're despicable and I hate you."

The hulking goon from before stepped away from his plaything, apparently more interested in egging Xavier on than assaulting the defenseless waitress. "That's Ava Davis? The skank who killed - "

"If you know what's good for you, you won't finish that sentence, Lance." Xavier's voice was deceptively dismissive. As close as she was to him, Ava could see his muscles tense at the mention of Sophia and Sam.

He hadn't been the only one to recognize her name, though. Ava was suddenly very aware of the fact that every eye in the room was now trained on her, glaring daggers right through her. Apparently, her reputation preceded her. Xavier's hand shot out, closing around Ava's throat, and drawing her to him. "Some nerve you have name-calling, Ava," he traced a finger down her cheek, resting a thumb against her swollen lips. "You haven't even finished serving your sentence."

He leaned in and whispered conspiratorially, "And how did you get out, by the way?"

She turned her head away in answer.

"Fine," he turned to Lance and nodded toward the door. "Take her to - "

"No!" She cried, panic gripping her. Unwittingly, she clung to his wrist where it still rested against her throat, "P-please, don't send me back."

The bastard rolled his eyes at her, "Where's your dignity, Ava?"

His careless words stung because they mirrored her own thoughts. If her self-respect was all Ava had, she needed to guard it. So she beat down the rising panic that threatened to send her back to that cold, dark place, hungry and hurting. "Stop messing with me, Xavier," she said. "What do you care if I'm sitting in prison cell or scaping come off the walls of a fuck club? What do you really want from me?"

She'd wanted to surprise him, but his next words left her stupefied.

"Kiss me."

"W-why?"

"Why ask questions?" He said.

What was he getting at? His body language said he despised her as much as she did him, yet here he was demanding another kiss. His behavior was completely unsynchronized and that left Ava feeling unsettled; an enemy you couldn't read, was an enemy you couldn't beat.

She looked him straight in the eye, "No."

After a beat he released the hold on her throat only to move it to the back of the neck in a grip that looked innocent enough but was firm enough to kill any thoughts of escape.

"Fine," he said and pointed toward Lance the asshole. "Kiss him, then."

She reeled back but his hold on her neck kept her in place. "Excuse me?"

"See, Ava, you don't seem to realize that you're the party in the wrong here. You're supposed to be serving your civic duty in a cell, right now," he gestures around the suite. "Cesspit it may be, but **this** is not a prison, Ava." "Says you." She quipped through gritted teeth.

He chuffed, increasing the pressure on her neck until she started moving forward. He brought her to a stop in front of the massive goon. The male was sporting a nasty smirk and a malicious gleam in his eye, both of which she knew Xavier saw. He was looking to humiliate her in the most public way possible.

"I'd like you to attempt to make up for your grievances, Ava. If you won't give me a kiss," he gestures toward the smirking male. "Lance, my guard, is looking to relax."

"Lance, your guard, is a sadistic monster. And you're a piece of shit, Xavier."

He shoved her closer to the other male.

The guard reached for her right as the room to the suite opened and a tall figure sauntered in.

"Sorry, I'm late! Trust me, the real party's in the stairwell."

The frosty man she'd met earlier on the stairs. He seemed considerably less icy now than he had when she'd last seen him. His bright smile seemed absurdly out of place among the noxious energy in this room. He paused, grin freezing on his face as he finally noticed the bristling tension. "I take it I missed something?"

He chuckled, but his eyes darted around the room, landing on Ava. He sidled closer, subtly angling himself between her and Lance.

"Funny running into you here, sweets!" He looked from her to Xavier's imposing form, to Lance's menacing one. "Anyone care to fill me in?"

It was the man she met on stairs.