

Chapter 5

Author: Catty Wheels© 2024-10-29 19:42:56

PRECIOUS

THE FOLLOWING DAY,

“Dear, would you like more rice?” Alpha Rodriguez asked, a warm smile on his face.

We were all having breakfast, and I had already emptied my plate due to intense hunger.

Red color made its way to my face, and I nodded, casting a glance at the young Alphas. “Yes, Alpha.”

Alpha Rodriguez chuckled. “You don't have to be ashamed about eating. Food will help build your strength, so there's basically nothing to be ashamed of.”

I didn't know what to say, so I hummed in response. The rest of breakfast was silent, and I was grateful for it. After everyone had eaten, I thanked Alpha Rodriguez and pushed my chair backwards, rising to my feet.

“Actually, I'd like to discuss something with you,” Alpha Rodriguez said, clearing his throat to draw my attention.

I raised my left eyebrow, falling back into the seat, and holding his gaze. “Okay, I'm listening.”

“I really do not want to push you into doing something you do not like. It's not like I'm trying to, it's just that...” he paused, lifting a hand to scratch his head, “I want to know when you will be ready to be initiated into the pack. No, listen, I'm not forcing this on—”

Thud!

A loud sound echoed as a palm made contact with the table.

Turning around, my eyes landed on a seething Nate. His chest was heaving, his veins popping out of his forehead. He looked like someone who had been told to eat shit.

“There'll be no initiation, father! She's a slave, and one she will always be!” He growled, his eyes glued to his Dad.

I cast a helpless glance towards the other boys who mirrored Nate's expression, except for Duke who was busy scrolling through his phone.

I started to feel bad for Alpha Rodriguez; if he hadn't bought me that day, his sons wouldn't have been challenging him. I made up my mind to tell him how sorry I am later. He didn't deserve to be treated this way because of me.

“Are you challenging me, young man?” Alpha Rodriguez's tone was low and daring, his heated gaze not leaving his son.

Nate rolled his eyes, bending low so that they were on the same eye level. “Yes, Dad. I'm challenging you, and there's nothing you can do about it. Have you initiated any of your slaves, or is this slut only an exception?”

Rage.

It bubbled through me like a cauldron, seething and churning with fiery intensity that demanded release.

How dare he!

My hands curled into fists, and I fought the urge to unleash a blow to his smug face.

By the time I could come up with a good retort, Alpha Rodriguez got up and gave him a hot slap.

Total silence welcomed us, if you'd ignore the fast beating of our hearts. I felt hot gazes on my skin, and I looked to find all brothers watching me—or more like glaring at me.

“Watch your mouth in this house, and show some respect when speaking to her! Did I raise you to be rude and disrespectful towards women?” Alpha Rodriguez growled, his body rigid with tension.

“Alpha!” Nate yelled.

I stood up at the same time Damon did, stuttering as I gently held Alpha Rodriguez's arm. “You should let him be, Alpha. I bet he'll learn with time.”

I sensed his anger dissipate, and with a curt nod, he abruptly pushed his chair back and strode upstairs, his footsteps echoing through the silence.

Nate, Damon, Richmond, and Tiger immediately rushed at me, and I staggered backward from their intimidating aura.

“I spelled it out yesterday: stay out of my way. Either you've got a short memory or you're deliberately ignoring me. Which is it?” Nate's stern voice sent a shiver down my spine.

With a defiant flicker of my eyelashes, I jabbed my index finger into his chest. “You are clearly not following your own rules, Alpha Nate. Maybe you are too dense to realize you need to back up your words with action?”

Duke snickered but wisely kept his distance. Nate and I remained locked in a fierce stare, our eyes mirroring each other's intensity.

Damn these infuriating hormones! I'm done being drawn to this asshole!

“Brother, let me teach her a lesson.” Richmond snarled, and I fixed my attention on him. He was heaving with anger, and I threw back my head, cackling loudly.

“You will do nothing to me. I have heard enough of your nonsense! Is this how you treat every girl, just because they were bought by mere cash? No wonder you guys are tagged as demons! You have no compassion towards those you deem beneath you. If this is how you are, then breaking news,” my eyes flickered on each of them, making sure I held their attention, “You have picked the wrong girl to mess with. I may have been bought, but my spirit is not for sale. I won't bow down to your cruelty or fear your threats. I will fight for my dignity and my freedom, no matter the cost.”

I straightened my posture, staring each of them down with unwavering resolve. The silence that followed was thick with tension. They exchanged glances, their bravado wavering ever so slightly. I could see the uncertainty creeping into their eyes, and it fueled my determination even more.

“Do your worst,” I continued, my voice steady and clear. “But remember this: every act of cruelty only strengthens my resolve. You may think you hold all the power, but you underestimate the strength of someone with nothing left to lose.”

I turned on my heel, walking away with my head held high. I didn't know what the future held, but I knew one thing for sure: I would not let them break me.

The following days were uneventful, just the usual routine of waking up to the four demon Alphas who made it clear that tormenting me was the highlight of their day. But I refused to give them the satisfaction of breaking me.

True to his word, Duke took me shopping, but only because I permitted it.

I ended up buying a wardrobe fit for three girls, thanks to Duke's relentless persuasion. Now my closet was overflowing with clothes, bags, shoes, and even makeup kits that I had explicitly told him I didn't need. Yet, he still insisted on paying for them, much to my dismay.

I had mustered the courage to apologize to Alpha Rodriguez on Nate's behalf, but he graciously brushed it off, reassuring me that I wasn't to blame. Afterwards, he began showering me with unexpected gifts, making me feel like I finally belonged. He treated me with a kindness that surpassed how he treated his own sons, which only fueled their resentment towards me - except for Duke, who found the whole situation entertaining.

Suddenly feeling bored and lacking what to do, I got up from my bed and made my way out of the room, towards the end of the hall where the library was located. It had come to mean so much to me, even when I wake up in the middle of the night due to my constant nightmare, I'd read more books than I have ever read.

Pushing the door open, I walked in and gingerly made my way towards the fantasy section, pulling out a book.

‘Hello Kitten’ by an anonymous author. Intrigued, I skimmed through the book, and the dedication should have made me drop it. Instead, I was fueled by determination to read it. Dark romance books and thrillers have always been my favorites, and the trigger warning only made it more intriguing.

After reading the book's trigger warning, I was convinced it would be a great read. Excitement bubbled through me as I walked back into my room, fell onto the bed, and buried my head in the book.

I was still on the first chapter when the door opened, and Duke entered with a smug grin on his handsome face. My breath hitched, and I swallowed hard.

Damn it! Why did he have to be so gorgeous?

“Enjoying your book?” he asked, his voice dripping with amusement.

I nodded, my eyes never leaving his. “Yes, it's interesting.”

Duke's grin widened as he sauntered closer, his presence overwhelming the room. “Good,” he said, leaning in until his face was inches from mine. “But remember, prishy baby, don't get too lost in fiction. Reality can be far more... thrilling.” He whispered and sat down beside me, too close.

I couldn't breathe properly. His chest pressed against mine, the solid muscle crushing my breasts. His hot breath fanned my face, and my stomach flipped as his eyes lowered to my mouth.

The sudden urge to kiss him overwhelmed me. His lashes fluttered down, and he leaned in, our lips almost touching. I surrendered to the moment, closing my eyes and tilting my mouth up to his. As our lips met, a low, husky growl rumbled through him, sending shivers down my spine. I melted into our first kiss, savoring the gentle pressure and the sweet sensation of his lips on mine.

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