

The Pack: Rule Number 1 - No Mates

Chapter Four

DRAVEN

"I didn't miss anything," I say with a roll of my eyes. Glancing around him at the back table, I can see Barbie staring at us with daggers in her eyes. "Your date looks thirsty," I quip. "So, what can I get you?"

He glares, shoving himself forward to lean across the bar.

God he looks good in that tight white shirt.

"What did that Armani Moron give you?" He hisses at me, eyeing the small bulge in my pants' pocket.

At first, I am a little confused, then I realize he is referring to Mister Hottie in the three-piece. "A twenty," I answer, not really sure why. I don't owe this fool any explanations.

His jaw clenches before he smirks. A deep dimple forming in one cheek. "What else?"

My eyes narrow at him, my gaze stuttering on the impatient line of patrons behind him. "Do you want something or not?"

"What else did he give you?" He asks again.

He couldn't possibly have noticed the little folded paper with the phone number on it, right?

"His number," I say to him softly as his silver eyes fall toward my lips.

He jerks backward, still staring at my mouth. "One hard lemonade and two shots of Jack," he says. Then ripping his eyes to the left, he glares at Mister Hottie's table.

"Coming right up," I say, turning around to grab the ingredients.

I can feel him watching me and I do my best to focus. It was all I could do to keep my momentum going and not spill anything with the fire of his eyes on my back.

"Let me have it," Domonic commands from behind me, causing me to laugh as I mix lemon syrup and vodka in a hot glass from under the shelf.

"I'm not done making it," I snipe, turning back around.

He grins at me, going full dimple and swiping two fingers over his chin. Then, giving me a stupidly sexy look, he says, "I'm talking about the guy's phone number. Not the drinks."

I bite down slightly on my tongue to stop myself from bursting into giggles. "No," I say smoothly, presenting him with his order. "Besides, his is only one of many." And it's the truth. In just the few hours since we'd opened, I've already made four hundred in tips and collected twelve different phone numbers. Ten from men and two from women.

Domonic glares at his drinks, shaking himself for a moment before taking them off the counter. "Have Bart meet me in the back room." He slaps a hundred on the table - no number. "Keep the change," he says.

Make that four hundred-seventy-five.

Then, without another word, he heads back to Barbie. Sliding back into his seat, I notice he was still staring at me as I charm my way through the next five patrons. In fact, each time I look up I am met with his heavy lidded gaze. But the dimples are gone. It seems the smile from before was given only so that I might grant him what he wanted.

But damn that smile is fire.

Bart slides up next to me so suddenly, I have to suppress a scream. "You scared me," I snap, slapping his wrist.

He giggles, "Am I that hard to look at?"

"No," I roll my eyes. "Your friend wants to see you in the back room."

"My friend?"

"Me," Domonic says, startling me and causing me to jump.

Bart catches my eye and we share a look. "Sure, thing Domonic."

I watch as the two of them disappear down the hall toward the restrooms and into the office in the back. Seeing that they left the door slightly ajar, I scan the action around me. Satisfied that a moment away won't be too terrible, I make my way toward where they disappeared.

As carefully as possible, I station myself between stacks of boxes just outside of the office door and listen.

"What the hell is she still doing here Bartlett?"

"Bartending. What does it look like?"

"You know I want her gone."

"I know what you said. I remember. What's the big deal? She needed help and I gave it to her."

"We don't need any strangers around here who can't contribute."

"Hey now, she is contributing. Just look out front. The place is packed."

"I'm aware."

"Not only is she gorgeous, but she's really good. So, what's the problem? What's really going on?"

"I'll give you one last chance to get rid of her."

"What the fuck man? What exactly is your problem with her? She's a sweet girl!"

"She's a smartass and she doesn't belong here."

"Really? Okay, I see. I'll send the poor girl on her way then. Maybe her stepdaddy will find her and put a few more bruises on her body. Or maybe his son will. That might make you might feel a bit better."

I tense, cursing myself for not swearing Bart to secrecy when I showed him my marks.

"What? What the fuck are you saying?"

"I'm saying - the men that she's running from aren't your everyday stepfather and son. She didn't leave them because of some silly disagreement, or because she's spoiled, or because she didn't get her way. She left them because they were abusing her! I saw the fruits of their labor all over her body today."

A small crash sounds followed by the thud of someone hitting the wall. Even the boxes shudder around me. "You what? You saw her? You-"

"Chill Dom! It's not like that so let me go!"

"No, I won't! Tell me, what is it like then, huh? Did you touch her?" Another thud. "I swear to God, if you-"

"I haven't touched her! So let me go."

A pause.

"Start talking before I rip your throat out."

"I gave her the t-shirt to wear for work today and, she asked if she had to wear it today. She wanted to know if she could wait. So, I asked her why and- she showed me. I saw her bruises, Domonic. Her backside-"

"Her backside?" Domonic's deep humorless chuckle fills the hall. "You've got to be kidding me. Her *backside*, seriously? What the fuck?"

"Not her naked backside asshole - her back. And... her arms. They're covered in handprint bruises and-"

Glass shatters. "Enough! I don't want to hear anymore of it."

Another pause.

"They were bad, Dom-"

More glass and the unmistakable sound of something being kicked across the room.

"I said shut the fuck up! It makes no difference. She still can't be here."

God, I hate that jerk!

"Fine. You're the boss, so if you want her gone then I'll send her packing. Maybe she'll die out there and you won't have to worry about her ever coming back. And if she does die - and everybody else figures out who she is the way that I just did - no one will ever forgive you."

Who she is? I am nobody. What the hell does he mean?

At that moment footsteps sound, heading my way and I duck further behind the boxes to remain out of sight. Bartlett exits first, walking right past me and toward the front of the bar. But Domonic, the moment he steps through the threshold, he stops.

I hold my breath, urging myself to keep perfectly still, and remain completely out of sight. One minute passes. Then two. Letting my breath out slowly, I peek around the largest box, surprised when I see the hall empty.

That man moves like a damned jungle cat!

I didn't even hear him leave.

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