

The Pack: Rule Number 1 - No Mates

Chapter Five

DRAVEN

I scramble toward the other side of the hall so that it will look as if I am coming back from the restroom. Walking back toward the bar I am met with Bart's sad, heavy eyes.

In an attempt to pretend I have no idea what is going on, I smile as brightly as my disappointed heart will allow. "What's wrong boss?"

"Um, Draven - I have to-" he cuts off as someone approaches from behind me.

Gee lemme guess who it is. Eyeroll.

I could be deaf and blind, and I would still know who stood behind me. His heat is pressing against my back again and the hairs on my neck are standing at attention.

If I lean back, just a bit... my ass will push right against his...

No Draven no!

"Bartlett has to renovate the upstairs apartment - so you'll have to stay somewhere else until it's complete," Domonic's low voice interrupts.

What's this now?

"Somewhere else?" My questioning eyes meet Bart's and he shrugs. "Where else?"

Knowing what I do - which is that Domonic is lying - sparks an anger in me and I spin on him with a glare.

He is smirking, that sweet dimple winking enough to make my panties damp. "I can set you up in a place, a small condo at the top of the hill."

"No thanks. I can't afford it," I say evenly, pushing my back against the counter to create distance between us. He is much too close. The mouthwatering smell of him is making me dizzy.

"You can afford it." His jaw tightens and he glares down at me. "You won't have to pay rent, because I own it."

My eyes narrow and I tilt my head at him reproachfully.

I can't let him know that I was listening to their conversation.

"I don't want anything from you," I growl.

He hisses, a muscle in his jaw ticking. Placing his hands on the bar on both sides of me, he cages me in yet again. Pushing in closer, so that we are a mere few inches away from each other, he replies, "Then you'll stay with me. At my house."

I hear Bart drop a glass behind the bar and curse.

I scoff, "With you? At your house?" Well, if *that* didn't spark a fit of giggles. "I'd rather sleep *on* the bar or at the train station," I retort. "No thanks."

Suddenly he dips his head forward and I freeze. His nose shifts into the long back tendrils of my hair, and his lips barely graze my cheek on their way to my ear. I have to force myself to stand my ground although my instincts have me reeling backward. His breath warms my neck, and I could swear I hear the beginnings of a groan. He whispers, "Then, either you take the condo, or you take the train out. What's it gonna be?"

My heart begins to hammer in my chest with his closeness. The delicious pine scent of his aftershave filtering through my senses and causing me to tremble within. I can feel his arms closing in on each side of my frame. As if he is inching them closed around me, one tiny millimeter at a time. Electricity sparks when he presses himself closer to my chest. So strongly that I'm surprised it doesn't crackle.

I open my mouth to speak, but the words catch in my throat as I feel the soft brush of his teeth upon my earlobe.

Oh God. What the fuck is he doing?

He whispers gently, "Please. Just until we can reinforce the security in your apartment."

Then pulling back, he meets my eyes directly, nodding at me while I stand there panting for breath.

My gaze narrows at him, and he smirks, crossing his arms over his chest.

Son-of-a-bitch! He did all that shit on purpose. He was just winding me up.

He knows! He must have seen me hiding back there. That's why he stopped in the hall.

"Fine," I bite out, poking him in the chest sharply. "But I get to keep my job."

Domonic scowls at me. His eyes floating up and back toward where Bart stands on the other side of the counter. "That's not necessary, because like I said, I will not be charging you rent."

I laugh - this asshole really is something else. "It is necessary because I will be paying you back," I snap.

"Paying him back for what?" A thick velvety voice sounds from Domonic's side and I know without looking that it's Barbie.

Domonic visibly tenses as she places an artfully manicured hand on his arm. Now that I am face to face with her, she doesn't look nearly as cute as I first thought. Her face is coated in an inch of make-up and her eyes are too close together, strangling the bridge of her pointy little nose. She does have nice tits though. The bitch. But one glance down tells me that is all she has. Her hips are non-existent.

Dead blue eyes find mine and she snarls, "I asked you a question."

She's taller than me.

But I can take her.

I smile, nice and bright, then turn my attention back to Domonic. "Can you walk your skank back to your table please?"

"Skank?!" She fumes.

Bart howls behind me, his laughter adding another measure of joy to my smile.

"Margo, this is none of your business. Go and get in the car. We're leaving." Domonic says blandly.

Margo huh? Bleh. Boring...

Margo stomps one foot then spins around, making her way toward the door. She is sure to send me one more bitch face before her exit though, and for that I am grateful.

Cunt.

Domonic, massages his temple. "As I was saying, you won't be needing this job."

I propped one finger under my chin as if I were deep in thought. "Well, then no deal. Because I like this job and you aren't going to keep me from it."

He glares at me, then chuckles darkly. "Fine. You can keep the job, but just so you know, the condo is four miles up the hill. So, if you insist on keeping it, you will be spending a good amount of time walking."

"I like walking," I say, and it's true, I do. "It's great for my ass," I supply. "Sounds like fun."

Again, he clenches his teeth. Eyes going heavy as they trace over my hips. "You aren't going to be walking four miles every night at two in the morning."

"I can drive her home," Bart offers.

I smirk, "There. You see? Bart will drive me."

Domonic nods, eyeing Bart as he turns to leave. "I'll see you both at the condo tonight then."

"Can't you just give me the key now? I'd hate to infringe on your hoe-down."

He ignores me, chuckling as he leaves.

I must be crazy. I don't even like this guy! He could be a serial killer for all I know.

As if Bart is reading my mind, he says, "Don't worry, kiddo. Domonic's an asshole, yeah, but he's a good guy too."

"Says you."

By the time Bart closes up and I've repacked my backpack, it is thirty minutes past two in the morning. We get into his truck and head into the thick fog of the surrounding streets. There aren't many cars left on the road and the limited street lighting only adds to the eerie atmosphere. The moon is only a quarter in and partially cloaked, so my view of the landscape around me is suppressed. On our way up the steepest of hills, I glance at Bart.

"How far do you live from the condo?"

He smiles teasingly, "I only live a block over. Why? You scared?"

"Not scared exactly. Just... wary."

He sighs, reaching an arm over to pull me in for a friendly side hug. "We're mostly good people out here, Draven. After you've been here awhile, you'll see that. Besides, it's not like you'll be alone on the property."

"The property?"

He laughs. "The condo sits on the landlord's property. I guess you could say it's more of a guest house."

Guest house?

Domonic's guest house?

"And my landlord is..." I say just as we pull past a modern gate surrounded by evergreen trees. "Domonic," I hiss, seeing him standing outside of a large modern looking home that appears to be wall to wall glass.

I roll down the window as the truck idles next to him. He is wearing gray sweatpants and a matching hoodie. And... he looked delicious.

"Where the fuck have you two been?" He snaps angrily, "I've been waiting out here for forty-five minutes."

"I had to close up, man. And Draven had to pack her things."

Domonic eyes the two of us suspiciously before rolling his gaze heavenward and gesturing for Bart to continue down the driveway.

As we pass the main house, I take in all of its features. I can literally see the kitchen, living room, and dining room through the spotless glass walls. The sports network is playing on a seventy-five-inch flat screen inside and the picture is so good I feel like I am in the room for a second. The modern decor is done in browns and whites, everything in the place looking expressively expensive. Suddenly, I am afraid of what I might see through those glass walls.

Where's his girl? Margo.

I do not want front row seats to Fifty Shades of Slut!

Turning back to the driveway and away from the house, I see it. The 'condo'. It looks like a miniature of the main house but with less windows on the second floor.

"Oh. My. God," I say quietly as we pull up and the porch light goes on. "I-I can't afford this!"

Bart laughs heartily, cutting off the engine. "Rent free, remember?"

"But I don't want it to be free! I want to pay him back!"

"Well then, pay him back."

"But!" I snap through clenched teeth. "I cannot afford this!"

Just then, the passenger door opens and Domonic is invading our space. I eye him warily. "You live here." It's not a question, but he nods, his eyes on Bart.

"You two are sitting awfully close together." The unmistakable rumble of a barely perceptible growl fills the air. One much like I heard the first day I stepped into the bar.

How very strange...

My lip lifts in annoyance and I slowly turn in my seat to plant a very thankful, very wet, kiss on Bart's cheek. "Thank you," I whisper, smiling when Bart looks like he can't breathe. "See you tomorrow boss."

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