

47 OVERHEARING GOSSIP

JASMINE'S POV 1

Once I finished my chores, I went into the healer's quarters and found Loren awake and busy with his work.

"Good morning," I greeted.

He looked up from his glasses. "Good morning."

I took a deep breath and walked up to him.

"Thank you for last night. You gave me your bed and slept on a cold bench." I told him. "Please, you're an old man, and you must lie on your bed. I'll take the bench."

He rose from the herbs he was chopping and looked at me. "With those marks on your back, how do you intend to heal?"

Hadn't I suffered a much worse fate at home? I was sleeping on the bare floor even though my back still bled.

"Yes, but it doesn't matter," I said. "You have done more than enough for me."

Didn't he understand? I was grateful for what he had done for me, but my conscience would

never let an older man suffer on my behalf.

He took off his glasses and looked at me. "I would expect the daughter of an Alpha to be foreign to suffering and such a life."

He raised a brow and looked at me, and my heart raced quickly.

I was blowing my cover with my attitude.

I was supposed to act like Jessica. Was her bad attitude so rampant that everyone knew how she indeed was?

I sighed and told a lie. "Yes, I lived well in my pack, but you're my senior, and I was raised always to respect people. Regardless of who they were."

He looked at me closely. "And who taught you this?"

"Urma. She was my nanny." That was technically not a lie.

He just gazed at me and then waved his hand at the table.

"Come and eat your food and take your medicine, young girl." He said. "And you had better take that bed. I won't treat you if you fall

ill again."

I said nothing as I sat on the chair beside him and ate the meal before me.

I watched him read through his books and write.

Something I could never do.

If I could try reading his books, I might understand how to read.

He was a good man, just like Urma had been, except he didn't like showing it, so he pretended to be gruff and grumpy.

Why were all healers like that?

I ate my meal and then took my medicine.

"Thank you," I said.

He ignored me and went back to his work.

Then I stepped down to the bathroom to find my water to bathe with.

My chains hurt as they were stuck on my feet, and the friction with my ankles against the metal gave me some bruises.

They also made noises, announcing my presence everywhere I went.

I had to bear the pain.

When I got to the bathroom, I saw the girls who had been in my room.

Before I stepped into full view, someone spoke.

"You're telling me Alpha Xaden took her out?"

One girl I had not seen in our room asked the girl who had been the first to attack me.

The girl rolled her eyes. "Yes. Do you think I'm lying? Everyone was there. We saw it with our eyes. She is a witch!"

"Oh, my Goddess." Another said as she scrubbed her back with soap. "She must have put a hex over him. I thought he brought her here to punish her."

They were talking about me.

Another girl snorted. "You haven't heard the last of it. When he punished us with twenty lashes of cane, she came down and begged him to forgive us."

The girls gasped.

"She said she was going to take the punishment."

The main girl said: "It was all a show, of course. Everything she did was to gain favor in his eyes."

And Alpha Xaden forgave us! Because she had begged him!"

"That has never happened before! Only Gamma Erik has ever changed his mind!" Another girl said her mouth was hanging open. "Even Aurora can't change his mind."

"Shut up!" The main girl hissed. "Who told you that?!"

The other girls went quiet.

"Aurora is going to be the lady of this pack one day. You better watch what you say!" The girl said, "We just need to get rid of that witch!"

"But how do we? You said it yourself; Alpha Xaden said we shouldn't touch her, or we would be dead." Someone cried.

"We don't have to kill her, you idiots!" The girl snapped. "We just have to frustrate her until she goes! Do it smartly with no foul play. Teach her a lesson!"

"But what if she is a good person?" I heard a quiet voice.

I turned and saw the girl, who was the only person who hadn't joined them to beat me and

had been standing by the door in the room before running away.

"She had agreed to take it when he said he would punish us. Two hundred lashes." The girl said,

There was a silence in the bathroom.

"Mya, please stop playing the saint and always look for the good in everyone. She is Bale's daughter. Bale is the destroyer. Do you think she is terrific? Huh? Her blood is black! Bad! She is even latent!" The ringleader said

There were further murmurings in the bathroom.

"And we don't even have a latent wolf in our pack." Someone added.

"An abomination. She is paying for the sins of her father already."

"And have you forgotten what Bale did to your family? Your village?" The main girl walked up to Mya. "HAVE YOU?!"

Mya was visibly shaken, as if the reminder of the past was haunting her again.

I felt so horrible for her.

Soft and quiet. "No," was all she said.

"That's what I thought." She sneered.

Then she turned to the other girls. "We will punish her. But we do it as quietly as we can. We all hate her. First things. Every morning, we put fire ants in her water. She would suffer."

The girls erupted into laughter.

I withdrew, sure that I had heard enough, and ran out of the bathroom, tears spilling.