

CHAPTER 31

31 Ava: Omega? (IV) It's a man—no, a shifter—with a mane of auburn hair pulled back in a practical ponytail. His sharp features are softened by warm amber eyes that crinkle at the corners as he offers Clayton a respectful nod. "The rogues have been taken care of," he says, his tone clipped and professional. "The authorities have been alerted, and our people are cleaning up the scene."

Clayton returns the nod, his expression grim. "Good work, Rowan. This is Ava—she was the target." I study the newcomer with a mixture of curiosity and trepidation. His nostrils flare as he takes in my scent, and his eyes widen almost imperceptibly. Before I can react, he takes an impulsive step forward, his gaze locked on me with an intensity that makes my breath catch in my throat. Alarm bells blare in my mind, every instinct screaming at me to flee. But then Clayton moves swiftly, placing himself between Rowan and me in one fluid motion. He extends an arm, effectively halting Rowan's advance with a subtle shake of his head. 1/6 31 Ava: Omega? (IV) Rowan freezes, his eyes fluttering shut as he draws in a deep, steadying breath. When he opens them again, a flicker of shame crosses his features, and he dips his head in a silent apology. "My apologies, Ava," he murmurs, his voice strained. "It isn't often we run into a true omega entering heat." My brow furrows in confusion as I glance between the two shifters. "A true omega?" I echo uncertainly. "I've seen many omegas enter heat. It doesn't seem rare." Clayton shifts his stance, angling himself towards me as he studies me with a contemplative frown. "There are omegas by birth and omegas by rank," he explains, his deep voice measured and even. "Omegas by birth are rare, and their heat can affect any male in their radius. They're the only ones whose heat can influence the rationality of betas and higher ranks." My eyes widen as understanding dawns. So that's why Rowan reacted the way he did—because I'm supposedly this "true omega" they speak of. A shiver runs down my spine as the implications sink in. If my heat can affect even the most disciplined of shifters, then I'm in far more danger than I'd initially thought. 216 <31 Ava: Omega? (IV) Clayton's piercing gaze holds mine, his expression unreadable. "Is your mother an omega, Ava?" I tense at the question, my jaw clenching instinctively. Memories of my family surge to the surface, bitter and unwanted. I can't bring myself to answer, to reveal any part of that life I've fought so hard to leave behind. An uncomfortable silence stretches between us, thick with unspoken questions and lingering tension. Finally, Clayton gives a slight nod, as if accepting my reticence for now. "Very well," he says, his tone neutral. "We'll get you settled, and you can tell us what you're comfortable with when you're ready." He turns to Rowan, his expression hardening ever so slightly. "Keep your distance for now. I'll have one of the healers take a look at her." Rowan bobs his head in a terse nod, his amber eyes

flickeriWw.novellwoRm.©00

Updates...

wW(w).môv(e)lw(o)©M.CoM

WwW.novellwoRm.coM

ng towards me with a mixture of remorse and something else—something I can't quite place. "Of course, Alpha," he murmurs, taking a measured step back. My heart pounds in my ears as the weight of the 31 Ava: Omega? (IV) situation presses down on me. I'm in the company of not just one, but two powerful shifters—an alpha and his beta, no less. And if what they're saying is true, if I really am this "true omega" they speak of, then I'm in a far more precarious position than I'd ever imagined. Where the f@ck is Selene when I need her? Selene, where the f@ck are you? A tremor wracks through me, and I clutch Clayton's jacket tighter around my shoulders, seeking the meager comfort it provides. I want to go back home. I want to be in my apartment, far away from so many shifters. From the alpha of this region. So much for my plans of hiding among humans. My heart still thunders as I shiver uncontrollably. I draw in a shaky breath, smelling the ocean and pines once again—Clayton's scent. Oddly enough, it helps calm my frayed nerves. I shift in my seat, wincing as the movement aggravates the aches and bruises littering my body. Clayton's imposing figure catches my eye as he stands guard outside the vehicle. His broad shoulders are 31 Ava: Omega? (IV) squared, his stance unwavering, every inch the powerful alpha he is. Yet there's a quiet strength about him, a sense of steady reassurance that radiates from his very presence. Despite my fear for my future, I can't deny the feeling of safety that surrounds me in his presence. It's a foreign sensation, one I haven't experienced much. Not since... I shake my head, grimacing as thoughts of Lucas intrude even now. It must be an alpha thing. Though I never felt anything resembling security with Alpha Renard. Fear, maybe. Rowan is back, nodding to Clayton, then to me. As if sensing my trepidation at the man's approach, Clayton shifts his stance, angling his body towards me ever so slightly. It's a subtle movement, but one that speaks volumes—a silent reassurance that he's there, watching over me. Rowan stands at a respectful distance, his amber eyes trained on me with an intensity that's almost unsettling. "We've secured accommodations for you," he says his <31 Ava: Omega? (IV) tone brisk and professional. "One of our healers will tend to your injuries and ensure you're comfortable." I nod mutely, unsure of what to say. My gaze drifts back to Clayton, and a pang of uncertainty twists in my gut. I'm grateful for their assistance, truly, but a part of me can't help but wonder what their endgame is. What do they want from me, this supposed "true omega"? Rowan must sense my hesitation, for he takes a tentative step forward, his expression softening ever so slightly. "You're safe here, Ava," he murmurs, his voice low and soothing. "We won't let any harm come to you, I promise." His words should reassure me, but instead, they send a shiver down my spine. What if they find out my real identity? How about then? Comment R Leave the first comment for this chapter. Vote