

## CHAPTER 61

©W©.novelworm.c0©

61 Ava: Homecoming (III) Alpha Renard is someone I have had few encounters with. He's come by the house many times through my life, but my parents always sent me to my room, not wanting to parade their shame in front of him. Today is different. Today, he sits across from me at the dinner table as my mother serves him, apologizing for the dinner- something Phoenix had brought home from a restaurant in town. Everyone's gaze seems to center on me. I can tell Phoenix and Dad are furious with me, but there's little point in looking in their direction. There's no point ruining what tiny appetite I have. Alpha Renard is an imposing figure, towering well over six feet with a muscular build that speaks of years of combat training. His brown hair is neatly trimmed and his face shaved; I don't think I've ever seen him in a state of disarray. He likes to show off the deep scars. clawed across his face. Shifters don't scar easily, but it isn't impossible. 12:43 17 61 Ava: Homecoming (III) Like all alphas, he has an intimidating presence and a confident air that demands respect. But his eyes hold a cruel glint that has me cringing from eye contact. He won't stop staring at me, even as he talks with the others. I keep my gaze fixed on the plate in front of me. Alpha Renard's intense stare burns into my face, making my skin prickle with unease. His eyes linger on the split in my lip, the abnormal color across my cheeks. They still throb. "Alexander," Renard's gruff voice breaks the tense silence. "What happened to your daughter's face?" My father clears his throat, his voice strained with embarrassment. "She has become willful in her time outside the pack. It requires discipline to correct such behavior." A shiver runs down my spine at his words. I risk a glance, finding a sinister look come over Alpha Renard's features. "I will take care of it," he says, his tone sending an avalanche of chill through me. Renard's gaze shifts back to me, his eyes boring into mine with an intensity that makes me want to shrink 61 Ava Homecoming ( away. "So tell me, Ava," he says, his voice laced with a dark edge. "Why has the Aspen pack taken such an interest in you?" My throat feels tight, the words caught like lead weights on my tongue. I can sense the challenge in his question. They know the Aspen pack had me. But how much do they know? If they know everything, and I lie, the consequences... But if they don't, and I tell them everything-wouldn't that be worse? So I lie. "I don't know. I happened to be in a car with some rogue shifters they were chasing, and got injured. They took care of my wounds after that as an apology." Mostly truth, but I can see by the twitch in Alpha Renard's jaw that he knows I'm lying. Did I give off a scent of deception? Or is it because he already knows? My stomach curdles, and I stab at a piece of buttery roasted potato, shoving it into my mouth. It tastes like 61 Ava: Homecoming (III) cardboard. I have to fight to keep from gagging, chewing in a slow and methodical fashion. If I'm eating, maybe he won't bother me. But he does. "Ava, we know you're an omega, and the alpha forced you into a mating. We will fight back so you can regain your freedom. We are all family here. You can talk to us." Alpha Renard's words are couched in a silken promise of confinement. Terror grips my heart, squeezing the air from my lungs. He'd wanted to breed me before I ever left the pack. If they decide I'm a true omega, like Clayton did, I'll never be able to escape that fate. I shake my head, desperate to deny his claims. "I've never been given a pack designation. I'm not an omega." He slams his giant fist wŴŴ.novêlw0(r)(m).c0m

Updates...

©wW.nôvêlw0Ŕm.c0m

ŴŴw.novê(1)worm.c(0)m

on the table, the dishes clattering from the force. I flinch, shrinking back in my seat. "Don't lie to me, girl," he snarls, his eyes flashing with barely contained rage. "We know all about your heat. How you threw yourself at the Aspen alpha, begging him to mate you." 17:41 4417 61 Ava: Homecoming (III) My father's voice cuts through the tension, dripping with disgust. "You're an embarrassment to the Blackwood Pack, Ava." Their twisted applications of the truth are not unfamiliar to me. Anger surges through my veins, momentarily overpowering my fear. "Wait a minute," I say, my voice trembling despite my efforts to keep it steady. "You're saying I threw myself at him, but you also just said Clayton forcefully mated me. So which is it? What's the truth?" Alpha Renard's eyes narrow, his jaw clenching. "Watch your tone, girl," he snaps, his voice low and dangerous. "You forget your place." I lower my eyes. Confronting him is not the best decision if I want to find a way to escape, but I hate feeling small in front of him. Despite my instinctual fear of him, it's a lot easier than I expected to meet his eyes. Perhaps it's the repeated contact with Lucas and Clayton, who never use their alpha presence to intimidate me. My mother's voice breaks the silence, her tone clipped and cold. "Ava, go to your room. We have much to 12.41 61 Ava Homecoming (1) discuss with Alpha Renard." I hesitate. I'd love to be far from them all, but I want to know what they're planning. "Go, girl," Alpha Renard rumbles, but he leans forward to grasp my hand in his in a gesture that I think is meant to be comforting. My skin crawls at his touch. I want to vomit. It's so much worse than even being in a room with Todd Mason, who's actually done things to me. My heart falls to my feet as my mother and father look on with a faint smile. Phoenix, silent for the entire exchange, holds my stare with a warning on his face- don't provoke the alpha. My hand twitches in Alpha Renard's grasp as I struggle against yanking it away. "Don't worry your pretty little head over these matters, Ava," he says, and I think it's the first time the alpha has ever used my name. When I look at him, I can see a calculating stare. But no desire. Maybe I'm wrong in the faint suspicions crowding my mind, but that hope fades as his thumb caresses the back of my hand. "Go rest. You've had an ordeal. 61 Ava: Homecoming (III) You're safe now. I'll save you from the Aspen alpha." Comment 4 View All A Post your first comment!