

## CHAPTER 68

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68 Ava: Their Plans (II) Phoenix taps a finger against the table, watching me with a calculating gaze. “You need to understand what situation you’re in, Ava.” @ Tap. Tap. Tap. “Why?” His smile is mirthless. “This entire pack will throw you away without a second thought. Alpha Renard will trap you in a life of misery and pain, and you will forever be a pawn in his hands.” “I know. That’s why I want to escape. You’re the one who brought me here, remember? None of this is news. to me.” Phoenix nods. Just the slightest nod. “Alpha Renard’s plans changed when he received some very interesting news from the Aspen territory. He heard of an omega with your description, with a heat so strong that even the Aspen alpha was affected.” 12.47 117 68 Ava: Their Plans (II) The glass of water is all I focus on. It’s hard to look him in the face as he talks about everything they’ve planned for me. “His orders changed from bringing you back with force, to rescuing you.” The emphasis is unmistakable, the slight disgust in Phoenix’s voice sending a little shudder down my back. “I flew out that night to find you and bring you back. Now, Alpha Renard is going to use your connection with him to nullify his ability to support Westwood in the upcoming war.” “Why is he so interested in Westwood? I don’t understand.” Phoenix sighs. “His last son was killed in a skirmish on Westwood territory. Against rogues, while he was traveling on a diplomatic mission. Alpha Renard never liked Westwood to begin with, but now he’s determined to bring the packs together under his rule.” “But the Council-” “Has overstepped its authority too many times. They have demanded changes in our pack policies, and have threatened us when we refused to give in to the 12.47 217 68 Ava: Their Plans (II) unreasonable. It’s time for things to change.” “You mean, he’s going to take over the entire Northwestern Territories?” How stupid is that? There are five other packs he would have to take over. Blackwood isn’t large enough to do that. Phoenix shakes his head. “It doesn’t matter what he wants to do, Ava. That’s not what concerns you.” “Then why are you telling me any of this?” “I need you to understand why I’m about to tell you what you need to do.” He steeples his fingers, waiting until my eyes drift toward him. “I have a plan for your escape that will benefit us both.” I think back to how relieved I felt when he and Jessa showed that they were willing to help me escape, even if it wasn’t for my benefit. Now, I feel like I’ve walked into a snake’s den. Foreboding slinks down my spine. “You need to return to the Aspen pack and seduce the alpha until he claims you.” His eyes drift to my neck, where the scars have faded and only my crescent scar remains. “Get pregnant. Have his heir. Become the 68 Ava: Their Plans (II) Aspen Luna.” +25 “Did you forget that you’re the one who took me from there?” I ask in exasperation. “Why didn’t you think of that before you snatched me back?” Phoenix grimaces. “He never revealed his plans to mate with you until after you were safe in pack lands, and we could all scent you. None of us really believed you were an omega until you came back.” “Then why did you think the omega was even me in the first place?” “Our source gave us your name.” He looks at me with a faint smile. “Though you never gave them your full name, so the Aspen pack had no idea you were affiliated with ours.” He sounds almost approving. “So you want to send me back and just trick Clayton into taking

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me as his mate?” “If you testify against Alpha Renard when he goes to the Council, he won’t be able to force the Council to bring you back. It’s only if he can prove that the Aspen alpha kept you there against your will. If you’re his Luna, you can use your influence to ally the Aspen Pack with Blackwood. We don’t lose too much with 417 68 Ava: Their Plans (1) you gone, and I don’t lose my place.” He reaches over, grabbing my hand in his, a cajoling tone entering his words. “You’ve seen how much effort I’ve put into this pack, Ava. I’ve never been greedy. I’ve worked for this pack, and obeyed our alpha. Do you think it’s right for it all to be taken away from me just because you became an omega?” “So all of this is my fault?” I snap at him, yanking my hand out of his. “You’re happier with Aspen, aren’t you? I’m not so horrible that I want my sister to live a miserable life here. I’ll help you, and you can help me. Because we’re family.” A wave of disgust makes me dizzy. As much as I despise his manipulative plans, I can’t afford to alienate someone willing to help me escape this nightmare, even if his motives are skewed. “And if I refuse?” I ask, feigning curiosity. Phoenix’s smile fades, his eyes hardening. “Then you’ll stay here, and Alpha Renard will have his way with you. He’ll use your connection to the Aspen Alpha to neutralize any support for Westwood anyway, and < 68 Ava: Their Plans (II) you’ll be nothing more than a broodmare, pumping out pups until you’re no longer useful.” A shudder runs through me at the thought of being trapped in that hell, forced to bear children for a man I despise. No, I can’t let that happen. “Okay,” I say, my voice barely above a whisper. “I’ll do it.” Or at least pretend to until I can make a real escape. Phoenix nods, satisfied. “Good. I’ll make the arrangements for your return to Aspen territory. Remember, Ava, you need to get pregnant as soon as possible. The sooner you have the Alpha’s heir, the stronger your position will be. Is your period near?” “No.” I’m actually not sure when it’s due, because I’m terrible at keeping track. I feel like I have another week or two before I need to get worried, though. My mind is already racing, trying to find a way out of this twisted scheme. I have no intention of following through with Phoenix’s plan, but I need to play along for now. “When do I leave?” I ask, forcing a smile. “Soon” Phoenix savs rising from his chair. “I’ll let you 68 Ava: Their Plans (II) know the details. In the meantime, try to rest. You’ll need your strength for what’s to come.” 66 The next release will be another 10–chapter mass release. Be prepared! 😊 Comment 0 Lenaleia Creator’s Thought Leave the first comment for this chapter, *wWw.novellworm.com*