

CHAPTER 8

8 Ava: Gala (IV). 8 Ava: Gala (IV) [WARNING: Mature Content] If someone had told me that, mere days after that incident with Todd, I'd be in a similar situation with a stranger and enjoying the f@ck out of myself, I would have advised them to check in to a psych ward. That's not how trauma works. But apparently it might. Maybe it's just because he's so... Tall. Dark. Handsome. All the cliches you can dream, that's him. Especially when he makes no secret of his attraction toward me, despite all the harsh words Jessa and Mom had thrown my way while getting ready. Apparently this man doesn't think I'm too short, or that my hips are too wide. He seems to like them a lot, actually. So when I feel his tongue against my neck and realize that the sensation is completely different coming from someone like Tall, Dark, and s@xy, that primitive part of me goes absolutely wild. 14:37 1/10 8 Ava: Gala (IV) That voice inside of me, the one that's absolutely me, tries to tell me that maybe I should step back and think for a second. That this connection is weird. That I don't act like this, and I should really respect myself more. But the throbbing down below tells that voice to shut the f@ck up and move over, that he's my fated, and then it asks him to slam me against a wall. I have no idea where that level of bravado came from, and when my back hits the rough bark of the tree to add more bruises to my body, desire floods everything in a way even romance novels hadn't prepared me for. Oh sweet baby Jesus in a manger. Sweet Moon Goddess. This man is magic. Feeling the hard length of him shoved against the very core of me should have me running for the hills, and it doesn't. Nope. I arch closer instead, aching and begging for more, peppering ki*s'es along his jaw and rolling my hips toward him. I moan in appreciation when he pushes back, almost inside me if my damn panties could just spontaneously combust and get out of the way, but the moan changes to frustration as his hips pull back. 14:37 2/10 8 Ava: Gala (IV) Then his fingers are there, yanking my panties to the side as he slides his cock up the wet lips of my pussy, and oh my God. So warm. So hard. Velvet and f@ck me harder. Please. And the man keeps biting and suckling everywhere. I know I'm going to have marks all over my neck and shoulders, and my breasts ache to be touched, but everything's kind of busy on my lower half as I pray and plead for him to go all the way in. But he doesn't, just slides up and down again, soaking himself in the juices I can feel running everywhere. I'm probably wetter than a slip'n'slide, and in my haze of desire, that doesn't seem embarrassing at all. "Please," I whine, loving the rumble of his growl as he slams his hips into me, rubbing us together in the most delicious tease. He keeps rocking as his hand returns to my hair, yanking my head back in an act of submission that 3/10 8 Ava Gada (IV) should have turned me off. Instead, I eagerly presented my neck, hoping he would bite and lick and suck again. Harder. Hurt me, please. f@ck. This bite is directly over my scar and makes my entire body twitch and hum as I rock against him harder, the pain doing sinful things to the place where we are so close to being connected. And then I fall apart out of nowhere, sent so far over the cliff that I cleared it without realizing the end was near. His mouth slants over mine, hot and hard as he sucks out my scream, claiming it for himself. His hips rock against me, hard and frantic, before his entire body tenses and shudders. The ki*s ends in an abrupt movement as he bites my lip and groans, something warm spreading against my abdomen. I can feel the sharp pain in my lip and know I'm bleeding, and he sucks at it like it's ambrosia, before resting his head against my shoulder in the afterglow. I blink up at the stars, feeling my heart slow and my limbs grow heavy as the normal part of me takes over 14:3 4/10 8 Ava Gala (IV) my brain again. He's my fated mate, but—he's also a stranger who admitted to stalking me out here. Someone who said he was going to take me away. And I want him to. I want him to. Oh, my God. The reality of what happened finally hits me like a freight train, and I can feel my cheeks flushing with embarrassment. I just let a complete stranger dry hump me against a tree, and I liked it. No, I loved it. What the hell is wrong with me? Fated or not, that's... I'm still trying to catch my breath when I feel his hands on me again, but this time, they're gentle. He carefully adjusts my dress as best he can, despite the semen sticky against my abdomen. He does his best to pull it back into place and smooth out the wrinkles. Thankfully, the back fabric hides a lot, and I planned on changing at the hotel anyway. His touch is so tender, so loving, that it makes my heart ache in a way I've never felt before. He leans in to ki*s me again, and I find myself tilting my head up to meet him halfway, desire tingling down 14:37 5/10 8 Ava: Gala (IV) my spine once again, as though I hadn't gotten it out of my system just moments before. Our lips are just about to touch when a shrill ringing cuts through the air. His phone. Lucas curses under his breath and pulls back, reaching into his pocket to retrieve the offending device. I can't help but feel a twinge of disappointment at the interruption. "I have to take this," he says, his voice low and rough. "Don't move." I nod in silence, watching as he steps away to answer the call. My mind is still reeling from what just happened, and I can't seem to form a coherent thought. What do I do now? Do I wait for him to come back? Do I run away and pretend this never happened? My heart is telling me to stay, but my brain is screaming at me to get the hell out of here. Plus, I need to run—in general. He'd mentioned me coming with him before we had, er, connected in the way we did. But he doesn't even know who I am, and oh my God, he's the 6/10 B Ava Cala (IV)) alpha of the *www*

Westwood pack. I can't possibly be mated to an alpha. I'm still reeling under this belated recall of his introduction when he returns, his expression unreadable. He takes my hand in his, and all the gentleness has disappeared. His eyes are hard and cold, and dread numbs my face. Oh my God. This is no magical connection after all. This is a hump and run. Son of a bitch. "Ava Grey?" he asks, a muscle in his jaw flexing, and his voice isn't warm or rough or s@xy anymore. It's harsh and cruel and oh my word, I think my heart might actually be breaking. "Yeah?" I feel two inches tall. Lucas swears in ways I'd never heard before, and some hysterical part of my brain latches onto that detail, clinically impressed by the variation and creativity. Then his eyes meet mine, and that s@xy man from moments ago is gone. Gone. He's staring at me with something I'm far too familiar 14:38 — 7/10 Ava Gala (IV) with. Hatred. I don't wait for the rejection; I yank my hand out of his and run, and he doesn't follow. *** I burst through the hotel room door, slamming it behind me. My heart is pounding in my chest, and I can't seem to catch my breath. I lean against the door for a moment, trying to compose myself, but it's no use. I'm broken. Somewhere inside of me is a gaping hole, and it burns with the fire of his rejection. My mate's rejection. Get it together, Ava. You don't have time for this. I push off the door and grab my bag, rifling through it until I find my change of clothes. I strip off the dress and throw it into a corner, reminding myself to throw it in the trash on the way out. I don't need my parents finding the evidence of my indiscretion after I leave. Then again, it would be a great red herring in their search for me, wouldn't it? I step into the shower, turning the water as hot as I can stand it. giving myself a five-minute luxury to 14:30 — 8/10 8 Avs: Gala (IV) cleanse myself of everything. I let the water cascade over me, hoping it will wash away the shame and humiliation I feel. But no matter how hard I scrub, I can't seem to get clean. I can still feel his hands on me, his lips on my skin. I can still hear his voice in my ear, telling me how good I feel. Stop it. Stop thinking about him. The shower ends with my body clean and my soul filthy. I take little care in drying myself before throwing on my clothes, feeling my first bit of true relief now that I feel more like myself. There's no point in looking in the mirror. I don't want to see the mess I've become. I grab my bag and head out the door. I need to get as far away from here as possible. The rideshare app is already open on my phone from my escape from the gala. Now, I put in another request and dash to the lobby, unsurprised to find my ride already here. They must have been waiting at the hotel in case any guests needed them. Well, hurrah, I'm here. I don't have time to put any fancy plans in place, and my mind isn't capable of thinking through any intricate tricks. As we pull away from the hotel, I lean 14:30 *www*.N.v.ëLW©r.M.có(m)