

CHAPTER 85

85 Ava: Lucas Visits Lucas strides into the room from behind the wearied nurse. His presence is much as I remember—like a lion surveying his territory, confident in his domination over everything in his sight. This is the Alpha. Even after everything that’s happened, the sight of him still sends a ripple of attraction and unease through me, a reminder of our complicated history. But this time, there’s a huge part of me that wants to dash over and lift my head, baring my neck to him. To roll and rub against him with whimpers of submission. I shove that part deep into a dark hole inside of me and close the f@cking door. Lucas moves with such fluid grace, despite his towering height—he’s at least six—three, rivaling Alpha Renard’s imposing ability to loom. His hair is tousled, falling into a loose mess around his face and shoulders, and judging by the dark circles beneath his amber eyes, he’s been up all night. 85 Ava: Lucas Visits And speaking of his eyes... I try to avoid them, but it’s like there’s a force that pulls me into his gaze. It’s different from any time before. At the Gala, they’d burned with desire and curiosity. In Cedarwood, there was always an aching longing in their depths. Today? They’re intense, smoldering with rage that wars with relief. His jaw is clenched, his face set in a way that I’d have expected him to be a grim reaper instead of a visitor. But his brow settles out of its deep furrow and relaxes a little when he sees me, and the wrinkles around his eyes relax. As he approaches my bedside, I can’t help but lean toward him, into the scent of campfire smoke and something smooth and sensual beneath. A dizzying fragrance that has my heart yearning toward him. It should be comforting, but it sets me on edge as I try to pull myself back, waking myself from the brief intoxication with the man that the fates have deigned to mate me to. It’s startling to realize I’m not angry with him anymore. I guess that’s what happens when you get rescued before you’re wiped from the world’s history 2/7 <85 Ava: Lucas Visits book. “Hi,” I say, because he’s too busy staring at me to talk. “Are you okay?” Some of the stress fades from his face as he grabs the doctor’s stool and takes a seat next to my bed. His gaze lingers on the bandages on my face and neck, before sliding down to my abdomen. His fingers twitch, and he links his hands in his lap. It’s a casual gesture, but somehow I know he’s fighting his urge to reach out and touch me. It’s... cute. “I’m fine. As long as I don’t move around, I don’t hurt too much. Thank you for changing my doctor.” He grunts, shifting on the tiny stool. “Ellison’s a good .doctor, but a shit person.” I blink. Honestly, I’d have never guessed in a million years that he’s actu

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ally good at what he’s supposed to do. I figured his personality bled into his talent. “Oh.” “He’s been warned. He won’t bother you again.” I nod, not sure how to respond. Even if he’s taken care of, there will be other wolves with a similar mindset. I’m not stupid enough to think they can all be taken care of. 13:17 317 85 Ava Lucas Visits care of so easily. “Thank you... for coming for me.” The blanket is soft between my fingers, easy to twist. I can’t meet Lucas’ gaze as I struggle to convey my grateful feelings. “I didn’t know what to do.” He does reach out then, one of his hands dwarfing both of mine, quelling the anxious tugging of fabric. “I’ll always come for you, Ava. No matter how things go between us.” My fingers still, quiet beneath the warmth of his hands. There’s a gentle thrill that goes through me at our touch, a comfort I can get only from his proximity. One of the reasons I wasn’t angry when I learned he was breaking into his apartment is because of this. His -scent brings a sense of security, even with bad memories. His intense stare burns into the side of my face, and I shift uncomfortably beneath the weight of his regard. After a few moments of silence, I pull one of my hands away from his and bring it up to touch my hair, which must look terrible after everything I’ve been through. 13:17 417 C 85 Ava: Lucas Visits “Stop looking at me like that. I must look terrible.” Lucas chuckles, the rich sound sending a shiver down my spine. “You’re gorgeous, Ava. Even now.” I chance a glance at him, searching his expression for any hint of mockery. But his amber eyes are warm with sincerity, a real smile softening his face. Even his eyes are crinkled at the corners. A real smile is always seen in the eyes. My breath catches in my throat as I take in the rugged angles of his face, the way his dark hair falls in tousled waves around those high cheekbones. Even bruised and bandaged as I am, something in his gaze makes me feel beautiful in a way I’ve never experienced before. Not even with Clayton—but I shove that guilt down, not ready to deal with those thoughts right now. Heat blooms in my cheeks and I lower my gaze, fiddling with the blanket again. “You don’t have to say that.” “I’m not just saying it,” Lucas counters, his deep voice tinged with gentle amusement. “I mean it, Ava. You’re the most beautiful woman I’ve ever laid eyes on.” 57 85 Ava: Lucas Visits Even knowing that it’s just the mate bond talking, it warms my body from inside out, like a heating pad against the wounds of my heart. A faint smile is desperate to curve my lips, and I struggle against it. Be cool, Ava. Calm. Detached. Professional. You are not going to sit here and flirt with the man who rejected you. You’re strong and independent, and you can stand on your own two feet. I take a deep breath at my pep talk and look at Lucas, repeating my mantra to myself in my head. Too bad Selene isn’t here. She’d help with that. “How did you find me?” His expression sobers, the lightness in his eyes dimming. He still has a hand over mine, and he links our fingers together in an absent gesture as he talks. “It wasn’t easy,” he admits. “After you disappeared from Cedarwood, I tried everything to track you down. But it was like you’d vanished into thin air.” His jaw tightens, a muscle ticking with repressed emotion. “I knew it had to be the work of your pack, but I couldn’t prove it. Not at first.” I swallow hard 13.17 85 Ava: Lucas Visits Shit. I should probably explain what really happened. But how will he respond when he learns about Clayton? Comment 1 View All > R Leave the first comment for this chapter. Vote 12 1 Fandom Swipe left to continue >www.novellworm.com. ©(c)@

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