

CHAPTER 94

www.NoVé(1)worm.com

94 Ava: Lisa (1) Three nights. Three lonely, empty nights staring at the sterile hospital ceiling. Only Lucas' voice on the phone breaks up the monotony, checking in on me each evening. I hate how much comfort I draw from hearing the deep, soothing rumble of his voice, hate that I keep glancing at the clock, waiting for his call. Life is hard without Selene here. She would be able to help me work through these feelings. Separate what's me from the demands of my fate bond. Beyond that, she would have kept me entertained with her wry observations. Dr. Beaumont had mentioned this morning that it seemed as though my rate of healing was increasing. Her confusion over it nags at me. Is Selene getting closer? After the car accident, I noticed my wounds knitting together faster once she returned. I'd assumed it was from my heat, but perhaps... "Miss Grey?" I look up to see the nurse peeking around my door, a hesitant smile on her face. "You have a visitor." 13-28 94 Ava Lisa (1) Visitor? I stare at her in confusion. Lucas is still away dealing with pack politics, and he would have called first anyway. My mind races, trying to figure out who it could possibly be, when a blur of motion pushes past the nurse. "Ava!" "Lise?" I barely have time to process what's happening before she's flinging her arms around me, squeezing me so tightly it borders on painful. "Ow, careful!" "Sorry, sorry!" She loosens her grip immediately, leaning back to look at me. Her eyes are shining with unshed tears. "I was just so worried about you! God, Ava, what happened? Are you okay? Lucas called me, but he didn't explain much beyond you being in the hospital." The worry and gentle nagging in her words, the way her eyes dart over my body, the way her hands flutter and hover over me as if she's not sure where to touch first—it all brings tears to my eyes. I hiccup. Then I sob. Then I woon 279 C 94 Ava Lisa (1) No, it's not weeping. Weeping implies a woman who cries in silence, shoulders maybe trembling a little. Weeping is a beautiful art, an act that's painted in somber colors, touching all who view it. I'm just... Sobbing. Wailing. Blubbering. All three, all at once, in a sniffling mess of noise and tears. Lisa's here. I'm no longer alone. Lisa is on my side—always. Lisa will never judge. Lisa won't force me to choose. She hugs me through it all, as I soak her shoulder in grief and terror. She doesn't ask; I don't offer. Right now, it's all about the release of all these emotions I've held onto. 3/8 04 Av (1) Selene isn't here, but at least I have Lisa. My Lisa. It feels like eternity before I'm finally calm. My eyes burn, sore and swollen with the force of my sobbing, and my head aches. Lisa takes a tissue and wipes the tears from my face, pushing my hair behind my ears. All of her actions are maternal and loving, and I find myself wondering how many kids she'll have in the future. She says she wants to go into business, but I see her as a teacher more than anything. Or a mom. Or both. "Long story, yeah?" Lisa says, her question more a statement than anything. I nod. "Do you want to talk about it?" I nod again. I do. I want to talk to someone who can listen to it all. Trying to figure out where to begin has me confused. I've told her some things over time, but this is 94 Ava Lisa (1) different. She's here. She's in front of me. We can talk in deptw(w)w.NoVé(1)worm.com

Updates...www.NoVé(1)worm.com

(w)W(w).(n)OveLwD(r)@.com

hs that we couldn't manage over text messages and infrequent phone calls. I swallow hard, trying to figure out where to even begin. So much has happened in such a short time. "It's a long story," I say weakly. Lisa settles onto the edge of the bed, grabbing my hand. "I've got time." And so I tell her. Everything. From the moment I left Beaniverse to my failed attempt at running away and being kidnapped by my family. I talk about the discovery of my fated mate bond with Lucas, even though she's heard it before. I talk about Selene and her cryptic remarks. I talk about Clayton and my time in the Aspen pack. And finally, I talk about my rescue and the events that led to me being here, in this hospital bed. By the time I finish, Lisa gapes at me, her eyes wide with shock. "Holy shit, Ave. That's... a lot." "Yeah," I agree with a shaky laugh. "It's been a wild ride." "And you're... what, some kind of special shifter? With 04 Ava Lisa (1) a fated mate bond to the alpha of the Westwood pack?" Lisa shakes her head in disbelief. "This is insane." "Tell me about it," I mutter. It still doesn't feel real, even to me. When I summarize it like I did, it feels like so much has happened—straight out of one of Selene's trash TV dramas. Lisa squeezes my hand, her expression softening. "I'm just glad you're okay. Well, mostly okay," she amends, glancing at my bandaged wounds. "Lucas said you were pretty badly hurt." I nod, wincing at the memory of Todd's attack. "Yeah. It was... it was bad. But I'm healing." Faster than I should be, apparently. "Good." Lisa's voice is fierce. "Because as soon as you're better, I'm going to kick your ass for scaring me like that. Running off without a word, getting yourself kidnapped and mauled..." She shakes her head again. "Don't ever do that again, you hear me?" "I won't," I promise. And I mean it. I never want to go through anything like that ever again. We lapse into silence for a moment, just holding onto 94 Ava: Lisa (1) each other. It's a comfort, having Lisa here. A piece of normalcy in the midst of all this chaos. "So," Lisa says eventually, a mischievous glint in her eye. "Tell me more about this Lucas guy. Is he as hot as he sounds on the phone?" I can't help but laugh, even as a blush heats my cheeks. "Lise!" "What? I'm just asking!" She grins at me. "Come on, spill. I want all the dirty details." And just like that, it's almost like old times. Gossiping and giggling like young girls without responsibilities. Like we're in an apartment instead of a hospital room. Like we're drinking wine instead of asking for little cartons of apple juice from the nurse. For a little while, I can almost forget about the supernatural drama that's taken over my life. Almost. Comment 2