

Chapter 34

A Better Nominee

"W-what do you want me to do?" Madison's voice came out rough with nerves. She'd been put in uncomfortable positions while working at the club before.

She'd thought that nothing would top the night she'd been cornered in that room of Wolves on the eighth floor. It had been her first time up there, and she hadn't even been scheduled to be there. Tired of waiting for her chance to see what all the fuss was about; she'd decided to take fate into her own hands.

Much like the girl who'd called to notify her of this assignment, Jared had tasked her with letting another, more seasoned member of the waitstaff of their upcoming appointment. Seeing an opening, Madison had borrowed another person's phone and posed as a worker at her son's daycare. One quick call and the woman had been off to pick up her 'sick' son, and Madison had been there to volunteer to take her place.

The experience had been everything she'd hoped for during the first hour or two of the party. The suite had been packed with gorgeous Wolven men, throwing wads of cash out left and right for the most arbitrary of services. Madison had been having the time of her life, already raking in enough to cover half a semester. She was certain that with a little more flirting, she could get at least one of the partygoers to ask for her number.

Then, she'd accidentally knocked into someone's elbow, sending their drink sloshing onto the floor. She'd put on her best smile and offered to get him another one on the house, but the hulking brutelike motherfucker had gotten it into his drug-addled head to teach her a lesson about "disrespecting her betters."

That was the same oily feeling Madison got from this lot. They weren't even Wolves - at least she thought so. She'd never seen a potbellied Werewolf before. They were pigs, through and through.

"I'm a waitress, so unless your little game involves seeing how many bottles of Patrón I can convince the house to comp you, I'm afraid I can't help you."

Madison's bravado sounded forced, even to her own ears, but it was all she knew. She'd had to rely on sheer audacity to keep her safe, and spite to stay motivated. But she'd never been a situation quite like this before - trapped alone in a room with a bunch of sleazy strangers.

Even during the eighth-floor party, she'd been fairly certain that the sex-addled Omegas in the room wouldn't have allowed her to be harmed - they knew the rules. And at the end of the day, she'd walked away with one of those sweet hush money bonuses Bella gave out to any worker who suffered 'emotional damages'.

Here, she was completely alone.

The greasy man reached into his jacket pocket and pulled out a leather wallet that was comically overstuffed with bills. It was clearly designed for shock value rather than practical use.

"Trust us, we have enough to pay you to do whatever we want."

Madison cocked her head in defiance, "Trust me, you do not."

"He was right, she has a mouth on her, this one!" Another skeezer took out a black sack and rifled inside. When he removed his hand, he was holding a leather collar, and Madison could swear she saw the glint of metal from within the bag. "I think this one would suit her nicely when we string her up."

Madison almost took a step back, until she remembered the guy standing behind her, guarding the door. "You're not allowed to bring outside gear inside of the club."

The man with the money grinned, "Breaking the rules is all part of the fun, sweetheart. We asked for you because we heard you were ballsy. Give us three minutes of asphyxiation and we'll make your dreams come true." Madison made a conscious effort not to move a muscle. If she could get past these guys, it would only be a matter of calling for the right person, and these perverts would be out on their gout-riddled asses.

As it stood, however, it was one against four. And since this party had only called for a waitress, it was assumed they'd be providing their own entertainment. Madison doubted security would be making extra rounds this way, since the working escorts were their priority.

It was up to Madison to get herself out of this. It wouldn't be the first time, she thought. Even so, she needed to be smart about this. She'd been making the mistake of acting without thought too often lately, and it had been costing her sleep, thinking about all of the chances she'd missed to get ahead. Like the other night with Ava. She'd lost her cool and never even gotten that information about...Ava.

A plan started forming in Madison's mind. It was dark, even for her, but the outcome would undoubtedly serve her in more than one way. And if there was one lesson that had been beaten into Madison by her worthless mother and the string of strung-out deadbeats who'd used their trailer like a revolving door, it was that the only person Madison could rely on was herself.

Everyone from her shitty hometown had expected her to be nothing, just like her mother, but she'd defied them at every turn to escape to the city and enroll herself in university. And she'd done all while maintaining the dignity and grace her mother had never had.

She hadn't pulled herself up from the bottom to lose it all here.

"Like I said, that's not my style." She placed her hands on her hips and projected as much confidence as she could muster. "I'm more of the...entrepreneurial type."

The man began to frown, "You saying you don't want our money?"

"I'm saying I'd be glad to take a finder's fee," She announced. "Forty percent and I can refer you to the perfect girl for the job."

The man raised an eyebrow, naked interest on his ruddy mug, "Is that so?"

Madison nodded, "She's a Wolf, too. Hearty...lungs, or whatever."

"And you think she'll like our game?"

"For sure. She's the subservient type. And she'll do anything for cash." Madison let out a silent breath of relief when the men made affirming murmurs and the guy with the money placed his wallet back into his jacket pocket. "Forty percent, you said?" Madison nodded and the man wheezed out an uncomfortably moist laugh, "I still like you."

"You'll like me even more once you meet Ava."

Ava had been in the middle of a deep, blessedly dreamless slumber when rapping on her door roused her.

Goddess, no! She rolled over, pulling her pillow over her head, determined to wait whoever it was out. The insistent knocking came again, and again, increasing in volume and intensity until Ava finally pushed herself out of bed with a groan. "Wha-"She started, "Oh, you've got to be kidding me."

Madison was about the last person she'd expected to see standing on the other side of her door. The girl only gave Ava a polite smile.

"You're being requested in room 701."

This was the day that just wouldn't end. Ava checked her clock to see that it was pushing three in the morning. "Now?"

It was still well within the club's operating hours, but usually assignments were ending around this time. No one should be calling this late.

Madison only shrugged, "Last minute appointments happen. Lucky you, yet again."

Ava rolled her eyes, "Fine. I need to get dressed, then."

Madison huffed out an impatient breath, "Is that how you get invited to the eighth floor all the time? By keeping your guests waiting?"

"Fine, whatever," Ava said and grabbed a pair of satin pumps to dress up the oversized graphic t-shirt she wore to bed.

When they arrived outside of 701, Madison nodded toward the door. "Go ahead. I need to grab some stuff from bar storage."

Ava nodded and went ahead. When she entered the room, she was relieved to see that the clients were human. Her mood quickly soured as she noticed the various items scattered across the couch cushions.

Chains, cuffs, chokers. Absolutely not, Ava thought. During her escort training, Bella had advised her to keep her limits as open as possible, and eventually, Ava had come around on the idea. She drew the line at bondage. Every time. She'd already spent enough of her life in chains.

This definitely should have been flagged, and she never should have been assigned this room.

Ava shook her head, "I think you called the wrong person." She started for the door. "I can go find our client manager and he'll- "

"No!" One man snapped, and suddenly Ava was surrounded on either side by the two burliest men in the room. "We've waited long enough. We want to play our game."

The man made the mistake of walking up to her while he spoke, likely to intimidate her. Ava leveraged herself where the men held her arms and kicked out with both feet. Her heels connected, sending the repulsive man tumbling onto his back. "Get the fuck off of me!" She yelled.

The men only laughed, even as their friend wheezed on the ground. "Madison was right, this girl is something else!"

The wheezing man looked up, red-faced, his hair askew, "Yes she is." His voice was full of anticipation, "Now, knock her out."

Ava yelled again, but a damp cloth covered her face. Soon, the world turned black.