

## Chapter 13

Maya

An hour later, I wished I never agreed to this.

Caden put me on my ass more times than I liked to admit, and he never had anything nice to say about it.

By the time he threw me on the ground for what seemed like the umpteenth time, I was completely over it.

"I'm done!" I said shoving at his chest as he pinned me to the ground. "You're not being fair, Caden. You know I have no training."

"Exactly," was all he said. "I bet Leo, even Tylon for goodness sake would be easier on me."

"Don't hold your breath," he said, deadpan. "This isn't about being easy. It's about being efficient. You think you haven't learned anything today?"

I huffed, frustrated. "I know I haven't."

"Oh yeah?" he teased. "Try and get me off of you, and then we wrap up today's session."

"Caden, you're like twice my weight. How do you expect me to—"

"You can. The right motivation will work."

I rolled my eyes. "Caden I'm tired. I haven't learned anything and I most definitely cannot flip you. You have my entire body pinned."

"Try."

I groaned.

"You don't need to muscle this. You need to aim."

"You do realize I've never been less muscular in my life?"

He almost smiled. "Your body knows more than you give it credit for."

I huffed as I tried to get him off me, but he was like a literal freaking rock.

"Focus, Maya," he gritted out. "What's one thing you can do... what you've already done, if you're being pinned?"

The heat off his chest met the cool of my breath, and for a second my brain forgot verbs.

"Look for your advantage. Your size isn't a weakness," he said. "Look closely."

I did, but I was sure it was entirely on the wrong thing. The world narrowed to the blink-rate of his pupils and the music of his breathing.

He pressed harder, and I quarter-turned and lifted my forearm to guide his shoulder past me. He tried to pin me again, but I pressed my elbow to the ground so it wasn't so easy for him anymore.

"There," he said quietly when the movement finally felt like it belonged to me. "You found it."

"What if someone is bigger?"

He glanced down at himself like the answer was obvious. "Few are," he said. "We don't trade force. We steal balance. Continue trying, you're not free yet."

I didn't know how my body found it, but it did. I shifted at the hip the way he'd shown me, caught his weight on my forearm, and rolled through. Within a few seconds, I was able to flip myself from beneath him, now straddling him.

He didn't look surprised. If anything, the corner of his mouth hinted that he'd been waiting for me to get there, and I wondered if he made me do it on purpose.

I should have went for the throat as he taught me, but instead, my hands slips up his chest and to his shoulders.

Our gazes collided, and suddenly, the room was charged.

His hands found my hips and pressed me into him.

I gasped at the firm hardness I felt beneath me. Because I knew what it was. I knew what it meant, and my pulse answered like it had been waiting for permission.

He wanted me.

His heart didn't seem to race, but mine tried to set a record. The room shrank to the ember space between us.

"Go for the neck," he said, but it came out like a command he couldn't quite sell.

"Right," I said, and didn't look at his mouth. Which was not the same thing as not thinking about it.

He slid his hand up my forearm to adjust nothing at all and left it there anyway. We were too close. We knew it. But neither of us moved.

His eyes cut to mine again, and I found myself leaning into him, going for the kiss because I was torturing myself by not even trying.

"Maya." It came out like a warning and a plea, but I didn't stop. We were inches away, and he buried his fingers into my hair at the nape of my neck, and pulled me down to him.

Our lips brushed, and my breath caught, but then the phone on the table blared, and within seconds, he was gone.

I blinked away the haze as he grabbed the phone, and I made a mental note to castrate whoever it was who called.

I saw the caller ID briefly before he answered it. It read 'Dad.' And Caden's face went gravely still.

"Yea... Dad I can't... Yes... Yes I know..., Fine, I'll be there."

I didn't mean to eavesdrop, but I knew the conversation didn't do how Caden wanted it to go.

When he looked back at me, he wasn't the Caden I knew. His eyes were dark and cold, and there was no warmth in them.

"Caden..."

"We're done for today," he said, and he was already leaving.

"Wait are you okay?" I asked desperately, but he was already climbing the stairs, ignoring me in a way that stung.

Yet, like the fool I was, I still ran after him, grabbing his arm.

"Caden I—"

"What Maya!" he shouted, swerving around to face me and yanking his arm away from me.

I whimpered as I stumbled back, hurt and embarrassment eating me whole. His eyes flashed with the emotion I knew him for, but it was gone in a second. He was acting like... Tylon.

I stepped back about two more stairs, and hung my head.

"I'll tell you when the next session is," was all he said, before storming away, leaving me in my mess of want, hurt and chaos.