

Chapter 29

Demetri Contreras POV:

She didn't wait for my reply. Her hands were already reaching for the blanket. I stiffened as she pulled it back, and for a moment, my mind went completely blank.

Then the blood rushed to my head, a hot, searing wave of shame that burned my cheeks. I was an Alpha. A predator meant to stand at the pinnacle of my kind. And now, I was to be treated like an infant, having a woman handle my most disgusting, private... functions.

My dignity, the last pathetic scrap I had left, was being stripped away, piece by agonizing piece.

She seemed completely oblivious to my turmoil. Or perhaps, she simply didn't care. Her expression was the same as when she had been cutting into my leg-focused, clinical, detached.

In her eyes, I wasn't a man. I wasn't an Alpha. I was just a broken body in need of maintenance.

That purely professional gaze, devoid of any desire or disgust, was more humiliating than any look of contempt could ever be.

She reached down and lifted the thin blanket. I instinctively started to resist, my hand lifting, but then it fell back to the mattress, limp and useless. What right did I have to protest?

She expertly untied the soiled cloth pad and removed it.

Despite my best efforts, a low groan, a mixture of shame and despair, escaped my throat.

I turned my face away, staring hard at the wall, as if the cold stone could offer some escape from this reality.

She cleaned me with a warm, damp cloth. Her movements were gentle but efficient. Her fingertips occasionally brushed against the skin of my inner thigh, and each time, a jolt like an electric current shot through me, making my rigid body tremble uncontrollably.

I could smell the faint, clean scent of herbs on her, mixed with her own unique fragrance, something like a forest after a rainstorm. The scent was maddening. It made me want... things.

Just as I felt I would break under the strain of this torturous combination of shame and alien desire, she finished. The new, soft, white pad was in place.

A feeling of clean, dry comfort replaced the damp stickiness. The physical relief only sharpened the psychological torment.

She pulled the blanket back over me as if she had just performed the most mundane task in the world.

"How does it feel?" she asked.

"Wonderful," I bit out from between clenched teeth, my voice dripping with self-loathing sarcasm. "I suppose this is the best treatment a useless cripple can expect, isn't it?"

I was trying to wound her with my words, but I was really just attacking myself. I wanted her to get angry, or even just embarrassed. Any reaction would be better than her damned, calm professionalism.

But she only frowned slightly. Then her hand was on my abdomen, pressing down through the thin blanket.

My entire body went rigid. "What are you doing!"

"Don't move," she ordered, her tone brooks no argument. "Your intestinal function has nearly ceased. If this continues, you'll develop a blockage. I need to stimulate peristalsis."

Without another word, her palm began to move in slow, deliberate

circles over my lower stomach, applying a firm, specific pressure.

It wasn't a sensual caress. It was a practiced, therapeutic massage. But my body reacted in a way I couldn't explain. I could feel the firm pressure of her hand through the thin fabric, a searing brand on my skin.

My breathing became ragged. My body, this traitorous vessel, was having a shameful, primitive reaction to a purely medical procedure.

And a primal, wordless surge of possessiveness, an instinct I thought was dead and gone, flared up inside me.

I grabbed her hand, my own hand surprisingly strong. "Enough!" My voice was a raw, strangled sound.

She stopped. She looked down at my hand clamped around her wrist, then up at my flushed face and wild, chaotic eyes.

And she finally seemed to understand. For the first time, a flicker of something... like embarrassment... crossed her face. She snatched her hand back as if she'd been burned.

"... That's all the treatment for today," she coughed, turning and walking quickly away from my bed. It was almost a retreat.

I lay there, gasping for air, my heart threatening to hammer its way out of my chest.

This woman... what in the hell was she doing to me?



