

Scars by Jessica Bailey Chapter 13

Chapter 13

Amelie

Everything hurts. I think there might be one spot on my pinky toe that doesn't hurt. I cannot even open my eyes. My eyelids hurt. How do eyelids hurt? What is that smell? It's an overwhelming smell of disinfectant. "Inari, are you there? Did we die? I feel like death." I try to give her a reassuring chuckle, but I was a little serious.

"No, we didn't die. Almost!" Her voice is soft and soothing.

"I think you should open your eyes; everyone is waiting." Inari nudges me ever so gently.

I groan, "but my eyelids hurt." Inari chuckles. Hearing her laugh even just a little feels fantastic. It lets me know we are going to be OK. I try to open my eyes they flutter. I am hit with white blinding light. I quickly close my eyes and groan again. "Nope, too bright," I tell Inari.

"Your eyes will adjust. You need to try again." I just want to keep my eyes closed and go back to sleep, but I know if she is pushing me to open my eyes, there's a good reason. So I try again, putting all the energy I can muster into opening my eyes.

Again, I am blinded but the bright white light. I shift my head, trying not to look directly into the bright light. Finally, my eyes adjust, and I see Hope sitting next to me. She is sitting in a chair staring at me wide-eyed, not saying a word.

"Hope, where am I, and what are you doing?" I was so hazy still. She doesn't say a word, and next, I heard footsteps rushing down a hallway. I turn my head toward the door, and I see my mother Ann, stepmother Celeste, and uncle Lucas rushing through the door. "Hello, everyone. Ummm, can someone tell me what's going on?"

Everyone rushes to the bed; my mother, Celeste, and Hope are sobbing. I can't make out anything they are saying at all. I turn to my Uncle the Beta of the Ashwood Pack, "Where am I, and what happened?"

"We almost lost you. Your mate Tate did a number on you. Your brother and sister rushed you back to our Pack. Your dad added you back to the Pack while you were unconscious to help you heal faster. You've been in the Packhouse infirmary for three days." I have to stop and think for a moment. What was the last thing I remember?

That's right, I fought for my life with Tate and would have died if it wasn't for Alpha Mason. "Uncle Lucas, where's my dad and Alpha Logan?" I look at him with worry. I

was worried about Alpha Mason, yes, he did save me, but his actions were honestly odd. I didn't want any harm to come to him or his Pack.

Lucas lightly stroked my head as gently as possible. "They are finishing up a few things in your dad's office and will be here soon." I breathe a sigh of relief they are not at war with the Timber Wolf Pack.

The three women are sobbing in the corner; they start stepping toward the bed, and I tense up, "be gentle, everything hurts!" I brace myself for the onslaught of affection. I am surprised when they all seem to restrain themselves except for my mother, who is squeezing my hand so hard I think it's going to crack. "Mom, my hand, please. You're squeezing too hard." I have never felt like I would break with the slightest touch until now.

"I'm sorry, honey. I was just so scared I lost you. We all were." Tears were welling up in her eyes again.

"Come on, Mom, you can't get rid of me that easy. I might be small, but I'm still your daughter." I give her the best smile I could. I'm sure I looked horrible. I felt horrible. I hear two sets of footsteps coming down the hall, and I know it's dad and Logan. I listen to their footsteps stop before entering the room. I can only assume composing themselves before entering.

The door opens, "Hey, you two! Welcome to the party." I say with my best cocky grin.

Dad smiles, slightly shaking his head, "How are you feeling, kiddo?" I can tell he's relieved to see my snappy personality has returned.

"Oh, you know, feel great, except everything hurts! It's like I was in a fight for my life or something crazy like that." I needed to calm everyone down, and if it took sarcasm and bad jokes, I was all for it. I didn't want to see my family cry for me anymore.

"That's my girl! You gave him hell. It was your victory!" Logan roared with pride. Of course, that's what he would focus on the ass-kicking I gave, not the one I got. Dad turned to Alpha Logan, giving him a look that screamed, not now!

"I don't feel like I won. If this is what victory feels like, I'll be a spectator from now on," I joke, but I was thrilled to have made it out alive.

"Kiddo, I think we both have questions for each other, Alpha Logan and I are trying to piece together everything. I know you also have questions as well. This will be hard, but everyone here loves you, and no one is mad at you. We don't want you to be upset. Are you feeling up to talking about everything?" Dad is extremely cautious with me. It is like he's scared I'm going to break. Honestly, after what I went through, it's going to take a lot to break me. I know I am stronger and more intelligent than I had even realized.

I put all my sarcasm and jokes aside, take a deep breath, "Yeah, I think going over everything would be best. Don't worry, dad, I can handle it. Before we get started, I owe you all an apology. I should have stayed like you all had asked. I was scared to admit out loud you all were right. I knew you all were, but it hurt to admit it. Tate never had physically harmed me before, so I wasn't expecting anything to happen. I honestly wanted to try and fix things between us. I see now I was blinded by my longing for a normal, happy relationship like you all have. I am truly sorry for the trouble I caused." A tear rolled down my cheek. They were the people I loved the most, and I caused them pain because I was selfish.

Celeste took my hand, "You have nothing to apologize for. You didn't know, how could you? What matters now is that you are safe."

"Luna Celeste is right, now let's get down to business. How did Tate feed you wolfsbane?" Logan leans in, looking at me, waiting.

"Wolfsbane! I have no idea" I'm in shock. I did not detect any wolfsbane at all. I look to my dad to help me figure this out.

"Did you have anything sweet when you got home?" Dad narrows his eyes, looking for a reaction on my face.

I gasp, "The tea! I thought he was just nice, but Tate brought me a cup of my favorite tea with honey, but I still should have detected the wolfsbane."

Dad drops his head a slight sign leaves him, "The tea tasted like he added honey. I think he used marshmallow root to mask the wolfsbane."

My eyes widen. Herbs, flowers, and medical plants were a hobby of mine. I knew full well the medical properties of the marshmallow plant on werewolves. Its flowers were sweet and could be candied but were full of vitamins and antioxidants, great for growing pups. Its leaves and stem could be dried, ground into a powder, and pressed into pills used as a mild painkiller and anti-inflammatory, like aspirin. The roots were used to make a syrup that was a sleep aid. It was honestly an amazing plant. "How would marshmallow root hide wolfsbane? You know I am aware of all the uses for marshmallow, but I've never heard this before." I was simply curious at this point.

"It's not widely known for a good reason, but if wolfsbane and marshmallow root are combined and heated, it hides the taste of the wolfsbane, and instead of the marshmallow root being a sleep aid, it becomes a sedative. It tastes a lot like honey, and if he put it in your tea, the other flavors masked the bitter aftertaste. So the first mystery is solved. OK, Amelie, I know you want some answers too, go ahead." Dad sat down in an armchair; Celeste and Hope moved to sit on the arms of the chair. Logan had also moved to the other armchair, leaning forward, resting his elbows on his knees and his hands dangling between his legs as he leaned forward. My mother sat in a small chair next to my bed, her face still filled with worry.

I had so many questions, but I needed to confirm a few things, “How did you know I was in danger?”

My mom’s voice cracked as she answered my question, “We can still feel you. Your dad and I the strongest. I didn’t feel anything for two days, so I thought you were fine. Then all of a sudden, I felt panic, fear, and overwhelming rage—Logan and I were still here, and so was Alpha Mason. The three packs were in alliance negotiations still. Your dad and Logan told Alpha Mason if he did not return to his Pack and check on your wellbeing that your dad would financially ruin them, and Logan would attack and take over his Pack.”

Logan interjected, “We gave him an offer he couldn’t refuse!” I could not help but laugh along with him. Logan was rough around the edges and, like many wolves, love to fight, but I had to admit I loved his timing and humor. I looked around; no one else thought it was funny but him and me.

“Wait, it still doesn’t make any sense. How can you all still feel my full family bond? It should have weakened when I got my mate mark?” They had told me this the day I stormed out, but I didn’t stay for an answer. The family bond was a blessing from the moon goddess to protect pups, but once a werewolf found their fated mate, the bond would weaken to a whisper. The mate bond took over for the family bond.

My mother said softly, “I don’t know why the bond is still strong. It has never weakened, and I thank the goddess for that.” She caressed my cheek, and I could see all her love in her eyes.

Dad took over the conversation as was his style, “anyway, the one stipulation Mason gave was he didn’t want two other Alphas in his territory telling him what to do that it would look bad to his Pack. So I sent Hope and James with Mason in case you needed to come home.” It all made sense to that point, but I still had questions, but before I could ask another one, Logan had a few of his own.

Logan cleared his throat then asked, “I want to know how you got out of there with your wolf sealed. Mason said the scene was a mess, and to be honest, so were you.” Everyone looked at Logan with wide angry eyes. “What? Like you all don’t have the same question!” Logan defended himself.

My mom jumped in, “Baby, you don’t have to answer that. I know it’s hard. I don’t want you to relive it.” I sat for a second and thought. I know they are worried about me reliving the trauma, but at the same time, I felt I needed to face it. If I didn’t, I would still be giving some sliver of control to Tate. I could never live like that again.

I took a deep breath and patted my mother’s hand, “No, mom, I’m OK. I can talk about it.” I proceeded to tell them about creating my makeshift weapon out of cloths and broken glass and stone wear. I told them how I ambushed Karen. I told them about my fight with Tate, and I burned his face with a blowtorch. I did this all while my wolf was

sealed. After telling them about the fight, all their eyes were wide; mouths were open in disbelief, all except Logan. He was beaming with pride, and I swear I could see his wolf's tail wagging. He stands up abruptly.

"That slimy little worm. How dare he think he could lock you up. Who does he think he is! You gave him hell every step of the way. That's my girl, never backing down from a fight." I didn't know what he was rambling about. I had never been in a fight before this and didn't want to be in one again.

"I do have one more question. Why did Alpha Mason kick me out of the Pack and take my shop?" To be honest, I think that almost hurt worse than the fight. I worked so hard on making my business successful.