

Scars by Jessica Bailey Chapter 4

Chapter 4

Amelie

As soon as the switch is flipped, the loudest scream, “NOOOOOOOOOOOOO!” came from James’s room. Next, we heard the door slam open. From the top of the stairs, he yelled, “Who has a death wish. Who did it?” I looked up to see our baby brother, who was not such a baby anymore. He was a towering 6’4” with light brown hair with similar caramel highlights to mine. He also got our father’s bright blue eyes and high cheekbones. He was still a bit skinny as he was only 17 and had yet to fill out. I could tell he would be more imposing physically than our father, but could he play the mental game as dad could? This was yet to be determined. As things currently stood, sisters, were winning and little soon-to-be Alpha was losing his mind, and Hope and I could only sneaker mockingly.

“Oh, Hope, look at the little pup. He seems angry, and whatever will we do, I’m so scared of this little pup.” I mocked as James came rushing down the stairs. We ran around the house playing some odd form of keep away and tag until our father stepped into the room.

“Enough” he used his Alpha ton with us, making us stop in our tracks, not fair. “You are adults, yet whenever you are all together, you act like children. Now stop tearing up the house before your mom yells at me.” We all knew who the actual “Alpha” in the family was. We held it in, trying so hard not to laugh.

Our dad just shook his head at his three adults but forever children and said, “Dinner’s ready come on before it gets cold.” He sighed and waited for me to bring up the rear. He put his arm around my shoulder and kissed the top of my head “how are you doing, kiddo?”

“I’m a good dad. It’s nice to be home again.” He smiled at me, but I could see a little pain in his eyes as he looked at me. “I promise I’m fine. My business is doing good. Everything’s fine.”

“OK, kiddo. I understand.” With that, we continued our walk to the small family dining room that was used only for the Alpha’s family.

Inari chimed in, “I told you he already knows. He can feel your pain through his family bond. You cannot lie to your parents. You need to talk to him.”

I knew she was right, but I just wanted to live in this happy moment without my shame and sadness taking over. “Inari, you’re right, but let’s wait till after the Heir Ceremony. I’m here for James. Also, I’m mated he can’t feel me in the family bond like before you

know that." I could feel Inari agree and shift back again. "Let's go for a run tonight. We'll go to our spot." Inari agreed, and I entered the dining room.

Luna Celest gave me a huge hug and a kiss on the cheek. "Hello, love, did you have a nice drive?"

"Yeah, I always enjoy the hills and mountains on the drive." I hug her back and take my seat at the table.

The rest of dinner was its usual banter. We were catching up on each other's lives and teasing from time to time and getting our marching orders from Celest. We all had a job to do tomorrow to make sure the event went off without a hitch. All I could do was smile and let my heart fill to the brim.

After dinner, I switched into some workout clothes, leggings, and a long sleeve t-shirt and went out the backdoor to the tree line. Once I got there, I stripped down and let Inari out. I was filled with all the love from my family and, at the same time, sadness because I knew it was going to end. I needed some air, and Inari needed to run free. So I shifted, which I didn't do often enough since finding my mate. My body cracked and twisted, and fur pushed through my every pore. Werewolves who shift repeatedly need a ton of protein. It takes a lot to keep up a wolf's body. Finally, I complete my shift, and Inari stands in her full glory. Chocolate brown with an almost gold undercoat, and her eyes changed from my stormy grey to a rich topaz. "OK, it's all you, Inari. Let's go to our spot." At that, we take off through the woods to find our favorite mountain clearing.

Once we get there, I shift back. I'm naked, but I love this place. Growing up, I would find wildflowers and wild herbs. I would collect the seeds and bring them to this clearing. I walked through the wildflowers and herbs. I looked around to take in the violets, gaillardia, yarrow, feverfew, echinacea mixed with thyme and wild rosemary, and mountain mint. It was a little slice of heaven for me. It was a place I could truly be at peace and just be, no judgment, no expectations, no one was controlling me. Just me and my plants growing and thriving. I breathed in the cool mountain air of Western South Dakota and looked up at the clear night sky. Up here, away from everything, you could see every star, and I passed the time trying to identify constellations. Which I am terrible at. I think everything looks like the big dipper. Good thing I didn't have to navigate by the stars. Who knows where I would end up?

"Am, we need to head back. Tomorrow is going to be a long day, and you will be needed to represent your family fully."

"I know. It's just so peaceful here I never want to leave."

Inari sighed. She felt the same as me. This was our peaceful place. The one place we wished we could take with us. With that, I stood up, my naked butt covered in dirt. I dust myself off and step back, making sure not to step on the chamomile in front of me. Inari shifted, and we headed back to where we had left our clothes. I dressed and started to

walk back to the Packhouse. I could see a silhouette in the backdoor. Once it saw me, it slowly stepped away. I could only assume it was my father. It was his regular practice when I lived with him before. He just wanted to make sure I was safe but also giving me my space.

I went back to my old room. Everything was left as it was. It was like a time capsule. It was all frozen at the moment; my life changed the moment I found my mate. I found it comforting and a little unnerving.

I rinsed off in the shower and pulled on some pajamas. I realized I hadn't checked my phone since I got to my parent's. A jolt of pure panic shot through me. I didn't want to check, but I knew I would have to. 5 missed calls and 20 texts. The last text sent a chill through me.

"Don't answer my calls and texts for hours; there will be consequences." I read aloud. Shit, what was I going to do now? I looked at the time. It was only 10:30 PM. It wasn't that late yet. I quickly text him back, hoping I can stem his anger.

"Hey, babe! Sorry for the late text. I was spending time with the fam. I'll call you as soon as I'm up in the morning. Love you good night." I breathed a heavy sigh. I prayed that was enough to calm him. My phone buzzed again.

"Don't let it happen again." That was it. For now, I averted disaster. I plugged my phone into the charger and laid down in my childhood bed. I pushed everything out of my mind and just let the sounds of the woods nearby sing me their sweet lullaby as sleep took over.