

Alpha Kael

FOUR

~Jada

I didn't sleep easy that night.

The bed had sunk into the shape of someone else, so all night, I shifted uncomfortably. The unknown haunt my dreams, the amount of times I woke not knowing where I was being ridiculous. I'm in the middle of nowhere, my fate unknown. Whoever sleeps in the rooms around me are surely as anxious about tomorrow. I take comfort in knowing I'm not the only one.

The lack of curtains truly live up to their desired effect. Sun glared into my eyes the moment it rose, at some ungodly hour. As much as my body protested, I knew it was my cue to get up and face this undetermined day.

Out of sheer habit, I made my bed. If this is anything like the institute I grew up in, someone would come in to check it, then scold me if it was done incorrectly. So I fold the sheets up, and decide to figure out what to wear. I wasn't allowed to bring any clothing or personal items with me. As much as it saddens me, I know I didn't own anything or significance. I'm sure all of it will be thrown out. It was all falling apart anyway, and I had no portraits of my family.

I pull open the top drawer of the dresser. It's filled with underclothes and socks. I select a pair, and move on to the next door. This one is filled with shirts and pants. Compression tights. I select a black pair, and match it with a very light grey shirt. Whatever today entails, it surely includes a lot of movement. After changing, I find shoes and jackets in the wardrobe.

It was as I was tying my shoelaces, a screeching sound of a microphone announcement blares through my room.

"Good morning competitors. We hope you have risen this morning. You have ten minutes to report downstairs for where you will be briefed," the voice says. It's make, which is starkly different to the last person here that I sealed with. Perhaps they will be more gracious about answering my questions.

I brush my hair back and tie it up before I go down. I must be fairly earlier, because as I silently emerge into the corridor, it's completely empty. I make my way quickly down the stairs, wanting to catch however we are meeting downstairs. If they are one of the trainers, I want so desperately to know what is going to be on the agenda today.

I find exactly who I'm looking for in the cafeteria area.

A man stands there, arms folded, staring down at a girl miles shorter than him. They seem to be deep in discussion, but that doesn't stop now from walking straight up to them. It's not hard to deduce the fact that this man is a trainer, or holds some high position here. His shoulders are broad, muscles prominent, and he seems clearly hardened by years of hard work. I'm unsure if he wears a uniform, but it's intimidating nonetheless. A black tunic and dark pants. Something easily move around in.

The girl he is talking to seems to be doing all the talking. She looks similar to him, with the same dark hair, except hers reaches all the way to her hips, twisted into soft curls. She's quite pretty. As I approach, she glances my way, eyes a soft, warm brown.

"How many other people are competing?" The girl demands. She has a thick Discipline Pack, which is a relief. Hopefully not too many of the competitors will come from other Packs.

"Most of the competitors you will never meet. But there are an average of forty of you," the man explains.

The raven haired girl pauses her speech about how offended she is that there are so many for her to compete against. The pair stare at me, but I refuse to be intimidated. I'm here for the same reason they are - to win and not to be sent to the prisons to work for the rest of my life.

"And what might your name be?" The man asks. His ebony hair matches perfectly to those dark eyes. Closer up, I see he's younger than I thought he was from a distance, although he is surely a few years older than me. He glances down at his clipboard, which hadn't even noticed he was carrying.

"Jada Michaels," I say, taking an anxious glance at the other girl. She is studying me silently.

The man doesn't smile at me. "I'll be your trainer for as long as you survive here. I commonly go by Niko. This is one of your competitors, Shana. She will be in your sect."

Shana offers me a smile, and I give one back. Hopefully the eight others in my sect won't be so competitive. As much as I want to win, I'm not about to shun any of them. Unless of course, they offer that hand right away. Despite the fact that Shana isn't saying anything, I have a feeling she is hear for a similar reason to me. That this might be everyone's last chance.

Everyone shows up before the ten minutes was up, which pleased Niko immensely. He recorded down everyone's names, which gave me the chance to observe them, and figure out who is who. I may not know anything about them, but at least I know there are five females and five males who I am competing against.

Everyone was forced to sit around the same table to eat breakfast. Each of us waited for the one who would break the silence.

“I can’t believe you’re here,” one boy says suddenly. I remember him as Parker, that shaggy blond hair he’s tied back impossible to forget. As was the arrogance he projected when giving his name to Niko. Everyone saw it. I’m not surprised he opened his mouth first.

He’s targeting Baylee Torres, a very petite, pretty girl with honey blonde hair, similar to Parker’s. “Shut up.”

“I thought your daddy bought you into a good school. Or did they realise you’re not intelligent enough for them?” Parker questions, an infuriating smile we all want to slap off upon it.

“At least my life isn’t so sad, I drink myself into oblivion, Baylee snaps back.

Everyone swallows uncomfortably. Clearly they know each other, which is a surprise. As far as I know, no other girl was offered what I was. Not with the way Cunningham had reacted. From this interaction alone, something tells me everyone was selected for a reason. Because of a problem. We all had one.

“It seems there is a little tension here. We are going to have to work together. We are competing against other sects, you know,” Shana says, her tone scolding and firm. She sits right next to me, part of me wanting to nudge her in appreciation, but I refrain. “Why don’t we go around and tell each other a little about ourselves.”

No one speaks. Not wanting to let Shana’s idea go to ruin, I speak.

“I’m Jada. I was held back a year in boarding school. I had no friends, and I signed this contract because I had no other choice. This, or the prisons,” I say. I’m brutally honest. If not, I doubt anyone would have the trust or confidence to say anything we want to know.

A girl next to me sighs. “I’m Ciera. My dad is a prison warden and to get my boyfriend out of his cell, I stole his key. Dad was the one who convinced me to take this opportunity.”

My jaw clenches. I’ve never meant anyone who has chosen a path of unlawfulness. It makes me nervous. It might not be severe, but Ciera looks like the kind of person to not take any flack from anyone. Dyed hair was always forbidden in school, so seeing the fire red colour stained into her strands, I’m surprised.

“Hot,” Parker says. Ciera scowls at him.

“I’m Baylee. Parker is an asshole from my previous school,” she says, glaring at the smirking boy from across the table. “I chose to do this because I didn’t want to do what my parents wanted. I want to be different, for once.”

I can see by the way she acts, that she came from a wealthy background. She wears the same as us, but I see an expensive necklace hung around her next, glinting with beautiful diamonds and crystals. Hair hair is tossed up into a ponytail, the style accentuating those hazel eyes.

“I’m Ace. This opportunity got me out of jail,” he says gruffly.

I blink a few times, while Shana questions him. “Jail? For what?”

The boys jaw clenches. He’s chosen a jacket with a dark hood, which hangs over his forehead. I can barely see those obsidian black eyes beneath it. He’s hiding something, and I make a mental note to avoid him. I don’t want to see what he is capable of.

Before he can tell us, which I have a feeling he wouldn’t, Niko approaches our table. I haven’t even finished my breakfast, which was simply an array of fruits upon oatmeal.

He claps his hands together. “Everyone get ready. We are going to meet the Alpha.”