

Chapter 115

Ava slowly walked back up the front steps and stopped at the open door. She tried to hide her horror but didn't think she succeeded.

Jared was wearing only a pair of shorts, and his whole body looked like a giant bruise. He also had huge open wounds on his stomach shaped like teeth. Huge teeth that could only belong to one person.

What the hell? Had Zeke come after him again while she had been in Isolation?

She met his gaze and saw the dejection in his eyes. The complete helplessness.

"I don't think you should be here." Jared said.

She ignored his statement to look at his wounds again. Why wasn't he in the Infirmary! Why was his pack letting him walk around like this?

"What happened! Did Zeke come again?"

She didn't know why she was surprised. She had witnessed Zeke go after the wolves watching her in his backyard, and he'd come back

bloody Zeke was very much capable of this. His wolf was capable of this.

She didn't know why she always pushed such important facts to the back of her mind. She didn't understand why she felt so safe around Zeke. She'd seen his wolf, and he was a beast. Twice the size of any Alpha she had ever seen and had nothing but darkness around him. That was not the type of man she should kiss or lose her head with.

"No," Jared sighed.

And then he stepped back to allow her in as if he didn't care about the repercussions now. She followed him in and then closed the door behind her. The house was so quiet she wasn't sure if anyone else was there. When she had stayed over before, it had been just the two of them and two Omegas, but surely his pack members should have come to attend to their future Alpha.

"Then what happened? Where's your pack?"

"They don't want to do anything that would upset your Alpha," Jared grunted as he gingerly walked towards the stairs.

"He's not my Alpha," she said, "and they should be here regardless. You'll be their Alpha when you graduate."

Jared looked back at her for a second. She couldn't decipher the look in his eyes, but she knew what she said had upset him.

“I hope you don’t mind; you’ll have to talk to me in my bedroom,” Jared said, ignoring her statement. “I’m more comfortable lying down.”

“Maybe I should take you to the Infirmary instead?”

His back looked worse than the front and had a matching row of teeth marks. Why were they not healing? When had Zeke done this?

“No,” Jared said quickly. “I’ll be fine.”

She didn’t say anything else until Jared led her into his bedroom and settled on his huge bed. She hadn’t been in his room before, but it was as flamboyant as expected. It was similar to Zeke’s in size and design, but Jared had shown his personality with bold colors and artwork on the walls.

Once he settled himself on his side on the bed, he let out a breath of relief.

“Sorry it took so long to get to the door,” he said.

She pulled a chair over to the side he was facing and sat.

“If I had known you were like this, I would have just walked in. What happened, Jared? When did he attack you again?”

“He didn’t. This is from the evaluation match.”

What?

“But then was two days ago!”

He should have completely healed by now.

Jared sighed and closed his eyes.

“I told you I’ve been to Isolation before. It was the worst experience of my life and my wolf... He was more affected than me. I can’t always rely on him now,” Jared stated. “Sometimes, I don’t heal quickly and rely on witchy potions. Sometimes, I can’t sense any danger around me. Sometimes, I can’t tell when my enemies are lurking in the woods, ready to attack my friends.”

The last part he said so softly. When he opened his eyes, she could see how upset he was.

“I really didn’t know Claire was in the woods that night,” he whispered. “Out of everyone who was there, you were my only real friend. I would never...”

His voice trailed off, and he closed his eyes again. And her heart hurt when she accepted that it was the truth. She had been so quick to trust Zeke when he blamed Jared for that attack, and Jared himself had lashed out when she had gone to get her things from his house that it had been easy to believe.

But here was Jared now. A wolf who wasn’t healing. An Alpha who was not an Alpha. The proof was right in front of her eyes.

“I don’t know what to say. I came to see you when I felt better, but you were just so hateful.”

“Because I’m an asshole. You were right about that. It’s why people only come here when I throw parties. It’s why I’m alone right now, and my pack shows more respect and loyalty to Ezekiel”” Jared said. And then he slowly shifted onto his back.

He looked like he was in so much pain from that little movement that she stood up quickly to help him. When she helped him to settle, she felt how hot and clammy his skin was, like he was running a fever. He was likely infected if he hadn’t been taking care of his wounds.

“I think you really need the Infirmary-“

“No. An Alpha who can’t heal? I’ll be the joke of the academy.”

“Your wounds need treating, Jared. What about that cream you gave me? Have you run out?”

“I’ve been using it twice a day. I’ll be fine soon.”

Twice a day? She’d only had that cream once, and the effects had been long-lasting. Very long-lasting. Did it work differently on humans? But right then, Jared looked very much human. There should have been some improvement.

“Look, thank you for coming. I really needed to clear the air,” Jared continued. “But I should have stayed away when I saw that Ezekiel on you. I saw him from the first night; he was always watching and always

in the background. I think it's best if you go back to his house, but just watch your back. I'm on borrowed time already: I don't want to make him angry."

"What do you mean by borrowed time? Is he going to keep coming after you?"

"Zeke is waiting to kill me. Little Red. The day he becomes Alpha is the day I die. That's why there's no one here, because I'm an Alpha in name only. So I'll stay away from both of you and keep my life a little longer. Go home, Ava"

She sat back down heavily on the chair. Her limbs weakened, and she felt the blood draining from her face. Was Ezekiel so blase about killing people? Claire, the wolves in the woods and now Jared? Was that why everyone was so scared of him?

Before she could say anything else, she heard a loud crash downstairs.

"Shit!" Jared groaned.