

Chapter 12

Ava looked away from the angry Alpha as Jared stopped at the seats on the opposite side of the aisle. Her heart beat so loudly that she knew everyone here could hear it. The Alpha's words floated through her head again.

They would smell her fear. They would tear her apart.

Jared inclined his head, and one of the people quickly stood to move away. She had been ready to let go of Jared and find an empty seat for herself, but Jared still held onto her hand. It took her moment to realize he was making the other guy give up his seat, too. She would have felt mortified when the guy stood and walked to the back of the hall, but she was ready to sit down. Her whole body had started trembling so much again that she didn't think her legs would hold her.

"After you," Jared smiled.

She sat quickly and looked down. It was so quiet in the room she would have heard a pin drop, and Jared was grinning like an idiot as he sat next to her. Maybe all the Alphas here were crazy.

“If you are quite ready, Mr. Anderson, perhaps I can continue?” the man on the stage growled.

The hair on the back of her neck stood when she heard that sound, but she didn’t dare look up.

“Please, continue,” Jared said.

And then there was another growl from the stage. Had she just unknowingly aligned herself with the Academy jerk?

“As I was saying before I was so rudely interrupted, the Council has made a special request this semester for an early demonstration of the values we have instilled in you,” the wolf on the stage continued. “I’m unsure to what end.”

Ava tried to listen to what the man said, but her mind was too jumbled; she only caught some of it. She suspected he was the dean and the one she would have to talk to beg for her release. Coming in with Jared like this wouldn’t work in her favor.

“But it’s not our position to question the Council, and I implore you all to follow all our rules strictly. Is that clear to you, Mr. Anderson?”

“Crystal,” Jared answered.

There had to be hundreds of students in this room, and the dean knew Jared by his name. Definitely the Academy jerk.

“Because of this, I will announce dates for early evaluations for each faculty before the visit, just so there are no surprises like last time.

Something in that statement made Jared tense beside her. It was such a swift change of mood that it pulled her from her head and made her look up at him. There was no smile on his face as he looked ahead.

Something must have happened at the evaluations that the dean had referred to,

She was about to look away when she caught the angry gaze across the aisle again. He had actually leaned forward so he could see her, and his anger was like a punch in the gut. She had done nothing wrong. Why was he being like this?

Her heart felt like it would explode as she looked away, and this time, it was Jared looking at her with a questioning frown. But she couldn't calm herself. With their sensitive ears, it would sound like someone was playing a really loud, off-tune drum beat. She should have done what that man told her to and gone straight to the dean's office. What did it matter if she broke a rule and skipped the assembly if she was leaving anyway?

“...new students orientation this whole week, so please head out your assigned rooms...”

She didn't realize she had started bouncing her leg until Jared put his hand on it. She would have protested the way he took such liberties by touching her without her permission, but another growl took her focus.

This time, it filled her with fear and left her feeling cold. She already knew where that growl had come from.

The dean stopped speaking. It was like everyone held their breath at the same time, and time stood still. Jared removed his hand from her lap as he looked to the source of the growl. Then he saw the movement from the corner of her eyes, and she was sure this was the end of her. She would stand no chance against such a strong Alpha if he had decided she had disobeyed him and needed to face the consequences.

But instead of coming for her, he walked up the aisle. She lifted her head to watch two others follow behind closely, and they went through some doors at the back. Doors that Jared should have used to enter, it seemed.

She let out a shaky breath as she looked at Jared. But he was looking at her, and it seemed he had the same questions.

“I will post any updates to your tablets, so check regularly. You’re all dismissed.”

It felt like he had cut the assembly short, but she was glad he had because she needed to see him before that Alpha killed her. Her heart was still doing its loud drumming.

Everyone stood in an orderly fashion, and there were none of the loud conversations that she would have expected, Jared remained seated, so she followed his lead. She tried not to look directly at the people around her, but it was hard to miss the hostile stares. The last group to leave the room had been seated in the same section the angry Alpha had vacated. Three girls wearing the same uniform, and yet on them, it looked like it

was expensive designer wear. One of the girls, a tall, gorgeous blonde with a chest that seemed to go on for days, gave her a cold look as she stepped into the aisle, and then she also walked out of the room

She didn't know why that look struck her more than the others.

“What just happened? Who was that?”

“Ezekiel Michelson. And fuck if I know,” Jared sighed.

Ezekiel She felt sorry for all the pack members who had to deal with him every day.

“Please take me to the dean's office. I shouldn't be here,” she whispered to Jared.

“I shouldn't be here either, but I am, Jared answered somberly, I'll take you, but my best advice right now is to keep your head down. This place is a lot more dangerous than you think