

## Chapter 122

Ava was still shaking when she finally made it to her first lesson, and the weight was back on her shoulders. Her body felt too heavy.

She was broken, Instead of worrying about what Mr. Patrick told her and the fact that the Council was after her, she kept thinking of Zeke. Had she made him that angry by refusing to kiss him that he didn't want in be in the same house? Couldn't he see for himself that a relationship between them was impossible?

Still, it weighed heavily on her mind that something was wrong with her, mentally and physically.

She didn't understand what was said in any of her classes, and she had no idea how she ended up in the queue in the dining hall at lunchtime. There was a fog in her mind, and the only thing that brought her out of it was when someone touched her shoulder.

She blinked and looked up to see Derek in front of her with a frown on his face.

“Get your food, then we'll go and eat outside,” he said.

Why? Was Zeke waiting for her?

She nodded and moved forward to start filling her tray but paused when she saw Dexter at the end of the service station. His eyes were so full of hatred. She had expected this. She'd humiliated him and damaged his fragile ego. The heat from his anger would have terrified her if it weren't for the emptiness in her chest. She didn't even bother to look away from his gaze.

She couldn't remember if she had lowered her gaze at all that day. Had she unknowingly broken any rules? Had she added to her detentions?

“Ava.”

At Derek's urging, she looked away from Dexter and put some food on her tray. She still wasn't hungry, but she knew she had to try to eat something. She needed to keep her strength up for when she escaped this place. Somehow, she ended up sitting on a bench in the Quad with the two wolves on either side of her. They didn't speak, and she could feel the tension rolling off them like waves.

And Zeke was not there.

“Wipe your tears, Ava.”

She looked at Myles with a frown until she felt the tears falling down her cheeks. Why was she even crying?

“You need to talk to Zeke. Really talk,” Derek said.

But she didn't want to. She knew the moment she did, she would beg him to redo the picnic, look at her the way he had and tell her she was his.

She blinked, and she was in detention. Had she even gone to training? Mr. Patrick seemed to be studying her. She had no idea what was happening in her head, so she didn't know what had given him the look on his face,

But she looked away from him to look out the window, and only moments later, Derek was helping her out of her chair. Detention was over, and both he and Myles were somehow there.

"I think I'm sick. I think something happened in Isolation," she told them.

"You're not Ava. Not physically, anyway," Derek said.

She didn't have the strength to ask what the hell he meant as they led her to the car. All then she was in Zeke's bed. The cologne on his pillow failed to calm her as it usually did. Though she left the lights on, it felt like the darkness had invaded her soul. It filled her whole body, made it too heavy to move. And the nightmares. They came even though her eyes were wide open.

Blood Screaming Coughing sounds Blood, Screaming. Crunching sounds.

Claws. Red eyes. Violet eyes.

Claire. Her friends.

So much blood.

When daylight streamed in the room and Derek walked into her line of vision, she could still hear it. Still see it.

And Zeke still wasn't home.

She didn't hear what Derek said. She kept her gaze outside the window, still unmoving, until the daylight disappeared and darkness started to creep in again. Someone put the light on, but it didn't help. The darkness hadn't left her, even when the sun was shining.

Zeke. Where was Zeke?

Her chest tightened, and her breathing became labored. She knew it was the start of another panic attack.

But she lay there, still unmoving, letting it all take her over.

Maybe she would always be like this now, even if she left this place.

And she would leave this place. Without Zeke.

As the morning light started to stream into the room again, she felt the tears on her face. Her pillow was soaked.

Somebody came to stand in front of her again. But it wasn't Zeke.

Maybe she had to say yes. Perhaps he was the only one who could keep this darkness at bay.

“Zeke,” she croaked, looking up at whoever was currently speaking to her.

It was Derek, and when she spoke, she saw the relief on his face.

“He’s coming.” Derek said. “But you need to get up now. Your father is coming today.”

She felt a little spark in her body. The only warmth she’d felt in what felt like an eternity.

Her dad was coming—the man who loved her unconditionally was coming.

It took forever, but her body finally listened and moved so she could sit up in bed.

“Samantha and Julie will help you get dressed, then after you eat something, we’ll go and wait for your father. Okay?”

She nodded

“When will Zeke come?”

Something crossed his face, but he gave her a smile that looked completely fake as he said, “Soon.”

She didn't know how she ended up dressed and in the car as they drove to the administration block. It looked like midday. Was it really Friday already?

The area around the main building was busier than usual. When Derek parked in the student parking lot, she saw that some cars started coming down the long driveway from the main gates.

“Your father would have received instructions of where he will stay for the weekend. The academy would have arranged his transport the same way they did yours. All their residences are in restricted areas, so you won't be able to visit him there, but he can come to the house. He might go and settle in first, but this is where we meet our parents,” Myles said.

Her father would want to see her first. She was sure of that. And he would take one look at her and know that something was wrong. As she got out of the car, she did her best to pull herself from the dark place she had fallen into.

All sorts of cars were coming down the road, with some turning towards the restricted areas first and others coming straight down to drive around the fountain and let the concerned parents and guardians out. As she sat on the steps of the Administration building, it didn't take long to figure out that the Academy also organized their transport according to role or rank. The Omegas were in taxis, the Betas in nice, luxury cars, and the Alphas in cars she had never even seen before.

They all turned their noses at her once they caught her scent.

Then, one of the biggest, fanciest cars stopped in front of the building. She knew who it was before the door opened. She always knew.

As his door opened and his huge boots hit the pavement, she started sobbing.

Of all the Alphas she had seen, her father was the only one in jeans and a leather jacket, No airs and graces. His long hair was tied back and his tattoos showed on his neck.

The biggest Alpha among them. Even from here, she felt his presence as the others stepped back from him. And then he saw her. In seconds, she was wrapped in his arms. Her feet dangled in the air as she sobbed into his T-shirt. Her dad. Her rock.

He would take her out of the academy and save her.