

## Chapter 149

Ava gasped for air and clawed at her throat as she sat up. Something was squeezing her throat, making it hard to breathe. The darkness was inside her. She could feel it

“Shh. It’s okay. You’re okay.”

She felt Zeke’s warm, hard body against her bare back as his arms circled her. The relief was instant as she greedily inhaled and exhaled deeply. Zeke’s large arms tightened around her as he brought his lips down to her mark briefly. The security she always felt in his arms failed to ease her mind. There was danger all around them, danger inside them, and she didn’t think she would ever feel safe again.

But still, her breathing evened, and her heart rate lowered. Zeke didn’t need to say another word, but her body relaxed as if the nightmare hadn’t happened.

“My dad?” she asked.

“Gone. I did what you asked.” Zeke said.

Her heart squeezed again. She would have wanted a better goodbye. If the pain she'd felt all over her body was anything to go by, her dad would have been traumatized after seeing her.

She looked down at her body and didn't see a single mark. There were no cuts or bruises on her legs. No burn marks. It was as if she had only imagined the pain.

“How long was I out?”

Had she lost more time? Were they even closer to the day the Head of the Council arrived because of this failed experiment?

“A few hours.”

She untangled herself from his arms to face him. Hours?

“Your body had already healed even before sundown.” Zeke said.

“But... But I didn't feel my wolf, she whispered.

She felt something she didn't understand as if her bond with Zeke was even stronger. She sensed his emotions as easily as if he had told her.

Why was he so confused and depressed at the same time?

“What happened?” she asked

Zeke just pulled her back into his arms and kissed the top of her head.

“Nothing Just... Let’s not do that again.”

Never again. She could I still feel the chill in her body, as if the darkness had touched everything inside her.

“Let’s get ready for the day. We have lessons soon.”

Right Lessons. She still had to go to those while she awaited her fate. She still had to do needlework as if it would be of any use to her after this week.

When Zeke got off the bed, she squealed when he picked her up and started walking to the bathroom. She already knew his intentions. His kisses were gentler this time, and he took her slowly as if they had all the time in the world. By the time they walked back out of the bathroom, the sun had already risen

She felt restored despite what they still had to face.

Maybe this was all they had now. Each other. Perhaps they had to forget about lighting and just enjoy each other while they could.

Derek and Myles were already downstairs when they went down, as were Julie and Samantha. She was glad they hadn’t been there to get caught in the middle of all that shit.

“Morning, Ava,” Samantha said, with her eyes down.

Like Emily had done. She still didn’t understand why they were doing this when her wolf was still hiding. She was still technically human.

She waited for the Omega to greet Zeke as she usually did, but Samantha just carried on with her breakfast preparations. Julie walked in from the dining room and also lowered her gaze.

“Morning, Ava,” she said shyly.

And then she also just carried on.

“I think you’ve stolen my Omegas,” Zeke whispered with a grin.

“Don’t be silly,” she said as she went to the coffee pot.

“Breakfast is on the table,” Samantha said. “I know you don’t like it when we do it, but we thought you’d appreciate a good meal after we were gone all weekend.”

“I am actually starving” she said gratefully. “But you still have to join us.”

“Yes. Alph... Ava”

Samantha quickly walked out of the kitchen after that slip of the tongue.

“See,” Zeke chuckled as they all followed.

When Samantha and Julie hesitated to sit down, she only had to ask them once, and they sat at the end of the table like before.

If she weren't dying that week, this would have warmed her heart to see. No bullshit separations like they were forced to endure outside these walls.

But as it was, the mood was somber. Despite Zeke's earlier amusement, his sadness had returned. Maybe he had realized, as she had, that there was nothing they could do.

"The dean has called an emergency assembly," Derek said when they were halfway through their breakfast.

"Probably to tell us lies about all the guards around the school, Myles added.

Zeke didn't comment. He just ate until his plate was empty and then pushed it away. But she could still feel that sadness increasing inside him.

Once they were all finished, they cleared the table and loaded the dishwasher despite the Omegas' protests, and then they went to the car.

What would lessons be like after everything she had found out about herself? After knocking out two Alphas Without her dad there, she was sure the dean would punish her.

"Can I call my dad later?" she asked Zeke as they headed out.

"Of course You don't need to ask."

Zeke was parking the car before she was ready. He wasn't ready either. She could feel something else from him now, something more than sadness and confusion, but she couldn't put her finger on it.

"We'll wait for you outside the assembly hall," Derek said as he could also sense his Alpha's mood.

She watched the other students in silence. Others were already looking at the car and whispering, even though they couldn't see inside.

"Are you still thinking of handing yourself in?" Zeke asked finally,

"I can't fight them, Zeke," she whispered.

They had to face it. There was no other way.

"Do you know what that will do to me?" he asked quietly, still looking ahead.

She brought her hand up to his mark on her neck. Her dad had loved his wife completely, but he had accepted her death and moved on. Zeke would do the same.

Even if the Council didn't kill her, if they made her the soldier Mr. Patrick had mentioned. Zeke would be fine.

"Yes. But we will be okay" she answered.

Lies. But what else did they have now?

Zeke shook his head and opened his door to get out. She picked up her school bag and was about to open her door when he opened it for her and offered his hand.

And once she was out, he linked her arm through his like Jared had done on the first day of school when she hadn't known what a big deal that was.

But she knew now. And still did it.

The students stepped out of their way as Zeke led her to the assembly hall. When Derek and Myles saw them, they opened the doors for them. The room was deathly quiet when they walked in as if they had already sensed Zeke coming. As if they could feel the darkness inside her.

When Zeke led her to the Alpha seats and Derek and Myles sat on either side of them, no one even whispered.

As the hall continued to fill, she let herself wonder what the dean possibly had to say. Couldn't he have sent a notice to their tablets? Especially if he was just going to tell them lies about the guards.

And that was when she felt something.

The darkness. The evil that always tried to claim her. It was coming for her again. Her eyes checked the room as her heart started to beat a little faster. Nothing. She couldn't see where it was

Zeke tensed beside her, and the room erupted in gasps and whispers.

Her gaze was instantly drawn to the door.

Her blood drained from her face, and her limbs weakened when she saw the students walking through the door. One stood out more than most. and her cold blue gaze found hers immediately.

Claire.