

## Chapter 41

The following day, Jared dropped her off at the kitchen for her duties because she had further to walk from his house. She was still so tired from her restless night that she hadn't declined the offer. But she knew she couldn't ask him to drop her off again, not if the looks she had gotten when he had picked her up last night were anything to go by.

She seemed to be breaking rules all over the place. Maybe she needed confirmation from the dean or the Student Welfare Coordinator, Mr. Benton, that it was alright that she was living with Jared.

"I won't be coming to the dining hall for my meals today, so I'll pick you up after your detention." Jared said.

"Oh, there's no need to do that, she answered quickly as she took her seatbelt off and grabbed her bag. "You're already doing a lot for me. I wouldn't want you to get into any trouble with the school."

"Let me worry about that," Jared answered "Keep your head down. I hear someone's pissed that you didn't stay in the infirmary longer."

Ava paused with her hand on the door. She'd forgotten about Claire, which seemed ridiculous because that wolf was out for her blood.

“Thanks for the heads up, she said with a frown, but Jared’s attention had already been diverted. The Alpha looked out of his window into the darkness with a frown.

Was someone there? Was it Claire? There were rules against fighting in the school, but the wolf had already proved that she was less than honorable. She would break the rules if there was no one to see her.

“Who is it?”

Jared turned back to her with a smile.

“Don’t worry. Go in I’ll see you later.”

The sky was just starting to lighten, so it was still too dark for her eyes to pick anything up. Jared had done this last night, and then Ezekiel had turned up on her balcony. Was it him, then? She remembered the dreams she had had about him, and her cheeks colored

She thanked Jared quickly and got out of the car before he could ask any questions. The moment she stepped out, she felt the prickling at the back of her head, and she knew it was Ezekiel watching her. She didn’t know how she knew that, but she was not ready to see Ezekiel so soon after that kiss or her dreams. She quickened her steps until she reached the back doors and then turned to wave Jared off.

The other Omegas whispered and snickered behind her back as usual, but it was so frustrating that they could all pick up the whispers from anywhere in the room while she couldn’t hear anything. Her anger

slowly returned, and by the time she was wiping the last counters, she knew she wouldn't make it through the day without exploding

Being at Jared's had just given her a little respite, but the pressure in her head was back in full force.

"I don't know why you all think you can look down at me or laugh. We're all the same here. You mean nothing to them, just the same," she snapped.

"We're nothing like you, human," one of the Second Year Omegas snarled. "And we don't walk around thinking we're better than anybody else or have other Omegas serve us like we're queens."

"Trash," another spat out

They didn't give her a chance to respond as they knocked into her on their way out. Was this what all the animosity was about? That Jared shared the meals the Omegas at his house had prepared!

She didn't linger over her breakfast because she could feel everyone's gazes on her, and a part of her didn't want to come face-to-face with Claire when she was feeling this angry. Her father had always taught her that emotions had no place in a fight; they were the reason people made mistakes that cost them their lives. She needed a way to release this pressure so she could make rational decisions.

By lunchtime, her resolve had been tested to the limits. She skipped lunch entirely and headed to the training center early, hoping she could at least use a punching bag before her duties started. After she had

changed into the kit provided, a pair of shorts and a tank top, she made her way to one of the smaller means she always went past. It was empty, thankfully, and at the furthest end were a few punching bags suspended from the ceiling.

She didn't bother wearing gloves or taping her knuckles. She knew that was a mistake; she would likely damage her hands, but she'd had enough in this place, and the rage inside her needed an outlet,

She imagined Claire's face as she got in the proper formation and started punching. She imagined the dean's face and all his ignorance. She imagined Ezekiel's face and punched even harder. He was so contradictory that it was doing her head in. She imagined the faceless Council making decisions that affected her life like this. No one here cared that she was human and their strikes could kill her.

She didn't know how long she punched and swerved, but instead of helping her, it made her angrier. She could see her blood on the bag from where her knuckles had split, but she carried on punching

They had to let her out of this place. They just had to. She didn't want to die.

Sweat was dripping down her face when a pair of very muscular arms picked her up from behind and carried her away from the bag. She wanted to feel alarmed that she knew who it was without even looking, but that million-dollar spicy cologne and the strong arms did what the punching bag had failed to achieve. It calmed her. It soothed her. The rage lowered to a more manageable level as she leaned back against the solid chest and tried to breathe through it.

Ezekiel took her to a small room at the back and closed the door before he turned her around. And then he wrapped his arms around her again and leaned back against the door. With his face in the crook of her neck and the solid muscle she could feel against her body, she felt completely safe for the first time since she arrived. She couldn't help closing her eyes as she took his scent, too, the way she imagined wolves did

Her hands somehow found their way to his chest and gripped his t-shirt. She didn't say a word as she let her mind settle.

She pulled away from Ezekiel only when she heard voices and movements in the training room behind them. She looked up into his beautiful eyes and wondered why it had been so hard to let go of him, Why did she let him hold her in the first place? The Alpha didn't growl, and his gaze didn't go cold as it usually did when she forgot her position as the Omega, which confused her

"Your knuckles are bleeding," Ezekiel stated.

She looked down at her hands and assessed the damage. Besides a little sting, they didn't hurt as much as she had thought they would. And if the past few days were anything to go by, they would probably heal in no time, though the effects of Jared's cream were surely fading by now.

"I'm fine," she said.

Ezekiel opened his mouth as if he was going to tell her something but closed it. She had no doubt he had been about to say something but closed it. She had no doubt he had been about to say something

assholish as usual. That would have ruined the tranquility she had somehow gained in his arms.

“I need to go. I think I’m late.”

Ezekiel moved away from the door without a word. When she arrived at the Beginners’ training room, the rest of the class was already piling in. She was sure that meant that when she looked at her tablet after class, she would see another detention added to the list. It had been worth it, though, to release all that dangerous pressure in her head. She could do the rest of the day with no incidents now.