

Chapter 42

“Listen up,” Coach Baxter shouted after she finished her warm-up jog. “Because of the evaluations earlier in the semester, you all have to meet certain standards by the time we do the mock evaluations. So we are moving to weapons training.”

Ava let out a breath of relief at the news. She had been hoping that was the case when she saw the massive wall of weapons set up at the front when she came in. Weapons were her thing. She had mastered quite a few of them before they had known that she wouldn't shift, and she had doubled her efforts when she realized this was the only way she could defend himself.

She was glad to see that Claire and the rest of the Intermediary class hadn't joined them today. Though she had no proper explanation for her calm mood, she was sure that if Claire had been in here, her rage would have built back up. And if the coach had put them in a match again, weapons would have been used to hurt her.

“Though I expect you to be as shit at that as you were in hand-to-hand combat,” Coach Baxter said while looking directly at her. “It's imperative that you find a weapon that you're comfortable working with

as you will need to show some efficiency at the evaluation. I don't normally care about your comfort; I'm not here to hold your hand."

She snorted at his statement and then looked down at her feet when the whole class turned to look at her. She could feel her ears burning with embarrassment.

"Anyway," the coach continued, "we will resume proper training after the evaluations. You will be expected to be proficient with all the weapons, or you will fail this class. No exceptions."

Again, she felt that part was directed at her. She resisted the urge to roll her eyes.

"When I call your name, come forward and pick a weapon. You will go through all of them today and train with what you're comfortable with tomorrow. Ezekiel will be your opponent when required"

Ava looked at the large wall again and noted all the weapons on display. Though these weapons looked too sharp to be training ones, they didn't scare her. She looked away from the wall without looking at the hulking figure standing beside it with his arms crossed. Ezekiel hadn't stopped looking at her since he had trailed into the class a little while after she had, and she was pretty sure people were starting to notice.

"Ava Morgan!"

She was startled when the coach said the name.

“What the hell are you waiting for? We might as well get you out of the way so we can concentrate on the people that matter,” the coach snapped.

Her tranquil bubble burst, just like that. She should have been punching the coach’s face on that punching bag, no one else’s. She stood up from the bleachers where they had all been told to sit so there was more room to use the weapons safely. She looked the coach directly in his eyes, as she had done the say he’d allowed the other students to beat her to a pulp. And as on that day, his anger was instant. A deep growl left his lips, but her step didn’t even falter, and she didn’t look away.

There were murmurs from the class behind here as she came to stand right in front of the ignorant coach. His growling got louder, She had made enough wolves mad at her in the past that she knew he was only moments away from losing control. So she rolled her eyes and looked away.

Maybe she did have a death wish after all.

When she approached the wall, Ezekiel stood unnaturally still with his fists clenched at his sides and his eyes glowing on and off as he looked at the coach. Now, this wolf scared her. She couldn’t understand the way she reacted to him, but something in her recognized he was more dangerous than anything else she had come across in this school. Her heart skipped a beat as her fear started to fill her, making the Alpha turn his gaze to her instead.

His eyes stopped glowing, and he visibly relaxed. Was he not angry at her, then? So, who had been the unfortunate recipient of his wrath?

“Pick a weapon,” Exekiel said.

Without waiting to be told twice, she looked at the weapons closely. None of them seemed to be forged with silver, which was great for the others since they could heal. But they would all be deadly when used on her. With a deep breath, she picked the throwing knives first and then walked to where some targets had been set up. Then she let out a breath and let all her emotions seep out her. Steady hand. Focus Tune out all the distracting noises. She was always more precise when she detached her thoughts from the process.

The five knives hit the target in quick succession.

She chose the throwing stars next, and she did the same. She quickly picked all the sharp weapons she could throw and did the same without thought. And then her eyes were drawn to a pair of long knives. As she unsheathed them, she was drawn in by the beautiful craftsmanship. Whoever had made these weapons was a master of their craft, and these, in particular, had her name on them.

When she finally walked to the middle of the room, she looked at her opponent. Ezekiel seemed to pull himself out of his thoughts when they made eye contact. He walked across and chose his weapons – two heavy- looking battle axes. She knew how to use them, but their weight always slowed her down.

Ezekiel would be able to wield them easily. As he stood across her on the mat, he looked every bit the warrior that his Alpha blood made him. He was huge and intimidating; her nerves started to get the better of her.

But she had to trust that out of all the people in this school, he was the one who wouldn't hurt her even if he was always so angry with her.

So she took another calming breath and readied herself. And then she attacked. Her family always joked that she became possessed by the devil himself when she had weapons in her hands. She used her height and weight to her advantage as she launched herself at him. Ezekiel blocked her with an axe, and instead of falling back, she used the momentum to twist her body and caught him with the hilt of the other knife behind his back before she landed on her feet.

If this were a real fight, she would have already caused a fatal blow. But Ezekiel had been underestimating her, so that blow didn't count. So, she stayed on the offensive and attacked him again. This time, he easily countered her. It had been a long time since she had been allowed to train like this, she felt the adrenaline rushing through her body with every move. It was like a dance, and her intent flowed through her weapons as if they were a part of her body. It was a rush that she had missed. She could tell by the look on Ezekiel's face that she was surprising him.

By the time he had her on her back, with the sharp end of the axe an inch from her neck, she had a stupid grin on her face. She knew she looked crazy, but she couldn't help it. By the end, Ezekiel hadn't been holding back. She had lost this match but handled herself well. She could still hold her head high

Ezekiel still had a frown on his face when he dropped the weapon and then held his hand out to help her up.

When she turned to face the coach, he still had a snarl, and his eyes were the coldest she had ever seen. He had been expecting her to fail, as she had failed the combat assessment, and something told her he would do something drastic to take this win from her.

“Next!” he shouted to the class.