

## Chapter 45

Ava made so many mistakes in training that she was surprised she had only come out of it with a few cuts and bruises. Claire managed to ruin the one thing she had felt confident about in this academy. Not letting emotions take her over while fighting was her thing. But the whole afternoon, she'd been too nervous and distracted and her paranoia was back in full force,

Her classmates were looking at her differently. And the coach. She didn't think he had even paid attention to anyone else; he had been too intent on giving her sparring partner after sparring partner as if he was testing her limits, She'd had to rely on muscle memory to get her through, but if her partners had been any good, she would have been in the infirmary again. It seemed to have pissed the coach off that she had lasted the whole training session without being knocked out.

The moment her panic attack had abated, Ezekiel had rushed out of the bathroom. He hadn't turned up for training, and she'd felt disappointed. But that was a good thing. She didn't want to rely on anyone here, least of all Ezekiel. There was something different about him.

She didn't like him but still felt these confusing emotions. His warnings from the first day had been on her mind all day because that seemed true

now more than ever. They would carry her out of the academy in a body bag She would have to make a run for it through the forest. There had to be a way back to the little airport where the small plane dumped them.

“Do you want to talk about it?”

She looked from the window to look Mr. Patrick in the eyes.

“Would it do any good when you don’t answer any of my questions?” she asked.

Mr. Patrick raised his brow but didn’t dispute what she said as he continued marking his work.

Why was she always the only one in detention with him? Had he been assigned to this room on purpose? What the hell was he? The dean had hinted that he was receiving reports from her other teachers about her progress. Was Mr. Patrick one of them? Was he a spy?

Mr. Patrick made a face and put his pen down before he met her gaze,

“Seriously?” he asked

“So I’m right. You are reading my mind.”

“You project all your infantile thoughts so loudly,” Mr. Patrick snapped. “It’s like being in a room with a psychopath. Learn to meditate and focus your thoughts, for heaven’s sake.”

“For whose benefit?”

“Yours! So you can pick the best course of action without thinking that escaping through that forest is a viable option. The forest doesn’t make any exceptions. You will die,” Mr. Patrick said.

“Stop invading my privacy. What I think is none of your business.”

Mr. Patrick slammed his books shut and shook his head as he stood.

“Then on your head be it,” he said as he picked his work up.

“Dismissed,”

She looked at the clock above the board at the front of the room. She had only been in detention for fifteen minutes. Jared wouldn’t pick her up for another forty–five. Her anxiety ramped up as she watched the teacher start to walk out of the room.

“It’s not time yet!” the protested

“Stay here by yourself if you wish. It’s Friday night. I have better things to do with my time than babysit you.”

“Sir!”

But he was already gone and she knew it was pointless running after him. She stuffed her tablet into her bag and rushed to leave the room. It was still dinner time so she knew other students would still be in the area. The last person she wanted to see again was Claire.

She kept her head down and walked out of the First Year block, ignoring the whispers and laughter. When she made it outside, she thought of the long walk ahead of her. At least the sun hadn't set yet, so she wouldn't be jumping at the shadows and any little noise.

“Ava.”

She tensed a little at Emily's voice and then started walking quickly without looking back. She had a vague idea of which road to take to get to Jared's house now that she had been there a few times.

Emily continued calling her name. Loudly. If anyone hadn't known where she was, they did now. She swore to herself as she forced herself to stop and face the Omega.

“I thought you were in detention again. Is everything okay? Skipping detention is even worse than skipping a lesson, you get double the penalty”

Emily said as she approached.

As if she cared. Ava remained silent. She could forgive the Omega for turning her back on her but even if she hadn't, she wasn't one to give her trust away again so easily.

Emily must have read into the silence because she sighed and said, “I messed up. I get it. But I've heard so many things today about you that I don't think you should be out here alone. If Alpha Anderson isn't here, at least let me walk with you”

Emily would just stand aside if anyone attacked her, but Ava didn't point that out, she just turned around and continued walking. And to her credit, Emily didn't give her any fake apologies as she walked slightly behind her. When they were walking past the dining hall, she tensed at the number of students still hanging around outside, but none of them said anything to her.

Emily let out a breath behind her as if she had also been expecting trouble.

“Crap.” Emily muttered.

With her heart beating loudly, she turned to face Emily, What was it now?

“I'm being g summoned,” Emily said with an eye roll. “I'm sorry. I have to go. Duty calls. At least you got lucky on that; you don't have to be a anyone's beck and call twenty-four-seven. Take a left on the next road and walk as fast as you can. You'll come out on Alpha Anderson's road. If you meet any trouble there, just scream; they'll all hear you. I'll see you tomorrow.”

With that, Emily turned back the way she had come and used her supernatural speed to jog away, Envious, she watched the Omega until she turned out of the road. If she had that speed, these walks to and from her lessons wouldn't be so draining. If she had that, she wouldn't be in this position at all.

With a sigh, she took her tablet out to check the directions Emily had given her, and it turned out the Omega hadn't lied. The next turn was a shortcut that she would have missed.

She felt that prickling at the back of her head and started jogging. She saw no one behind her, but that didn't mean no one was there. Claire would be waiting to catch her alone.

There was loud music coming from one of the houses, and once Jared's house came into view, she saw many people outside. It was like the first night all over again. And like that night, they all turned to look at her as she walked past to enter the house. Jared hadn't mentioned anything about a party.

"Little Red, you're early."

Speak of the devil. Jared approached her with a beer in his hand and a girl on his

"Did you ditch detention?" he asked.

"No," she answered.

"Well, we were still setting up, but... surprise!"

She frowned at the grin on his face.

"This is your party. I thought you'd need cheering up after the week you've had,"

A party with the very people she had been trying to avoid? How would that even help her?

“I’m exhausted, Jared. It’s been a long week-”

“I’m not taking no for an answer. Go freshen up and then come outside.”

That had sounded like an order. Was Jared just as arrogant as all the other Alphas then? She felt indebted to him and didn’t want to seem ungrateful, so she nodded and headed upstairs. But with every step she took, she felt like that was her worst decision that day. There was something in the air, and her instincts were rarely wrong.