

Chapter 51

It was the wrong time to have a panic attack, but Ava couldn't stop it.

As Claire advanced, the pressure built in her head. She'd thought she could escape somehow if she came out of the academy gates to find a way out of town; she could have been on her way home before the end of the day. But here she was, about to face death for the second time in a few hours.

"Alpha Ezekiel is too good for a human like you," Claire continued. "He will be Alpha of the biggest pack in the world in a few short months, and I will be his Luna. I don't know why you thought you could compete with me. I mean, look at you."

Ava began to tremble as she stepped back.

"You're pathetic and can't fight your own battles. You're the last thing that Zeke needs right now."

"I'm not trying to compete or be a Luna. I don't even know what you're talking about,"

“Zeke’s late–night visits to your room? Stalking you? Reeking of your scent every time! He doesn’t take his eyes off you, but you think I’ll believe you don’t know what I mean?”

“Then ask him. How am I responsible for what he’s doing” she asked shakily

She said the wrong thing because Claire’s eyes became colder. The deranged woman was too scared to ask Ezekiel; that much was obvious. Instead, Claire was taking it out on the weaker person.

Her struggle to breathe became worse. She never had this many panic attacks at home, even with the constant threats and fights.

“You should have respected the fact that he wasn’t yours and kept away. But what would someone like you know about honor! You should have stayed in whatever maggot–infested hole you crawled out of.”

The first blow caught Ava by surprise, even though she had known this was where the ambush was heading. The force of the punch sent her flying into the wall, knocking her head against the exposed bricks. She hadn’t caught her breath yet when Claire picked her up and threw her into the opposite wall.

“I will be back in his bed by tonight” Claire snarled. “I’ve not worked this hard for three whole years just to have someone take my place at the last minute.”

Ava spat out some blood and looked up to see Claire’s friends cheering her on as they blocked her escape routes. Her ears were ringing louder

than usual probably because she had knocked her head too hard. All of the sounds whirled together and increased the pressure. It felt like it was being split in two,

“I will not be humiliated like this,” Claire continued. “You’re a worthless piece of trash; you’re nothing compared to me. I am his first choice.”

Another blow, and this one had her vision fading. She felt her anger rising even as her lungs started to shut down and pain shot through her whole body. This was not how her story was supposed to end. She was supposed to overcome her bullies and live her life well as the perfect revenge. It was what her father had always told her would happen.

She wasn’t supposed to die in a back alley in some unknown land,

Her vision faded completely and then returned, Claire was still talking as she attacked her, but her words were a jumble she couldn’t understand anymore. It didn’t matter that she had covered her head; she could still feel every blow. Something cracked, the sound of the breaking bone sounding louder than anything else. The metallic stench of her blood filled her nose. There was just too much pain.

So much pain that she prayed to the Goddess to just take her now,

“He is mine!” Claire screamed

Those words she heard loud and clear. And her rage rose despite the pain of her breaking bones. Something in her rebelled at that statement even though it was true. Ezekiel had never been hers. She should never have

kissed him so many times because he already had a woman in his life. But will, her body reacted to those words until they were the only ones ringing through her head.

He is mine! He is mine!

The rage overwhelmed her and surpassed the pain she felt in her body. A growl filled the air in the distance, mixed in with all the noise in her head. A familiar growl that she felt to her core even though she couldn't open her eyes to pay attention to it.

But the most intense pain filled her whole body, and she knew this was it. She was dying.

Her had come too late.

Everything faded to black.

Her eyes blinked open slowly. The sun was shining directly into her eyes. She winced and turned her head, but pain shot through her head at that slight movement. That was different. She usually woke up perfectly fine. Maybe Jared's magic cream had run its course now, after all.

She blinked her eyes open again and saw exposed brick an inch from her face.

Way she still in the alleyway? Had Ezekiel not taken her to the infirmary this time?

She winced against the pain again as she forced her body to move. Once she was leaning against the wall, she looked around and realized she was alone. Besides her blood that was in several places in the walls and the ground, there was nothing to indicate that something horrendous had happened there. Had they all run away when Ezekiel had come to rescue her?

Wait. Did Ezekiel leave her alone in the middle of an alleyway?

That bastard! She had been unconscious. Anything could have happened to her.

She lifted her hand to try and feel the damage on her face but sucked in a breath when she saw the blood on it. Her hand was covered. She lifted her other hand and saw it was the same. The blood was under her fingernails and all over her clothes. How much damage had she taken to have so much blood on her? She had already lost a lot last night; losing that much again would be fatal. She needed to head to the infirmary quickly.

She used the wall to push herself to her feet and then lifted her torn and bloody T-shirt to inspect some of the damage. She didn't see any bruises, and when she felt her ribs, they weren't even tender or broken she had suspected.

She couldn't understand it. Was Jared's cream working or not! Because her head was still pounding from those blows, and she felt woozy. Maybe it was from the blood loss, but....

Confused, she slowly made her way out of the alleyway. There was hardly anyone around at this end, almost like this part of town was That should have been her first clue that Emily had been leading her into an ambush. Instead, she had been too busy trying to find a way out of this place.

When she made it back to the inhabited part of the village, no one even looked at or helped her. Maybe the locals weren't as friendly as Emily had said because it was clear no one cared that she was bloody and limping through their streets. There was no sign of Ezekiel or Claire, either.

No taxis were waiting on the long road back to the academy, She looked longingly at the town before she started the journey back to the safety of the school grounds. She almost scoffed at that, but it was true. At least there were rules at the academy. The town was dangerous. Maybe she would have found a way out, but she was in no state to escape now. Her head still felt like it was exploding. She needed to heal and wash all the blood off if she was going to stand a chance against any other attacks. Plus, she had no money to go home once she escaped. She needed to pack a bag, at least. Tonight. She would return tonight when she was prepared. She wasn't giving anyone else a chance to hurt her again.