

## Chapter 54

Ava took a step back from the venom in Jared's voice.

"I... What's going on, Jared?"

"Alpha Anderson," Jared corrected with a snarl.

Her heart sank as she took another step back. How had she been completely taken in by him? There was no sign of the concerned and sometimes flirty wolf she had deal with before. So why had he helped her? Why had he given her a room in his house? It hadn't felt like he was faking it, and her instinct would have been screaming if she had been in danger.

"Don't look me in the eyes when you address me," Jared continued.  
"Unless you want to challenge me. And we all know how well you do in a fight."

She looked down and swallowed. She didn't feel scared of him, just a crushing disappointment that Ezekiel had been right.

Jared hadn't even looked for her after Claire attacked her at his party. He didn't give a shit.

“I’ve come to get my things.”

“So you’ve moved from one Alpha to the next?” Jared chuckled. “It’s true, isn’t it? You like to see people fighting over you while you cower in corner. You invite trouble by walking around like an Alpha, challenging everyone when you can’t fight your own battles. Even now, you have a bodyguard with you”

She frowned and looked back. Had Ezekiel followed her? She didn’t have the usual uneasiness she felt when he was watching her. Jared was probably referring to how Ezekiel had saved her that night.

“Well, I hope you enjoy it while it lasts because I’m going to destroy that deranged Alpha and his pack, and you will burn with him.” Jared snarled.

And that was the kicker. She had always managed to fight her battles just fine. But coming here, so far from her family, and trying to follow the rules had got her anxiety through the roof that all she saw was her death at every turn.

She didn’t need Ezekiel to fight for her. And she hadn’t needed Jared. She would leave both of them behind in this mess of an academy and deal with the consequences later. At least she would be alive.

“Can I have my things, please?”

Jared reached just inside the doorway and pulled her suitcase out as if he had been waiting for this moment. She was willing to bet the things he

had bought for her were not in there. She made to reach for it, but Jared threw it with so much force that it landed halfway up the driveway,

“You’ve picked your side, human.”

Side? She wasn’t aware there were any sides. Had she stepped into an ongoing war?

“I thought we were friends,” she started as she turned to walk down the steps. “I guess I should have known better. You have a hero complex, and people like that rarely ever turn out to be heroes. I hope you’ll be able to atone for whatever shit you’ve done in the past that turned you into such an asshole, Goodbye. Alpha Anderson.”

She expected a comeback or some sort of retaliation, but Jared slammed the door. With a sigh, she picked up the handle of her case and started pulling it back to Ezekiel’s house. She would have to find weapons there. It would be sundown soon; she had to make her move.

The house was quiet again when she let herself back in. Her suitcase was light since most of her things were ruined, so she picked it up and stepped lightly as she walked to the kitchen. The feast the Omegas made was covered and still on the kitchen island, but the Omegas were gone. She quickly walked over to the knife rack she could see on the counter and set her suitcase down. She opened it slowly, grabbed two of the biggest knives she could see, and put them inside before zipping it up again. The only good thing about the money the academy spent on the Alphas was probably the quality of the knives she had taken. They had a good weight to them. She could wield them like her daggers.

She left the kitchen and was about to head up the stairs when the door opened. It was the other wolf who had picked her and Ezekiel up. She ignored him and continued up the stairs. She couldn't explain the crushing disappointment when it wasn't Ezekiel who had walked through that door. She hadn't seen him since she woke up when usually he was the first person she dealt with. She had deluded herself into thinking he cared, but she should have remembered his threats in the beginning.

He wanted her in his bed. The longer she stayed there, the more likely it would be that that scenario would play out. Ezekiel knew she didn't belong there, and he was just as eager to make sure she got out. He didn't care about anything else.

Once in Ezekiel's bedroom, she looked around for a smaller bag and found a backpack. Then she took out only the essentials from her suitcase and the knives and parked them carefully in the bag before she sat down and waited.

The more time passed, the more she wondered where Ezekiel could be on a Sunday Jared had done nothing but lounge around on weekends; she had assumed Ezekiel would be the same. Was he still out dealing with Claire! Guilt bubbled up inside her when she thought of that. She was leaving when he had been busy cleaning up her mess, but he was an Alpha and knew the rules better. She had to believe he would be okay.

But what if he needed her to make a statement? What if the Council did get involved this time, and she wouldn't be there to hack him up? Not that her words would matter to them; she was just an Omega in their eyes. Besides that, she had no injuries to support her case anyway. They

would probably listen to and believe him just because he was an Alpha. He would be fine.

She told herself that many times until the sun finally went down, and then she waited another hour before finally picking up the backpack and slipping it onto both shoulders. Then she picked up her old sneakers and opened the door. There were no lights on, and it was pitch black. The wolves wouldn't need lights, but she had to step carefully so she wouldn't tumble down the stairs.

Pride welled up in her when she finally stepped out of the house and down the driveway before she put her shoes back on.

There was half a moon to light her way as she crept towards the small gate and then crouched behind a bush when it came into view. The light in the guardhouse was on, and she could see the enormous guard in there. And he had a friend. Was there a reason they had two guards at night? They both seemed alert, and one patrolled the immediate area in front of the gate. She didn't know what they were and if they could scent her if she went closer,

She mentally screamed because her plan was derailed at the first hurdle. But there was no way she was going back now

To her left, the eerie forest waited. A shiver went down her spine when she remembered how it had felt to go through it in the taxi on the first day. But it was her only option now. She'd lived in a forest her whole life and knew what to look out for and how to protect herself. This one only felt wrong because it was unfamiliar. She would be fine.

She stepped into it without another thought