

## Chapter 98

Ava slept in her own room and silently made her way downstairs before Zeke woke up. The Omegas were the only ones awake when she went into the kitchen to grab a piece of fruit. She would have breakfast in the dining hall before going to the arena for the second day.

The Omegas were just standing around, and the moment she walked in, they tensed and looked down

“What are you doing?” she asked with a frown, keeping her voice to a whisper so she wouldn’t wake anyone up.

And why were they lowering their eyes?

“Alpha Ezekiel keeps ordering us not to cook, but we have to. We don’t know what we should do,” one of the Omegas said. Samantha, if she remembered correctly. This Omega was usually the one bold enough to answer Ezekiel.

“I would do what he says. Prepare your own food and then go to train and get ready for today, or whatever. I won’t say anything,” she said, reaching for a banana.

She ate it quickly before grabbing a bottle of water from the fridge and putting it in her bag. The plan was to jog as far as she could and consider that as her warm-up for her fights. It was stupid to put herself through that torture voluntarily, but she had to get away from Zeke.

“Do you do you want any breakfast?” the shorter one asked.

That made her turn around and really look at them. What the hell was going on here? The last conversation she had with them was when they had been changing the sheets on Zeke’s bed and basically called her a slut.

“Um... No. No, thank you,” she whispered before leaving the kitchen.

She quietly walked out of the house and down the driveway before she started stretching for the jog. It was still dark, so it took her a moment to realize someone was standing in the shadows across the road from Zeke’s house.

Maybe leaving the house by herself was a bad idea. She knew how much she humiliated Dexter yesterday, and if there was one thing she knew about bullies, it was that he wouldn’t let that go.

“Why are you alone, Little Red?”

It was a relief to hear Jared’s voice, but he was still an unwelcome intrusion.

“And why are you standing in the dark like some creepy pervert, Alpha Jared?” she asked.

Jared stepped into the road and looked over at Ezekiel's house.

"You shouldn't be alone," he said without answering her question.

"Don't worry about me," she said as she continued her stretches.

Jogging was the last thing she needed to do right now, especially considering how much she hated running. But if a two-lap equivalent was all she would manage, that would be okay. At least it was something. There was no way she was going to train with Zeke now when it was clear he would just interrogate her.

"How are you feeling! I heard it was touch and go last night."

How many people knew about this? She didn't want the whole academy speculating about this in case they came up with the correct conclusion.

"I'm fine. It was just nerves. All that was unexpected yesterday," she lied as she turned away from him.

"Can we talk!" Jared asked.

"I'm sorry, but I stopped caring about anything you have to say when you showed me your true colors, Goodbye, Alpha Jared."

Without waiting for his answer, she started what she knew would be a grueling jog towards the dining hall. She kept her ears and eyes open just in case Douche Dexter was also waiting in the shadow somewhere, ready to make her pay. As the sun rose, she peered into every shadow

and jumped at every noise. They would find her body in a ditch somewhere because of her stupid decision to leave the house alone. If she survived the day, she wouldn't do it again. She would wait for a lift or find out how the oilier Omegas got to school.

Caught up in her thoughts and fears, she didn't realize she had jogged the whole way to the dining hall until the entrance loomed in front of her.

She stumbled as she came to a halt and then looked back in the direction she had come. Was she imagining this? She didn't feel as breathless as she usually did after a couple of laps around the training room with Coach Baxter. Was the coach's training working?

She snorted at that as she turned and walked the rest of the way to the dining hall. Running and her would never mix, no matter how much stamina she built up during training. It had always been that way. This was probably a fluke caused by her flight or flight reactions when she had imagined Dexter jumping out of every shadow.

She took out her water and drained it before heading in to sit at a table. It seemed she was a little too early for breakfast. She must have woken up earlier than she thought, or her alarm clock was messed up.

The kitchen Omegas took another half an hour to start putting the food out. She was ravenous when she finally helped herself, so much so that she went for a second helping just as the first students arrived.

She didn't enjoy her second breakfast as much as the first because the moment they started to whisper and look at her, she lost her appetite.

She left the dining hall before it was full of people and headed for the locker room to store her bag with another set of fresh clothes. Then she walked to the arena.

When she opened the door, she stopped at the sight in front of her. They had set things up for the day, and somehow, the arena looked more intimidating. At one end were four tall, glass cabinets with ridiculously sharp weapons that seemed very real. She hadn't even seen some of them in her training sessions, although she had worked with most at home. She assumed they were arranged by level because the wall on the end had the biggest and most beautiful weapons, so she guessed those were for the expert-level students.

Then she noticed something else. There was a shimmer around the rings. She walked towards one slowly and then put her hand between the ropes. It felt like an invisible solid wall stretched around all the rings.

It was good protection for the spectators, she supposed, but it also meant that once she got into the ring today, she would be trapped inside.

I didn't take long for the arena to start filling up. Though she kept her gaze down, she could feel the scrutiny. Was her life going to get worse at the academy now? Emily once said that training was where everyone advanced to any level, regardless of their role. But would Dexter accept that? She didn't think so.

She felt the moment Zeke walked in and looked up to meet his gaze. He was still angry with her. She could tell by the stiff set of his body and his hard gaze. And maybe she was losing her mind, but she could almost feel his disappointment.

Eventually, the coach blew his whistle, and as his favorite student, he called her name first. Her favorite daggers were not among the weapons available for the beginners, and the coach's sneer told her he had done this on purpose,

But that was okay. All weapons were her forte. The katana she pulled down from the cabinet would work just as well.

She didn't search for Zeke again as she waited in the corner for her beginner classmates to begin the process all over again. Belatedly, she remembered Mr. Patrick's words. The Council's eyes were here. But did they want her to win or fail!