

In Love With My Best Friend Chapter 8

Astrea

I sat on the mattress, feeling overwhelmed. I knew I had a full day ahead of me and I needed to rest, but I just couldn't lie down. I wasn't sleepy. I just felt miserable.

"Why can't he be my mate, Ash?" I complained to my wolf. She was the only one I fearlessly confessed my deepest emotions to. I wouldn't be able to hide them from her anyway.

"Why am I feeling like this when he isn't my mate? It isn't fair, Ash. I want to fall in love with my mate. Not my best friend," I moaned.

My wolf was silent for a while. A moment passed with no words exchanged between us. I let my tears roll down my eyes while I sat on the bed.

"I don't know, Astrea. It is hard," she finally said. "I feel so confused around him."

Inhaling deeply, I closed my eyes and curled up on the mattress. Little sighs escaped my lips as I lay feeling devastated. I wished I had met my mate sooner. Perhaps then, I wouldn't be so baffled by what I wanted.

The following week was packed with drills. The schedule was so packed that I temporarily moved in with the new recruits. Since it was our fourth and last week before we were tested, Sir Elliot made sure that we did our best. We were so busy with our schedules that we didn't have much time for ourselves.

Because of all of this, I barely met Leo. Maybe it was best that we didn't see each other often. Being around him confused me and my wolf. Undoubtedly, I yearned for him and my efforts to control my desires were in vain. I found it easier to focus when I didn't see him. Maybe things should remain like this until I meet the one meant for me.

"Today is the last day of this week. I know today's session was short and rather relaxed compared to what we practiced earlier. But I want you all to save your energy for tomorrow's test. I expect all of you to gather in this arena by nine in the morning tomorrow. Have a good evening," Sir Elliot

addressed the crowd after the day's session and walked away with his helpers.

We relaxed when they left and everyone dispersed. I went to the girls' locker room to get my belongings before I went on my way. I would meet Sarah and Elena there. We always met after training and walked back to our dorm together. Exhaling deeply, I picked up my towel and wiped the sweat off my face.

"Ready for tomorrow?" I heard Sarah ask me.

"Yeah, I guess," I told them.

"What are you going to do tonight?" Elena asked, taking her grey backpack from her locker.

Shrugging my shoulders, "I guess I'll just relax. Maybe call my parents and then go to sleep," I told them.

"Sounds like a good idea to me. I think I'll do the same," Sarah mumbled.

We walked out of the arena together. Since we finished our training earlier than usual, we got to catch a glimpse of the young lycans' training. My heart thumped as I passed by their field in the training arena. I knew Leo would most probably be there. Should I take a look? I wondered.

"Hey! Look! It's the Crown Prince and Leo!" Elena whispered, leaning forward towards Sarah and me.

My lips parted as I glanced into the stadium. Indeed, it was them, sweating from head to toe as they did their workouts. My heart skipped a beat as my eyes focused on Leo.

He looked so hot...

I gulped. No. I should stop.

"Wow," Sarah whispered. "This is the first time I've seen a Lycan train," she said.

My eyes were on one specific lycan among them. His movements were so swift and just simply incredible.

Amazed, the three of us stared at them training. And before we knew it, their session ended. They seemed to be oblivious to us watching them from a distance. When Leo removed his shirt after the session, I felt as though my eyes might pop out of their sockets. My lips parted as I gawked at him.

He is just perfect.

Gulping down the accumulated saliva in my mouth, I knitted my brows together. I couldn't take my eyes off him.

"Mmm... those abs," Elena giggled along with Sarah.

I frowned. A little growl erupted from the deepest part of my throat, surprising me and my friends. The resentment I felt surpassed the shock I was in. I didn't like it when they commented on his body.

The two girls gaped at me in amazement. They exchanged glances.

"Did we do something wrong?" Elena asked Sarah, who shrugged her shoulders. Sighing, I walked away, with them following me close by. I picked my pace. I wasn't in the mood to talk. Holding back a sniffle, I fought against the tears that gathered in my eyes.

He wasn't mine. Yet I couldn't help it. I wished he could be mine.

"Hey, is everything alright?" Asked Sarah as she caught up with me. Pursing my lips, I walked ahead of them until we reached our dormitory.

"Astrea," Sarah grabbed my arm and turned me around. Both of their faces softened when they saw my glossed eyes.

"What's wrong?" Elena asked, knitting her eyebrows in worry.

"I... I..." I stuttered, but the tightness of my throat made it hard for me to speak. The tears that I fought against won and started to roll down my cheeks.

Her creases deepened.

"Hey," Sarah mumbled as she hugged me.

I was glad neither of them said anything as I sobbed into her arms. At least we were now alone. Only the three of us.

“What is it?” Elena asked, clearly concerned about me.

Wiping my face, I smiled as I breathed out. “I. I’m sorry,” I mumbled.

“For what?” Sarah questioned.

“I growled at you,” I said, looking at their solemn faces.

They chuckled rather anxiously. Sarah took my hand and gave it a little squeeze.

“It’s okay,” she whispered.

Elena smiled and patted my arm. “Do you want to talk about it?” She asked and I quickly shook my head.

“No,” I hastily replied.

“Okay. Let’s just get some rest. Tomorrow is a big day,” she said as she shrugged it away, but not before flashing a wide smile at me.

I was glad that the girls didn’t ask me about it afterward. As planned, we went to bed early. I called my parents and talked with them for a while before lying down to sleep.

I tried not to think about him, but how could I fool my own emotions? I yearned for him. There was no question about it.

“Try to focus on self-defense. Dad wants you to overcome the trials in the maze,” Xander told me. He and Leo met me and the others outside the arena.

“Thanks, Xander,” I chuckled. “I’m anxious, anyway.”

“You got this. I just know you’ll pass,” Leo prepped, making me chuckle.

“You think so?” I asked him and he nodded in affirmation.

“Come on,” Sarah pulled my arm. Elena and the guys had already gone inside the stadium. Sarah too left when I bobbed my head, indicating that I would follow her soon.

“Well, wish me luck,” I grinned at the duo and ran after Elena. So it was a maze. I wonder what Sir Elliot had prepared for us in it.

We lined up. Each one of us was given a different door to enter from. As Xander had told us we were told that it was a maze. They had placed obstacles at various points where we had to use the tactics we learnt over the past month to overcome the obstacles.

I had a sharp knife in my boot and a couple of tear gas bombs in my belt where I could easily reach them. We would use tear gas infused with wolfsbane if it was a real war, but since this was just a test, we were using plain tear gas. Firmly holding the sword in my hand, I stepped inside, keeping all my senses on alert.

“Girl, I need you,” I called my wolf.

“I’m here, girl,” as usual, Ash was quick to respond.

I channeled my wolf senses and squinted into the darkness as I moved forward. I moved as stealthily as I could, making sure that my boots made no sound at all.

A sudden creaking sound made me halt.

“What was that?” I asked my wolf, through our link.

“Watch out!”

Ash was barely able to warn me. I turned around just in time to see a large wooden log swing right at me. I jumped backwards, dodging it, and escaping the unexpected blow. But that wasn’t it. As soon as I managed to stand on my feet, small dart-like things shot towards me.

“What the…”

I quickly took the sword and deflected it.

I stared at the little sticks lying on the ground and realised that all of them were blunt. They wouldn’t have done any harm anyway. I chuckled.

This is just a trail.

This is just a trail.

I told myself as I moved forward. I had to keep all my senses on alert, as I didn't know what would attack me next.

What I didn't expect was to hear growling. The sound of an angry wolf growling. To my dismay, I saw a pair of eyes glimmering in the dark corner of the chamber I had just walked into.

"s**t!" I exclaimed. The wolf was charging at me and I didn't have enough time to shift to my wolf.

I did the next best thing that came to my mind. I ran towards the wall and gave a strong push to my right leg before jumping backwards. My eyes focused on the wolf as I somersaulted backwards. He ran right into the wall, but I guess he wasn't confused. He prepared to rebound as soon as I landed. Clenching my jaws, I landed on the floor, and took a tear gas bomb in one hand while clasping the sword in the other. I had to use everything I had to the best I could.

Before he could attack me again, I threw the bomb at his feet, distracting him. A dense fog filled the air. It stung my eye a little, but I didn't think about it. I used the opportunity to escape the chamber and ran away.

It seemed to me that I had to be continuously on alert throughout the trial, because as soon as I entered the chamber, a dense fog filled the room. As soon as a familiar pungent smell hit my nostrils, I instantly recognised its smell.

"The hell! Wolfsbane!" I exclaimed through my link to my wolf.

I quickly crouched down, keeping my eyes squeezed shut as it would sting badly if it got into my eyes. As I dragged myself forward, I relied on my sense of hearing. I knew I had to be fast. Because despite being used to the stinging sensation, prolonged exposure to its smoke will cause fatigue.

I succeeded.

"Whew," I breathed out and turned around. My lips stretched in a little smile when I realised that this was almost the end of the trial. I saw the little red flag that I was supposed to take. Just as I was about to pick it up, a sharp metal blade of a sword crossed my path.

"Where do you think you are going?" A familiar female voice mumbled.

The tone of her voice made the hair on the back of my neck rise. With an anxious heart, I looked up. The Queen was smirking at me. She was in her combat clothes. I gulped. Was she my last trial?

Gripping onto the rubber handle of my weapon, "I need to take the flag," I said as firmly as I could. She chuckled.

"For that, you have to go through me!" She growled and started to attack. It wasn't unexpected. I was able to block her just in time.

"The hell!" I yelled as I pushed her away. She was stronger and way more skilled than I was. Moreover, she was way more experienced than me.

"We are young and fast," Ash reminded me. Of course, I would have to use that to my advantage. She pointed the sharp weapon at me, skillfully fighting against me. I saw the red flag from my peripheral vision. It was just a little distance away.

If I could trick her...

I pushed her once again and ran away. I just hoped that it would work. She was the Queen after all, and she most probably would know a lot of tricks. I aimed to grab the flag somehow.

I was about to do a somersault like I did earlier, but before I did, she grabbed my ankle and pulled me down.

"Nice try, Astrea. But nope. I won't let you," she hissed as she pinned me on the floor.

My heart sank. Did I fail?

"Astrea, on your right," Ash whispered.

A little red cloth waved on my right side. I smirked and grabbed it. Clutching it in my fist, I glanced at the flag and grinned in triumph. I did it.

"Your majesty," waving the flag, I humbly addressed the Queen, who stood up and chuckled.

"I knew you would do it. I'm proud of you, Astrea," she said as she helped me stand up.

We walked out of the chamber together. As soon as we did, a strong pair of arms grabbed me in a warm hug.

“You did it! I knew that you would!”

Leo exclaimed in delight as he rocked me in his arms. My heart soared with a different kind of elation. The excitement of passing the test and the joy of being held by the man of your dreams.