

Chapter 11: Speaking Tongues

ARDEN

"Who does he think he is?" I muttered as I washed my hands in the sink. I caught my reflection and grimaced at how red my cheeks looked. Did I look like this when I spoke to Cade, too?

I shook my head, flicking water off my fingers like I could shake off the frustration with it. "Just because he's smart and tall, good-looking, and competent..."

"That doesn't sound right," I whispered, annoyed with myself. "There's no reason for him to treat me in such a way when I didn't even do anything to him."

With a breathless sigh, I grabbed a paper towel to dry my hands, willing my heart to calm down. I looked in the mirror and forced a smile. "Let's just eat," I muttered. "Food will make things better... like it always does."

I pushed open the restroom door—only to freeze in place.

There was a shadowy nook near the stairwell, dimly lit and often ignored. But now, it held something—or someone—I shouldn't have seen. I had seen werewolves mid-rut on campus before, and no one batted an eye. That wasn't what stunned me.

It was him.

Cade.

He had a girl pinned against the wall.

The shadows cloaked most of her, just a glimpse of long blonde hair and



hands fisting his shirt, trying to keep him close. But he was all I could see. His lean body towered over hers, not quite aggressive, but commanding. He wasn't holding onto her desperately—no, he was too calm for that. One hand was casually shoved into his pocket. The other was planted on the wall beside her head.

His mouth moved over hers with burning intensity. Meanwhile, she kept trying to speed up the kiss, but Cade didn't let her. His lips parted hers slowly. His tongue slipped inside and the girl moaned softly into him, a sound that made my knees go weak.

My breath hitched.

His hand slid from her waist to her hipbone, fingers curling in, gripping tight and leaving a mark on her exposed skin.

His jaw tensed, that sharp angle flexing beneath flushed skin. His brows furrowed deeper. His shoulders blocked most of her from view, but I could see how her chest was rising and falling too quickly, like she was on the edge of something.

And so was I.

I shouldn't be watching.

But I couldn't look away.

There was no mistaking the hunger in the way he devoured her mouth, taking his time to kiss her deeper, hotter. He leaned in more, his body brushing hers, pressing her tighter against the wall. Her legs shifted—were they trembling?

My throat went dry. I tried to swallow, but I was too focused on the way Cade kissed her.



I bit down on my lip.

It wasn't fair. Kisses weren't supposed to look like that.

I thought back to mine. My first kiss with Jaxon had been sweet but clumsy. Our kisses were polite and short-lived. Even when they stretched longer, there had been no heat. I knew it was partially my fault because I was always unprepared for him.

I shifted ever so slightly, just to breathe, but the water bottle slipped from my hand, clattering to the floor.

The sound echoed in the hallway like a gunshot.

Both heads snapped in my direction.

Cade's eyes landed on me first. His lips were swollen and slick with saliva. The girl's were too, her head spinning as she turned her face from his chest. It appeared like she had gotten the greatest pleasure of her life only with a kiss.

I bent to grab my bottle, cheeks flaming. I was about to bolt when his voice made me freeze.

"Hey, Flub."

I blinked. Flub?

I turned around, confusion betraying my better judgment. Big mistake. He was already walking toward me.

He stopped right in front of me. He was too close. Close enough for me to smell the warm scent of spice on his breath.



His expression didn't soften. "Were you observing us?" he asked, tilting his head.

"I—Of course not!" I stammered, mortified. "I was just leaving the bathroom and—you were there! It's not my fault you were making out in such an open area!"

"You could've looked away," he said flatly. "But you didn't. You watched for quite a while."

I opened my mouth, then closed it. My cheeks burned. How did he even notice? His eyes had been shut!

"Why?" he asked, stepping closer. His voice dipped an octave lower, rough and suggestive. "Did you want it to be you instead?"

I pursed my lips.

"No," I blurted, stepping back. "It was... it was an appalling sight. I couldn't look away because I was disgusted."

His lips twitched like he was holding back a laugh. "Sure, Flub. Keep telling yourself that."

"Flub? What even is that?" I snapped, trying to shove down the boiling embarrassment.

He ignored me, gaze sweeping me slowly. "If I were you," he said, "I'd just walk away. Things like that happen a lot in Elite. Unless..." He smirked. "...you want to be on the receiving end."

I scoffed, folding my arms. "I will never kiss you."

"Good," he murmured with a smirk, but it didn't feel like I'd won. Not



when my body was still betraying me.

He walked back to the girl, who immediately clung to his side again.

I clenched my fists, not out of anger—but something far more dangerous. Curiosity.

The burn from earlier hadn't left me.

I exhaled slowly, willing myself to calm down. Then, I turned around, ready to head back to class—only to be stopped once more.

Fate hated me today.

“Arden?”

I didn't turn around.

“Gosh, it really is you. I thought I was hallucinating for a moment.”

I knew that voice.

“Sienna.”



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