

# Chapter 3: Elite Order Academy

ARDEN

I let out a deep breath as I gazed at the tall gate in front of me. It was impeccably maintained, glinting as if forged from real gold. Given the sky-high tuition at Elite and the prestigious sponsors backing it, the theory didn’t seem too far-fetched.

“I’m really here.”

I clutched the single duffel bag slung over my shoulder. It was what I managed to pack before my mom shoved me out of the door. She had confiscated my phone, claiming I hadn’t paid for it. Thankfully, I had set aside some money for tuition, and despite the hundred-mile journey, I had decided to travel with my wolf to reach this place.

Just as I was about to step forward, I felt something hard slam into my back, sending me sprawling onto the ground. Fortunately, my bag cushioned my fall. I was ready to glare at the culprit when I caught sight of a tall, imposing man radiating an indescribable aura.

My mouth fell open in shock, and I struggled to find the right words.

Beside him were two women clinging to his shoulders like leeches. They didn’t bother to apologize and continued walking. Frowning, I called after them.

“Excuse me?”

They halted, giving me a once-over before scoffing. The man didn’t even turn around. I clicked my tongue, feeling irritated. They were clearly in the wrong!

“Aren’t you going to apologize?”

“How dare you?” one of the girls exclaimed.

“You were standing there like an idiot,” the other chimed in, her tone scathing.

I bit my lip, frustration bubbling up within me. Just then, the man finally turned around, and my breath caught in my throat. Now that I was standing, I could see his features more clearly.

Blonde hair. Blue eyes. A strong jaw. It was a dangerously attractive combination, but my annoyance at him overshadowed my appreciation for his looks.

“You… want me to apologize?” he asked slowly, striding closer.

I pursed my lips and took a step back as he approached.

“You bumped into me,” I muttered, my confidence wavering slightly under his intense gaze.

A small smirk danced on his lips. “What’s your name?” he asked, brushing aside my statement.

“I don’t think that’s relevant to this situation.”

His eyebrows arched in surprise. “Interesting,” he replied and then offered his hand.

“The name’s Rowan.”

“And you still need to apologize,” I said, crossing my arms defiantly.

He laughed—a loud, rumbling sound that echoed around us. The girls beside him shot me daggers with their glares. I frowned, unsure of what I had done to provoke such a reaction.

“Really interesting,” he murmured, then turned to leave. “Well, see you around,” he added with a wink, backing away while his hands found their way to the waists of the two women. Glancing over his shoulder, he planted a kiss on one of them, his tongue making its way into her mouth.

Disgusted, I turned my gaze away.

“Did they really allow such odd people on this campus?” I muttered, shaking my head. Let’s just hope I never run into that guy again.

Once they were out of sight, I approached the guard.

“Name?” he asked, not bothering to look my way.

“Arden Stone,” I replied.

“Look into the sensor,” he instructed, pointing to an iris scanner. I complied, holding my breath as the scanner processed my identity. After a few tense moments, it turned green. I sighed in relief—there was no mistake. I was really admitted.

“Go in,” he said, finally meeting my gaze.

I smiled and stepped inside, the air feeling different compared to the outside. I inhaled deeply, taking in my dream school. The campus was so vast that it would require a car just to navigate. On the far right were the Elite Mansions, reserved for the crème de la crème—those who could afford the outrageous fees. When I found out how much a single room cost, I nearly fainted. It was even pricier than the tuition.

I had heard that’s where Alphas, Betas, and the offspring of wealthy tycoons stayed.

And that’s where my brother was residing. I shook my head, feeling the familiar pain of unfairness. My parents claimed we couldn’t afford it when they easily paid for his accommodation.

With determination, I turned my focus to a large map a few steps away. I needed to locate the Hades Dorms—the cheapest option, though it had received mixed reviews.

“Where is it?” I muttered, scanning the enormous map. “A-ha!”

A frown creased my forehead as I realized its distance. “It’s at the farthest part,” I mumbled, estimating it must be around twenty kilometers away.

“It’s a whole marathon,” I chuckled to myself. It was the only housing I could afford, so I had no right to complain. Besides, I was already here!

With renewed resolve, I embarked on my journey to my new home for the next two years. Unfortunately, in my distraction, I bumped into yet another person.

This person was solid, and I found myself losing my balance, but a pair of strong arms quickly wrapped around my waist, steadying me. A shiver ran down my spine, making me bite my lip.

“I’m sorry,” I began, realizing I was at fault this time. “I was just in a hurry—”

My words caught in my throat when I looked up into the eyes of the person next to me.

“Pretty,” I murmured before I could stop myself.

His eyes, the shade of stormy skies—gray, neither too dark nor too light—held a depth that seemed to shimmer despite their dullness. His dark hair added to his striking appearance, and for a moment, the world around us faded away.

“I’m sorry again—”

Before I could even finish my sentence, however, he had stepped back, not acknowledging my statement. Then, he walked toward the Elite Mansions, leaving me as a silent mess.

I had barely stepped foot into the campus, but there was already a question that lingered in my mind.

Did this school only accept attractive people?