

Chapter 4: Hades' Dorm

ARDEN

“Finally,” I sighed in relief as I reached my dorm.

I gazed at the semi-tall building before me. With its seven floors, it stood out as a bit more worn compared to the rest of the campus infrastructure. But I can’t complain; it was the most affordable option available.

Stepping through the door, I was met with an interior that was even worse than the exterior. Torn couches and broken tables filled the shared area, remnants of what seemed like multiple fights that had occurred without any effort to repair.

The woman behind the counter appeared utterly bored, meticulously doing her nails—on her feet.

I cleared my throat once, but she held up a hand, silencing me as she focused on her intricate design on her smallest toe.

It seemed to be... a cherry? How will that fit on such a small nail?

After a moment, she sighed in relief and finally looked at me, still with her foot on the table.

“What do you need?” she asked.

“Um, I’m a new tenant,” I replied, managing a small smile. “Arden Stone.”

With another sigh, she peered at her laptop and squinted her eyes before nodding. “I see your name. You’ve paid the initial deposit?”

“Yes,” I said.

“Hmm,” she hummed. “Make sure to pay your rent on time. We don’t want another fight to break out. Hades does not appreciate those who make late payments.”

My eyes widened. “What?”

She raised an eyebrow. “Will you be a problem?”

“No, no,” I quickly answered, shaking my head.

“Good,” she smirked. “My name is Maisey, and I am the dorm leader. If you have any problems, speak with me between 8 and 10 AM and PM only—STRICTLY. I am also a student.”

I nodded again.

She rummaged through the drawers and handed me a rusty key.

“Room 707,” she said. “It’s a shared room, you know that, right?”

“Yes,” I confirmed. “Can I take the elevator?”

She burst out laughing, leaving me confused. “Oh, honey. Our elevator has been broken for five years. Take the stairs.”

I raised an eyebrow. A school like Elite had such living arrangements? Still, it seemed like she was on the verge of a tantrum if I asked another question. So, I nodded and made my way, taking the stairs to the top floor.

The journey was less than pleasant. Shirtless men and women lounged in the hallways, some even kissing and borderline having sex. Beer bottles littered the ground, and tissues with unknown substances clung to the walls.

I shook my head and hastened to my room, sighing in relief when I found that the seventh floor wasn’t as chaotic as the others. I inserted the key and twisted it, quickly shutting the door behind me and leaning against the hard surface.

“Rough, right?” someone suddenly asked.

I jumped in shock, coming face to face with a striking woman with light skin and wavy hair.

“Don’t scream,” she said. “The walls in here are paper-thin.”

I pressed a hand to my heart. “I’m sorry. I just didn’t expect anyone to be here.”

“No worries,” she said, rising from the floor where she’d been arranging her belongings and offering her hand. “I’m Tessa, and I think we’re roommates.”

A small smile crept onto my lips. I already had a good feeling about her. “Arden,” I said, shaking her hand. “Nice to meet you.”

She covered her mouth for a moment. “You’re so pretty,” she declared.

My eyes widened, and I shook my head. “That’s too much,” I shyly replied. “You’re definitely prettier.”

“Trust me,” she said, patting my shoulder. “You’re the prettiest girl I’ve ever seen.”

My cheeks flushed as I looked away.

“Anyway, are you also a freshman?” she asked.

I nodded, setting my bag on my side of the room.

"Same here," she smiled. "Let's hope we have the same schedule. The Moon Goddess knows I need a friend in this place."

I chuckled and nodded. “It’s a good thing we don’t have classes today, right? We can rest.”

She tilted her head, looking thoughtful. “We do have to attend the general assembly, though.”

“Huh?” I asked, turning to her with furrowed brows.

“The general assembly—they posted it on the ‘Echo,’ the school’s page.”

“Crap,” I muttered. My mom had taken my phone before I could check it. “What time is it?”

Just then, sirens wailed across the campus, causing me to freeze. Tessa's eyes widened.

“Now!” she exclaimed, grabbing my wrist and pulling me out the door.

“Wait, wait,” I protested. “Do we have to run to the main hall?”

She frowned slightly. “Run?”

“Are we going to shift or something?”

She giggled, shaking her head. “No, silly. We have a free shuttle for all! Come on, let’s go.”

The hall was already packed when Tessa and I arrived. We settled into the back seats, which suited me just fine. I spotted my brother and Sienna sitting near the front and center, and I wanted to avoid them at all costs.

But where was Jaxon?

I shook my head, dismissing the thought. I didn’t want to give that jerk a single moment of my attention.

“Phew,” Tessa sighed in relief. “We made it! We can’t miss the announcement of the Alphas for each faction. We need to choose wisely so we can have a peaceful stay at school.”

My frown deepened with every word. “Choose... an Alpha?” I asked.

She looked at me in confusion. “Yes,” she replied. “That would be most ideal. You automatically have a clique, and you can build connections.”

“What are you talking about?”

Her brows furrowed. “Don’t tell me—you don’t know these things?”

“No,” I said.

She let out a small chuckle of disbelief. “Were you sheltered all your life?”

I pursed my lips. Well, my parents did restrict me much more than they did to my brothers, practically controlling my life like it was theirs.

“I’ll tell you all the details,” she said with an understanding smile.

“For now, focus on the front. The Alphas are about to be introduced.”