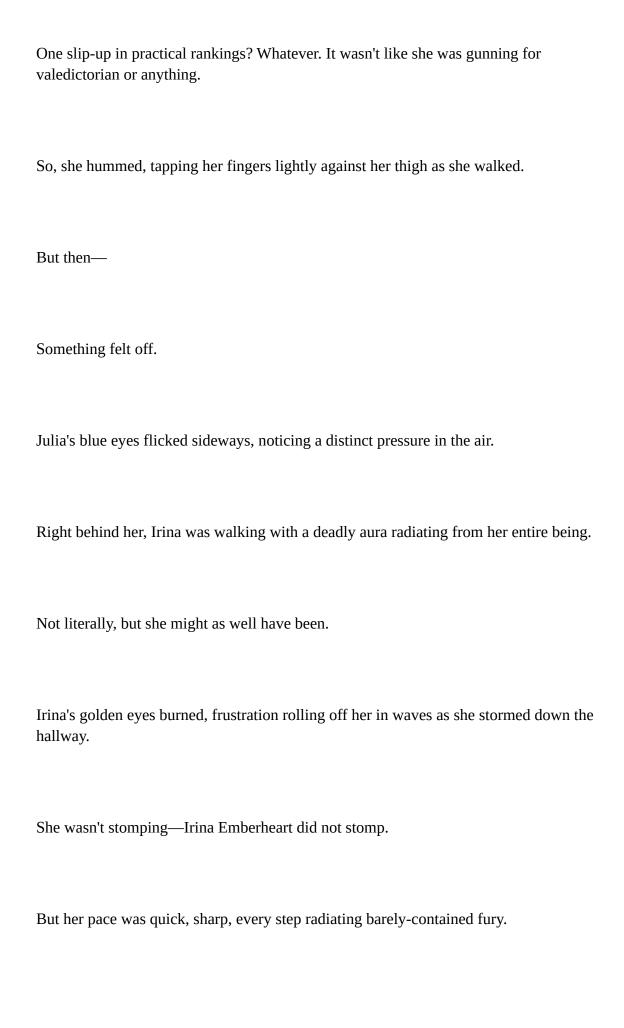
## H. Academy 882

Chapter 882 - Integrating Into
Julia stepped out of the locker room, rolling her shoulders as she stretched, the faint hum of her voice echoing lightly down the hallway.
She was grinning.
Despite the fact that she had just lost in the exercise, despite the fact that Astron had slipped through her fingers, and despite the fact that she had to hear Damian and Rebecca talk her ear off about it—she was still smiling.
Why?
Because, honestly? She didn't care.
Grades had never mattered to her. Never once in her life had she given a damn about test scores, ranking evaluations, or whatever metric the academy used to sort people into neat little categories.
She knew exactly why she wasn't in the top ten, despite probably being stronger than half the people up there. Her theoretical scores were trash. They had always been trash, and they were going to stay trash.



	passing cadets must have sensed it because they all instinctively moved out of her avoiding eye contact like their lives depended on it.
Juli	a, on the other hand?
She	grinned.
This	s was funny.
"He	y," she said, casual as ever.
Irin	a didn't respond.
Irin	a's grin widened as she tilted her head, watching the way people actively fled from a's path like she was some kind of vengeful storm goddess about to incinerate the re academy.
	y," she tried again, this time stepping into Irina's path and forcing her to nowledge her.
Irin	a's eyes snapped toward her.
Juli	a raised an eyebrow.

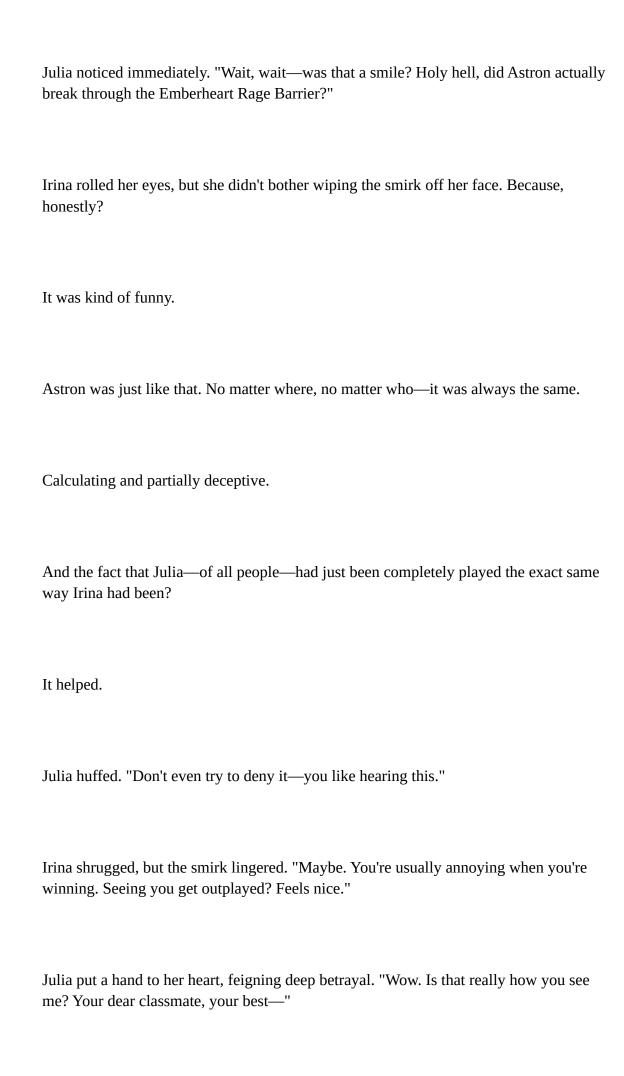


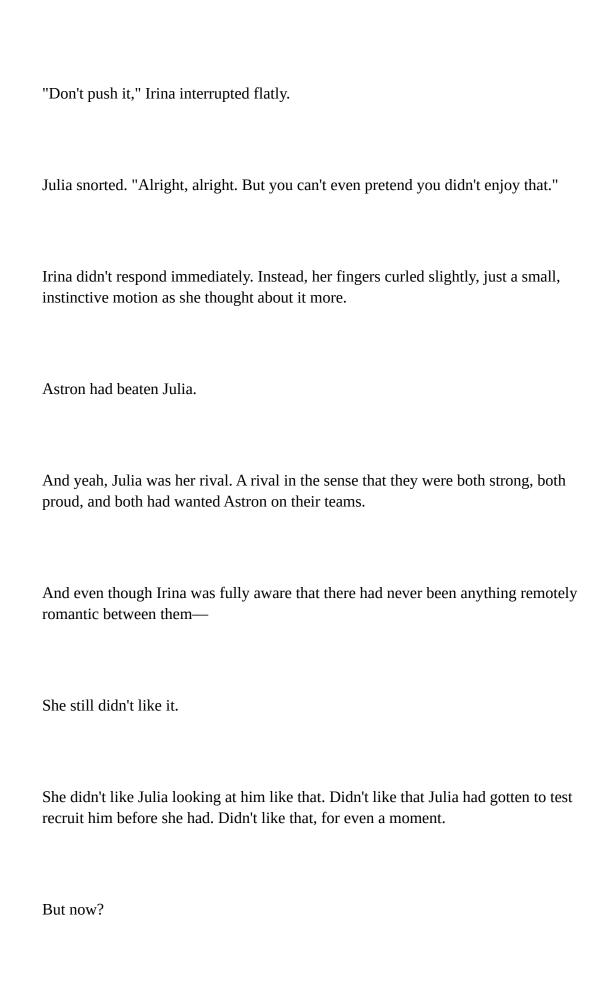


Julia whistled. "Oh, wow. You're actually about to explode."
"I'm about to do a lot worse than that," Irina snapped. "I held that damn wing alone. I burned through two teams. I did everything right. And then your damn brother comes out of nowhere, takes the artifact, smirks, and runs off like it's a joke."
Julia tried—really, really tried—not to laugh.
Julia bit her lip, her shoulders trembling as she tried—really, really tried—not to burst into laughter.
Because this? This was hilarious.
The irony was almost too much.
What Astron had just done to her, Lucas had just done to Irina.
Both of them had been played. Both of them.
And while Julia could take the loss in stride, Irina was absolutely fuming.
Julia pressed a hand to her mouth, trying to keep her amusement contained, but it was getting harder by the second.



"Yep. And, I had him dead to rights. The guy was on the ropes, and all I had to do was finish it."
Irina's expression shifted slightly—mild interest creeping in past the frustration.
"And?"
Julia sighed dramatically. "And? Oh, well, he distracted me with some daggers, blew me up with a damn sphere, snatched the artifact right in front of my face, and jumped out the window."
Silence.
Irina blinked.
For a second, Irina just stared at her.
Julia, still grinning like she'd just won the lottery, tilted her head. "What? Processing?"
Irina blinked once. Then—a smile. Small, barely there, but unmistakably real.







Irina flinched.