## Chapter 0109

I head to the corner of the arena that has a yellow flag. Three other people joined me. My first sparring partner who seems to have done well for himself, he doesn't look like he sustained many injuries. A poor guy who looks like he has been a human punching bag for everyone stumbles over. He has a cut across his right eyebrow that is bleeding into his eye, his nose is for sure broken and his lip is split and bleeding. His whole face is going to be bruised soon, I hope his eyes don't swell shut while we are trying to complete this course. The girl is one of the last opponents I had and she was giving me a run for my money. None of them look to be current students so maybe in the 20–30 group.

I start to wonder why I was put with a group of people actually competing for a training spot when Warrior Nickolas announces, "You have five minutes to strategize and tend to wounds, then the horn will blow. From then you will have 30 minutes to complete your task."

"What task?" The girl asks as we all do the obvious and put on our team shirts.

I dump my bag and so does my first fighter. Where I have a first aid kit he has rope.

"Check your bags, we all have different things and come here," I gestured to the injured guy, " Let me reset your nose so it can at least start to heal."

The girl dumps her bag and a card falls out. The only thing on it is 'Capture The Flag.' My eyes light up, yes!

"What's got you looking so happy?" First guy asks.

"It's my favorite game. Looks like this is a team effort. You are the tallest, can you see where they may have hung the yellow flag?" I ask while I am still tending to injured guy. "My name is Sky."

Injured guy looks at me, "I'm Jeff, how'd you learn to do this?"

"You can flirt with her later, I see it, I'm Lillian, can he move yet?" The girl rapidly fires at me.

"He should be good, everyone eat and sip water so you don't get a cramp or throw up, it will slow us down." I turn to see where Lillian is pointing. "I see it too, he should be good to go. Let's assume that we have to get it and return it as a team. Who's the best scout?" I look at Lilian and First Guy. I don't even

bother with Jeff for now, once I see him move I'll decide if I trust him to help.

"I'm a good scout, once we get over there I can keep anyone away who may try to intercept you guys." First guy shrugs. "Name's Wyatt."

"Okay, you're pretty fast so we should work together to get to our flag." I look at Lilian and she nods. "Jeff, can you be on the lookout for other team flags as we move?"

"Sure can, then I can help Wyatt with scouting."

"Alright, Lilian lead us out, I'll cover your back, Jeff, follow me and Wyatt can bring up the rear. Our flag is on top of the rope climb, but it looks like they took the ropes off completely, so we are going to have to scale the obstacle course." I point out to Lilian, "the best spot is there to the right. The cargo net bracing is the most direct route and we should be able to jump from there, as long as we aren't intercepted. I do have a couple back up ideas, but let's hope we don't have to use them." I smile at her, and surprisingly she smiles back. Perfect someone else just as crazy as me.

We line up and the horn blows. The four of us take off behind Lilian and she follows the path I gave her perfectly. There is so much debris on this portion of

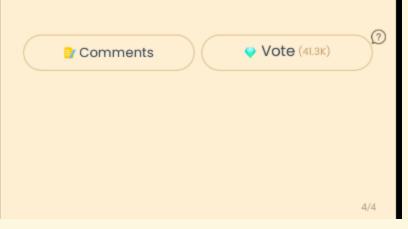


the arena, it looks like a paintball field. I can hear others shouting directions to each other, but we stay as quiet as possible. I figure we can rest up a bit if we don't have to fight our way to the flag. She follows a path that takes us around the outer edge, Poor Wyatt is so big he barely fits, but he squeezes through and we come around to one side of the cargo net.

"Alright, this is where we let go of our cover, Wyatt, Jeff? You guys ready?" I whisper over my shoulder.

"Yes." They replied together.

"Keep track of the other teams, we don't know how big they are, assume we are outnumbered and fight like we are. Let's go."



## Chapter 0110

Lilian and I do a running crouch to the other edge of the cargo net. It would be stupid to scale it and then have to climb across. I head up first and can hear Lilian right behind me, she struggles a bit as the net swings and shakes below me, but she keeps up. Once we are halfway up six people run out from various places along the ground. Wyatt is able to stop two with swift hits to the head, they go down hard. Jeff is fighting with one, and I have to say is putting up a good fight even with his injuries.

"Let's go!" I shout to Lilian and hear a string of curse words with every movement. It actually makes me smile. Once we get to the top, I help Lilian onto the beam. "It's a ten foot jump, you have to take a running start."

"You act like you've done something this stupid before."

"Yep." Is all I say before I take off across the support beam and launch myself onto the rope climb support.

"That's all you girl, I'll catch you when you come back." She laughs.

I grab the flag and go to put it in my bag, but as I am, I have a thought and move it to my sports bra then make a show of closing and securing the bag on my back before running and jumping back.

"You were right we are surrounded, how are we going to get out of here with the guys? Wyatt isn't fast enough to get up here and Jeff can only handle one person at a time."

"I can handle several at a time, here, you take the bag and wait until we clear a path, then we can all run together." Let's see who takes the bait.

We move down and Lilian stays out of reach with both my backpack and hers on her. I jump in and start helping Wyatt clear out a path, there are only about ten people left and he's knocked a few of them out. Once we get a couple more subdued, I call up to Lilian.

"Get ready! Jeff flank her right, I will take her left then Wyatt can watch our backs. 3. 2. 1. Go!"

Lilian drops down and starts to run, Jeff runs to position on her right side, I follow up on her left. Wyatt grunts like he got hit and I risk a look back and see someone barreling at Lilian's back. I move to intercept him, but his momentum is too much and all three of us go toppling head over feet. The guy grabs

both backpacks and takes off hooting and hollering to his friends. Lilian moves to get up and chase him, so does Wyatt.

"Let it go, let's just get back to our side before time runs out, we only have 2 minutes."

"But, it doesn't matter if we don't have our flag." She whines as she stops moving.

I open my eyes wide and say again, "We should get back to our side before time runs out."

"Ah!" Jeff says and jumps up to wrap a sympathetic arm around her gently guiding us to our corner, but she starts to dig her heels in. Then Jeff looks over his shoulder, "Would you please?"

The next thing I know Wyatt has Lilian in a fireman's carry and we are slowly jogging back to our side while the other team is still having a party in the center. I don't even think they checked the bags yet. We all step over our line, just as the buzzer goes off. There are cheers and boos from the crowd.

Warrior Nickolas walks to the group holding our bags, while medical staff goes to tend to the injured people. He held out his hand to the leader of the group. The leader opened one of the bags and rummaged around in it. Then he flips it over and dumps it out, no flag.



He moves to the second bag, and you can see the looks on the faces of his teammates change to worry. He wastes no time dumping the bag and finding no flag. Warrior Nickolas looks over at us and Jeff looks right at me smiling as does Wyatt who caught on. Lilian looks confused, then I pull the flag out of my sports bra and wave it around. My team and the crowd goes nuts. I have never heard it this loud in the arena before. The vibrations of all of the voices are rumbling the ground we are standing on. My team all hugs and we are laughing, Lilian is pissed I didn't tell her, but I had no way to and not give it away.

