

Chapter 52

Violet

“You!”

“Me?”

“I’m looking at you, am I not?”

“No...sir...commander,” I stumbled over my words, wanting to disappear on the spot.

He raised an eyebrow. “Sir or Commander?”

The room fell silent as I tried to think of my answer. Which one of the two was it?

“S-Sir?” I tried.

I bit my bottom lip as his gaze remained on me for a moment. “Do you not wish me a good evening?”

So that was the issue.

“Good evening, Sir,” I replied quickly, making a mental note not to forget to greet this man ever again.

Commander Jorn let out a satisfied chuckle, then walked further, pacing back and forth in the room without saying a single word. His eyes scanned the group, like he was trying to look for more targets.

“I see old faces, new faces,” he finally began speaking. “For those of you who do not know me, you will get to know me—my name is Commander Jorn.”

His voice carried no warmth, nothing. “I’m not your dad, I’m not your silly commander from back home, I’m not Rochwall,” he spoke the name with a slight disgust, “I’m not here to hold your hand, or be your friend.”

The vibe in the room had shifted tremendously from the last training. This wasn’t like Rochwall’s class at all, where we could slack off and sit on our fat asses. With Commander Jorn, there was a clear line between student and teacher, and it was clear that he expected full control.

After pacing back and forth for a while, he stopped in front of me for a second time. I swallowed hard, trying to hold his gaze while preparing for whatever harsh words he would throw in my direction.

Luckily, he turned halfway, and just kept walking.

“I’m here to break you, to make you the best of the best,” he said, his tone harsh. “The Elite team is expected to protect this school, and we can’t do that with a bunch of weaklings.”

“In any case of threat, you will be on the frontline and no one else, because that’s what you’re here for,” he said. He stopped in front of someone else, giving them the same hard look he had given me, then continued his pace again.

“Here in my training room, I got three simple rules.”

I held my breath, afraid to move.

“One,” he said, his tone cold, “you show up on time. Doors close at the start of class—so don’t bother trying to get in if you’re late.”

“Two,” he continued, “it’s all for one, one for all. This team rises and falls together. If one of you makes a mistake, everyone pays the price.”

The pressure was already too much for me. One stupid mistake, and we’d all feel the consequences. I glanced at the others, realizing that my mistakes—and I knew it would only be a matter of time—could pull everyone down.

“Three,” he spoke with a piercing gaze, “there’s one voice that matters here, and it’s mine. If you think you can speak back or challenge authority, there’s the door—walk through it and don’t come back.”

A chill ran down my spine. So basically, he was the boss around here, and if you didn’t agree—you could fuck yourself.

“I don’t care if your dad is an Alpha, royal, or some well-respected individual in your pack,” he said. “Here in my training room, I’m the king. If they got a problem with that, you can tell them to come and see me.”

He eyed the room, daring anyone to speak, but everyone knew better. Just as he said, even Kylan, and all the others from high and mighty families knew better.

For the first time, it hit me just how different this training would be. This man was ruthless.

“Mavis!” Commander Jorn called out, moving in front of her.

She was one of the senior girls who had already been on the team for several years. “Yes, sir!” she straightened.

“Explain to the new recruits why I will challenge you physically before I’ll even give you the chance to shift.”

“It’s because shifting is a privilege, and not a shortcut,” she addressed us. “He wants to see what we’re made of without relying on our wolf—to prove we have the strength, mind, and endurance to earn that advantage.”

Commander Jorn gave a nod of approval. “Thank you, Mavis.”

Shifting was a privilege...for many, but not for me. The only privilege on my side had always been my healing powers.

I wasn’t a good shifter, and I never had the best condition. Esther saw something in me that I didn’t, but all the signs showed I wasn’t cut for the Elite Team, but it wouldn’t be too long before the others would find out.

“To the old recruits, we’ll pick up from where we left last year,” Commander spoke. “To the new recruits—you might’ve made the team, but I’m going to make you wish you hadn’t.”

My heart sank.

“Now everyone, give me 30 laps! Go, go, go!”

Everyone scattered, breaking into a sprint around the training room while I just followed behind.

I didn’t know how I did it, but I had somehow managed to complete the rounds.

By the time we reached the core exercises, sweat was nearly dripping from my face, and I already felt like I was dying.

Every muscle in my legs and arms screamed for me to stop, but I had to keep going.

I didn’t want to be that one person, the weak link.

Even now as we began planking, my arms were trembling—but I couldn’t stop. I tried to keep my balance, but the burn in my core felt terrible.

Why didn’t I take Nate’s advice and do some extra training?

I suddenly began regretting every hour I’d spent focusing on Kylan, and Mom’s friend instead of myself. Trying to distract myself, I closed my eyes, trying to hum a song in my head, anything to take my mind off the ache in my muscles.

Then I heard footsteps stop in front of me, and knew it could only be one person. Nervously, I glanced up for a second into Commander Jorn’s hazel eyes before quickly looking back down.

“Muscles, Pixie. Build some,” Commander spoke in a mocking tone.

Pixie?

My tired brain struggled to process his words. Do I really look like a fairy to him?

My arms trembled even harder.

“Come on, three more minutes, Pixie!” he barked. “If your body touches the floor, we’re all planking again.”

Everyone groaned in unison, and I felt like shit, knowing it was meant for me. One drop, and they’d all kill me.

Commander Jorn clapped his hands loudly. “Yes, yes, yes! One for all, and all for—”

Before I could fight any longer, my body gave in, and I collapsed to the floor, which was followed by even louder groans.

“Unfortunately, that’s not how Pixie feels about it,” Commander spoke, his voice dripping with sarcasm.

There was no need to raise my head to guess that everyone must’ve been glaring at me. I hated myself for dropping, I hated myself for having no condition—I just hated myself.

The whispers and complaints from the team added to my self-hatred.

As I looked up, I saw Commander dropping his shoulders dramatically. “You guys know the rules.”

Once again, everyone began complaining, only more loudly this time.

Commander stomped his foot, silencing them instantly. “Hey! What did I say about talking back?”

I flinched at his loud tone, and just when I thought I couldn’t feel any worse, Commander spoke up.

“Captain Kylan?” he called out.

“Yes, sir?” Kylan responded.

My stomach turned as I dared to glance over at him, wondering what Commander Jorn was going to ask.

Commander looked around the room. “It’s one for all, all for one. But the majority of that all feels they shouldn’t pay for Pixie’s mistake.”

Shocked, I turned to look at Kylan. He met my gaze with an unreadable expression, then looked back at Commander.

Commander smirked, glancing between us. “So, Captain,” he said. “will you choose punishment for one, or for all? Will you all be planking an extra five minute to make up for this weakling, or will you force your weakest link not to be weak anymore?”

I didn’t have high hopes. He had been so harsh to me before—so why would he protect me now?

Kylan looked at me again, and I stared into his eyes, almost pleading for him to spare me. His eyes which were usually cold, and hateful—suddenly softened. It caught me off guard, but it also gave me an unexpected flicker of hope.

I hoped—no, I prayed—that maybe, just maybe, he wouldn’t let me get punished...

“Punishment for one, sir,” Kylan stated, looking the other way so he wouldn’t have to meet my eyes.

The words hit me like a truck. I felt my heart sink, and a wave of disappointment washed over me. But then again, what else had I expected?

Commander smirked. “Great. Pixie, after class, I want you to run twenty full laps around the track.”

“Yes, sir,” I gulped.

“And, Captain,” he added, “you’ll be supervising her. I’ll give you a curfew pass—you’ll be needing it with this one, trust me.”

“Yes, sir,” Kylan replied, without hesitation.

My mind spun as I tried to process the punishment. Twenty laps? I could barely imagine doing ten. By the time I finished, it would probably be past midnight. On top of that, Kylan would be supervising me.

All of this was a disaster.

Unfortunately, the rest of the training wasn’t any easier. It was filled with more exercises, sprints, drills—and by the end of it I felt like a living corpse.

It wasn’t just the training, but also the fact that Commander had a bullying kink, and continued including Kylan, which had somehow escalated my lap count from twenty to sixty.

Sixty...

The number was too cruel for words.

As soon as training ended, I dragged myself over to the track with Kylan by my side. We didn’t exchange a single word, although I had plenty to say—and most of it would not be nice.

I was furious with him. He had the power to save me, to spare me from this, and instead, he had made the choice to let me suffer. It felt personal, it had to be—like he wanted to humiliate me for obvious reasons.

I started my laps at nine and didn’t finish until midnight, stopping many times to catch my breath or stretch my aching legs—all while Kylan observed me from a distance, without a single word of encouragement.

I knew he was judging me, and it only made me angrier. By the time I finished my laps, I was so exhausted I could barely see straight.

When I finally reached the dorm, drenched in sweat, all I wanted was to crawl into bed and sleep for a week straight. As I closed the door behind me, the last thing I expected was to hear the sound of the fridge slamming shut.

Someone appeared from around the corner, and it was Chrystal.

Seeing who it was, I tried to ignore her and headed toward my room, hoping to escape, but she quickly stepped in front of me. There was a cold stare in her eyes, and I just knew some bullshit was about to spill from her lips.

Nothing unusual for her.

“I don’t know how many times I need to tell you to stay away from my people,” she sneered, nearly stabbing her finger into my chest, “but you need to stay the hell away from my brother, and especially Kylan, before I scratch your eyes out, you dirty, disgusting little pup slut!”

These Lyperians sure were creative with their insults...

I was too tired to react, too drained to respond—so I just stayed silent, my eyes probably looking dead as I stared into her icy ones. Realizing she wouldn’t be getting a reaction out of me, she huffed loudly and stormed off, slamming the door behind her.

At last, I let out a deep breath, throwing back my head in exhaustion.

Wasn’t Starlight Academy just amazing?