

Chapter 193

Ava stood and looked at her coach as if she would miraculously see the solutions to her problems in his eyes. But the coach stepped aside and kept his head lowered.

Though her wolf was calm now, she felt more alert. She could hear the quickened heartbeats of the other students without trying and knew it was her wolf allowing her in, maybe so they could both stay alert. She walked out of the bleachers towards the president of the academy and remembered to keep her head down. To remain unthreatening.

“You’re all doing excellent work,” Mr. Hansson said to the class, and then he turned to leave.

She could feel the relief from everyone in the class. But would it be short-lived? It was nice that her father and Zeke had faith that she wouldn’t buckle under the pressure and give in to this man, but if she came to that point where she had to choose their lives over everyone else. She didn’t know if she deserved their trust.

She followed Mr. Hansson and sensed the three councilors following behind her. She cleared her mind because she knew Mr. Patrick’s

protective magic required her to control her emotions to be more effective.

Mr. Hansson said nothing as they walked down the hallway. He started whistling and had his hands in his pockets, as if this was truly a day to celebrate for him. And when they walked out of the doors, he looked up at the sky and smiled.

“This day will go down in our history as the day that changed everything,” Mr. Hansson said.

Dread filled her stomach.

Had she been wrong to trust them? Had she fought her wolf and lay there while they had found a way to break her bond with Zeke?

Her heart started to pound. She was a fool. A gullible fool.

“Oh, don’t worry. Ava. I can hear your little heart pitter–pattering, but you don’t need to be afraid. You’re on the good side of history because today. I learned I can trust you despite everything. You will do as you’re told.”

Because she’d let her mate die? Because they weren’t true mates after all?

She risked a glance at Mr. Hansson, and her fear must have shown in her eyes.

“I saw a chance today, and I took it. Do you know where your mate is?”

Was he alive? That was all she wanted to hear.

“Come.”

He started walking again towards the Administration block, and that was when she noticed all the guards lined up down the streets. He'd made sure he was protected in come to see her, but he hadn't needed this before. Was Mr. Patrick right? Did the forest affect him, too, the longer he was here? Mr. Hansson hadn't been on campus nearly as long as Mr. Patrick, so he couldn't be affected already. Could he?

Someone nudged her gently from behind and made her start walking.

“Your mate went on a rampage today,” Mr. Hansson said. “He killed several people.”

What?

She felt Zeke's anger but hadn't thought he would do that.

“And the fact that this is news to you also proves my point,” Mr. Hansson said. “That lay by the forest, I masked your bond, but I felt like somehow you were still connected. So when Ezekiel defied my guards today, I sent them back up to stop him. I had to be sure, see. But he went through several of them before he could be subdued.”

“What did you do to him?” she asked quickly.

Subdued, to this insane man, could mean anything. Her heart twisted again as she waited for the answer.

“Oh, he’s fine. You’ll see him in a moment,” Mr. Hansson said. “But the moment he went down, I expected you to massacre the whole school in a bid to find him. I thought this would be a bleak day for the academy, the day I proved that somehow two demon wolves had been fated. Killing you would have ruined all my plans.”

So Andrei and Iulia had been telling the truth. They had saved her.

She resisted the urge to turn back and look at them as she walked next to Mr. Hansson. She didn’t know what this meant. Were they allies? Or were they just looking out for them because they liked them, not because they would ever turn on Mr. Hansson?

“All I’d have had to do was kill Zeke while he was vulnerable, and that would have taken care of you, too. They don’t teach you about True Mate bonds because it’s something that never happens anymore, thank fuck. Everyone’s better off without that bond. People should be allowed to pick who they want to be with. Like you and Ezekiel did,” Mr. Hansson continued.

She could see the Administration block coming up ahead. Where had they put Zeke? In Isolation?

“Two good things came out of this experiment today, so I can’t complain. I proved you’re just an ordinary, murderous, blood-thirsty wolf with no crazy bond enhancing you. And Zeke murdered some

people, which means if he doesn't accept a position on the Council, he would have to pay for that crime, the same as you."

What did he mean when he said the bond enhanced them? Was that why Mr. Patrick said that was their advantage?

"You're rather calm for someone who just found out you have no choice," Mr. Hansson said.

"You already showed us we have no choice," she pointed out.

"Touche," Mr. Hansson laughed. "But you have to admit I had every right to check. No one can command the creatures in my forest, but somehow, you did that, and you also managed to create some soldiers for me. You've just found your wolf; imagine what you'll be like when you're Diego's age. And you'll use all that strength for the good of the Council."

She felt something stir in her and realized it was Zeke. The bond felt a little muffled, as if it had to strengthen again, but she started to sense his confusion and then his anger. The closer she got to the building, the stronger those emotions became.

"We're just in time," Mr. Hansson said.

And the Administration building doors smashed open to reveal a furious, red-eyed Zeke,

She couldn't stop herself this time; she ran the rest of the way and jumped into his arms when he reached the bottom step, soothing herself

as much as him. She could have lost him. She could have trusted the wrong people and lost him. This wasn't something she could allow to happen again. She had to be better. She had to learn to trust herself.

“What a wonderful reunion,” Mr. Hansson said as he came past them and walked up the stairs.

Andrei caught her eyes as he and the other councilors followed, and she suddenly felt like this wasn't over.

“Shall we complete this family reunion?” Mr. Hansson said.

The doors opened again, and two guards came out. They were dragging her father between them.

“No!” she screamed.

All the guards who had been at the front formed a wall that stopped her from going further. She felt her fury rise and growled in warning at all of them. Zeke was her mate, but her bond with her father was just as strong. She would tear all of them apart. She would-

“Ava!”

The sound of her father's voice pulled her focus back to him. He was now standing on his own and looking right at her.

“I'm okay,” he said.

“Of course you’re okay,” Mr. Hansson said. “My apologies for the way they mistreated you. I assure you, you will be perfectly safe in one of the guesthouses from now on. I just wanted you to hear the good news first.”

The good news?

She looked at the satisfied look on the Head of the Council’s face.

“Your daughter and her mate are the newest members of the Council. And tomorrow, they will bring in five people to join my guards.”