

12~ I'll Join The Human Academy

Zane's Point Of View

I stood between them like a thread about to snap, stretched so tightly I thought my bones might break just from breathing.

On one side: Ronan. Power coiled beneath his stillness, golden eyes hard as metal, sharp jaw clenched like he wanted to grind the whole damn world into dust.

On the other side: Miles. Relaxed, leaning slightly toward me, fingertips brushing my sleeve in a way that looked casual, but wasn't.

The tension wasn't just thick, it was suffocating. And everyone was watching.

I felt like I was standing on the edge of a blade. Choose wrong, and I wouldn't just fall, I'd be cut to pieces on the way down.

I swallowed hard, throat dry. The whole courtyard was holding its breath, waiting.

Waiting for me.

"Zane," Ronan finally spoke, his voice rougher than usual, low like a growl dragged from deep in his chest. "You don't belong with them. You know that."

With them.

My pulse jumped.

Them.



Humans. Half-bloods. The “weaker” academy. The outcasts. I was an outcast, wasn’t I?

But I thought about Miles. His steady presence. His quiet voice in my ear when I’d been bleeding on the ground, when no one else had come for me.

I looked back at Ronan, searching for something... anything, that told me this was more than pride. That this was more than him just trying to win some twisted power game.

But all I saw was control. Ice layered over frustration, over something hotter that he wouldn’t name.

Not here. Not now. Maybe not ever. And I was so tired of chasing people who pretended not to care until they lost me.

I forced myself to breathe evenly, even though I felt like I might shatter into glass right there in front of them all.

“I’ll join the Human Academy,” I said finally, my voice soft but steady.

Miles smiled gently, like the sun cutting through rain. “Good choice.” A beat of silence hit the crowd. Murmurs. Shock. Confusion.

But the loudest reaction was the silence coming from Ronan.

His eyes flashed wide, just for a heartbeat, shock. Not disbelief that I’d said it... but disbelief that I’d said it knowing what we were. Knowing we were mates.

Then, in the next breath, it was gone. Masked. Hidden. Perfect Alpha composure again, like none of this mattered at all.

“It doesn’t matter,” he said coldly, folding his arms across his chest like



a gate slamming shut. "Pick whatever pathetic group you want."

But I saw the slight tremor in his jaw. Saw the faint twitch of his fingers.

It did matter.

Mark, not missing an opportunity to humiliate me, scoffed. "Doesn't change anything. Talent means nothing if you can't fight. You'll see in a month, mixed-blood. The freshmen duel will sort out who belongs here, and who's just wasting everyone's time."

The other students snickered, confidence returning now that the moment of shock had passed.

But I didn't care about them.

I only cared about the weight in my chest, the ache of wanting someone to choose me and the pain of knowing he wouldn't.

Miles let the taunts roll past like smoke drifting over polished stone.

"They're just jealous," he murmured softly, steering me away with a hand light on my back, like I might fall if he wasn't careful. "Let them bark."

Miles escorted me across the academy grounds, through winding halls of smooth stone and carved archways, past windows with colored glass filtering fractured sunlight across the polished floors. The noise of the crowd faded with every step we took.

Finally, we stopped at a tall dormitory building that looked newer than the ancient structures surrounding it. Sleek. Quiet. Tucked away from the noisy student plazas.

Miles turned toward me, smile softening again. "This is your new



dorm," he said gently. "It's quiet here. The others won't bother you."

I nodded numbly, the ache of everything still twisting under my ribs.

Miles studied me for a long second, then leaned closer. "If you ever need anything... find me. I'm on the top floor. Always."

For some reason, that made something sharp flicker behind my ribs, sharp and warm all at once. I swallowed past the knot in my throat. "Thank you."

"Of course," he murmured.

He lingered for a second longer, his gaze dropping briefly to my mouth, like he wanted to say something more, or maybe do something more, but then he pulled away and gave me that same lazy smile.

I stood in front of the door to my new dorm, everything quiet now except for the hammering in my chest.

I'd made my choice.

But the ache of Ronan's furious, silent stare still followed me like a ghost. And deep down, I didn't know if I'd won anything or just started a war.

The room felt quiet after Miles left, almost too quiet, like a sharp inhale that hadn't been exhaled yet.

I stood there for a long second, staring at the smooth wooden floor, before I finally moved toward the narrow bed tucked against the far wall.

I dropped onto the edge of the bed, elbows on my knees, and took a slow breath. My hands still trembled faintly, adrenaline leaking out of my system like a slow bleed.



I didn't even know what I felt anymore.

Anger. Shame. Relief. Confusion. All of it mixing, swirling like storm clouds barely holding together.

I was still replaying Ronan's face in my head, shock, fury, that dangerous flicker of something possessive when the doorknob rattled.

I shot upright immediately, muscles tense, body stiff as stone.

The door creaked open.

A head popped through, framed by messy brown hair, a wide grin, and bright green eyes like sunlit grass.

"Whoa... sorry! Didn't mean to scare you," the boy said quickly, hands raised in surrender. "Didn't know anyone was in here already."

I blinked, shoulders staying tense, but something about his awkward smile softened the instinct to snap.

"Who are you?" I asked warily.

The boy stepped fully into the room, kicking the door shut behind him with his heel like he owned the place. "Charlie. Second year. Or, well... kind of a second-year." He rubbed the back of his neck sheepishly. "Technically, I'm repeating first-year stuff because, y'know, academics? Not exactly my thing. Apparently, you have to pass written exams, not just punch people really well. Shocking, right?"

His grin was lopsided and self-deprecating, warm without being pushy.

I didn't know whether to trust him yet. After what happened in my old pack, trusting anyone felt like handing them a knife and turning around.



But something about the way he stood, hands open, relaxed, no sharpness in his scent calmed me slightly.

"I'm Zane," I said cautiously.

Charlie blinked, then whistled softly. "You're Zane?" Immediately, I tensed again. "What about it?"

"Dude." He stepped closer, excitement lighting up his entire face. "You're the Zane. The whole campus has been talking about it nonstop... two academy presidents fighting over you at awakening day? You're basically a legend already."

My throat dried. "I don't want to be a legend."

"Yeah, well," Charlie shrugged, "too bad. You're famous now."

I opened my mouth, but didn't know what to say to that, but Charlie's eyes didn't have mockery in them. Just genuine curiosity.

He flopped down on the bed across from mine, legs sprawled awkwardly, one arm draped behind his head like he was settling in for a nap. "So what's your deal? You a wolf or a mage?"

I hesitated. "Both."

Charlie's brows lifted. "Damn. No wonder everyone's weird about you."

I frowned. "Weird how?"

"Y'know... half the academy wants to recruit you, the other half's scared of you, and a third half wants to date you."

I blinked. "That's not how math works."



Charlie grinned. "That's exactly what the professors said on my last exam." Despite myself, a sharp breath of something like laughter escaped me.

Charlie beamed like he'd just won a gold medal. "See? I'm great company."

I shook my head, but my shoulders felt lighter. For the first time in days, I didn't feel like I was about to break apart.

Charlie pushed himself upright suddenly, eyes gleaming. "Wait... you've got a suit for the ball, right?"

My brain stuttered. "What ball?"

Charlie's entire face froze.

"You're kidding."

"No."

"The Freshman Ball!" he said, voice nearly cracking with disbelief. "Tomorrow night! Big deal, huge tradition, mandatory for first-years unless you're unconscious or actively on fire."

My stomach dropped. "I didn't... no one told me."

Charlie's jaw dropped open in theatrical offense. "No one told you?!"

big sale: 100 bonus free fou you

get it