

Chapter 15: Bullied

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So, this is what a classroom looks like with students.

And now, I am part of them. I'm also a student now.

I glanced at my classmates. They were chattering and busy—until the teacher walked in, with me trailing behind her.

"Everyone, quiet down," she said firmly, then turned to me with a small nod. "This is Elira Wynter. She'll be joining Class C starting today."

Elira Wynter.

I'm not a Vane in this school. I don't carry the name—maybe that's what Darius wanted. And why did I even think I'd be using his name?

Of course, that's what he wanted.

He doesn't want me to be known as his wife.

An omega, married to a Lycan king?

That would be a disgrace to him.

I stood stiffly at the front of the room, hands tucked behind my back, my stomach tying into knots as I stared at the students.

They weren't around my age—I knew that.

But they weren't kids either.

The headmaster told me I did well on the exam, so they placed me among the seniors.

Some were curious.

Some judging.

And a few are indifferent.

The silence stretched longer than it should have.

The teacher gave me a subtle glance. "Would you like to introduce yourself, Miss Wynter?"

I nodded, even though my throat felt tight. "I—uhm..."

Just speak.

"I'm Elira Wynter," I began quietly. "This is my first time attending a real school, so... I may be behind, but I'll do my best to learn. That's all."

I kept my head down but forced myself not to shrink onto the floor.

A few whispers fluttered around the room.

One student coughed.

Another leaned toward their seatmate and murmured something, followed by a soft snicker.

The teacher cleared her throat, and the room straightened up again.

"You'll be seated next to Cassiel," she said, pointing to an empty seat in the second row.

I walked over quickly, trying not to trip over my own shoes. I didn't even look at the boy beside me—Cassiel, I think the teacher said—though I felt his eyes flick toward me once before returning to his book.

"Open your textbooks to page 87," the teacher said, and just like that, the lesson began.

I sat there, notebook open, my pen shaking slightly in my hand.

But I wrote.

Slowly.

Awkwardly.

And when the teacher asked a question... I raised my hand.

Even if my voice cracked when I answered.

Because I was here now.

Not in chains.

Not in shadows.

But at a desk.

And that meant something.

Even if no one else saw it... I did.

The bell rang, signaling the start of the break.

Most students stood from their seats, laughing and chatting as they spilled into the hallway or gathered in small groups inside the classroom.

I remained seated, unsure what to do or where to go. I guessed I'd have to wait for Dianne. She came in with me but excused herself to go to the bathroom.

I was still clutching my notebook when the boy beside me turned slightly.

"Hey," he said.

I blinked and looked at him. He was the one I'd been told to sit next to... Cassiel, I think.

"I'm Cassiel," he said, resting one arm casually on the back of his chair. "Just figured I should introduce myself."

"Oh," I murmured. "Elira. But... you already know that."

He nodded, and then his eyes drifted to my hand resting on the desk. His gaze lingered on the silver ring around my finger.

"That's familiar," he remarked, voice light but with something sharper underneath. "You're married?"

The question caught me off guard. My throat tightened, the words sticking before they could form.

"I—"

"Elira, right?" a voice cut in smoothly.

I turned.

Three girls stood just behind me, their polished shoes in perfect line, uniforms crisp and tailored like they'd been born wearing them. Their smiles were wide.

Too wide.

Cassiel didn't look at them. He just sat back, arms folded, like he was used to this.

"We're heading to the lounge, Cassiel," one of them said, her voice honeyed. "Come with us?"

Then her eyes slid to me. "How about you, girl? Want to come with us?"

I stood quickly, suddenly feeling too warm under their gaze. There was something cold behind their smiles—something that twisted my stomach. It was familiar.

"No, thank you," I murmured, wanting to leave before this turned into

something else.

But the moment I stepped past them, my foot caught.

Or rather—someone made sure it did.

Pain shot through my knee as I stumbled forward, hitting the floor with a soft thud. Gasps and quiet laughter followed, but I kept my eyes on the ground, my hands stinging.

"Elira," Cassiel said, rising. "Are you okay?"

I nodded quickly, brushing the dust off my skirt. I didn't take his hand.

"I'm fine," I whispered, though the heat crawling up my neck said otherwise.

I could feel it—eyes watching me, judging, waiting to see if I'd cry or shout.

But I didn't.

I just walked away, one step at a time.

Even if my knees shook.

Even if I wanted to disappear.

Because I promised myself—I would get through this.

*

The final bell rang.

I took a breath.

Despite what happened during the break, I kept my head down and tried to ignore those girls.

I was used to bullying, after all. It wasn't anything new.

Though Cassiel had been oddly nice, he hadn't said much during the rest of the class, but he didn't laugh or whisper behind his hand.

"Maybe you should go to the clinic," he commented as we walked down the hallway. "You're limping."

I glanced down.

My knee was still red and bruised, slightly swollen beneath the fabric of my skirt.

Dianne walked with us, holding her bag tightly. She nodded in

agreement but suddenly shook her head—as if remembering something.

I already knew what it meant.

"No," I said softly, smiling at Cassiel. "It's okay. I'll just put some cold compress on it at the house. It doesn't hurt that bad."

"Sure, it doesn't hurt that bad," he repeated sarcastically, then exaggerated my limp with a mock hobble.

I blinked at him, startled... and almost laughed. Almost.

I opened my mouth to say something back, but then it happened.

A scream.

A loud, guttural scream echoed down the corridor.

It wasn't just any scream—it was filled with panic. Terror.

All three of us turned toward the sound.

Another scream followed. Then chaos.

I ran—or tried to—despite my knee. Students gathered near the main stairwell, their faces pale and voices rising in confusion.

Then I saw her.

One of the girls who had bullied me earlier—her body engulfed in flames.

Literal flames.

Her blazer burned like dry paper, fire licking up her sleeves and catching in her hair.

She screamed again, stumbling into a wall, clawing at her uniform, at her skin, at anything.

Gasps echoed.

Someone shouted for water.

Another student yelled to call the guards.

Cassiel grabbed my arm instinctively and pulled me back from the smoke and heat.

"Get back!" he told both Dianne and me. "Now!"

The hallway blurred—heat waves shimmered against the windows,

students pushing, scrambling to move away.

The girl fell to her knees, flames still dancing around her despite the efforts of someone trying to smother them with a jacket.

I froze.

This couldn't be real.

It wasn't just fire.

There was something... wrong about it.

The color of the flames wasn't natural—too blue at the center, almost ethereal. And the way they clung to her like they were alive...

Like they wanted to hurt her.

My pulse roared in my ears. I felt Dianne's hand grip mine tightly.

I heard those voices again.

"She's cursed. Don't go near her."

"A curse."

I swallowed hard as I met the girl's eyes.

The moment before she collapsed, she looked straight at me.

Like she knew something.

Like I had something to do with this.

But I didn't.

I swear—I didn't.



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