

CHAPTER 4

The tension between Holly and me was thick in the hallway. Dante stepped back as Holly shot a glance at her friends, silently hoping one of them would come to her rescue. But no one did. They all avoided the situation, staring at the ground and taking a step back.

Holly turned to face me, and even though my fingers throbbed painfully, I stood my ground, glaring defiantly to show her I wouldn't back down. The pain faded into the background as I lunged at her, driving my knee into her and tackling her against the lockers. I grabbed her head and slammed it against the metal surface before seizing her shoulders and delivering a knee to her stomach. As she doubled over, I struck her in the face, pulling her back up to confront me.

Her face was already smeared with blood, but I followed through with a headbutt that sent her crashing to the floor, half-conscious. Just then, a teacher's booming voice rang out, cutting through the chaos. He pushed through the crowd that had gathered, taking in the scene before him.

"Holly started it, sir. She slammed Madison's hand in the locker," Dante quickly jumped in to defend me.

He walked over to take a look at my hand and immediately saw that my fingers were definitely broken. The expression on Holly's face made it clear that none of us would be getting patched up by the nurse today.

"Alright, Dante, get Madison to the hospital. You girls, help Holly. I'll notify the principal, and he will want to speak with all of you," the teacher directed.

So, Dante and I made our way down the hallway while Holly's friends struggled to lift her off the floor.

At the hospital, they made sure to keep Holly and me in separate rooms, far apart from each other. Dante stuck around with me, and I suspected part of the reason was that he was glad to skip out on class—school was never his favorite place to be.

But not long after our arrival, Alpha Gideon walked into my room.

"Alpha," Dante greeted, standing up and giving a respectful nod.

"Dante, could you please give Madison and me a moment alone to discuss something?" Alpha Gideon requested, his voice steady and authoritative.

"Of course," Dante replied, the weight of the moment clear on his face as he turned to leave the room.

As the door clicked shut behind him, a mix of apprehension and determination washed over me. "Alpha, I sincerely apologize for my outburst earlier. I know I let my emotions get the better of me, but you understand I can't allow anyone to push me around or bully me," I stated, my voice gaining steadiness as I met his intense gaze.

Alpha Gideon raised a hand, signaling for me to pause. He wasn't being harsh; he simply wanted me to hold back on my defense for a moment.

"I'm not here to reprimand you," he said, his voice steady and calm.

"You're not?" I raised an eyebrow in surprise.

"No. I just wanted to check in. How are things going at home?" he asked, his eyes searching mine for an honest answer.

"I'm sure you already know the answer," I replied, my tone edged with a mix of resentment and resignation. "That's why you're asking."

"I got wind of a fight last night," Alpha Gideon stated, concern creeping onto his face. "Someone overheard you yelling that she hit you."

"Yeah, it's nothing. Really, I can handle it," I insisted, trying to brush off the gravity of the situation.

"If you ever need help, just reach out," he said firmly, his voice carrying a weight of authority. "I won't tolerate that kind of behavior in my pack."

"I know, sir. Thank you," I assured him, feeling my resolve strengthen. "I'll come to you if I need help."

"Alright, you don't need to explain about Holly. I know how she is — unpredictable and often cruel. I believe you were just defending yourself. She'll be the one facing consequences today," he said, his expression softening just a bit.

"That eases my mind," I replied, a small smile tugging at my lips, which brought out a chuckle from him.

"By the way, when did you last speak to your mother?" he asked, shifting to a more personal topic.

"Sunday. We talk every week. Why?" I sensed an urgency in his question.

"I've been in touch with her this week. There have been some troubling developments in your pack," he explained, his brow furrowing with concern.

"I noticed a shift in command not too long ago. I'm guessing that i****t did something to stir the pot," I said, frustration bubbling up inside me.

"Well, I'll let your mother fill you in on everything happening," he said, his tone turning serious. "But just so you know, there's a good chance you might be going home soon."

The gravity of the conversation started to sink in, and I couldn't help but notice that my mother had reached out to the Alpha about me.

"Am I really going to want to go home after all of this?" I questioned, sitting on the edge of my bed, feeling the weight of the decision heavy on my shoulders.

"I can't say for certain, but you should get in touch with your mother as soon as you can. She has crucial information to share, though she seems a bit unsure about how to bring it up," he replied, concern etched on his face.

"Alright, I'll make it a point to call her today," I promised, though a flutter of anxiety stirred in my stomach at the thought of that conversation.

"Alright then," he said, his tone shifting as he stood up, ready to leave the room.

"Alpha Gideon, why did I sense a shift in command a while ago?" I asked, my curiosity sparked by the subtle yet undeniable change I had noticed.

"That's a conversation you need to have with your mother," he replied, his tone serious, as if the matter carried more weight than I understood.

"And if I decide I want to stay with the Blood Howl pack? Is that even feasible?" I pressed, feeling a glimmer of hope amidst my confusion.

"Well, since you've never been officially initiated into the pack, that isn't an option right now. I can't risk igniting a conflict with my pack over personal loyalties," he explained, the seriousness of his words lingering in the air. I nodded in understanding, the reality of my situation settling in as he left my room, leaving me to face the choices ahead.

I spent most of the morning at the hospital while they put a cast on my hand and part of my arm, and I still needed to wait for the painkillers. When they finally released me, Dante decided to head home since returning to school didn't make much sense. I walked to the park and took a seat on a swing, pulling out my phone to try to call my mother.

She didn't pick up the first few times, and I was starting to panic. But when she finally answered, a wave of relief washed over me.

"Mom, what's going on?" I blurted out, my voice rising more than I meant it to.

"Honey, just take a breath," she replied calmly.

"How can I? Alpha Gideon just told me he's been in touch with you all week, but I haven't heard a thing. What's happening?" I pressed.

"A lot has gone down here at the pack. I'm sure you felt a shift in command," she said.

"Yeah, I'm still part of the pack, so I noticed. So what?" I shot back.

"That little bastard Atticus was starting fights with other packs just for kicks. He felt invincible, like he could do whatever he wanted. Well, he found out the hard way. He picked a fight with the Iron Fang Pack," she explained.

"Alpha Axel. The devil himself," I said, my voice barely a whisper.

"He's taken over our pack. He's our new Alpha now," she stated matter-of-factly.

"Oh my Goddess," I gasped, my heart nearly stopping at the dreadful news.

Alpha Axel was merciless. He took pleasure in making examples of people like Atticus, and Atticus had walked right into his trap, handing Axel our pack on a silver platter. What a f*****g i****.



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