

Wards Down

Elowen POV

Pulling up to the school in Daxon's matte black fancy jacked up truck with his scent wrapped around me like a damn safety blanket should've made me feel self conscious.

It didn't. I felt like a goddess on a warpath. Marked. Powerful. Feral as hell. The moment we stepped out hand in hand, jaws hit the concrete. I could hear the pack link exploding with gossip as we walked toward the front doors like the cover of a supernatural romance novel.

Taya was already waiting, practically vibrating with excitement. "Oh. My. Goddess," she gasped as we approached. "You two look like a goddamn Packflix special. The hot broody alpha and his mate who could kill him in his sleep."

She wedged herself between us, looping her arm through mine like she'd just been cast as my sassy sidekick. "Please tell me everything. No, wait. Don't. I want to guess. Did you tackle him? Did you shift mid argument and have wild feral sex under the moonlight?!"

"...I mean," I said with a smirk, "you're not wrong."

She squealed. Behind us, Rylen and Jace fell into step like backup dancers who missed rehearsal.

"Damn, El," Jace muttered, eyeing me up and down. "You look like a whole

new species."

"She is," Daxon growled, low and proud, his hand resting on my lower back like a damn brand.

Taya snorted and flipped her hair. "Gods, now I'm jealous. My birthday's in a week. What if I find my mate and he's, like... a tax accountant or something."

Rylen, who'd been eyeing her with the subtlety of a horny golden retriever, leaned closer and took a long, very obvious inhale.

"Do you mind?" she snapped, shoving his face away. "I don't care if you're a beta, a gamma, or a golden god, if you sniff me like a heat seeking missile again, I'll rearrange your nose."

Jace snorted, and Daxon chuckled under his breath. Rylen turned red and grumbled in embarrassment.

"She's not wrong," I said sweetly. "Taya bites."

"Only if I'm paid," she replied with a wink.

We all cracked up, the five of us walking toward the main doors like a damn werewolf boy band plus the sassiest backup dancer ever. But inside? My stomach was still doing flips.

There were stares. Whispers. Envy and curiosity and more than one growl of jealousy. Taya and I broke off as we reached the locker wing, the boys heading toward Alpha Training.

"See you after," Daxon murmured, stealing one last kiss on my cheek before they peeled off. He didn't look back. But I felt him watching me. Always watching.

And I loved it.

"Come on, mate magnet," Taya said, grabbing my arm. "Time for Wolf Politics class, aka the 'How to Not Start a War With Vampires' hour."

I groaned. "Can I just fake a migraine?"

"Nope. We have to pretend to be responsible today."

"...Fine. But I'm not answering shit if Vaela opens her crusty mouth."

"Deal."

We pushed through the double doors and headed to class, not knowing today was going to be the calm before the absolute shitstorm. The moment I stepped into Wolf Politics, I knew that bitch was going to try me.

Vaela was already perched at her desk like some crusty knockoff Barbie, her lips curled in satisfaction and eyes locked on me like she was waiting to pounce. Her minions flanked her, Soria to the left, Clone A and Clone B in their usual brainless formation.

Taya and I took our seats two rows up, ignoring the stares and whispers, but it didn't stop the venom dripping from Vaela's tongue.

"Careful, everyone," she purred loud enough for the room to hear. "Our

little hybrid horror might spell you into kissing her boots. Isn't that right, Elowen?"

I froze mid reach for my pencil. "What the fuck did you just say?"

She tilted her head. "I mean, it makes sense. No fake ass hybrid mutt could ever land my brother. Not without... unnatural help. Maybe a little witchcraft, maybe some sex magic?"

"Vaela, shut the fuck up," Taya hissed beside me, but it was too late. My whole body tensed. Lyssira growled low and feral in my mind, and then everything snapped.

Pain lanced through my limbs as my fingers curved into claws, my bones grinding as silver fur shot down one arm. I gasped as my face half shifted, jaw lengthening, eyes glowing pure moonlight.

The classroom went dead silent. And then? All hell broke loose. Screams. Desks flying. People shoving each other to get away from me like I was some goddamn rabid beast. Even the teacher stumbled back in horror, his eyes wide as he fumbled for the panic button.

"No, no, no, no" I choked, trying to force myself back. My body was caught in limbo, half wolf, half girl, and I couldn't control it.

"EL!" Taya's hands gripped mine, grounding me. "Breathe! Just breathe! You're okay"

Before I could even start to shift back, the overhead speaker crackled to life.

"ATTENTION STAFF AND STUDENTS, SCHOOL WARDS HAVE BEEN BREACHED. INITIATE LOCKDOWN PROCEDURES. ALL STUDENTS TO SAFETY BUNKERS IMMEDIATELY. ALERT ALPHA DRAVEN. THIS IS NOT A DRILL."

The panic in the teacher's voice matched the chaos of the room. "EVERYONE, MOVE TO THE BUNKERS! STAY IN FORMATION!"

"What the fuck is happening?" I gasped, still half shifted as Taya pulled me to my feet.

"I don't know," she breathed, her eyes scanning the panicked crowd. "But that wasn't about you. Something's wrong. Really wrong!"

Then I smelled them. Not wolves. Not human. Wrong.

And in the doorway, like a gift from the goddess, Daxon appeared, flanked by Rylen and Jace, all three panting and wild eyed.

"ELI!" Daxon's voice cracked as he barreled through the crowd to get to me. "Are you okay? What the hell happened?"

"She half shifted!" someone screamed. "She's a witch!"

"I fucking knew it!"

"Elowen cursed the school!"

"ENOUGH!" Daxon snarled, the force of his Alpha power shutting the room up fast. His arms were around me in a heartbeat. "You're safe now, baby."

"We've got you."

I was shaking, my body still twitching with power that wasn't supposed to exist. The second his skin touched mine, the shift receded. Slowly and painfully, but it passed.

"We have to go," Rylen said, glancing toward the hallway. "The wards are down. Something's out there."

Jace growled. "You felt that too, right? That energy? It wasn't wolf."

Taya's face was pale. "Can someone please tell me what the actual fuck is going on?!" Rylen stepped forward and embraced her and her breathing slowed.

"Safety bunker," Daxon barked. "Now."

We ran. Down the hallway, around the corner, past screaming students and panicking teachers. All I could think about was what Vaela said. What I was.

And the fact that this breach? It felt personal.

Like someone, or something, had come for me.

Error correction of this chapter

