

Chapter 167 – Beauty and The Beta

The journey felt like it was lasting an eternity. But we had ditched Marc's car, he said, for an additional safety measure, so if Miles managed to get on our tails he'd at least be looking for the wrong car. Something I don't think

'I've ever have considered in a bid to escape. Evidently, Marc was better skilled at this sort of thing than me. But as things were, the car ride was now calm and Marc seemed at ease, which told me things were likely good

If he seemed on edge, which he had at the beginning, then I knew we had to worry. He had taken it upon himself to be the sole protector for Morgan and me right now, and he had been frequently reassuring Asher on the phone that he would be taking care of us before we cut the call.

I thought it was sweet he was so concerned about us... or maybe me. Perhaps the other day had been nothing more than an overreaction caused by a build up of emotions and a messed up mind... there was no denying my mind was messed up from all the stuff going on over the last few years! I needed to make it up to Asher when we got home.

Wow. Home?' Akira questioned with a hint of sarcasm in her tone. 'Already set then are we? Decided Autumn Valley is our home?' she was so clearly teasing, and I chose not to respond

Yet, I found myself smiling at her words. I hadn't even considered my thoughts then. But, it was my home right now, regardless of where my pack may be. However, I have to say, I felt more content in Autumn Valley Pack than I did in Lotus Shadow Pack. Happier... and more settled. Many paragraphs are missing. Read the complete book on J o=b n-I b . c (o) m . And, I think so much of that was because of Asher. The more I think about what he said on the phone, I think I do want him to speak with the Alpha. Formally take me into the pack. I just wish I had asked sooner. I have no doubt Luna Eden would have accepted without a second's thought, especially if I had explained my reasoning for leaving my home pack.

I glanced down at the buzzing phone in my hand to see a message from Harley. And I released a long breath of relief as I opened the message.

Just a quick one, 'sweetcheeks' © haha. It is Dana, here, Harley is driving, but I wanted to let you know that we are on our way back to our pack. Harl delayed that psycho as best as he could, but I didn't want to put him at risk, or at least not for too long, not with the baby on the way. He did fight valiantly though. We escaped in your Dad's car, leaving it at the packhouse, to collect our own. As we left Miles, your brother and Ellis arrived, so Harl said hopefully they had delayed him even longer or took him back to the packhouse.

It was so nice meeting you. Though I won't lie, I wish we never accepted the offer of an invite to the wedding now, but think they invited all pack members and former pack members, and Harley had wanted a chance to see you were okay, and it meant I got a chance to meet you. We will arrange something soon. Just wanted to let you know we are okay

I smiled as I read her message, so relieved they were on their way home, and they were safe. That had been weighing heavily on my mind since the moment we had left them ready to battle with Miles. I know how he fights, and it definitely is not fairly. But, the fact that Ellis and Jordan had then come along meant it was likely Miles had been taken back to the packhouse. That had to be good for us. It meant we had so much more of a chance to get back to Autumn Valley safely with no further issues. I snuggled into the seat, planning to snooze for a little while as I was more than shattered after the stress after today. I would reply to Dana and Harley when I get home...

Suddenly, I was swung into the door of the car, jerking me awake. I blinked, quickly trying to adjust my eyes, as I heard Morgan scream. "Be careful!"

"I'm trying!" Marc growled.

Through sleepy eyes I could see the fear upon Marc's face, as I saw him battling to get the car back under control. "Are you okay?" I asked, knowing it was the silliest of questions because right now the car was swerving back and forth across the road Marc appeared to have lost control of it

"Someone just appeared in front of the car. He swerved to miss them, but I think he hit something else." Morgan said, her voice trembling with nerves

My heart was pounding heavily as I looked out of the window, trying to get a glance at what Marc had hit, but could see nothing. But as I looked around, I was sure the road was familiar, this was the road to town from Autumn Valley, I was sure of it. Set deep within the forests, the road running through the middle of the trees, it felt suddenly intimidating. Imposing. We needed to get out of here.

Stopping here would not be a good idea, even with a warrior by our side. But, suddenly, the car came to a screeching halt, the engine making a strange hissing noise.

Morgan looked back at me, terror within those beautiful eyes of hers. "We will be okay, right?"

"Course you will. I am here, baby. And I can fix cars." Marc said with a shrug. "I just need to see what damage there is." And with that he stepped from the car, flipping the bonnet to go and see if he could fix the car. I truly hoped he could. I did not want to be here too long, especially with the fact it was getting darker now...

My eyes were frequently falling into the darkness of the forest either side of us, something that normally I found great calmness in, Always loving running through the trees, or relaxing as I sat enjoying the stillness and calm of the forest. The peace and quiet. The serenity. But today the forest felt nothing but dangerous.

“Should I call Asher?” I suggested to Morgan, who was still sitting in the car with me. “He may be able to come and help?” I suggested, and she nodded eagerly.

But as I glanced down at my phone, I realized there was no service. I couldn’t call him, and I think we would be too far out for Marc to use his mindlink too. Right now, we were isolated within the forest, while Marc fixed the car. My heart dropped as I looked out of the car once more, as I was certain there were eyes out in the forest watching us...

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I had chosen to drive with the rogues with me for a large portion of the journey, despite us all being fast in our wolf form, we didn’t have the resilience to maintain that speed for longer lengths of time, and a car was always going to be quicker. Plus, being in the car would keep us on the more likely route that Bailey and the others had taken. I needed to get to her and bring her back to me. The incessant calls to my phone were becoming tiresome now, but they were easy to ignore, and no doubt my father, brother and others from my pack who were attempting to call would become far more tired of attempting to contact me than I would by rejecting their calls.

I did not need to answer their calls to know what they wanted me for. They wanted me back there to deal with this mess with Kaia. They wanted me back to prevent me gaining access to Bailey. Why they suddenly felt the need to protect her after being so blindly oblivious to the s**t we put her through for so many years, I do not know. Their attention had always been so intensely focused on Jordan and I over the years, with us being the heirs to the Alpha and Beta titles, it had so easily distracted them from all else; and sweet little Morgan had a way to garner their attention too, with her being the youngest, not to mention being so demanding. Bailey was easily forgotten about; and I guess in many ways so was my brother. So this sudden need to protect her and be there for her reeked of guilt in my view

After their many calls were rejected, many messages began to pop up too I had received so many messages, like they thought I would take notice!

Miles.

This needs dealing with. Bailey is not a priority right now, this marriage is. You are risking our pack here and I will not tolerate it

Dad

Bro, :

Not cool running off on us. We are meant to be able to trust you, and you do that? Now we have to go and deal with your mess. You need to leave Bailey alone, or I will not be responsible for the s**t you have to face from me, and my Dad – likely the rest of the pack too. You chose to reject her, nobody else. You deal with the consequences. She deserves a life now – and that is a life without you!

So get your f*****g ass back here and grow the f**k up!

Jordan.

Miles.

Do not keep ignoring me. We dealt with Kaia and her father, but that does not mean we do not need you back here to sort the situation properly. You killed a man today. That cannot be ignored!

Dad!

Listen here you little s**. You think yourself the big man now, huh? All because you managed to escape? Kill some random warrior? That means little. When you are an Alpha, Miles, you should be able to do that. But here is when you prove whether you have the ability to be a f*****g man. To be a GOOD man. A GOOD Alpha. Because neither one of them runs away from their mistakes, and right now that is exactly what you are doing. You made some huge mistakes lately. Not to mention forcing a woman against her will being the sickest thing to do.

Time to step up, little boy. So, want to be the Alpha you claim you are? Get your pathetic ass back to the pack then, and leave Bailey be. Or there will be consequences.

Uncle D

I could tell from their messages not one of them could see why I was doing what I planned, they were solely focused on their own reputations and the reputation of the pack.

They did not care about how I was feeling. They did not seem to realize that for me to be the strong Alpha our pack needed. I needed that girl. I needed Bailey, and she would be coming home with me.

But, I was not going to allow them or their calls and messages to stop me from fulfilling my goal. I was going to get to Bailey, and I would be returning her to the pack, making her my mate, the way fate had initially intended. Even if I had rejected her. I now needed her. She was suitable as my mate now, and I needed the strength she could bring; and

having heard the way in which Kaid had spoken, I think I underestimated the benefits of intelligence.

Previously, Bailey's intelligence had done nothing but irritate me. Making me feel inferior to her, despite being her upcoming Alpha. She had always had the ability to talk to me in a way that made me feel stupid because of the things that she knew, without even realizing it, and I hated her for that. Despised her. Yet, seeing Kaia, I wonder if Bailey was like that as a defense mechanism. And, when I thought about it, I had seen I could easily use Bailey's intelligence to my gain in my running of the pack... in my plans to change things... whether pack members liked it or not.

"All our contacts have been contacted now." The head rogue spoke up from my side, snapping me from my over-running thoughts. Causing me to look in his direction, as he added. "They are wanting to ensure they get paid.

They not doing nothing without funds."

"Money will be provided the moment Bailey is handed over Gives them a reason to try harder to find her." I said coldly. I had no plan of allowing any sly little fuckers to try to have me over. "If they want the money, they will do as they are asked There are plenty more rogues I can ask."

He sighed before nodding, telling me he knew I was fight.

Rogues were renowned for being underhand. Doing tasks for packs for cash, usually illegal things that the pack cannot do themselves. Anything for money. "I inform them.

They spread across areas between here 'and her new pack."

I felt a deep growl slip from my lips. "That is not her new pack. Simply one she has been working at. That f*****g place will never become her new pack! My pack is her home and will always remain that way!"

The rogues within my car all looked at one another with judgmental eyes. I could only imagine what their thoughts were right now, but I did not care. They were pathetic excuses for werewolves that had no place in our werewolf community, hence being rogues. No pack wanted them, making them the lowest of the low. Worthy of nothing and no one. So they were in no position to judge me!

"A figure of speech is all." He said nervously. "But they have been told, so they will be ready to act now. All ready to look for this girl. We know car now. Now we look for her more easy. So let us go find her."

I could only hope he was right. Their attack on the security guard and this crazy fucker's ability to hack the computer system had meant he had been able to find us the information we needed to gain access to the security system to watch the camera footage

of Bailey, Morgan and her man as they arrived at the car hire shop to collect a new car. Likely thinking they were being clever. Well, I can assume they never thought I would be arriving to investigate right behind them. Gaining the information we needed was as easy as taking candy from a baby with the help of these guys.. so I can only hope now, with their assistance, the rest of the mission went my way too.

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I fidgeted uncomfortably in the backseat of the car. We seemed to have been sitting here for a lifetime! Maybe that was more to do with the fear that was lingering within me that I could not shake... and the fact that Akira was heavily unsettled, telling me something was seriously amiss right now. The sky was darkening even further now, and I was becoming more and more restless, not to mention more anxious, as we continued sitting in the car while Marc continued to mess with the engine. This was taking longer than he thought, and I was seriously beginning to question if he did in fact know what he was doing, when he said he could fix the engine.

“Maybe we would be quicker walking back?” I suggested to Morgan, who looked at me in shock.

“In the dark?” she said, and I couldn’t help but smile. Even with a wolf, Morgan had always been a little scaredy-cat. Scared of the dark, scared of the slightest loud noise... she was forever teased for it, and forever a source of amusement for it, but everyone found it incredibly endearing too.

“Well, otherwise we could be here all night!” I exclaimed, beginning to wonder how Marc was going to be able to see much at all with the shade of the trees making the sky feel even darker.

“Let us ask him.” Morgan suggested, opening her door, so I followed suit, glad of the opportunity to stretch my legs.

Marc instantly looked up. “Why are you out? I said to stay in the car, it is safer there.” He grumbled, a deep frown etched upon his face. I think he was unsettled as I was at being out here in the forest, and he was an experienced warrior; that only confirmed in my mind how dangerous of an area we were in.

“We are uncomfortable, and wondering how long you might be.” Morgan asked, walking to look at the engine, though goddess knows why. I don’t think she knew the first thing about cars, other than you put fuel in them to make them drive, and even then she usually found somebody else to do that for her!

Marc sighed deeply, as I came to lean against the side of the car nearer to them, and he looked up at me. “Hmm, not going to plan. I can’t work out what is wrong. Not to mention

one of the tires is gone. Though that is an easy repair once the engine is sorted. But, I need to sort this engine.”

“I was just saying maybe we would be better walking back... or shifting? Pack isn’t all that far is it?” I suggested, and the moment my words were out, the darkest look passed over Marc’s face. I think it is safe to say he didn’t agree with that idea.

“No.” he snapped. “You are safer here with me. Out in the forest here it is dangerous, especially at night. There have been many reports of rogues around here of late too.”

I sighed, my heart pounding, trying hard not to allow my gaze to fall upon the trees, recalling what felt like many eyes looking at us earlier... had they been rogues? That would make sense. Though why would they be watching us? And would they be tempted to attack?

“Rogues?” Morgan asked, her voice stuttering, and I knew she was as scared right now as I was. We all knew the risk of rogues, and the damage they could do. They were feared by most in packs.

“Yes, beautiful.” Marc reached for her, pulling her to him, softly kissing her upon the head as he did. “Which is why I need you to stay with me. I need to protect you both.”

I couldn’t help but smile as I looked at the two of them, as my sister looked up at her mate adoringly. It made me realize just how much I wanted to get back to Asher. I had missed him, and I wanted to put things right with him...

Suddenly there was a chorus of deep growls from either side of the road, and Marc looked up suddenly, his eyes flashed darkly as he focused upon the forest. The whole stance of his body changed as he realized the threat surrounding us, and that filled me with terror. We were in trouble. I quickly looked around, my eyes darting across the forest either side of the road, my gaze anxiously falling upon many wolves... and these wolves did not look like friendly ones...

“Shift girls, and run! Run for pack!” Marc muttered loudly, as he pulled away from Morgan and his body began to alter. “Stick together.” He added just as his body made those final changes to create the form of his strong and skilled warrior wolf.

A deep growl was emitted from Morgan as she followed in her mate’s path, transitioning into her wolf form, so I did as I was told. Knowing I had no option right now. Marc had told us how dangerous this area was, and that it was filled with rogues... and it seemed they had found us. We needed to get ourselves back to the pack, and the only way to do that was to shift. Shift then try to outrun and escape these wolves... I just hoped we had the skills to do that...

Akira wasted no time now in surging forward, that familiar sensation as my body twisted and contorted into her beautiful wolf form. I had never had to fight aggressively with

another wolf... we had trained, of course we had, that was a part of being a werewolf. We had to train regularly to ensure we were prepared for war, and to protect ourselves. But, never had I actually had to confront another wolf... not in this way, and despite the fact I knew Akira was skilled, I was still filled with fear. Fighting was not something I enjoyed. And rogues were different. They did not fight like we did...

But today, Akira seemed to have no plan to fight. No plans to use the fighting skills she has refined over the many years of training we have endured... oh no, she planned to run as quickly as she could to get us back to Autumn Valley. Get us back to Asher. I knew if I could get back to him, he would protect us; and I think Akira knew that too. Thankfully, running was something that Akira was skilled at, because it was something we regularly did together. Letting her out for long runs, building up her strength and her speed. And right now, I have never been more glad for our routine...

As Akira began to build up her speed, running as quickly as she could, I could see the wolves of Marc and Morgan ahead. Akira was following the instructions, knowing Marc had told us to stick together, obviously knowing staying together was our best option. That way, if the rogues attacked, we could assist one another in our defense, but now I could see other wolves appearing, and they were targeting each of us individually... closing in upon us...this could not end well.

Suddenly, a deep gray wolf, with spittle hanging from its mouth, ran toward Akira. Angry eyes focused intensely upon me, and Akira swiftly darted off. The need to get away was overpowering. But it took us away from my sister and Marc and a sinking feeling of dread settled in the pit of my stomach as a number more wolves appeared from around the trees, their amber eyes hungrily gazing upon me. This was not a good sign. I think I may be in trouble, because I wasn't even sure now how far we were from pack.

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I had worked tirelessly on the car. But nothing I did seemed to make a difference. Fuck knows what was wrong with it. I was increasingly aware of the rogues lingering, but I did nothing to anger them, knowing that with the number that were known to be in this area, I stood no hope of protecting the girls if they were to turn on us. It was best to continue with trying to fix the car and hope they went on their way, leaving us alone. That was what we needed...

The moment Morgan stepped from the car my wolf was going wild with apprehension. He knew it was not good. If the rogues got the scent of the girls, they were more likely to come closer... more likely to attack. That was why I had intentionally spilled some of the fuel from the can on the edge of the road to confuse their senses. The strong sense of car fuel was overwhelming for their noses, and I had hoped it would detract from the overpowering scent of the she-wolves.

Rogues do not always have many she-wolves around, putting females more at risk when around them. I did not know what they might do knowing the girls were here. I understood the girls were restless. They wanted to get home, and so did I. I had tried persistently to mindlink, but where we were was a dead spot, for both phones and my mindlink. Just slightly too far out of the range of our pack link. I needed back up... I knew that. I needed Asher. He would never forgive me if something were to happen to Bailey. Damn, I don't think I could forgive myself. That girl had been through so much already, I did not need to be the reason she came to further harm. And I would be beyond forgiveness if anything were to happen to my mate.

The moment the wolves surrounded us, I knew we were fucked. There were more of them than I realized when I had looked up. They seemed to come from everywhere, and they were looking at us with purpose. Bailey's suggestion of shifting and running back to pack was our only hope now. We had no other option. But, it was not going to be straight forward. Not with a bunch of fucking rabid rogues on our asses, desperate to get to us... desperate to get their filthy claws into us... or what was probably more likely was get their claws into the girls.

As we shifted and began to run, I could only hope the girls did as I asked and stuck together. We needed to stick together to give ourselves the strongest chance. If we didn't, then the wolves would decimate us, of that I was certain. And the moment we began picking up speed, the wolves worked to target us individually. Them working in smaller groups to separate us. My gut was instantly to protect Morgan as a wolf flew at me, my wolf biting into the flesh of the flank of a wolf coming at me... the metallic taste of blood filling my mouth...

A loud whimper from Morgan's wolf as one of the wolves targeting her dragged her down caused my wolf to growl deeply, somehow giving me an additional surge of strength to pounce forward, getting to my mate, dragging the wolf upon her away. Teeth deep in his neck as I snapped it. Only as I looked up did I realize Bailey's wolf was nowhere to be seen. In the mayhem that had been occurring she seemed to have fled, and the other wolves were retreating. I could only hope she had managed to escape them. But a sinking feeling lingered in my gut, with a question hanging in my mind: Had they specifically been targeting Bailey?!

'Morgan? You okay? We need to get to pack. Get help.' I mindlinked her, knowing we can't mindlink Bailey as she doesn't yet share our mindlink. I only wish Eden and Caleb had considered this earlier. Considered the need to keep her safe while she was in the pack, and made her part of her pack, if only a temporary one. Asher's suggestion made so much sense. That fucker of a former fated mate of hers was poison, and the more I think of it, the more I realized this whole thing reeked of him. He had likely found a way to enlist rogues to help him. He was evil enough. Fuck, he likely controlled rogues, he was that fucked up...

'Yeah. I will be okay. Mimi is injured, I think, but she will be okay. Come on.' Morgan's wolf twists herself back to standing, and I can see a large wound down her left side. Bleeding weeping out. My wolf quickly rushed forward to lick along the wound to assist in

it's healing, knowing a mate's saliva helped in that, as we made our way back to the pack. Knowing Morgan needed treatment, and in the knowledge that within pack we had back up. We could get the help there we so desperately needed to ensure Bailey was safe too.

The run to pack felt like an eternity, all the while keeping a close eye out for Bailey. So desperate to find her, but there was no sight. Asher was going to be so angry with me!

As we got a little closer to the pack I knew my mindlink would work, but at the same time I was more than a little tentative in telling him what had happened... he would never forgive me... no, I needed to do this.

'Ash?'

'Are you home? I have been waiting all fucking day! Where are you, so I can meet you?' Asher's voice sounded so excited even through the link, I knew now I was about to break his heart.

'Ash, I am sorry... ' I began.

'No. No.' Asher interrupted. 'Do not tell me she is dead Marc. I cannot lose another.' His voice is trembling.

'No.' I told him abruptly. 'But we have been attacked. She is trying to evade the rogues in the forest near the pack. The car broke down and they came for us. I tried to protect the girls. Told them to stick together, but I think she bolted as they came for her. I have tried to find her. I don't know where she is. But, the way they retreated from us tells me this was not a normal rogue attack. This was planned, Ash. I think he arranged it.'

'Fuck no. I am on my way. I will get more warriors.' And with that he was gone. I could only hope we could find her. I could never live with myself if Bailey were to come to any harm. The thing is, if this was arranged by Miles, I don't think he would want her dead. He would have her returned to him, and then her life might as well be over. We needed to act fast.