

## Beauty and The Beta Chapter 7

### Chapter 7 Bailey

I sat at the coffee table painting my nails when my brother Jordan came storming into the room. "What the f\*\*k have you been doing?" he snarled at me.

I glanced at him with a sideways glance. "Hi to you too big brother." I smiled sarcastically, this being the first time seeing him since I had returned.

"Do not big brother me Bailey!" he snaps, throwing himself down on the sofa next to me. "What the f\*\*k did you do to Miles."

Was he having a laugh? What did I do to Miles? He says it like I attacked him! Or pounced on him... He is the upcoming Alpha for f\*\*ks sake! It is not like he is unable to defend himself... though I should have known he would go running to my brother to tell tales. Stir sh it like he always did. Make me look like the bad one.

"I didn't do anything to Miles. Why?" I asked, my heart racing a little already, wondering why my brother was angry over this. Had Miles confided in him? Did he know more now than he previously had? The thought of him knowing I had been short-tempered with his friend didn't bother me in the slightest. The fact there was no love lost between Miles, and I was well known, but what worried me was now Ellis knew of our secret, would Miles have told others too? Because that was the last thing I wanted. Especially for my brother to know, and especially for him believing that I had rejected his best friend and our upcoming Alpha!

"So why was he cursing you out when we were at training? Him and Ellis. They would not be doing that for no reason. A little odd when you had just arrived home, don't you think?"

I shook my head. "Oh, that was because I was a little sarcastic this morning when I saw them in the garden. Both acting like they were Go d's gifts."

"Bailey, they are the equivalent of Go d's gift to you and the rest of the pack. They are the Alpha's sons. Of Alpha blood. The future Alpha. So why the f\*\*k are you disrespecting them?!" Jordan's voice is booming with anger.

"Hey! What is all the shouting about in here?" My Mum called through from the kitchen, but she didn't actually come into the lounge to see what Jordan was shouting for. She would no doubt take his side, she always did. She thought the sun shone out of his rear end.

"Bailey doing Bailey things. Being the social pariah she has always been. The failure to the family. as always." Jordan says with a roll of his eyes. "A makeover doesn't change what you are, you know."

I glared at him. "And what am I, oh big shot Beta over here?"

He widens his eyes at the fact I have stood up to him, when in the past I never had. Being away has made me change. It had given me confidence, and the last few times I had come home, I had avoided my brother as he was staying with his girlfriend or was away at his Beta training, "Who the hell are you talking to?" his hand is suddenly gripping mine, tightly. His claws slipped out, digging into my skin, blood now trickling down my arm.

My wolf Akira was rippling beneath my skin, I could feel her presence coming closer to the surface, trying to help me heal the damage done to the skin that my brother's claws were causing. But I can also sense her anger at how he is treating me. As werewolves, we are taught to respect our family, yet my brother is not showing respect to me. Not that he ever has...

"You." I hissed, unable to get away while he had hold of me like that, and knowing that even if were to shift, my wolf would not be able to beat my brother's.

"Well, I suggest you remember your place, Bailey. You may be Beta blood, but you are still a nobody in the pack. Nobody cares for you. Nobody would notice if you were gone, so bear that in mind before you go shooting your mouth off at people, Bailey." Jordan says coldly, watching me with his dark eyes. And I see no love or care there for me. I hate that the man in front of me is my brother.

I felt a cold chill at his words. They sound an awful lot like a threat to me, but I am not about to show my brother his words have affected me. I know nobody in the pack particularly cares for me. All because I never fitted in. I was never one of the popular ones. Not like my brother and sister. All because I enjoyed studying. I became an outsider. But did that mean they would harm me? I shrugged, not willing to show him any emotions.

"You say that like I want to be here, Jordan. It isn't like I wanted to come back. I asked not to. But I was told to. Alpha said I had to come home." I told my brother sharply, and I saw his face contort in confusion.

"What? He did what? Like f\*\*k the Alpha ordered you home! Miles said you begged to come home when they suggested you looked for work away, after your degree was done..." Jordan says in disgust, looking at me equally disgusted, telling me that this pack were not being honest. I do not know why Miles told my brother that, but I know for certain I had been instructed by Alpha Marshall, Miles's Dad and my Uncle, to return home immediately once my degree was achieved. I had begged, yes, but it was the opposite of what Jordan suggested. I begged for a chance to look for work away from the pack, not wishing to return to the mundane life I had here. Nor to the mate who had rejected me. But I had been told it was not to happen...

I sigh to myself. I do not know why things were being twisted, but it only confirmed to me that being in my pack was far from the right thing for me. I needed to find something else, and I needed to find it soon....

## **Beauty and The Beta Chapter 8**

### **Chapter 8 Miles**

I move through the packhouse at a pace faster than I would like to at this time of the morning, but I would do anything right now to get away from my f\*\*king father! He has not stopped wittering in my ear since the moment I stepped from my bedroom this morning. And he didn't even give me the chance to pour myself a coffee before he told me we should come to the packhouse to continue with the training he needed to give me.

Yes. I want to get this transfer of power done with. The alteration of him being Alpha to me taking my rightful position as Alpha of the pack, but s hit, did he have to go on so f\*\*king much?! I had done the necessary training away at Alpha training, so why my own Dad now needed to do his own training I did not know. But, he was adamant he would not hand this pack over to me until he felt I was ready. Personally, I think he just did not want to give up his power nor his control.

"Miles. We think you need to do a tour of the packs locally at least. Find your fated mate, or do more to do so." My Dad's voice echoed around my brain as we walked into the Alpha office.

I gave him a dark glare. "What?" This had never been mentioned before. Finding your fated mate was evidently something that itself. Something that was happened when the right time came. A moment left up to fate

itself. Something that was out of our control... So, why would they be pressuring me to rush this? I obviously know who my mate is no, rephrase that... I know who my fated mate was. She isn't mine anymore. And I could not be more f\*\*king glad of that.

Yes, there is such a thing as a second chance mate, but that doesn't happen for everyone, and it can take years... so, I know looking around for my mate would be nothing but a waste of time and effort. I am ready to be Alpha. I do not need some woman by my side to establish my place as leader of our pack. Once again, f\*\*king Bailey West messing up my whole life. The world would have been a better place if her Dad had pulled out that night and let the sh it that created that waste of space trickle down his wife's leg...

I looked at my Dad, and the determined expression on his face bothered me. Surely my parents are not going to pause on the Alpha ceremony until I have my mate by my side? That would be sheer lunacy, wouldn't it? Who does that? Alphas rule on their own.

“Me and your Mum were thinking it would be wonderful for you to begin your reign as Alpha with your Luna by your side, son.” Dad says with a smile. “Like I did.”

I rolled my eyes in irritation. It was alright for him. His Luna was the pack’s main cheerleader. The beauty queen. One any man would want to show off by all accounts. Not that I think of my Mum in that way, but I have seen pictures of her back in her younger years and there is no denying she was beautiful. My Dad, Alpha or not, had been punching well above his weight! So, of course, he would be one to promote how wonderful fated love is. He got dealt a truly wonderful hand by fate...

Me, however... I got dealt the pack geek. Why the f\*\*k would I want her?! Yeah, we had been close growing up, and she was my best friend’s little sister, but she was the biggest geek I knew, who spent more time with her head in a book than she did going out. It just was not normal. That is not what a guy wants for a woman! How can you show someone off who has her head in a f\*\*king hank)

Balance:

These last few years, while she has been away studying, have been wonderful. I haven’t needed to see her face. Remind myself what I had done... because, like it or not, my wolf hated me for the fact I rejected our fated mate. She was the one the moon goddess selected for us. In my f\*\*king wolf’s eyes, she was perfection. Did I feel guilty for hurting her? Hmm, maybe a little, when I thought back on the memories we shared... but that was usually after a few too many drinks..... otherwise, the thought of Bailey just irritated me beyond belief!

She did nothing to make herself look appealing, and she wasn’t like the other she-wolves in the pack that worshiped the ground I walked on. She barely bothered with me and spoke to me like I was stupid at times. I was going to be her next Alpha, she should have been treating me with respect. She should have seen me as important. The fact she was so pathetic and barely noticeable made it even more devastating when I learned who she was to me. Why of all the she-wolves in the pack would fate mate me to her? She was a nobody. I deserved better!

I contemplated numerous times getting her to stay away after her studies had been completed. She was smart. Though when you spend all your time with your head in a book and with very

few friends to dawdle away your time with, I should expect nothing less... And she passed her degree easily. Now a qualified teacher. She even begged to have permission from my Dad to apply for work away from our pack, but I told him we should make use of her here, and strangely, he agreed. I hadn’t missed Bailey, so why I quickly put a pause on her dreams of leaving the pack, I do not know... something stopped me letting her leave. A small part of me got a kick out of knowing I was ruining her hopes of escaping me and our pack. Destroying her dreams.

A girl like her didn't deserve dreams. Didn't deserve a happy life. She had f\*\*ked my life up by being my fated mate, so I planned to make her life miserable. Bullying her growing up had always been fun. Seeing her cry, though doing her hardest to hide her tears gave me a high I cannot explain. We may be adults now, but I still enjoyed seeing her cry. She deserved to suffer. And if she was now to be the cause of more issues for me, then I would most definitely be making her suffer...

There was just a knowing feeling inside of me telling me to... I did not want her to think she had earned herself freedom from us. Our pack. From me. No, she may no longer be my fated mate, but she would always be under my control...

"Miles, do not roll your eyes at me. A Luna is a vital part of the pack." My father interrupts my wandering mind. Why the hell was I allowing the thoughts of Bailey to take over?!

"Dad, I do not think there is any rush to find her. We visited packs not too long ago, and I found no mate. We know that. She will come when fate decides. Perhaps, I am one of the Alphas that is meant to have his pack prepared and built for his mate." I suggest, lying through my teeth, because I know full well, that my mate is not coming. There is no fated mate out there waiting for me.

No. For she found me on the day my wolf came for me. And I was truly disgusted with the choices made for me by our moon goddess. So much so, that I turned my back upon her, and I never intended to allow her back in either...

## **Beauty and The Beta Chapter 9**

### Chapter 9 Bailey

I strolled the sunshine-filled footpaths of pack, having got bored with sitting around at home, it was truly not the place I wanted to be staying for long. My job searches were not proving successful whatsoever. The school here had a fully equipped teaching staff, though I am sure Miles would ensure there was no hope of a role there for me anyway. He seemed determined to make my life as difficult as he could for me. I have no clue why, but it was like he was determined to punish me for being his fated mate....

Going along similar lines, none of the packs nearby would even speak to me regarding work. The schools within the nearby human communities I had applied to had yet to get back to me, and as time went on, the less hopeful I became that my applications for the teaching roles there were successful. And much could be said for the ones slightly further afield too. It seemed nothing was going to work. I was giving up hope. I really began to wonder if Miles was influencing these in some way.

"Hi Bailey." I heard a deep voice approaching behind me, and turned to see the warrior, Harley, who had been on guard as I arrived home earlier in the week.

“Oh, hey Harley. How are you?” I smiled at him, actually surprised he would even speak to me. Very few others our age bothered to, all choosing to ignore me.

“Not bad, just on the way to the gym for training.” He told me, lifting the bag he was carrying, as if he was showing me his kit.

I nodded. “Bit warm though.”

He grins. “I am a warrior, we don’t have a choice. Have to train every day.” He says with a shrug, and I nod in agreement. “Though I do have time free for ice creams later if you fancy something to cool yourself down?” he adds with a cheeky smile, and a twinkle in his deep green eyes.

I chuckle at his brazenness. “Oh, is that right?”

He looks at me a little sheepishly now, and I can see a hint of color on his cheeks. His dark hair flopping forward over his face as he looked at the ground, obviously a little embarrassed. “Sorry, was that a little forward?”

I smiled at him. He looked quite sweet, all embarrassed, I have to say. Far from the cocky image the warriors generally have. “Took me by surprise, I will say that much.”

“Yeah?” he looks to me with a tilt of his head, but the smile across his face his was so genuine it gave me butterflies. “In a bad way?” I have to say it feels quite nice to have someone here pay me attention. It happened every now and again whilst I was away studying, but back here at pack I had always felt invisible...

“No, not in a bad way at all. Though, it is not often guys in the pack bother talking to me, Harley.” I admitted with a shrug. “So, you may want to consider that offer carefully, unless you are only doing it to make me feel stupid?”

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am going to say this, I am not like that. And, how about we say screw them? We will go for that ice cream, yeah? Meet me after training. What do you say?” he looks at me like he is waiting. nervously for my response, like he is unsure of himself.

As we reach the door of the pack gym, Harley pauses, still waiting for his answer, so I smile at him. “Aww, I guess I had best not keep you waiting, had I? That sounds good, thank you, Harley.”

“I thought you were not going to give me an answer then. Trying to torture me there? Seems I may have to keep my eye on you!” he playfully winks at me. “I shall see you in a few hours then, Bailey.” He lowers his head to softly kiss me upon my cheek, taking me by surprise, before he winks again, and walks inside the gym.

I moved across the parking area to the doors of the packhouse, my head a whirlwind of confusion at what the hell had just happened! Harley had known me for years.... had been in my classes at school... where had his interest come from all of a sudden? I know I have changed a little since school, thanks to my roommate at college being a dab hand with a make-up brush, and giving me a few lessons in make-up and also on how to tame my mane of curls. So, I now look a slightly better styled version of me, if nothing else. Plus, my eyesight had improved once my wolf had arrived, so I could rid myself of my glasses...

But, I still do not see there was that much of a difference that I would catch the eye of a warrior. A small part of me can't help but wonder if he was doing this for a dare...

"Bailey! There you are." I heard my Dad's voice, the moment I stepped inside the packhouse, instantly distracting my train of thoughts.

"Oh, hi Dad, are you okay?" I looked up to smile at him, only to find the expression upon his face. was not a happy-looking one. No. In fact, he looked far from impressed. Did I even want to know what was bothering him?

"Hmm, heard you have been causing chaos with our upcoming Alpha." He says with a shake of his head, and before I even had a chance to defend myself he began lecturing me again. "Bailey, you have barely been back five minutes and you are causing problems. It is something we can do without. I know you and Miles do not get on, but he will be your Alpha one day, so show him some respect. It isn't difficult just to fall in line, is it? I think you need to go and find him and apologize."

I looked at my Dad in shock. Well, that explained the miserable face I suppose but did he actually expect me to apologize to that fool? Wonderful.

## **Beauty and The Beta Chapter 10**

### **Chapter 10 Bailey**

My Dad literally dragged me to the Alpha office, where my Uncle was sitting at his desk, but sadly for me. Miles was sitting on the sofa at the opposite end of the room, his feet propped up on the coffee table, looking more than relaxed. Doing what he did best, absolutely nothing...

"Ah, hi Bailey sweetheart. How are you finding being back on pack?" Uncle Marshall asked me with a big smile, like he was pleased to see me. Needless to say, the feeling was not mutual with his son, whose dark glare was focused solely upon me from the moment I had walked into the room. If looks could kill, I would have dropped dead the second I came into the room. A painful death, no doubt too....

"Hi Uncle, it is a little odd, I can't lie. I think I got used to being away." I admitted, and saw him frown.

“Well, we are glad to have you back sweetheart.”

I heard what sounded like something crossed between a snigger and a cough from Miles, making me turn to look toward him, and he shook his head at me. He thinks he bothers me? That I care he doesn't want me back here? I didn't want to be back here. Strangely, it was them that told me to come home. I couldn't care less about his view on it.

“Bailey wanted to come and see Miles, actually.” My Dad began, and I felt myself wanting to curl up and die of embarrassment. “She needed to apologize, I believe,”

“Oh?” My Uncle questions.

Though what catches my eye is the smug expression upon Miles's face. “Is that so?” he looks at me with his brows raised. “You realized you need to show me some respect, little girl?”

I could see the confused expressions on the faces of both my Uncle and my Dad. Unsurprising really when this st\*pid f\*\*ker is addressing me in such a way. I don't care if they thought Miles deserved my respect or not. But I had no intention of apologizing to him when he was calling me little girl. I was a year younger than him. And even if I wasn't there was no need to be patronizing and call me that.

“Lost your tongue Bailey?” Miles stood up, striding across the room and was soon standing in front of me, looking all co cky. I could feel my wolf, Akira rippling beneath my skin at how he was behaving. She did not like how he was treating me. She had never forgiven him for rejecting her. “Or is it just hard to admit you are in the wrong?” he smiles smugly at me.

I shook my head. “No. I don't find it hard to admit when I am wrong, actually, Miles...” I began.

“I think it should be Alpha Miles to you.” he says with a jeer.

“Erh...” his Dad began, but was silenced by Miles with a wave of his hand. I would like to think my Uncle have been about to defend me. Or tell Miles to control himself.

“As I was saying, Miles, Alpha Miles, or whatever else you would like to be referred to, I am sure I earned, and you, I am afraid, are an awful long way from earning even an ounce of respect from me Miles, upcoming Alpha or not.” I said calmly, and I can see my Dad standing with his eyes wide at what I have just said.

My Uncle is frowning. But Miles looks ready to burst with fury. His face contorts with anger. “You have a f\*\*king nerve. You b\*tch! You know I have every right to throw you from this pack!” he roars, flying toward me, only for his Dad to grab the back of his shirt.



“Woah!” Uncle Marshall says, looking confused. “Miles stop! You do not have that power. You are not Alpha yet, and this is exactly why I have said you are not ready to become Alpha! I have no clue what the hell is going on with you two, but that reaction was unnecessary. Bailey, as much as you may dislike it, you have to show him respect. He will always be your senior.”

I see Miles smiling smugly at me. “See, it doesn’t need to be earned. You will always be below me. I should have you on your f\*\*kking knees.”

Uncle Marshall slapped the back of Miles’s head. “That does not give you free reign to act like a total bell end. You are an Alpha. Act like one. The things Bailey said are not wrong, respect is earned to some degree. Not to mention you are expected to treat your pack with respect too, Miles. Or else I may have to reconsider your position.”

“You best be kidding me?” Miles roared. “All because of this stupid bitch?! Have you seen what you have caused now?!” his dark eyes were suddenly on me, and the hate in them was clear. He looked ready to kill me.

“Bailey, I think it is best we leave now.” My Dad grabbed my arm and pulled me from the office as quickly and forcefully as he could, the door slamming loudly behind us as we left. I could hear my Uncle and Miles yelling as we retreated down the corridor.

“See the f\*\*kking mess you leave? Would it hurt you just to have done as you were asked Bailey?” My Dad looks at me with a disgusted look. “Anyone would think the quiet one would be the easiest child, yet you seem to do nothing but bring f\*\*kking problems!”

I clenched my fists in anger. He was angry at me over all of that? Had he failed to notice the way Miles had spoken to me? Or did they all think that was acceptable? I have had enough of all of this now. All I do is bring problems, yet for some reason they won’t let me move away? Strange that, isn’t it?

“Oh, so now you are choosing to ignore your own father?!” My Dad yelled, causing the two young she-wolves further down the corridor to turn around in curiosity to look at what was happening, and now they were rushing away muttering between themselves. No doubt I would be the new source of gossip. How truly wonderful!

“What do you want me to say Dad?” I looked at him. “Anything I do is wrong. You always told us to stand up for ourselves, yet when I do, I am in the wrong. The way Miles spoke to me was not right, and you know it wasn’t. Well, that is how he thinks it is okay to talk to me all the time, and I don’t like it. That is why he gets angry at me because I stand up to him. So, if that means I am in the wrong, then so be it. If it means I am the cause of so many problems for you, I apologize. I apologize for being such a disappointment of a daughter. I thought you would be glad you had a daughter who didn’t take no sh it. Obviously, I was wrong.”

Balance:

Bailey. You have to show him respect. End of. You are not a disappointment, I am incredibly proud of you. I just wish you didn't cause me so much drama sometimes, because: know you Uncle is going to want a chat with me over all that."

"Blame me. Every f\*\*ker else does." I said with a shrug.

My Dad shook his head. "Even your Uncle couldn't avoid the obvious that Miles was out of order. But you do need to apologize, even if it is to your Uncle. And I think it would be best to perhaps. stay out of Miles's way."

"You not think I am trying? Why do you think I didn't want to come home, Dad? Why do you think I desperately want to find a job away from the pack? But, no, they want me here, apparently. Though goddess knows why!"

"Apply out of district, I will help you by reaching out to other packs." Dad says with what could only be described as a pained smile.

"They don't want me to work away Dad. They made me come home. You know that."

"I will deal with that when the time comes." Dad tells me with a frown, and I smile in thanks, because right now that is the biggest hope I can cling to. Because this would be the closest thing I have to a way out of this hell...

## **Beauty and The Beta Chapter 11**

Chapter 11 Asher

The night of our former Alpha's party was here, and the pack was in good spirits. I was wishing I could be any place but surrounded by so many cheerful pack members, but I was putting on my

happy face, and being the ever gracious host.

"You have done a good job bro!" Caleb called over to me, as he walked across the dancefloor set up on the training field, his hand holding that of his heavily pregnant mate, and our pack Luna, Eden.

"Thanks." I nodded at him.

"Asher, you look fed up, love." Eden walked across to me, resting her head of long, dark braids upon my shoulders.

"Just tired Eden, not sleeping too good." I explained. "And hoping tonight goes okay."

"You worry too much, you know that once everyone has a few drinks down them, they won't care how much planning went into the party." Eden says with a light-hearted

giggle, and I can't help but smile at her words, because I know she is right. Once the drinks begin to flow, then the majority of the pack will be having far too much fun to even care about the details.

"So long as Uncle Isaak enjoys himself, then I am happy." I told her, giving her a hug.

"He wasn't expecting a party, so his face was a picture. You saw that. We made his day. And if he keeps drinking he won't remember a bloody thing anyway!" Caleb says with a grin.

We had the whole of our pack here, plus many of his friends from neighboring packs too. As an Alpha, my Uncle had been much respected and gained many allies, who, in later years, had become friends too. Most of whom were delighted to come and join him at his birthday celebrations tonight. And seeing my Uncle walking around catching up with them all now shows we have made the right decision.

I grab myself a drink and linger at the edge of the party. I can see my Uncle chatting to some friends, and the sheer joy upon his face tells me he is happy, which means, all the hassle and hard work was worth it. The family he is speaking to I can't say I recognize. So I can only assume they are from off pack. But, I can see my Uncle chatting to a man and his family. As I look, one of the women, who I could only assume is the daughter of the man my Uncle is speaking to, looks up to meet my gaze. Big brown eyes, almost like a deer caught in headlights, bless her. Looking like she would rather be anywhere than here right now...

Hell, I have to say I know that feeling only too well. As much effort as I may have

put into organizing this party for my Uncle, I do not want to be here. I smile politely, but she quickly looks away, so I assume I may have made her feel uncomfortable. Not my concern, not like I know who she is.

I returned my gaze to the others enjoying the party, and could see the drinks were flowing freely and there were many of our pack members that looked like they had already had too much to drink. I have a feeling the clean-up duties tomorrow are not going to be fun. I think I best to avoid those...

"Are you okay Asher?" Eden's voice interrupted my train of thoughts, which had been excuses I could use for getting out of the clean-up.

I smile at our pack Luna. Her heavily pregnant bump seemed to be making her look heavily out of proportion now, and she was beginning to look uncomfortable. "I am fine." I replied. My set and standard reply. Easier than going into anything deeper than that. I am sure she did not need a detailed analysis of my feelings. "Are you? You like tired, chick."

She rests her hand on her belly and gently strokes it. "This little swine in here. Saps all my energy. I can tell he is Caleb's pup. He doesn't know how to lie still. Just like his big brother was!"

I chuckle. I remember her forever complaining during her first pregnancy that their son, Matty, was forever kicking ten bells of sh it out of her insides. Seems this little one was doing the same. A standard part of pregnancy I would assume... I can't say, as I never got to go through that with Isla. She had gone before we experienced that...

"Make sure you use it to your advantage. Get Caleb running around after you." I tell her with a smile, and she begins to laugh.

"He tries, but then he gets under my feet and gets on my nerves!" she rolls her eyes, and I laugh. I swear there is no pleasing her!

"You think everyone is enjoying the party?" I asked Eden's opinion, and she looked at me with a shake of her head.

"You really need to ask that?" she asks me, resting her hand upon my arm. "You know they are. Listen..." she tilts her head to the side as if to listen, her chocolaty brown skin catching the glimmer of the fairy lights we were standing underneath. "You hear all the laughter? The happy chatter? That is enough to tell you people are having a great time."

I listened like she said and had to say she could be right, and found myself nodding in agreement. "I guess so."

"There is no guessing about it, Ash. I know you may not want to be here, but everyone else does, and they are enjoying it. You did good, like we knew you would. Why do you would. Why do you think we asked you to help organize it?" Eden rests her head against my arm.

"Because you guys like to find me things to do to keep me busy, I am sure I am too fussed about being here." I admit.

of it. And no, I can't sav

Eden looks up at me, her big blue eyes gazing at me, full of concern, before she shrugs. "Well, I guess you have shown up. You have had a drink, so you don't have to stay too much longer. Your Uncle can't complain too much." She grins. "Besides, I think he was on the tequila before, so a few more of them, and he won't even notice you aren't here. He won't notice anyone is here. He could be in an empty room, and he would still be chatting away like the room was full." She says with a mischievous grin, and I laugh, because she is right, my Uncle was terrible once he has had too many tequilas.....

“Asher!” I heard a voice calling my name, and I turned to see where it was coming from, and as I thought, it was my Uncle. Strange, considering the conversation I was just having....

“You were cavino?” I muttered to Eden who grinned before wandering away though it was more of a waddle now, to her mate.

“Asher, there you are boy...” my Uncle, our former pack Alpha Isaak, came walking over to me, though from where I was standing it did look like he was already struggling to walk in a straight line. I wonder if Eden and my estimations had been right, and he had already had a few too tequilas...

“Asher!” he yelled again, though why he felt the need to shout I have no clue. “I have someone I need you to speak to.”

Great... So much for a quick escape...

## **Beauty and The Beta Chapter 12**

Chapter 12 Bailey

I adjust my skirt as I look out across the party wishing I could be anywhere but here. My Dad had requested us all attend with him. Represent him as a family. Goddess knows why, but that is what was asked of us. The party of a former Alpha of a pack on the edge of our region. Yet all we had done so far was follow my Dad around looking like weirdos. I was sure of it.

“Heard you been causing sh it with Miles again.” Jordan said quietly as my Mum and Dad stood together chatting having a drink together.

I gave my brother a dark glare. I had managed to avoid him since the incident in the Alpha office, so he hadn't had a chance to say anything about it, but I could only imagine his best friend would have had something to say to him about it. “Not going there, Jordan.”

“Oh, I can imagine.” Jordan shakes his head while looking ahead. “You know you are pushing your luck with Miles. His Dad will only protect you for so long. He changed the conversation to mindlink, I assume, so nobody else could hear him.

“Not going there, Jordan.” I repeated.

‘You think you are better than us all, do you because you have a degree? Sorry to disappoint you Bailey, you are below us all, because we have titles. What are you? A Beta’s daughter, and a f\*\*king pathetic geeky one at that, one that nobody gives a sh it about. One that best watch her back before she gets kicked out of her pack!

I bite my lip to stop the tears that are threatening to come. My brother is not going to get the better of me. He is almost as bad as Miles. You would think as my brother he might want to protect me... haha, no. It seems he enjoyed seeing me suffer as much as Miles did. Saw me as nothing more than an embarrassment.

I could see my Dad chatting to a man I did not recognize. Though reading their body language and the friendly way they are chatting to one another, I would say they are familiar with one another. They are laughing and talking, both seemingly happy to see one another. I looked around the party, wondering why my Dad needed us here. We don't know anyone.

-Bailey, come here please." Dad called me over. So I walked over to where he and my Mum were stood talking to a man dressed smartly in suit trousers and a gray shirt. He had to be my Dad's age if not a little older.

I smiled politely as I reached them, and my Dad placed his arm around my shoulder in what felt like quite a proud gesture. "Bailey, this is the former Alpha of Autumn Valley Pack, Isaak Garcia. Isaak, this is my eldest daughter Bailey."

I smiled politely again, offering my hand to him to shake. "Pleased to meet you, Alpha."

"No need for that dear." He says with a wobbly smile, making me wonder if he has had a little too much to drink. Though this is his birthday party after all, so I am sure he was entitled to a few drinks. "Isaak is fine. Or Mr Garcia."

and thin and nod. "I was just telling Isaak that y

are a teacher Bailey." My Dad interrupts,

I smile and the moment he says that, I feel my hopes begin to build. Has my Dad found somewhere that may be able to offer me work? All my recent job applications seemed to have gone unanswered. I was truly beginning to wonder if Miles was somehow having some effect on them.

"Ah, yes, I am. Are you looking for a teacher, Mr Garcia?" I asked, going for a formal title, seeing that I was asking about employment, and he did ask me not to call him Alpha.

"I think we could be. Are we?" he asks me, and I hold back the smile that is threatening to come. I definitely think he may have had a few too many drinks.

My Dad chuckles. "Is Alpha Caleb around Isaak? Maybe we could let Bailey talk with him?"

"Caleb is here somewhere. But it is Beta Asher who is fixing jobs I think." The older man says, though he looks at my Dad like he is asking him a question. I don't think we are

going to get much sense from him, and I am beginning to lose any hope I had of finding work with them in their pack.

“Asher!” he suddenly yells, making me jump out of my skin.

‘Sh itting hell! What is wrong with the old man?’ Akira complained, and I have to say, she makes a valid point. That came from nowhere, and I have no clue who he was yelling at! It could be anyone that was here... one thing that he had caused was many people to turn and look at us... lots of which were smiling affectionately at the old guy. He was clearly much loved, even if he seemed a little crazy after a few drinks....

“Asher, there you are, boy...” he spoke again in close to a yell, and began to walk at somewhat an unsteady gait across the party. He definitely did not have the ability to walk in a straight line anymore, only further solidifying my thoughts that he had been drinking. I glance at my Dad in uncertainty, who simply shrugs before quickly following the former Alpha with a smile.

“Asher!” he yells again. “I have someone I need you to speak to.” He declares, but this time he has stopped in front of a tall man, his skin decorated with many tattoos. Almost collar length black hair with a slight wave to it. A muscular man, and at first glance, a f\*\*king scary looking man. He looked moody as all hell!

This man, who I can only assume is called Asher, raises his gaze to look at the former Alpha. He has piercing green eyes. Yet his gaze somehow remains dark... “Uncle?” he says, looking more than a little confused.

Uncle? If he was calling the former Alpha his Uncle, did that make him related to him? Like a child of one of the Alpha’s siblings? Or was he his Uncle like the Alpha was mine? I pondered...

“Asher! Where have you been?” the former Alpha greeted the man with a slap to the back, and even I winced at the sound of the impact.

“I have been right here, Uncle. Watching you enjoy your party. Is everything okay?” This man I assume is called Asher, looks at my Dad before he looks at me momentarily before looking away again like I was meaningless.

“This is a teacher!” Isaak said with a smile, and Asher looked confused.

“Right?” he urges, like he needs further information.

“Your Uncle was coming to introduce my daughter to you, Beta Asher, because she is a newly qualified teacher. He said you were looking for a teacher for your pack, and as it happens, Bailey is looking for a job.” My Dad took over, which I have to say I am a little embarrassed about, because it makes me look like I am incapable of speaking for

myself. And I don't think I want to put that impression across, especially not in front of this man.

Beta... okay, so that makes sense. Explains his bigger build too. He looks to me with critical eyes. "So you are the teacher?"

Wow, this guy is friendly... "Yes, Beta Asher. I am Bailey West from Lotus Shadow Pack." I informed him, smiling politely, and he nodded.

Just as I was about to begin explaining a little about my training, he interrupted me with a cold glance. "Arrange a meeting with the pack, we will speak with you and decide if you are suitable. I was just about to leave, and a party is not a place to be discussing work. Beta Asher says as coldly as he looked at me, like even talking to me was an inconvenience.

"Oh, okay, I apologize." I muttered, unsure what to

man was looking like he wanted to kill someone do or say, especially as this moody-looking

"What for?" he rolled his eyes, like he thought I was st\*pid. "As I said, contact the pack, an appointment can be made, and we will discuss things then. Goodnight." And with that the Beta walked away without even a second glance in our direction.

"Well, he was a friendly fella!" My Dad said with a chuckle.

I nodded, attempting to smile, trying to be as lighthearted about it all as he was, but I was beginning to wonder if I would want to work for someone that angry and moody. He seemed to have some serious darkness lingering over him...

## **Beauty and The Beta Chapter 13**

### Chapter 13 Bailey

The rest of the party had been nothing more than a drag. My brother and sister had done what they do best and chose to throw insults at me, before wandering off and leaving me alone. So, I had chosen to go and find a quiet seated area, while my parents were circulating. I could only assume my Dad knew many of the people here. Though as a pack Beta, it was not uncommon for him to have to socialize or to work alongside other packs. Personally, I can think of nothing worse. The thought of having to make polite conversation with people I either don't really know or I don't really like is my idea of hell.

Thankfully, I was considered unimportant, so I was able to fade into the background. I don't even think my own family had noticed I had disappeared. Much like they rarely did at our own social events in our pack. I would stay for a minimal amount of time before



making my excuses and leaving. Usually I would just sneak out, and this was rarely noticed. Unfortunately, here was not our pack, so I did not have the option of escaping to our home, so instead, I sat upon a quiet bench in the shade of some beech trees and from here have a perfect spot for people watching.

I had noticed the ever so happy beast of a Beta had already made his excuses and left. Seems he was even

less sociable than me. You would think, as the Beta, he would be expected to stay for the duration of the party, but it was definitely implied when he spoke to us that he was wanting to get away. And, by that point, the party had been going on for less than an hour. He seemed such a strange character. Not what you would expect for a Beta.

I know a Beta is meant to be strong and dominating, much in the same way as an Alpha, but, they are also meant to be approachable and decent. Kind and caring. Friendly and hard-working. Much like my Dad. I was unsure if my brother held all those traits, but that was a different story. Hopefully he would improve as he got older, or that is what I kept telling myself, despite the fact he had already attended his Beta training. But, this Beta here seemed to lack most of these skills too, or that was my first opinion of him.

And don't they say first opinions matter the most? He came across as mean and moody, and quite honestly terrifying. I could not imagine anybody wanting to approach him for assistance, he would likely eat them alive sooner than help them.

I could see the former Alpha, his ability to walk was somewhat declining. But boy, did he look cheerful! I could not help but smile at the older man as I watched him pose for pictures with some of his pack members. The biggest, toothiest grin he could smile upon his face as he posed. Like he did not have a care in the world. He looked like he was enjoying his birthday party, and I guess, at the end of the day, that was what mattered the most. Though I could only wonder if he would actually remember any of the party in the days that followed!

'Bailey, can you head to the car please. Morgan is being sick so we need to go home. My Dad suddenly mindlinks, taking me by surprise. I had expected to have to sit and endure the boredom of the party for hours yet. I wonder why my sister was sick? Not that I am going to complain, it meant we got to head home a lot sooner than planned.

'On my way.' I responded, and began to head to the car, walking through the beautiful gardens of the pack to the parking area at the front of the packhouse. This pack certainly took care of their packlands. All so well maintained and truly beautiful.

"Oh, and you thought it was okay to let her drink?" I heard my Dad chiding my brother as I reached the car, which suddenly explained why my younger sister was being sick. My idiot of a brother had obviously thought it would be okay for her to drink alcohol. As werewolves, we generally have a better tolerance to alcohol, but this does not form until

we have our wolves. And, for Morgan, she had only recently shifted, so this was definitely something that was still developing. She was not used to drinking. And I would say the pool of vomit at my Dad's feet was proof of that.

"She is plenty old enough. Stop being so protective." Jordan says with a dismissive shake of his head. "Was good fun, wasn't it Morgan?" he now grins at our sister, who is hunched over, with Mum holding her long dark hair back from her face so she doesn't get her own sick in it. Morgan looked up, looking decidedly green, and far from impressed.

"It doesn't feel fun." She mutters, before hurling up her guts a little more, making my own stomach turn.

"You are a disgrace." My Dad says, as he opens the car to get inside. "Meant to be responsible as the next pack Beta and look at the things you do."

"Oh and you were holier than thou, were you and didn't have fun when you were in your age because you were the pack Beta?" Jordan argues. "Like f\*\*k you did. I have heard the stories of the sh\*t you and Alpha Marshall did."

I rolled my eyes, knowing this could easily escalate to something more than it needed to be, like so many of the arguments did between these two. "What we did is irrelevant. This is your sister, you are meant to look out for her." My dad said with a warning tone.

Hmm, chance would be a fine thing Jordan looking out for his sisters. Or me, more specifically. He never bothered looking out for me once I was a teenager. If anything, he was one of the leaders of the gangs of idiots picking on me for being different. Teasing me for studying. Far from being a protective brother, if anything, he was a lousy brother.

"I am being a good brother. Letting her live a little. Having some fun. Shame you have forgotten. what that is in your old age." Jordan says with a sneer.

Dad shook his head. "And that is why you are not ready to be the Beta. I am beginning to wonder if you ever will be."

Jordan gave our Dad a dark glare, before climbing into the passenger side of the car. "I will sit here Mum, you can sit in the back with Morgan to help her if she is sick again." He informed her.

Great, so I get to sit alongside Little Miss pukey-pants all the way home, and a very happy looking Mum. Though, looking toward the front of the car, and the atmosphere that was forming between my Dad and my brother, I could only imagine the journey home was not exactly going to be pleasant. The two of them were so alike, not that they would admit it, but that meant that they clashed a lot. And it meant we had to listen to far too many arguments.

Why I couldn't just be blessed with a decent family who just got along I don't know...

## **Beauty and The Beta Chapter 14**

Chapter 14 Bailey

The drive home was proving to be an awkward one. Morgan, thankfully, had not been sick again but had done nothing but moan loudly the whole time we had been in the car, and I had to listen. to my Mum talking to her like she was a little baby. Reassuring her she would be okay, because Morgan was truly acting like she was dying. Jeez, it was self-inflicted, and it isn't like most people don't experience it at some point in their life. She had drunk too much. That was all. Yet here she was acting like she was at death's door, facing her demise.

Goddess help her tomorrow morning when she wakes up with a raging headache if she thinks this feeling is bad! The way she will feel with a hangover will feel like death itself... I will have to make sure I am out of her way, because I don't think I could tolerate that. I am trained to deal with kids, but a poorly Morgan, sheesh, she is on a whole other level. A true nightmare.

But my Mum coddling my sister was almost bearable when compared to the atmosphere. between my Dad and my brother. That tension could be cut with a knife. It was so tight. It was a good thing my Dad was driving, or they would likely be physically fighting by now. The insults. being thrown back and forth were ridiculous. Anyone would think they hated one another. But, in truth, they were actually quite close. That is just what they do when they disagree on something. Unfortunately, that seemed to happen quite often. Something I had become. accustomed to over the years, but it still didn't make it any easier when you got caught in the middle of it with no means of escape.

After Dad had criticized his abilities as an upcoming Beta, Jordan now seemed to think it was his place to disagree with our Dad on everything. From his opinions on work decisions to training sessions. Jordan seemed to think all of a sudden he was an expert on anything and everything. and he was ensuring my Dad knew about it. Including the fact he didn't think introducing me to the former Alpha was appropriate when I am a minor pack member, though why it was anything to do with him, I do not know.

"So why did you think she needed to be speaking to senior members of another pack?" Jordan had decided to continue this argument, and is giving Dad a dirty look. "She is not of importance within our pack. Alpha Marshall has not asked for her to speak with them. She is not a representative of our pack."

"Have I not explained this? And besides, it is nothing to do with you."

"If you are going behind the back of our senior pack members it would be." Jordan argues, and I am shocked he would report his own Dad, because that is certainly what it sounded like he was implying.

"I will be speaking to them. Do not worry your pretty little head, Jordan. It will explode if you put too many thoughts in there." Dad says sarcastically, and while I hold back a smile, I can see the anger upon my brother's face. He doesn't like it when Dad patronizes him, but he likely deserves that for undermining Dad, and for all the insults he has thrown at him previously.

"So, why was she speaking to them?" Jordan's voice was demanding now, like he felt he had a right to know what was happening.

"For f\*\*ks sake Jordan, have I not told you, this is none of your business?" Dad snaps, as we approach the pack gates.

"We are meant to be a family are we not? You want me to step up as part of the family, yet you keep secrets from me. Yeah, that works doesn't it?" Jordan says, anger lacing his voice..

"Oh, excuse me! We are a family, are we? Yet you talk to your own father like a lump of sh\*t. And,

That is you want to step up? Yet you just said you are going to go running to Miles to tell tale And not stepping up. That is choosing sides." Dad said before pulling up at the gate and waving at the guard at the gate, as he opened the pack gates for us.

"So you are hiding things then." Jordan shakes his head in

"You causing more sh\*t 1 sey. It is all you seem to dust, before turning to look at me.

Nothing but a f\*\*king shame upon our family name." he hissed. "We should have stopped you coming back after you finished studying.

"Jordan! There is no need for that." My Mum says, looking to me, with an uncertain look upon her face. I know she doesn't like to discipline Jordan, she thinks he is truly wonderful. Her firstborn, not to mention the heir to the Beta role. He is good at manipulating Mum too. So, obviously she will think he is amazing.

"Oh, whatever, Jordan. Your head is so far up Miles's a\*s, you wouldn't know if things were being hidden from you, unless, of course, they were hidden up his a\*s. You want to know what we were doing?" I began.

"Bailey, you don't need to do this, not until we know." Dad interrupted.

"It is fine Dad, he thinks he is so important and needs to know it all, so let him know. We will deal with whatever comes." I said to my Dad before looking at my brother again. "Dad wanted me to speak with them because they need a teacher. You know, someone to teach in their school. The thing I am qualified to do? The job I have been looking for since gaining my degree. So they want me to get in touch. To see if I would be suitable.

Happy now?" I snapped, hating that my brother thinks this is any of his business, but knowing full well that before the end of the night this would already be reported to Miles.

"Are you f\*\*king kidding?" Jordan says, as we pull up outside our family home. "You told me Alpha Marshall asked for you to be back in pack when your degree ended. If that is true, what makes you think it is acceptable to go outside of the pack to work? You belong to pack Bailey."

"Excuse me? She belongs to nobody. Other than her mate when he comes along." My Dad says bluntly, and at those words I realize I am in a deeper mess than I thought. My family are oblivious to the fact my mate had already come along. He had come along and rejected me for not being good enough. For not being the sort of she-wolf he saw as suitable to be his mate. But, is that why Miles is still trying to control me? Yet he had chosen to reject me, so didn't that mean I was no longer his mate? My head was spinning now, because, for whatever reason, Miles seemed to be the reason I was tied to this godforsaken pack. And, the more this went on, the more I could only think that he may never let me leave....

## **Beauty and The Beta Chapter 15**

Chapter 15 Asher

I looked at the computer displaying the security cameras. This was becoming too much. How can one pack be expected to hold back so many rogues? Wolves from all directions. Rabid wolves... I was sure of it... Where were they all coming from? This random attack had come so unexpectedly, all the wolves had been called to fight. Sending our entire pack into turmoil. We trained for this, yet when it came to it, nobody seemed to remember a thing about the training.

Ash, stay back, we cannot risk you or Caleb my Dad mindlinked.

My Dad was the current Beta of the pack, and I know he was right, but it was an instinct to want to fight. To protect our pack. But I know why he was saying what he was. Caleb would be the next Alpha, they did not want him risking, and me, as the next Beta, was viewed in much the same way. But, that did not stop me wanting to be out there. We had to protect our people!

"Dad, please. I urged him. We can help."

'No. Alpha's orders. He tells me, and I look across to Caleb, already pacing the office, where we had been instructed to wait,

"Not happening, you know that, right?" Caleb told me as he looked at me, noticing the tell-tale signs of the glazing of a mindlink had faded from my eyes.

“Why do you think I am already moving toward the door?” I grinned at him as I spoke. Neither Caleb or I had ever been good at following instructions, and we had both been keen fighters. Besides, I wanted to get this situation dealt with, I had a new mate I wanted to get home to!

Literally moments before the attack was announced, I had been getting settled in my house with my new-found mate, Isla. I had only just turned 17 a matter of months ago, and I had been visiting a neighboring pack for training, when I came across my mate. A daughter of their lead Warrior. A fiery red-headed warrior queen. A true beauty. And she had blown me away. Some men wait years for their mates, yet I had been lucky enough to find mine within weeks of me shifting and gaining my wolf. And damn, had I been blessed.

She was currently safely with the women and children within the safe rooms we have within our packlands. Yet, I was so desperate to go to her, already craving her scent and the need to be with her. This damn rogue issue needed dealing with. It was becoming out of hand. Caleb and I ignored the orders of our fathers and headed out of the door, to join our pack members in defending our pack. We will not leave them fighting

alone.

My wolf pushed forward the moment we left the packhouse doors, my bones twisting and cracking, altering shape and position to form the large and strong shape of my Beta Wolf, Zion. He took off after the strong Alpha wolf of Caleb, Thor, toward the area we knew many of our pack were.

The breeze rustling through the thick, black fur of Zion as he ran at speed, his paws pounding on the grass. My mind was focused on the fight ahead of us. I was desperate to get back to Isla, but I needed to be focused on the fight, of that there was no denying. We need to end this...

Suddenly, a tan-coloured wolf lunged at Zion at full speed with his claws out. Zion fell, but soon steadied himself. He was more than used to fighting and getting out of unexpected tackles. Zion aggressively grabbed

this small-animal's leg and I would fail the hamna na

looked around through his eyes I had lost sight of Thor. He had to have already gone and joined the others fighting.

“Go and find them.” I told my wolf, desperate now to go and help defend my pack. The way it should be.

“Where do you think I am going?” He responds, and with that he is running again, his movements a little more cautious this time after being attacked unexpectedly before.

The

As we came around the edge of one of the many storage buildings on the packland, I could see a flurry of wolves, some I recognized, others I did not. All attacking one another. It was a free for all by all accounts. rogue wolves we had seen on the security cameras were out to do as much damage and destruction as they could. I could see dead bodies littering the ground, and sadly many of them I recognized. Zion too recognized them, causing a small whimper to slip from him, before he began to move closer to the fighting when suddenly the most painful sound came through the mindlink. Asher!"

My name was almost a shriek of pain. So much so, I could not recognize who it was. My heart was pounding as I thought of Isla. She should be safe in the safe rooms. That is where the women and children went when our pack was compromised. So they were not in any danger. Surely she had to be okay? The rooms were

secure.

"Isla?' I mindlink, hoping that the scream had not been hers, though I don't like to think of anyone in that pain.

"Baby, help us! They have got in.' She screams, and at that moment I felt like my heart had stopped. Zion turns his back on the pack fighting and speeds toward the packhouse. The speed at which he reaches is likely the fastest I have experienced him run, darting and dodging between the trees and buildings as he moves. A few short sharp kicks to the occasional wolf we pass along the way that is within our path...

Zion knows his mate needs him. He needs to be with her. He needed to save her. As we reach the doors, Zion gives me control back, but the stench of blood is overpowering and my stomach churns with nerves. Zion is still present despite giving me control, his presence rippling beneath my skin, and he is whimpering within my mind. Scared for our mate....

The state of the area around the safe room is not good. It looked anything but safe now. Where is she? I allowed my body to dislocate and shift back to my human form as quickly as possible, not caring at that moment I was naked. I needed to get to my mate, and I dashed through the underground passage to one of the safe rooms, the safe room I had sent Isla to before going to the offices to meet Caleb. A safe room that I believed would keep my girl safe...

The corridor is littered with bodies... the walls stained with blood... I feel tears filling my eyes as I begin to run, stepping over bodies as I do. Needing to find Isla. A sense of desperation filling me....

"Isla?!" I called. "Isla, where are you?!"

I entered the room, and I saw so many wounded pack members, a mixture of children, elderly, and women all trying to tend to one another. But there were many dead bodies too. The rogues had clearly done their damage and left the room, likely to find another to attack... My eyes darted around the soul-destroying vision of a room, searching for my mate, hoping beyond all hope she was still okay. Only for my eyes to settle upon her. Her beautiful fiery red hair stained with blood, as she leans against the wall. The beautiful features of her face grimaced in pain. As I looked down to see gaping wounds to her chest and lower stomach, it made

My heart feels like it is crumbling at the sight of my injured mate, as I rush over to her, having to ignore the many pack members reaching out to me for help. "Isla!" I sob, as I drop to my knees, and gently pull her to me. Her eyes are open but the look within them is so vacant I fear she is already gone.

"I am sorry baby." She mindlinks, telling me she isn't strong enough to speak. I tried to help. But they kept coming."

"Let me mark you again, me doing that, along with your wolf trying to heal you may help?" I suggested, seeing that her wounds did not seem to be healing. I fear they are too much for her wolf to heal.

She slowly shakes her head, just a slight movement. I don't think it will work, Ash. The wounds are deep. It hurts."

"Let me get the Dr'I told her.

Ash, people with stronger chances of healing need their help. I think I will struggle.' I see her eyelids keep flickering as she mindlinks me, like she is struggling to maintain consciousness and tears are flooding down. My cheeks.

I reached for her hand, as I pulled her closer to me, gently kissing her head. 'Isla please, we need to try."

Ash, I am tired. I am hurting. I am sorry. She links, a lone tear trickling down her face, though her link sounds so weak, and I can feel the link fading. I cling to her as I gently stroke her hair.

"Okay beautiful, you go to sleep. You will stop hurting then. There is nothing to be sorry for. I love you." I whispered, knowing she was already going. She was likely already going the moment she screamed my name. And the pain filling my body is the worst pain imaginable. I was her mate. I was supposed to protect her and I had failed. I had failed in my duty as her mate, and it had cost my beautiful Isla her life. I had lost my mate... my other half... when we had barely been given a chance to build our lives together. Zion is howling within my mind, as tears flow from my eyes, mixing with the blood upon the floor.



My heart is pounding within my chest as I sit up, sweating, tears dripping from my eyes as I wake up. That dream.... no.... more nightmare, again. The same one... reliving that day... over and over... it is what turned my life into a living hell. It is what makes it impossible to sleep. Fate blessed me when they gave me Isla, then cursed me by snatching her away. Cursed me to a life of misery and loneliness.. reliving the pain of losing her. How was a man meant to live with that? Or his wolf?

## **Beauty and The Beta Chapter 16**

### Chapter 16 Asher

After tossing and turning, for goddess knows how many more hours after my recurring nightmare, I had given up all hope of sleep finding me again. Though in some ways I think sleep was something I dreaded because it brought that vision over and over. It meant I had to lose Isla again and again. The pain had been the worst pain I could ever imagine. I, like so many others, had heard of wolves losing their mate and the damage it could do to them, but never thought much of it. Though, I suppose, as a young and carefree boy, enjoying my life and having fun, why would you?

But, at the age of seventeen, fate had decided that was what fate would be dealt to me. I was to discover exactly what the pain could be. Discover the agonizing sensation as agony rippled through my body as the matebond was torn from me. Experience exactly how torturous the loss. would feel, and despite being surrounded by a pack, just how lonely you could feel when the one person destined to be by your side was no longer there. I had barely had a chance to develop a long-standing bond with my mate, but she was mine all the same. The connection was there, like it was with all fated mates. And losing her felt like my heart had been ripped from my chest and shredded into pieces.

And now, near seven years on, I felt like I was still trying to piece it all together, and I still felt like there were picces missing. Pieces of my heart are missing and pieces of me are missing. And these dreams... these visions, reliving it all meant I felt that pain... experienced it all... so often... too often... I could see how losing a mate could send a person to the brink of insanity. I think I may have verged upon that edge many times. I sometimes wonder if my own pack members question if I have already teetered over the edge. But, my focus in coping was my role as a Beta.

Soon after I lost my beautiful girl, Caleb became Alpha and I became Beta. It gave me a sense of purpose. I had a pack to be there for. I had failed my mate. I knew that, and would never forgive myself for that. But, I could be there for the people within my pack. And that is what I had tried to do. Doing so many more duties than were expected of me, just to keep my mind busy. But, in my own time, I was very isolated. I became withdrawn. But, that was what felt right. That was where I wanted to be. Alone.

I know I caused many concerns and rumors to be spread about my darkness and the fact I was so withdrawn. Living alone within the packhouse, now Caleb lived within his Alpha home with his mate and our pack Luna, only made the situation worse. But, I

could not bring myself to live in my former Beta home that Isla and I had moved into when she had come to the pack. The home held too many memories. We had only been there a short time together, but it held memories of love. Hope. Excitement. Dreams of new mates and their future. The two of us together. Returning there alone after she had gone, it felt like the house was empty. Like something was missing. I couldn't stay...

So, I had moved into the Beta suite within the Packhouse and I had stayed there. Our pack was unique in that it had many homes for all our pack members, so despite the bedrooms within the packhouse, they were not needed. There was nobody living in the packhouse now other than me. So, once the crowds from the day had left, it became quite lonely. But, I have to say I preferred it

that way.

I had showered and sat myself in my office, coffee in hand, reading through files in preparation for my meeting later in the morning. Some she-wolf from a pack further out in the region, I believe, who my Uncle was suggesting as a potential teacher for the pack's junior school. As much

as I respect my Uncle, he had been drinking the night he was trying to suggest this woman to me, so I had decided it would be best to invite the girl to the pack for us to speak with her and come to our own conclusion on whether she would be suitable. I did not want just anyone being brought into the pack, no matter how desperate we may be.

"Good Morning handsome!" Eden greeted me, as she came into the office, Caleb holding the office door open for her, a smile upon his face.

"That is more than I got. She glared at me, and hissed that this was all my fault while she, in a far from lady-like manner, rolled out of bed." Caleb laughed, and I held back the smirk playing on my lips. Eden had a habit of blaming her pregnancy discomfort on her mate.

"What he fails to mention is that he offered to give me a push!" Eden says, playfully ruffling Caleb's dark hair.

I raised my eyebrows at him. "Well, you likely deserve everything you get." I said with a shake of my head, trying not to laugh.

"Not like either of you have to go through this." Eden argues, easing herself down onto the sofa at the edge of my office. "What time are our visitors from Lotus Shadow Pack arriving?"

"Honestly, she makes out like she is the first she-wolf to go through pregnancy and childbirth." Caleb says with a shrug, and a wink in my direction, indicating he is being playful, but even I know he is asking for trouble. His mate is not going to appreciate the

implication that she is not capable of pregnancy. Or that it is easy. I glance across to Eden and the angry look upon her face. tells me she is ready to rip her mate apart. Hmm, yeah I don't think I will get involved in this...

"They should be on their way anytime now for the interview." I answered Eden's question, choosing to ignore Caleb.

"Why are you interviewing them? We need a teacher, she is qualified and comes recommended from Alpha Isaak." Eden questions, looking at me with confusion. This irritates me when she suddenly decides how I do things is not the right way, despite the fact I have been doing this job a

job, not to mention

lot longer than she has been here. And I have undertaken training to do "e been doing this job a

watching my Dad do the job for years as well.

"Oh, so you are happy to let anyone come into the pack without checking their details first? And I'm pretty sure Uncle Isaak was more than well gone on tequila when he was making that recommendation, so yeah I think we will do our own checks first." I say, knowing I sound more than a little snappy, but being past caring. This has become a regular occurrence of late. But, I had little patience to deal with others. Everything they did simply irritated me. I prefer to be alone.

"Ash, no need to be like that." Caleb says with a warning tone. Funny how he was being a d\*ck with his mate a matter of minutes ago and now suddenly he is jumping to her defense. I simply shrugged in response.

"Well, they are on their way. An interview has been arranged. We will decide from there." I said, standing from my desk, needing some fresh air before I said something I regretted.