

Servant

Chapter 21 - The Beastly Alpha's Mute Omega

Riley POV

I'm awake and staring miserably at the doorway when Cody enters the room. I can't get the image of Damien being tortured in front of me out of my mind. The helplessness I felt, the anger at my mate treating me like I was nothing, it was all overwhelming me. I hugged my knees to my chest, and I could see Cody's look of pity on his face as he watched me.

"Riley I wish I could talk some sense into him" he murmured, squatting down to speak to me as I lay on the bed "as it is he's going to let you stay in this room, that's something isn't it?" he asked as though I was some child being given a gift.

I stared at him. He sighed "I'm sorry but I'm to introduce you to the head omega so that you can" he coughed "start your duties."

He looked apologetic. I blinked and sat up, not surprised but a flash of anger swept through me.

So this was his plan? Just make me work and ignore me. I bit my lip and stood up, Cody running a hand through his hair and looking like a man who had been caught in the middle of everything. "Come with me, I'll take you to Sandra," he said with a grimace "She's not the most pleasant person to be around" he warned me.

I nodded. I followed obediently. Perhaps if I was given work to do, I would be able to forget about my mate for a while and what he was doing to me. I was not opposed to hard work or earning my place in a pack. But it hurt that my mate could not bring himself to look at me let alone speak to me.

We walked out towards the front entry way and Cody tapped an older female with blonde and grey hair, who looked to be in her mid-thirties on the shoulder, causing her to look up sharply.

"Sandra," he said and she smiled at him.

"Gamma Cody," she said respectfully, bowing her head "what can I do for you?"

I eyed her. She had a pinched look on her face and she was thin, clad in a uniform that resembled a maids, and her hair was pulled back so severely it caused her to look like she was angry.

"Sandra this is Riley," Cody said introducing us.

Sandra pursed her lips as she looked at me.

"Riley is to be given her new duties as an omega under you," Cody said reluctantly, as Sandra gave a slow smile and raked her gaze over me.

"You don't look like you're capable of much," she said snidely "you look as though you're pretty weak."

I looked down at the floor. "Riley can't talk she's mute" Cody quickly interjected, "so she'll be unable to communicate much."

Sandra sniffed, looking thoroughly put out, but a quick glance at the expression on Cody's face and she fell silent.

"She'll be fine with me. I'll find her a uniform and get her started" Sandra said sighing as though she had been asked to do something difficult "is there anything she's not able to do?"

Cody hesitated and then shook his head regretfully "The Alpha did not specify."

"Come along then" Sandra growled, motioning to me.

I looked at Cody who nodded and gestured for me to follow her. I hesitantly began to follow the woman who trudged towards the back of the pack house.

"Don't know what the Alpha is thinking, giving me a pathetic girl like you" Sandra muttered, as we walked, "I guess an omega is the only thing you're good for, considering you don't seem to have a wolf" she muttered, giving me a sidelong glance and sniffing me "but I warn you?" she said sternly "I don't put up with laziness, you do your job or suffer the consequences."

Consequences? There was a reason this woman was referred to as the head omega but she did not elaborate as to what the consequences might be. Instead, we stepped into what looked like a supply room, uniforms hanging on racks, cleaning supplies, brooms, mops, and anything you could need neatly stacked in the room. She glanced at me and then frowned, grabbing a uniform off the rack and passing it to me. "Get changed," she said, as I looked at her.

She turned her back, indicating I was to change right there in the room. I was quick. The uniform was basic black trousers and a black button-up shirt to my relief instead of the dress. While I was getting dressed, she rifled in a nearby cupboard and then threw some shoes over her shoulder. I put them on, surprised to see they fit perfectly. She had a good eye, I thought, then again she must have been doing this for several years.

I stood there with my clothes in hand. She turned around and observed me. "You look presentable" was all she said "but that blue hair of yours" she shook her head looking disgusted "you'll need to dye that back to an original color."

I touched my hair. It was an original color. She made no more mention of it, taking my clothes and throwing them into a nearby hamper.

"We'll start in the guest rooms on the ground floor," Sandra said tersely "Alpha Jaxon likes to keep them clean in case he has guests arriving. Bring the mop and bucket, and I'll grab the cleaning trolley" she grabbed it and began to check the contents "and we'll work together. We'll have to change the linen" she added "but the linen cupboard is on the ground floor and I'll show you where on the way. There are only six bedrooms for guests on the ground floor and I've been informed one is yours so that makes five to take care of today."

That didn't sound so bad I thought, walking behind her. True to her word, she showed me the linen cupboard on the way through. Five rooms didn't seem like much, but by the time we had stripped and remade beds, dusted, swept and mopped the floors, cleaned adjoining bathrooms, cleaned the windows, and aired out the rooms, I was a sweaty disgusting mess, and panting heavily.

Sandra was not impressed. "It looks like you'll have to build up your stamina" she tsked and shook her head. "Dinner preparations are getting started. Go and help in the kitchen" she hesitated and glanced at me "Go and wipe your face first" she said disapprovingly "you look like a red tomato and it's not flattering."

I bleakly carried the last of the linen to the hamper and dropped it in, before ducking into a nearby bathroom to wash my face and retidy my hair which was coming loose from my ponytail, before entering the kitchen which was abuzz with activity. The cook took a disinterested look at me while Sandra motioned for me to start doing the dishes. That job was easy at least and it gave me the chance to listen to the conversation of fellow omegas who chatted with each other while performing their tasks.

"Did you hear? The Alpha apparently found his mate" one said excitedly.

Another omega snorted "Yeah right, if he had, wouldn't he be claiming her by now?"

"You know he's always been against having a fated mate. But" a pause and two omegas looked at the third expectantly "he's going to have a party next month to find a chosen mate. Isn't that exciting?" she gushed "there'll be so many women to choose from."

I stiffened and my mouth went dry. Sandra was busy delegating tasks to some of the other omegas and was too busy to pay any attention to me. "I heard that he rejected his fated mate" an omega chirped "because she's not one of us."

"Yeah well, I heard that he wants her for breeding only" another one commented.

I hung my head and continued to silently do the dishes, my cheeks flaming.

So everybody knew that Alpha Jaxon's mate was here, but it was all rumors and gossip. Nobody knew for certain which meant at least, they didn't know the girl was me. It was something small

to be grateful for. I was sure that if they knew I was her, that I would not be treated with kindness, not with the way the girl had commented on the mate not being a shifter. I hunched my shoulders and tried to get my task done as quickly as possible, my mouth watering at the delicious smells coming from the kitchen as dinner was prepared.

"Prepare yourselves, dinner is about to be served. Riley" Sandra's voice was cutting and abrupt "stop doing what you're doing and try to tidy yourself. I want you, myself, Cassidy and Chloe to serve the Alpha and the others at the table their food. The rest of you" she eyed the other omegas who looked disappointed and even angry "go and find some work to do. Somebody take over the dishes, another of you begin to put the dry ones away and somebody go upstairs and begin to tidy the rooms."

A lot of grumbles followed her announcement but the other omegas obediently followed her orders as I straightened my clothes. The cook already had plates spread out and was busy plating the food. I glanced at Sandra wondering how to proceed.

"There's already cutlery and glasses etc on the table. It's just the food that needs taking out" she answered "the Alpha, Beta and Gamma get their food first as is the custom. If there was a Luna she and the Alpha would be first, but of course at the moment there is no Luna" she instructed.

"Riley, take Alpha Jaxon, Beta Callum and Gamma Cody their plates" she instructed, while the other girls looked dejected.

She wanted me to serve the Alpha his food? I realized she didn't know who I was because Cody had not specified and therefore could not be blamed for putting me directly in Alpha Jaxon's path.

I could not object or even refuse. I was doing precisely what Alpha Jaxon had ordered. I could feel my heart hammering loudly in my chest as I swallowed hard and took hold of the three plates, balancing them carefully and walking straight into the dining room, my whole body beginning to tremble as I felt eyes directly staring at me.

Protective Instinct.

Chapter 22 - The Beastly Alpha's Mute Omega

Alpha Jaxon POV

I'd managed to successfully avoid my mate for the day and was now seated at the dinner table, my stomach growling with hunger. I glanced towards the kitchen, impatient for the food to be

served. I had been training for a fair portion of the day and I was starving. Callum chuckled "I can hear your stomach from here."

"What's taking so long" I scowled "Do I need to go in there and make them hurry up?"

I was about to stand up and do exactly that when I smelt her and stiffened. No. Hadn't Cody informed Sandra she wasn't to be in the same vicinity as me? Her scent was so delicate and reminded me of the ocean. Cody and Callum's eyes widened as she began to step through, balancing three plates carefully. I gritted my teeth, glaring at my Beta and Gamma, both whom looked concerned.

"I thought you told Sandra she wasn't to be near him" Callum hissed.

"I forgot to mention it" Cody snarled "and besides it doesn't make sense unless he wants it known who she is to everyone" he added as I stiffened.

He was right, in a sense, by informing Sandra he would be informing the whole pack who Riley was to me. But it wasn't making it easy to be in her presence. As she placed my plate in front of me, I got a huge whiff of her scent, causing my wolf to go berserk as I inhaled it. Her hair lightly stroked my face and my eyes widened at the feel of it.

Callum and Cody thanked her quietly for their meals and I could sense the pack members curiosity as they looked at her. I growled, causing her to jump and the other pack members to still. "You've seen an omega before, stop staring" I snapped.

Riley ducked her head, her cheeks flushing. It was adorable. My wolf wanted to reach out and touch her. She was so close it would have just taken me to reach out with one hand. She hesitated and glanced at me, silently communicating.

It killed me to wave a dismissive hand towards her "continue your duties."

The flash of disappointment in her eyes as she turned, caused my wolf to grow angry at me.

Why can't you just admit that you have feelings for our mate already and stop this nonsense?

I've told you that I won't be taking Riley as our mate. It's not on my agenda, so stop pushing it.

You are a fool and an idiot. What you are doing to her is only going to make her hate us. The mate bond is sacred and you are making it seem as though it means nothing! The moon goddess will punish you for such disrespect towards our mate!

The moon goddess will do nothing. I have the pack to worry about, my own feelings have to be pushed aside. I refuse to be made weak or vulnerable because of Riley.

You idiot, it's not weak to fall in love with your mate. You act as though she is useless when in fact, she might be the strength you need to keep this pack from descending into chaos or challenging your leadership.

That's not going to happen.

My wolf stopped speaking to me. I absent-mindedly began to eat my food, watching out of the corner of my eye as Riley continued to bring plates from the kitchen and put them in front of pack members along with the other omegas. She moved gracefully on her feet, almost like a dancer and despite my misgivings, I couldn't stop staring at her, even though it was making Callum and Cody uncomfortable.

"You might want to stop looking before the pack starts asking questions" Cody growled.

I ignored him, chewing mechanically, watching Riley's hair swish in her ponytail as she walked, the sway of her hips, the delicate arch of her spine as she bent over. It was mesmerizing.

So when another pack member, Henry, thought it would be amusing to reach out and touch her ass, I was more than a little angry. Riley jumped and turned around, her cheeks red, trying to remove his hands but my voice cut through the din, causing each pack member to look at me stunned.

"Get your hands off the omega before I break them."

Stunned silence. Henry glanced towards my furious face and quickly removed them, while Riley bowed her head, stepping back quickly.

"I was just playing," Henry said dismissively.

"Playing" I repeated, as my Beta and Gamma shot uneasy glances at each other and Riley looked on the verge of tears "since when have I ever given the impression that the omegas were fair game to the pack members?"

More silence from the pack members at the table. I had never granted permission for the pack members to openly touch or grope the omegas and they knew it. Henry had gotten excited at seeing a new one and made the assumption I would not object. He was wrong. I stared at him stony-faced.

"I should not have put my hands on her," Henry said without remorse "but she's only an omega so who cares? It's not like she complained" he added smirking.

I slammed my fist on the table, causing several pack members to jump in their seats, some even pushing theirs back.

"For starters," I said icily as Riley glanced at me uncertainly, not sure whether to remain where she was or leave "she didn't complain because she's mute" I snarled "so that justification is weak."

Henry looked flabbergasted as he shot a glance over his shoulder at a trembling Riley. "I didn't know," he said fearfully "it was a mistake" he added, looking to the other pack members for sympathy.

No one met his eyes. I gave a grim smile. "Your hands just put their hands on her ass by mistake?" I asked callously.

Henry's eyes darted towards the other pack members who resolutely looked in the opposite direction. He would get no help from that quarter. "I mean, I made a bad judgment call," he said weakly "it won't happen again Alpha Jaxon."

I wasn't done. I got up, so abruptly my chair tipped over, causing gasps from the table. I strode straight towards Henry and grabbed him by the collar, hauling him to his feet, and forcing him to turn towards Riley whose eyes had widened.

"Apologize," I said between gritted teeth.

Henry's eyes widened in shock. "You want me to apologize to her," he said in disbelief.

My hand tightened and he made a strangled sound. "I'm sorry, I'm sorry" he choked out, as Riley gave a timid nod.

I still wasn't satisfied. I glanced at Riley who was still trembling and fearful, not sure if it was from Henry's actions or my own. I turned to Henry and then abruptly smacked his head onto the table, breaking his nose, blood spurting everywhere as he gave a loud howl. I let go of him and he immediately clutched at his nose. I regarded him coldly "anybody lays a hand on an omega from now on, the punishment will be dire. Henry has gotten off lightly today" I sneered as the table went slack-jawed "I trust I will not have to remind you of this rule?" I added, straightening my shoulders.

Everybody at the table slowly shook their heads. I fought to gather my composure again. Damn it. I might as well have hung a sign up stating Riley meant something to me. I breathed heavily and then forced myself to slowly walk back to the table. One of the other omegas had picked my chair back up for me and I sat back down, picking up my fork and meeting everybody's eyes. I deliberately put a forkful of food back in my mouth and began to chew, the table beginning to mimic my movements. Henry quietly got up from his seat and left the room, no doubt heading towards the hospital to get his nose looked at.

I looked at Riley. "You may go about your duties" I told her stiffly.

She slowly nodded and headed back towards the kitchen. Callum and Cody stared at me.

"Jaxon, you have never acted this way on behalf of an omega" Callum warned "the pack is bound to be suspicious now."

"They shouldn't be treating the omegas like that in my presence" I growled "perhaps this will serve as a lesson to them all."

"Or they'll wonder what caused you to be so angry on behalf of a mute omega" Cody sighed.

"Shut it" I growled, stabbing into my steak viciously "I don't want to hear anymore. As it is, I want a close eye kept on Henry. He's laid his hands on her once, he does it again, he loses both of them" I said frostily, glaring at my Beta who looked taken aback "the same goes for anybody else."

Callum and Cody sighed but said nothing more as I quietly finished my dinner.

Desire

Chapter 23 - The Beastly Alpha's Mute Omega

Riley POV

I'm so confused. He doesn't want me, but he acts so possessive when somebody lays their hands on me. He was so angry when that boy touched my ass, he looked like he was going to rip them to shreds. As I reentered the kitchen, after that dramatic declaration and show of authority, Sandra and the others were agog at what had happened.

"I have never seen Alpha Jaxon so furious on behalf of the omegas before" one whispered, a hand to her mouth "he completely lost his temper."

They eyed me. I ducked my head while Sandra harrumphed. "I don't know what caused him to lose his temper, all I can say is it's about damn time. I'm sick of those unmated males thinking they can get away with groping the young female omegas and get away with it. Now that Alpha Jaxon has spoken up, it's less likely to happen again. He should be showing an example to the whole of the pack, not just caring about the higher positions in the hierarchy" she said with some satisfaction "now hurry up and start gathering the plates up so we can serve dessert" she admonished all of us as I started at her mutely, silently pleading not to go back in there. Not after what had just happened. She pretended not to notice my beseeching eyes and I silently sighed, regathered my composure, and walked back in, taking Alpha Jaxon's empty plate as he silently sat there, his eyes on me the entire time while I trembled, trying not to drop the plates.

We emptied the table and then began to put dessert in front of everyone. My stomach growled with hunger, causing Alpha Jaxon to look at me. "Sandra" he called out, causing everybody to turn their heads.

Sandra walked out of the kitchen and viewed Alpha Jaxon curiously "Yes Alpha?" she asked quietly.

"The omegas should eat when we eat from now on in the kitchen," he said with a pointed glance at me "it makes no sense for them to have to wait until we are done. Everybody will eat at the same time starting tomorrow."

If Sandra was surprised she didn't show it. She merely bowed her head. "As you wish Alpha. I will inform the cook" she said softly.

I hurried from the room. Sandra showed me where the food for omegas was placed. Instead of separate plates, it was more buffet style along the kitchen wall on a table for us to help ourselves from after everybody else had eaten. I gratefully helped myself to food and sat down at the small kitchen table, devouring my food. Today had been busy and I was starving. Sandra joined me. I could hear the distant sounds of voices in the dining room, as the Alpha and his pack members quietly spoke to each other.

"You know, it's strange that Alpha Jaxon is relaxing so many of his rules" Sandra mused, gingerly nibbling on her own food as she stared at me hard "especially today, when a certain new omega has entered my service."

She couldn't know. She didn't know. She had to be trying to make me slip but of course, I couldn't speak so she was out of luck. She was just conjecturing. I stared at her and then looked down at my food, eating it and trying to look carefree.

"You did good today" Sandra finally admitted, her voice low "A lot of omegas give attitude or slack off when they think I'm not looking. You worked hard and you didn't let up or lower your standards. It's impressive."

It sounded like a compliment. I nodded slowly, trying to convey my gratitude. She sighed. "The Alpha is having a party next month and it's going to take a lot of organizing. As the head of the omegas, it's going to fall to me to ensure that the party is of the highest standard and doesn't embarrass our Alpha. I think that I might be using you a lot in the future to help me with the tasks along with some other omegas. There are rumors he's going to choose a chosen mate at this party" she divulged.

I tried not to let my feelings show. She peered at me "Omegas are generally not allowed to attend the party unless they are there in a professional capacity such as serving drinks or waiting tables."

I stared down at the table, my heart beating miserably in my chest. I took a gulp of my water and let it trickle down my throat. For once the water did not satiate the thirst that seemed to be

overwhelming me. All I could think about was water and how badly I ached to be near it. How much I longed for it. My body craved the feeling of being surrounded by the liquid, of feeling the water caress my skin, of feeling it over my head as I swam in the depths of it. Nothing seemed more important at that moment. It had been a long time since I had been able to go to a lake or even soak in a bath. It was like my body was on fire.

I searched frantically for something to write on and then seized a nearby paper and pen. Sandra looked taken aback as I began to frantically write.

"Lake?" she read. "We actually have one of those," she said surprised "It's a little deep in the forest though. North of here, about two miles in" she finished.

I was up on my feet within seconds. A lake. A gorgeous lake to swim and lose myself in. Right now I was almost irrational. The urge to run towards it was so prominent that I forgot all about Jaxon and his stupid party, the way he was treating me. My mind was on water and the best way to get to the lake. Sandra glanced at me, looking slightly concerned.

"Riley," she said as I stared intently outside "Riley, can you hear me?"

I could almost picture the water now. The soft sounds of it as it sloshed and the noise it would make as I splashed in it. I closed my eyes, imagining it, my mouth parting in ecstasy.

"Riley," Sandra said, a little shriller now.

My head turned instinctively and I began to walk, towards the back door of the pack house as Sandra stared incredulously. I couldn't really hear her. It was like her voice was coming from far away.

Water, water, water. The words continually echoed in my mind as I made my way outside. "Riley" shouted Sandra.

I failed to hear her. I could feel the softness of the grass as I walked, my body beginning to make my way towards the lake, almost by instinct. I had never been there before, but it was like my body knew where to go. I felt like I was moving incredibly fast, my hair billowing behind me. The lake was beckoning me. It called to me. I heard music in my head and it made the sweetest sounds that caused tears to come to my eyes.

The lake was up ahead now. I could see the water shimmering beneath the moonlight. I had never seen anything so beautiful. So mesmerizing. I kicked my shoes and socks off, still staring at it. My hands undid the buttons on my shirt, slowly pulling it down over my shoulders and dropping it to the floor. I undid the button, slid the zipper down off my pants, and stepped out of them, leaving myself clad in nothing but my panties and bra. The water was calm but so clear and so clean. I touched a toe to the water and felt the coldness as it chilled me.

I held my hands above my head, breathing in the freshness of the air, my heart beating fast and rapidly. My eyes were fixated on the center of the lake. Without hesitation I dived, my body

propelling itself forward. The water surrounded me as I dove deep, into its midst, my eyes wide open as I took in the beauty beneath it, before I surged back to the surface, my lungs burning for air. Home. I was home. Tears pricked the corners of my eyes. I trod the water and then dove back down, my hair flowing behind me, like a curtain, spreading out on the lake behind me as I continued to sink deeper than I ever had before, my lungs burning, and yet, I was not afraid, nor inclined to surface. The water was familiar to me. The only thing that reminded me of a simpler and happier time. The water soothed me. It reminded me of who I was. I was not about to relinquish its hold on me now. I surged to the surface once more and lay on my back, floating, my eyes glancing up at the sky, a look of contentment on my face.

Vanishing

Chapter 24 - The Beastly Alpha's Mute Omega

Alpha Jaxon POV

I'm about to leave the dining room when Sandra comes out, her face an expression of dismay. The other pack members have already eaten and left, whereas I have delayed, Callum and Cody relaxing at the table with me.

"Something the matter Sandra?" I drawled.

She looked upset. "Alpha Jaxon, I don't know how to put this" she began, eyeing me nervously.

"Spit it out," I said impatiently.

"It's the new girl, Riley. She um, she asked me if we had a lake, and when I told her where it was she went off looking for it. It was like she couldn't hear me calling her back."

The lake? I glanced at Callum and Cody who looked just as confused as I was. It was a cold night and she must be freezing. "She just took off?" I asked, wanting to confirm.

Maybe Sandra had it wrong.

But Sandra was nodding. "Yes, Alpha Jaxon. I tried to call her back" her voice broke "but she didn't even look back. It was strange, her behavior."

Damnit. Riley was proving to be a right pain in the ass. I gave a long groan and stood up. "I'll go and fetch her," I said and looked at Callum and Cody "you guys might as well come. I might need help bringing her back in."

Both of them nodded reluctantly. We headed out onto the grounds and headed north towards the lake. I knew the way but it had been a long time since I had gone there. I didn't have much interest in the lake. Nobody really did. Wolves didn't like water all that much.

I could hear splashing up ahead. She knew how to swim, which answered one of my questions. I was about to yell out when something made me pause. Cody and Callum remained still behind me. Our eyes widened. It was like I was watching something out of this world. She was otherworldly. There was no other way to describe it as she swam and dove into the lake.

Her complexion was almost shimmering under the moonlight. Her hair was a beautiful blue vibrant curtain that billowed behind her on the water. She was as graceful as a dancer as she moved easily, every movement designed to capture your attention. I swallowed hard and mind-linked my men behind me.

Go back to the pack house, I have this.

They knew better than to ask questions. I heard the soft sounds of their footsteps as they turned and walked away slowly. I kept my eyes forward, unable to move, unable to make a sound. She was so beautiful. It was impossible to take my eyes off of her. She was like a fish in the water, so comfortable and so at ease like she would live there if she could. I had never seen anything like it. She had a smile on her face that lit up her entire face. It was like she was at home in the water and now she was back where she belonged. Even her hair seemed like it had turned even brighter from being there, although that had to be my imagination.

I was being fanciful. She turned and dove again and I saw a birthmark on her shoulder, one that reminded me of a seashell. Small and brown, it was hard to see, let alone distinguish, hidden beneath her hair. I stepped closer, careful not to make a sound, not wanting to break the spell she was weaving right in front of me. I didn't want her to stop swimming and stop the dance she was performing.

How was she not tired? She wasn't slowing down. Any other person would have been exhausted by now. My chest tightened. I wasn't supposed to be feeling things for her. I wasn't supposed to be staring at her in fascination and wondering how it would feel to run my fingers through her hair. I wasn't supposed to be raking my gaze over her body and taking note of the lace panties and bra she was wearing as she frolicked in the water. What did she remind me of? Something tugged at the corner of my mind but just as quickly it was gone before I could grasp it.

The urge to claim her was overwhelming. To rip her from the water and mark her as she struggled was right there, as I fought back my wolf who was desperate to make her ours before the party and before we made a decision that would wreck both our lives. I was tempted to let him win. To just throw caution to the wind. What harm could it do? Then reality set in and doused me with cold water.

Watch our mate as she dances and plays in the water. Watch her and see how easily she moves. This is what makes her special, if only you would pay attention he growled.

She is still wolfless and therefore a liability to me. What good is her ability to do this I said with disgust when it does me and my pack no good. Granted she looks beautiful, but looks are not everything as well you know.

You are a fool Jaxon. The truth is right in front of your eyes. Just because she doesn't have a wolf, doesn't mean she's weak or not unique. There are many other abilities a person can possess, all of them just as valuable if you would only look properly.

The pack needs a strong Luna. You know that. Why do you insist on protesting and fighting so loudly? Our first priority is the safety and wellbeing of our pack. It has always been that way. Why then, are you fighting me on my decision?

Why are you being so stubborn? Have you never once thought to yourself that this girl might contain the ability to be the Luna our pack deserves if you give her the chance?

I ignored him. My wolf was being sentimental. He only wanted Riley because of the mate bond, nothing more. Whatever he said about abilities or her being unique, was just a lie designed to make me reconsider my decision. He was doing everything in his power to try and make me claim her but I would continue to resist. I couldn't put the pack at risk simply because my wolf wanted something that we could not afford to have. I would not drag the pack down because of his or my selfishness.

Riley paused and then began to float peacefully on her back. I glanced at her and stiffened. Were her eyes, glowing slightly? It had to be a trick of the moonlight I convinced myself. When I looked again, they looked more normal as she gazed up at the sky. There were goosebumps on her flesh. She must be getting cold by now. But there was a look of serenity on her face. A look of such contentment and all just from being able to swim in a lake that nobody else really gave much of a damn about. I shook my head in disbelief.

I stepped forward. My foot crunched on a loose twig. It snapped beneath the weight of my body. Damn it. At the sound, her head rose up sharply and the look of contentment was replaced by fear. I cringed even as I hardened my heart. I hated to see the expression on her face. I forced my feet to walk forward in order to approach her. I stepped out, near the edge of the lake and saw her eyes widen in horror. She faced me, lazily treading water. I cleared my throat, glaring down at her.

"That's enough lazing about for one day," I said evenly as she stared at me "you can get out now."

She began to sadly swim back towards me. The way her head hung low, and the sad look in her eyes, made me feel like a complete bastard. I had taken what little joy she had and crushed it. She reached the edge and got out, wrapping her arms around her chest, shivering slightly. I looked down and saw that her clothes were covered in dirt. Before I could think about it, I took my shirt off and threw it at her.

"I don't want the pack members seeing you like that" I snapped.

She looked confused but hesitantly put the shirt on. She bent down and grabbed her uniform clothes. Her hair damply hung behind her. My hand reached out and touched it as she stilled. It was as soft as I'd imagined. I swept the hair back, looking for the birthmark. But it was gone. Vanished. Like I'd imagined it. I frowned perplexed, pushing the top down and moving her hair. Gone. She glanced up at me, curiously. I let go.

"Get back to the pack house" I growled "and get to bed. No doubt Sandra has more chores for you to do tomorrow."

She hesitated. "Go" I thundered and she began to move, running through the forest, her feet pounding on the grass and dirt as I watched, fighting my inner turmoil.

That party couldn't come soon enough as far as I was concerned.

Saved

Chapter 25 - The Beastly Alpha's Mute Omega

Riley POV

Sandra corners me in the front foyer the next morning, a look of anger on her face. "I don't know what you were thinking when you chose to go out last night, but that's not how things work around here."

I simply nodded, feeling tired. I had not slept well and when I had, my dreams had been filled with images of fanciful creatures, women who sang and lured men to them in caverns underneath the water. Strange and yet, the images had seemed almost real, my body drenched in sweat when I had awoken.

"Great, you can help me outside today, we're doing the windows of the pack house."

I tried not to shudder. Perhaps she merely meant the windows on the ground floor? I did not like heights, although I could not think of the reason why. She got me a new uniform and after I had changed, we headed outside, where I was a little taken aback to find she already had a ladder waiting as we carried buckets of soapy water and squidgees with us.

"The Alpha likes to keep the exterior of the pack house clean and with the party coming up, we will need to ensure that it's kept to his satisfaction," she said pointing upwards "we'll start on the lower levels and then work our way up."

I tried not to shudder. This felt like a punishment and I wondered if this was her way of getting me back for my transgression last night. But her expression was indecipherable as we split up and began to work our way around the pack house, taking our time to do the windows carefully before meeting back at the front again.

She even went and double-checked the windows I had done before she came back looking satisfied. "Good, now you're younger than me and more agile," she said seriously, as I looked up at the ladder trying hard not to exhibit any fear "so you're going to go up the ladder and begin washing the windows while I hold the ladder below you."

I swallowed hard. My body trembled as I shot another glance up at the ladder which gave me a terrible sense of foreboding. How could I try to get across my fear of heights when I couldn't speak? My eyes were imploring Sandra to understand. She took my look for stubbornness though and her voice became sharp "Get up the ladder already" she said impatiently.

I didn't have a choice. I gulped and then began to slowly put my foot on the first rung. Although the ladder was sturdy and of good quality, it didn't make me feel any safer as I forced my feet to slowly make their way up the ladder.

"Don't look down, don't look down" I repeated the words in my mind, my hands shaking as I gripped the ladder so tight my knuckles were turning white.

"Hurry up" Sandra shouted below me, her voice razor sharp "We have a lot of windows to do today and we don't have time to dilly-dally."

It was all very well for her to say but she wasn't the one climbing the ladder while her heart raced wildly in her chest and her palms went sweaty with nerves. I knew all it would take was one glance downwards and I would lose my nerves completely. It didn't help that one hand was holding onto a bucket of soapy water. My breathing was shallow as I made it further up until I was at eye level with the window. I rested the bucket on a rung, forcing myself to breathe steadily.

This wasn't so bad, I thought, staring straight ahead. All I had to do was dip the cloth in the bucket and wipe the window over before squeegeeing it. Easy. My hand shook violently as I plunged the cloth in the bucket and then squeezed the water from it. I had to force myself to take the next step and put the cloth against the window next to me, rubbing the cloth against the window, while I leaned against the ladder, fearful that it was going to fall at any moment, even though Sandra was holding onto it below me. I could hear Sandra calling something out but couldn't make it out through the blood rushing through my ears.

The window was damp. I dropped the cloth in the bucket. My lip trembled. My feet seemed paralyzed. I was shaking so badly it was a miracle the ladder hadn't toppled over. Then I made the worst mistake anybody afraid of heights could make. I looked down. Instantly it seemed as though I was staring down at a ground further away than ever and all I could focus on was how far away the ground was, while my heart began to pound away in my chest and my body began to feel faint. I saw Sandra's eyes widen in alarm. I couldn't scream but my eyes were practically

bulging out of my head. The grip I had on the rungs loosened. I began to fall. I heard Sandra screaming as my body began to drop through the air.

I was going to injure myself badly. At the very least several of my bones would break. I closed my eyes, not wanting to see my body rushing to meet the floor. But a pair of strong arms grabbed me mid-air, a low growl emitting from their throat. I felt tingles down my spine, warmth rushing through my body. When Alpha Jaxon spoke, it was with a slight twinge of panic and a great degree of anger. "What do you think you are doing?" he bit out at Sandra.

"The windows. I had her cleaning the windows and she just, she just fell" Sandra blabbered, sounding panicked herself "I didn't know that she was afraid of heights. She's as pale as a bloody ghost. Gods, she could have died" she continued as I began to open my eyes, Alpha Jaxon still holding me tightly "I'm so sorry Alpha Jaxon, this is my fault."

He clenched his jaw. "Let's just be thankful she wasn't hurt" he said as I stared up at him, his eyes avoiding my gaze "and that I happened to be passing by."

He carefully put me on the ground and I staggered slightly, his hand shooting out to steady me "this could have ended badly" he added grimly looking up at the ladder.

I hung my head. My mate was quiet, observing me. Sandra was guilty. "I'll have another omega do the windows" she offered softly "and I'll find something else for Riley to do. Something safer."

"See that you do" Alpha Jaxon growled and then paused. "You know what, I need an assistant for today," he said glancing at Sandra "I'll take Riley."

She opened her mouth taken aback. I glanced between them. I thought my mate didn't want me anywhere near him? How had he suddenly been passing by when I fell off the ladder? It made no sense. I was sure he was keeping a close eye on me. As it was his eyes were narrowed as he dared Sandra to try and object to what he was requesting, something that Sandra knew would be extremely foolish to do. Whatever Alpha Jaxon wanted, he got.

"Of course Alpha Jaxon. Riley, go and assist Alpha Jaxon with whatever he needs today" Sandra said faintly, still looking up at the ladder and paling at the thought of what could have happened "and I shall make a note of your fear of heights" she added softly.

I nodded, feeling embarrassed. I could see pack members on the grounds pointing at me and gossiping to one another. No doubt this would make the rounds and be another tale of gossip for everybody by tonight.

"Let's go. I have paperwork and other things that need my attention" Alpha Jaxon growled.

I looked apologetically at Sandra and then began to follow Alpha Jaxon into the pack house. My mate looked furious still and I didn't know if it was aimed at me or at what had happened in general. His expression was fierce as he strode through the corridors and pushed a door open,

waiting patiently for me to enter first before he came in behind me. It was an office. He sat behind the desk and motioned for me to take a seat. I was puzzled but did as he asked.

He exploded. "Why didn't you fucking tell her you were afraid of heights? Do you have any idea what could have happened if I hadn't caught you in mid-air? How many bones you might have broken? The damage that could have been done? What were you thinking putting yourself in danger like that? All you had to do was speak the fuck up" he roared, slamming his hands on the desk and breathing heavily, while I stared at him numbly, shocked to my core.

Confrontation

Chapter 26 - The Beastly Alpha's Mute Omega

Alpha Jaxon POV

I lost control of myself. My rage had been brewing ever since I had spotted her up on the ladder looking as though she was about to faint. I had known instinctively she was afraid and even as I tried to resist going to her, my wolf had urged me to move, to hurry, my arms reaching out to catch her as she fell from the second story, a fierce wave of protectiveness coming over me.

What had Sandra been thinking? Riley was shaking violently as I roared at her from the desk, her eyes staring at me, wide-eyed, reminiscent of a doe. She looked like a creature from the wild, a timid creature, one that was not suited to be dominated let alone screamed at by somebody stronger than her. I closed my eyes, reminding myself as she stood there in shock, that she could not speak. She was mute. My outburst was not about to change the circumstances.

I exhaled. "You could have been killed you know that?" I snapped as she looked down at the ground "From now on you stay on the ground" I mumbled "I'll see to it that Sandra is informed."

She continued to look at the ground. I heaved a sigh and then grabbed a bunch of papers and some blank invitations. "Here," I said, passing them over to her with a pen "Start writing in these names" I pointed "These are invitations to the party. You can begin writing them out for me so they can be addressed and sent out."

She bit her lip and nodded. My wolf was displeased with me. You're an asshole you know that. Making her write out invitations to the party you're determined to take a chosen mate at. Do you have any sense of shame at all?

If anything this will drive home to her that I'm not messing around when it comes to ignoring the mate bond. Besides at least while she's doing that she's not getting into danger anywhere else. Isn't that something you would prefer mutt?

She's safer with us than anyone else but why are you continuing to deny you don't want her as our mate? You can't resist the bond although it's not for lack of trying. You're actively seeking her out now Jaxon, it won't be long now until you're unable to resist marking her. You should give up this stubbornness before it's too late.

Stop it. You're merely trying to persuade me to do something you want. Leave it. She's not going to become our Luna. Stop trying to make me think otherwise.

You have no idea of what she's capable of because you've blinded yourself to her attributes. Being a shifter is not the end-all or be-all of everything.

I irritably cut off the link with my wolf and regarded Riley who had her head bent over as she began to write out the invitations, her hair covering part of her face. Her hair was like a bright blue curtain and I bit my lip, forcing myself to concentrate, opening my laptop with a low growl of frustration and beginning to make my way slowly through my emails as we sat there in silence. The sound of my door opening and Callum walking in did little to improve my mood.

"Oh hey there Riley," he said cheerfully as her head slowly raised up "Good penmanship" he complimented, looking over her shoulder and regarding the invitations "I take it that's something I don't need to help with now or the omegas."

I grunted at him "Was there a reason you came in here or was it merely to check on someone" I looked pointedly at Riley who had bent her head back down and begun writing again.

"We have spotted several rogues on the perimeter. They are acting strange" Callum said, plinking himself down on the armchair opposite the desk and raising a brow.

"Strange how?"

"They aren't attacking for one" Callum pointed out.

I frowned "That's not unusual. Sometimes they encroach on our territory looking for food and then leave."

"True" Callum allowed "but this seems more than that. They aren't" he paused "How do I explain it" he mused "I think we should help these ones out."

My jaw dropped open "Since when do we help rogues Callum? Of any kind" I demanded angrily "They are nothing but scum. If they don't have a pack, there's a good reason for it."

"I don't think that's the case this time at all," Callum said, peering at me closely "For starters the rogues that are near our territory are all women."

All women? Normally there would at least be one man in the small group in order to lead them or exert dominance on them. This was almost unheard of. I frowned. "Why would they come here?" I asked confused.

Callum shrugged "Maybe they are looking for a new pack to settle down in? I don't know but they look in pretty bad shape. I think you should at least speak to them Jaxon before you turf them out. I mean, I can't exactly stomach making the order for them to be hunted down and killed and if you saw how they looked, I doubt you could either."

"Just because they look pitiful doesn't mean they are weak. It could be a trap of some kind to lure us into thinking they are harmless" I said sharply.

Riley's head slowly raised up and she looked at me. I inhaled. She slowly scribbled on a piece of paper Not everyone is out to get you. Sometimes people genuinely need help.

I scoffed at her. "You're too innocent Riley" I insulted her as she frowned at me "People will do anything in order to take over a pack or kill an Alpha. I've been led into traps before and likely will again. You need to learn to be more suspicious" I advised her coldly.

You need to learn to be more trusting.

I shook my head. "That will only lead to weakness," I told her coldly.

Maybe it will make you a better leader.

I laughed. Callum looked between the two of us "Am I missing something here."

"Nothing," I said calmly "I'm merely pointing out that Riley needs to learn to be more guarded and less naive when it comes to trusting people. Being so nice and kindhearted will only lead to her being killed."

As opposed to my mate ignoring me or refusing to reject me?

That one got to me. I glared at her "You overstep" I snapped as she looked right into my eyes, causing me to feel overwhelming guilt "I will not reject somebody who will lend strength to my wolf and make me stronger simply by being in my presence. I would be a fool to let that go."

Even if it hurts the person you are doing it to?

I got to my feet "Listen here and listen well little mutt" I said breathing heavily as Riley stared at me, before getting to her feet "you are nothing but a lowly omega who will obey my every command. I make the rules, you obey them. Just because I've saved you, or been kind towards you, it does not mean I have feelings towards you. Do not mistake my generosity with kindness" I warned her.

Reject me!

I shook my head, my anger increasing "I will not" I thundered, causing Callum to jump out of his chair. "I will not weaken myself in order to placate you."

I hate you

I stared at the words. For some reason they made my chest tighten and my mouth go dry. They hurt. For some inexplicable reason, the fact that Riley hated me, hurt me on the inside, although I struggled not to show it.

"Hate me all you want" I told her as she glared at me "Callum take her back to her room" I ordered softly as he looked at me uncertainly "spend the rest of the day there without food or water" I advised Riley, hardening my heart "and then see if you have the nerve to tell me I'm coldhearted."

Callum sighed and then got up, taking Riley's arm. "Make it quick," I told him gritting my teeth as Riley merely shook her head and turned around "Seeming as you're so concerned about these so-called Rogues camping out near our territory, I guess we should go and scope them out. See if they are a threat to the pack or if they are merely passing through."

He nodded and smiled down at Riley, causing a spurt of jealousy to shoot through me "Come on Riley" he said softly as she allowed him to pull her away "let's go sweetheart."

"Do not call her that" I growled and Callum glanced at me, his expression unreadable "never call her that" I snarled.

Callum raised a brow "whatever you say Alpha Jaxon" he bit out and I was left standing there as they walked out of the room, feeling like I had gone overboard and that I had lost all of my composure. What was it with Riley that had me constantly thinking I needed to do better and why was she able to constantly enter my mind, even when I tried so hard to push her out of them? At this rate, I could barely concentrate on my tasks and her scent was growing stronger by the day.

Caught

Chapter 27 - The Beastly Alpha's Mute Omega

Riley POV

He's never going to let me go. I know that now. My mate is determined to keep me here against my will. I remember hearing about the rogues nearby though and part of me is curious as to why

there are so many females needing help. It's against the rules, it's against his rules, I correct myself, but I'm through caring. If something happens to me, then it will be his fault. He could have marked me by now or claimed me for his own. I don't know whether to hate him. It's all so confusing, sometimes I hate him and then he touches me and it's like everything is forgiven.

I sit on my bed and debate the wisdom of my actions. This could get me killed but at this rate did it matter? What kind of life was this, constantly waiting for my mate to spare me the merest crumbs of his affection? I glance out the window. I already know that Callum has made his way back to the study. If I want to make my move, I have to do it now, before they realize I've gone missing. There's every chance patrol will pick me up anyway, before I can make it over the border, but that's a chance I'm willing to take.

I slide off the bed and peer out the doorway. The coast is clear. I resolutely make my way through the back of the pack house, careful to keep my head down and my body language of somebody who is on a task or errand. I avoid Sandra which is incredibly lucky and none of the other omegas care enough to question me about what I'm doing or where I'm going, too absorbed in their own tasks or their gossip to pay me much attention at all. It's perfect. Being invisible has never been so easy before.

I step out onto the grounds. Pack members walk or mull around but as a lowly omega, I'm barely even spared a glance. I remember Callum saying that they were close to the boundary and I began to head toward the forest, my body trembling slightly. Any moment now, I'm certain that a pack member or a patrol member is going to demand I stop and question me as to what I'm doing. But I reach the forest without issue, shocking me completely.

This was strange. What had happened to the so-called security of this strong pack? I shrug and begin to head in the direction of the boundary, certain I know which direction the women are. I push past shrubbery, stumble over debris, and pant as I continue to walk, the warmth of the sun becoming more intense as time passes by. It's times like this that I wish I had the ability to shift. It would make travel a hell of a lot easier.

I see a patrol member and quickly whip behind a tree. Why hasn't he smelt me? Picked up my scent? I sniff myself. I'm so covered in leaves and dirt that it's covered my scent completely. He continues on and I wait, before heading in the direction he came from. I was so close I could almost taste it. I didn't know why I was so intrigued by these women, only that I wanted to meet them. Maybe it was because I was wondering what it was like to be a rogue. Maybe it was because I was considering running away and becoming one. If they would accept me, could I leave this pack and travel with them? The idea lurked in the back of my mind. Freedom, I could almost smell it. If I got past the boundary line, Alpha Jaxon would have no authority to keep me here. I pushed a little harder, despite the pain in my chest and the shallow breathing. So close.

Something hits me, causing me to fall downwards, pinning my body to the ground as it lets out a ferocious growl. A large black wolf rests atop of me, his lips curled back in anger, it's eyes so black they are like obsidian. I swallow hard. It's expression is fierce. It continues to keep me from moving as I stare up at it, it's paws so large they are twice as big as my hands. I know

instinctively it has to be him. It has to be Jaxon. How long has he been following behind me? How long has he known that I was trying to reach the boundary line?

He snarls again and I wince from the sound. He sniffs me as I tense. His snout lowers to my shoulder and he licks it as I stiffen. Another lowly growl and then he gets off of me, backing away slowly. I slowly sit upright, my head aching. He had really knocked me hard. He growled and I looked at him terrified. He suddenly shifts and I can hear the bones cracking and adjusting as I close my eyes. I jump when I feel his hands on my shoulders.

"What on earth were you thinking?" he roared as I opened my eyes and stared dumbly at him "do you have any idea how dangerous it is to get so close to the border?"

That was the idea, I wanted to shout. His grip was painful, his fingers digging into my flesh. There was a mad look on his face. "You're driving me insane" he shouted as I stared at him blankly "every time I turn around I'm either having to save you or you're injured. You're supposed to be keeping a distance and instead, I'm forced to be close to you to make sure you don't do anything rash or stupid" he roared sounding frustrated.

I wasn't making him do anything I thought dazed. If he was following me or keeping tabs that was entirely his decision. I refused to be apologetic about my actions, flattening my lips and glaring hard at him.

I wish I had something to scribble down what I thought about him. He scowls at me and then lets go. I feel instant relief from the grip his fingers had on me.

"Where were you going?" he demanded shrewdly, his eyes narrowing "Were you just hoping to get past the boundary or..." he trailed off as realization dawned "You were trying to get to the rogues. Are you insane" he thundered "rogues are dangerous, regardless if they are women. They would have killed you instantly. Where is your brain," he said crudely "are you stupid or just naive?"

How I wanted to be able to retort or shout back at him. I stood up and dusted myself off while he continued to glower. I looked down at myself and saw that I was covered in various scrapes and cuts. No wonder my body was hurting. He growled at me "Get back to the pack house, now" he said impatiently.

I refused. I stood there defiantly. My hair flowed slightly around my body as the wind began to pick up. He got even angrier. "Get back to the pack house now," he said between gritted teeth.

I folded my arms across my chest. I was provoking him, I knew that. But I was tired of being bossed around. Tired of being made to feel like less than what I was. If he wanted me to go then he could use his Alpha tone. Nothing else was going to get me to move from this spot. The look on his face told me he had realized it too.

"For god's sake must you be so stubborn" he shouted as I raised a brow "What is it with you and defying my authority?" he hissed, coming closer "What is it with those eyes of yours that remind

me of a brilliant blue pool?" he continued making me frown "and that hair of yours that's like a bright sapphire? Do you have any notion of how beautiful you are" he groaned, causing me to look at him taken aback.

He thought I was beautiful? Despite myself, my chest tightened. His words were strangely poetic. Descriptive. But he sounded resentful about it as though he'd said the words against his will. His eyes narrowed "Your lips are so luscious and captivating" he groaned.

They were? My mouth parted as he moved even more. I tried not to blush at the fact that he was completely naked, my eyes focussing solely on his face. His hand shot out and I flinched, only to relax as it cupped my face. His eyes were piercing.

"Just one taste" he whispered, his voice dripping with longing "just one taste. What can it hurt?" he continued, although it didn't sound like a question.

My mouth opened involuntarily and that's when he made his move, his hand moving to grip the back of my neck firmly, his head bending down and his lips pressing firmly to mine, causing my body to instantly heat up and the tingles to go from gentle to what felt like an explosion of sparks flying throughout my whole body. Time stood still and it was like there was only two of us in that moment, a moment that I never wanted to end.

Sanctuary

Chapter 28 - The Beastly Alpha's Mute Omega

Alpha Jaxon POV

I was furious at her. I was so angry I was having trouble seeing straight and seeing those luscious lips of hers as she trembled in front of me wasn't helping. Before I knew it I was grasping the back of her neck to hold her still and kissing her, my lips forcing hers to part as my tongue slowly slipped inside her mouth, exploring the sweetness within. It was like nothing I had ever experienced. It was like electricity was running through my veins. I deepened the kiss, my body craving more, my hand gripping her hair and twining my fingers through it. All my anger faded for the moment and time ceased to stop existing. My wolf let out a purr, strangely content. I wanted more, to throw her down on the ground and do unspeakable things to her that had my cock jerking in reaction.

It was like having ice water dumped through my veins. I jerked backward and saw her blinking confusedly at me as she put a hand to her swollen lips. I was breathing heavily and I saw to my surprise, so was she. My eyes narrowed. I couldn't afford to feel like this. Not now. But the look

on her face was tormenting me. She looked as though I had shocked her. Had I just taken her first kiss from her? The idea did not sit well with me. I fought to bring back my composure and could see her discreetly eyeing me, her eyes involuntarily dipping down to my erection which I couldn't prevent if I tried. She just caused that reaction in me.

I stepped back and saw a flash of hurt enter her eyes. "Go back to the pack house," I said and this time my voice was devoid of emotion. I saw the pain on her face and fought to resist taking her back in my arms again. She shook her head and made to walk past me.

My anger increased. Even now she insists on defying me. Hadn't she learned by now that I had the final say? I could sense eyes on us and knew without turning that Callum had entered the clearing, although he remained well back, watching and waiting to see what happened.

"You insist on defying me at every turn," I said, my voice slightly incredulous "you refuse to acknowledge your place in this pack. If I have to use my Alpha tone to get you to realize I mean it then so be it. I Alpha Jaxon" I deepened my voice and allowed my Alpha aura begin to seep out as her eyes widened and she tried to shake her head in denial "order you Riley to remain on Blood Moon Pack lands until such time as I order you to leave. I order you to go back to the pack house now" I added and saw her eyes fill with hatred as she was forced to obey, her lips quivering as she slowly turned and began to make her way back to the house, her shoulders slumped in defeat and a look of resignation on her face.

"Here" Callum handed me some clothes "I figured you might need this."

I put the clothes on.

"Where do you think she was headed?" he asked.

I turned and eyed him "Either she was running away or she was heading straight to the rogues for some reason. I don't like the idea of either one."

"Don't you think you are being too harsh?" Callum asked, leaning against the trunk of the tree "the poor girl is mute, has no friends and you're treating her like garbage. You don't think that's not going to be too much for one girl to be able to handle?"

I stiffened "Do not question my decisions Callum, we've been over this. I'm starting to think you have something for Riley."

He shook his head "I just feel sorry for her" he said honestly "now should we head to the rogues?"

I sighed. "I'm not shifting to meet them. We go now and we meet on neutral ground. You say they need help. I'm not so sure they do. But I'm willing to meet them and find out."

He grinned and motioned for me to follow him, both of us stepping beside each other. "There's only about half a dozen of them, so it's no big threat," he said confidently.

We headed out of the boundary, that's how close Riley had gotten. My heart thumped loudly in my chest at the thought of how close she had gotten to getting off my pack lands. No sooner had we made it into neutral territory than we were entering a clearing where the women themselves were camping. At the sight of us, the women froze, all of them looking thin and starved, malnourished and weak, their bodies tense as they studied us and debated whether it was worth shifting and fighting to get away.

Callum held up a hand "We mean you no harm" he said quietly "we came to see for ourselves what your purpose was in being here and why you are here."

One woman, after glancing uneasily at the others stepped forward, her hair a matted mess of black and brown, her body barely covered by a nightgown. She cleared her throat. "We are trying to find a pack to take us in" she said lowly.

I raised a brow "What happened to your own packs?" my voice was blunt.

Another uneasy glance "We were turfed out for being wolfless."

Wolfless. This was why Callum wanted to show me the women and why he insisted they weren't a threat. But they smelt of something else.

"What are you?" I asked as they shifted uncomfortably on their feet "At least two of you are something else."

"Stacey and I are hybrids," the woman in front of me said "half vampires, half shifters. Naturally we are seen as nothing more than repulsive" she explained "and we weren't accepted by those that dislike the idea of vampires and shifters being mates with each other."

"Where are your mates?"

Stacey and the woman shot a look at each other "Dead" the woman said reluctantly "killed during a war against another pack."

Wolfless shifters and half vampires. I shot a look at Callum who looked unfazed. I motioned to him and turned my back on the women. "You can't possibly be serious about giving these women sanctuary," I said between gritted teeth.

"Why not? You've never cared about different races being mates and the wolfless women will be killed if they don't find a pack. Have a heart Jaxon" he said lowly.

"Please," a woman said, her voice shaking behind us as I looked over my shoulder "it's not safe out there. There is a crazy Alpha tearing women to shreds in the forest and rumors that he's feral. I beg of you, please grant us the sanctuary that we need."

Callum shot me a pointed look. I turned back around. "You would all have to pledge allegiance to me. You would be made omegas or be given work around the pack house."

The women looked pleased by that instead of put off. "My pack demands respect and I as the Alpha demand respect."

"We will happily abide by your rules" Stacey said hastily as the other women nodded as well.

"As for the so-called crazy Alpha whose gone feral, this is the first time I've heard about it," I said slowly glancing at Callum "and it's probably just rumored to keep rogues away from somebody's territory. The last time a wolf went feral..."

"They killed over a hundred women before they were caught," one of the women said fearfully "I remember my history."

"So it's just a rumor. I'll take you back to the pack house now if you start to pack up your things" I said dismissively.

A feral shifter or wolf was dangerous. It meant they had stopped being able to use or focus on their humanity side and could no longer shift back and forth. It made them blood thirsty and slowly they lost all sense of who they are until eventually all they did was hunt and kill. Most of the time, for some reason unknown it was male shifters who lost their humanity and became feral. It started with them becoming rogue but nobody knew what happened to make them feral afterwards. Maybe it was the death of a mate, maybe they were cold-blooded killers in the first place. Whatever it was, the end result was frightening. No wonder these women were so fearful. But it had been years since the last male shifter had turned feral and it was probably just a rumor as I'd said.

"We don't have anything, so we can come with you now" Stacey said relieved.

I sighed. Callum looked at them with pity in his eyes. I motioned for them to follow me. One by one we walked single file back towards the pack border. "You are from the Blood moon pack?" Stacey asked.

"I am" I said tightly.

"We were told to avoid your pack, that you were ruthless" she murmured.

"My Beta has taken pity on you all, otherwise today might have proven to have a different outcome to you all."

Her eyes gleamed even as she nodded. "Then I guess we should be thankful for the merciful Beta that you have."

I stared ahead. Callum's lip twitched. "You're not as bad as you make yourself out to be" he said with a chuckle, the women following carefully behind us.

I looked at him "You're in charge of getting these women settled in. Then I want to see you regarding party preparations. I suggest you hurry" I growled "I am already displeased having found my mate trying to run away."

I snarled at him and then turned, shifting into wolf form as the girls gave a loud exclamation and then began to run, my paws pounding against the hard dirt as I ran as hard as I possibly could. I needed to run and get some fresh air. At least my wayward mate had been dealt with and my pack was under control, I thought grimacing, but something told me that wasn't going to last much longer.

Siren

Chapter 29 - The Beastly Alpha's Mute Omega

Riley POV

I make it back to the pack house thinking about that kiss and the electricity that ran through my body as our lips touched. I can still feel it now. I touch my lips feeling defeated. I had smelt his scent, reminiscent of the ocean water and the sunshine to me. All I wanted was to be in the water again. It was like a craving. An urge. It couldn't be satisfied. I hesitated. If I were to go back to the lake it would no doubt anger Alpha Jaxon. I stayed on the grounds, but it was almost as though my body took over, my mind curiously blank.

Water. Water. Water. My mind constantly repeated the word as I turned. I was defying Alpha Jaxon again, but it was like I couldn't comprehend the extent of the actions I was taking. My body had a mind of its own as it began to woodenly make its way towards the lake. I could feel myself licking my lips. While I wanted so badly to be in ocean water, the lake would suffice as the next best thing. I could practically feel the water against my skin and my steps became even more hurried.

To feel the coolness of the water and the way it caressed me. My eyes closed in anticipation. I stumbled over debris and dirt, my hand blindly reaching out to touch shrubbery and trees, my eyes filling with eagerness as I drew closer to my goal. Water. I needed to sink into it, allow it to wash over my whole body, and let me escape into its tender embrace.

I reach the lake. The water is shimmering beneath the sunlight. I glance down at it with keen eyes. It's so blue, like a crystal and I begin to rip my clothing off, dropping them haphazardly on the floor. This time I strip down to nothing, wanting to feel the water against all of my skin. The water beckons me. I can practically hear a song in my head, gesturing for me to follow it as I dip a toe into the water and feel the coolness of it.

Come to me

I am coming, I tell the voice, beginning to make my way into the water.

Come to me.

I am coming, I repeat to myself, beginning to push further into the lake.

The voice appears to be satisfied as I push off, propelling myself forward, deeper into the lake, my body diving into the water. The song in my head grows louder. It's difficult to describe the beauty of the song. It was both eerie and yet calming at the same time. It was familiar and yet I had never heard it before in my life. I longed to sing with it, to make my voice known but of course, my voice was gone. I felt disappointment wash through me, even as I surged to the surface, my hair billowing behind me.

My body looks as though it's shimmering on the surface. Everything looks so much clearer and prettier. I feel the water and it continues to enthrall me. The voice fades but then as I dive it grows louder and clearer. Tears prick my eyes at the beauty of the sound. So much pain in the tone, so much hurt. I wish I could speak to the singer if only to comfort them. I frolicked in the water, feeling playful and happy for the first time in a very long time.

This is where you belong. Water is your home and always will be. It is your destiny.

I don't completely understand what the voice is trying to tell me, but instead of growing weary in the water, it's almost like I'm gaining strength. I feel rejuvenated the longer I spend in the water. I glance at my shoulder and see a strange-looking birthmark. It's a shell. My hair is brighter. Instead of being afraid, joy shoots through me.

For too long you've forgotten who you are and what you are capable of. It's time you embraced your lineage and what you can do. Drop the fear, drop the resentment, and embrace the heritage your mother left you.

What did this voice want? Why was it becoming more insistent? It was becoming louder and so was my heartbeat. It was thumping loudly in my chest. There was a sound of rushing in my ears. My lungs filled with air and I surged to the surface, Alpha Jaxon standing at the edge looking furious once more to find me here. I barely hear his shouts, over the loud ringing that's in my ears.

Release. Release the pain, the anguish, the hurt that's been locked inside you this whole time. Stop keeping yourself locked up. Heal that which has been hurt and take back what's yours and has always been yours. It's time Riley. It has always been time. You are eighteen today, your real birthday. Give in to the power that surges through you. Don't be afraid.

It felt like electricity was running through my veins. I trod water, feeling an incredible warmth start at the tip of my toes which spread through my legs and then slowly through my entire body until it reached my throat and stopped, the heat becoming intolerable and causing my mouth to

open as my eyes watered. I was barely aware of Alpha Jaxon or the threats he was making in the background. All I could feel was the pain in my throat and the unbearable urge to scream, to give voice to the pain I was feeling. My body shook with the effort to keep it back. The heat continued until I felt like I was going to spontaneously combust. I couldn't hold it back anymore. It was going to kill me if I kept it locked up inside. It wanted out and it wanted out now.

I threw my head back and screamed with all the power I could muster. At first, it was barely a whisper, but then it grew to a full-on banshee scream that thundered through the forest, ear piercing and loud, Jaxon covering his ears as I gave voice to all my pain, the scream going on and on, with no signs of stopping. My voice had seen fit to come back. I relished the sound of it as I let it linger, until it faded away to a hush and then back to silence, my eyes wide with awe.

I touched my throat. Sing.

Sing? Sing.

I began to sing, my voice becoming otherworldly, the song not one I had heard before as I stayed in the water. Alpha Jaxon's eyes widened as he listened. Slowly, one by one, men from the pack began to slowly make their way towards me, their eyes blank, staring at me hard.

You have the power to enthrall men. Once you sing they cannot escape your clutches.

But Jaxon was not affected. I frowned, even as I allowed my voice to halter and then stop.

Your mate will never be affected by your voice. It has always been that way. It's how it works.

The men looked around confused. I stayed in the water, a wide smile on my face.

"What's happening?"

"Where am I?"

"The last thing I remember I was heading down to the training ring" another muttered.

"Everybody goes back to what they were doing," Jaxon said sharply as several men turned to look at me in the water.

I was naked but I didn't move to cover myself. I wasn't embarrassed. The men's eyes widened. Jaxon let out a ferocious growl that had them almost running from the clearing. Callum and some women hastily left as well. They must be the rogues I thought absent-mindedly. Jaxon cleared his throat.

"Are you planning on coming out?" he asked hoarsely.

Was that fear in his eyes that I saw? Was he afraid of me? Of what I was? Or of what I Was capable of?

"I know you can talk now," he said quietly.

"You're afraid of me," I said, my voice was musical and lighthearted.

He did not deny it. "Now that I know what you are, yes I am," he said lowly "there's a reason your species is almost extinct" he added as my heart sank.

"I'm the same girl I've always been," I said quietly "but that will never matter will it?"

"Come out of the lake Riley," he said stiffly.

I slowly swam to the edge of the lake. I sensed his eyes on me as I walked out, my body almost glowing beneath the sunlight. He seemed to struggle to take his eyes off me as I slowly bent down and grabbed my clothes, putting them on.

"No wonder you're drawn to the water" he muttered with his back turned "and why you continually defy me to come here."

I said nothing as I put my shirt on. He turns around and stares at me hard. He seems to be having an internal struggle of some kind.

"I can talk now," I said as he regarded me.

"Not surprising. Nothing is strong enough to silence a siren's voice" he said stiffly "it's a miracle you didn't start speaking earlier. Your father must have scared you enough to prevent it until now."

I stared at him silently. No wonder father had continued to beat me and force me not to sing. I felt powerful still, my hair still brighter than ever. Jaxon exhaled deeply.

"This changes everything" he murmured, running a hand through his hair "I can't have somebody so dangerous walking so freely around the pack."

I felt hurt. Even now he wanted to deny who we were together. His eyes had clouded for a moment and then returned to normal. "I'm not dangerous, just because of my species and I'm only half siren" I tried to protest.

"Even half siren is too dangerous for my liking" he snarled as I cringed "your kind is responsible for war between packs, for the death of innocent shifters, for luring shifters to their deaths and who knows what else. We've lost thousands killing your kind to ensure our survival."

I felt my wrists pulled harshly behind me and cuffs placed on them. "Silver won't hurt me" I said dumbly.

But it did. It burned slightly. Callum looked apologetic while Jaxon strode forward and grabbed me. "I'm immune" he told Callum "so I'll take her down to the dungeon."

"Don't do this Jaxon" I pleaded softly "I'm not a danger."

"I'm not taking any chances" he hissed and began to drag me, while I stumbled and resisted slightly. The notion my mate thought I would be a danger to him or his pack, hurt me more than I could ever admit.

Forbidding

Chapter 30 - The Beastly Alpha's Mute Omega

Alpha Jaxon POV

A siren. I had my suspicions but she'd just confirmed it. I felt a moment of fear along with nothing but revulsion. I hardened my heart as I dragged her towards the pack house, as she struggled futilely, tears in her eyes, tears I had put there.

"Jaxon" she pleaded, with those big doe-like eyes of hers "Jaxon please don't do this."

She had her voice and it was beautiful. Like music to the ears. I didn't question how her voice had healed, evidently, the water had more than brought her powers to the surface. I could feel my wolf resisting me as we dragged her downstairs toward the basement.

"Please" she begged, her voice husky "I haven't done anything."

"Don't you get it" I snarled "It's not what you've done it's what you're capable of doing."

She still didn't comprehend the true nature of her powers, the strength she had in just her voice. I flung her into the nearest cell and watched as she stumbled and fell to her knees, listening to her cry out in pain as she grazed her knees. I swung the door shut with an ominous creaking sound as she climbed awkwardly to her feet and turned around to watch me with a fearful expression on her face.

"Jaxon we have to talk" she begged me.

"About what? How you've tried to hide what you are this whole time? Are you claiming you had no knowledge that you were a siren? Because I find that hard to believe" I said snidely, even though I suspected she hadn't known. The look of awe on her face as she sang, as though she was experiencing something new, something beyond her imagination was something that couldn't be faked.

"I didn't," she said indignantly "I've never known. All I've known is that I didn't have my wolf and that was it. I never knew my mother, she died giving birth to me" she continued to protest, clutching at her throat, unused to speaking let alone talking so much "how was I meant to know?" she asked and I hesitated.

"It doesn't matter" I muttered "because it makes no difference. I can't have you wandering around the pack house, being a danger to the men. Who knows what you'll do to them."

"I won't do anything. If you feel this strongly about me, then reject me" she insisted, her chest heaving up and down as she stared at me accusingly "if you hate me then just do it. Clearly, you can't stand the thought of a siren being your mate, so reject me and get this over and done with. Sever this mate bond so you don't have to have any feelings towards me."

I eyed her. It was tempting. So tempting that I almost opened my mouth right then and there to do it. But my wolf was growling ferociously in my mind and threatening to do all sorts of things if I so much as attempted it. "I wish I could," I said heatedly as she blinked at me "but my wolf seems to like you for some unfathomable reason. Right now my only option is to leave you down here."

"For how long?" she demanded icily.

I avoided her gaze. The thing was, I didn't know how long. The look in her eyes as she gazed at me told me she knew it too.

"I have my voice," she said suddenly "I don't need you to reject me anymore, I can do it myself" she added with triumph.

No. No, no, no I protested in my mind, despite my own misgivings. She opened her mouth and began to shout the words "I Riley reject you Alpha Jaxon as my mate..."

"I refuse to accept it" I snarled, causing her to fall silent in shock "so don't bother finishing that sentence, it's just a waste of effort."

"I hate you" she whispered, her face going pale "I hate you so much."

"Hate me then," I said nonchalantly shrugging as though it didn't matter to me, trying to put on a forced smile, even as I felt a twinge of pain in my chest and my wolf howled in grief "I don't care. It makes no difference. It's probably best that you hate me" I added grimly as she glared "it will make this easier on the both of us."

I began to turn. "Where are you going?" she shouted in panic "You can't just leave me down here alone."

I glanced over my shoulder "Omegas will come down and give you food and drink. Female omegas" I emphasized as she gaped at me "I won't trust a male to come down here."

"You bastard" she spat out as I raised a brow and turned my back deliberately "I can't believe you can be this coldhearted. Doesn't what I want or how I feel matter to you at all?"

Her voice was beseeching, a tinge of desperation in it. I closed my eyes and breathed for a second. I couldn't afford to show her mercy. Her kind had taken advantage of merciful shifters long ago and we had paid the price in bloodshed and the loss of many. I began to walk towards the stairs as she clutched at the bars, hissing as the silver burnt her slightly.

"Please" she shouted, while I began to climb "Please Jaxon" she screamed, as I winced and began to slowly ascend.

I opened the door and resolutely shut it behind me, Callum standing there with his arms folded over his chest.

"You really did it then," he said as I stared at him mutinously "you put your mate in the dungeon. Jesus Jaxon" he swore as I began to woodenly walk down the hallway "what on earth are you thinking? You can't keep her down there forever. I know that she's a siren but she's only a halfbreed, shouldn't that count for something?" he asked seriously "she's not a full-blooded one, so she's not as powerful. She doesn't seem like the type to just kill for no reason."

"We can't take that risk," I said dully "I'm not about to risk the lives of every man in my pack for the sake of one woman and a feeling you have about her either," I said sharply as we rounded a corner.

He sighed "Then reject her. It's simple."

"She still strengthens my wolf," I said gloomily as we headed back outside "it will weaken him if we reject her or accept her rejection."

He looked sick "So that's it? Is she just a prisoner forever? Even after you take a chosen mate, she will still strengthen your wolf as long as she stays in close proximity" he said exhaling and looking like he wanted to punch me in the face "but don't you have a limit? She's just a teenager" he argued "who's been abused her entire life. Where is your humanity? Where is your compassion?"

I laughed. "It's gone, Callum. Why do you think I have the reputation for being ruthless and coldhearted?"

He sighed. "The women are settling in. The new ones. They were quite fascinated by the show that Riley gave them at the lake. I gather the half-vampires have never seen a siren before, because they were asking questions but I couldn't exactly answer them. They seem keen to research the subject."

"Let them," I said blithely "they won't find anything we don't already know about them."

"The party preparations are already underway. What do you think we should do? Bring it forward? Keep the same date? What are your thoughts?" he asked quietly.

I paused. "Bring the party forward. I think it's imperative that I find a chosen mate, don't you? Although why everybody is insistent that this pack requires a Luna I don't know. It will at the very least prevent me from turning feral" I joked as Callum frowned.

"About that. Do you think there is anything to that rumor, about there being a feral wold out there in the forest?"

"No. The other packs would have reached out if that was the case. Until I find out otherwise, I think it's more than likely rumors or gossip. It's unsubstantiated. The women were probably just gullible and frightened of nothing" I said arrogantly.

"Alright," Callum said reluctantly "I'll inform the omegas to bring the party preparations forward and make sure that everybody that is eligible is invited."

"Do that" I sighed and pinched the bridge of my nose and then began to walk back out.

"Where are you going?"

"For a run" I retorted "My wolf needs to go and get some of his anger out. Unless you want to face me in the training ring?" I retorted eyeing him carefully.

He shook his head.

"Didn't think so" I muttered with a large exhalation and began to make my way towards the front of the pack house, my eyes focussed on the forest "never mind, while I'm this angry it's best I remain alone" I murmured, shifting and running into the place that felt like home and granted me peace and sanctuary.