

Chapter 31 - The Beastly Alpha's Mute Omega

Riley POV

I felt a little bit out of place as the woman stared through the bars at me, her gaze lingering on my hair as I sat there staring up at her. I could smell her scent and I knew that she wasn't just a shifter. She was beautiful, with golden honey hair and big blue eyes, her lips ruby red and curved back in a smile.

"You're even prettier than I remember from back in the lake," she said gazing at me as though I should know who she was.

"I'm sorry but I don't know who you are" I stammered, slowly getting to my feet while she held out some food to fit through the bars.

My hand reluctantly took the food. Her eyes sharpened. "I saw you swimming that day when you called for the men with your song" she explained nonchalantly "it was beautiful. It brought tears to my eyes. I never thought I would get the chance to hear a siren sing in this lifetime. Your kind are practically extinct you know" she told me with a hint of excitement.

I bit into the apple she had given me with viciousness. "I'm pretty sure Alpha Jaxon would prefer I not exist," I said bitterly "Why else would he have left me down here to rot?"

She sighed "Such pretty hair" she murmured continuing to look me over "and that shell birthmark, it vanishes when you leave the water?" she asked peering at my shoulder.

I frowned. I hadn't realized that, but sure enough when I looked at my shoulder the birth mark was gone.

"I guess it does" I scowled.

"Fascinating" she murmured.

I was beginning to feel like I was under a microscope as she continued to peer at me closely.

"What are you?" I asked bluntly "You're not just a shifter, I can smell you."

She put a hand to her chest "How rude of me. My name is Stacey and I am half vampire" she admitted "which is why I find you so interesting. In all my years, I never thought I would live the day I got to see a siren or even half of one. Your species is so fascinating to me."

"Why?" I asked, sitting back down on the ground and eying her "why am I so interesting?"

"Your power comes from the water. You can lure men to you with the power of your voice alone. You have the power to kill thousands which is quite frankly terrifying" she admitted.

"But I don't. I can sing them to me but that's it" I said frowning "how did the other sirens kill? How did they kill so many?"

She eyed me askance "They would swim to the depths of the ocean or deep to the lake and the men would walk in one by one and drown."

I swallowed hard. The image was sickening and frightening. "But you know that you should possess other powers as well, not just that one?"

I shook my head. "No, but I didn't know about the singing either. I mean until then I didn't have a voice. My father damaged my vocal cords and I didn't think they would ever heal."

"Hmm" she murmured "For starters this cell shouldn't be able to hold you if the legend is true," she said shrugging.

I glanced at her skeptically. She nodded solemnly "It should be nothing for you to sing the lock to open," she said calmly.

Sing the lock open? I scrambled back to my feet. Sing the lock open? I wanted to laugh at how ludicrous that sounded but the expression on Stacey's face was serious. I looked at the lock on the bars and then back at her uncertainly.

"How?"

She thought about it. "Well the silver burns you slightly because of your shifter DNA but doesn't fully burn you like it would the others. Try putting your hand on it, concentrating, and then sing."

She made it sound easy. I was still filled with doubt but I figured it couldn't hurt. I'd been down in this bloody dungeon for days and Alpha Jaxon had kept his word. The only company I had seen were female omegas who had brought down my food and drink and taken me to the bathroom or to shower and change. The idea of freedom was practically making my mouth water. What was the harm in trying? The worst that could happen is that it didn't work. No big deal.

I shrugged and put my hand lightly on the lock on the other side, feeling the slight burning sensation that accompanied touching silver. I breathed in deeply. "Try and envision the lock undoing itself" Stacey suggested helpfully "in your mind."

I nodded slowly. I felt foolish as I pictured it in my mind's eye, unlocking and the door swinging itself open. My mouth slowly parted open as she stepped back and watched, an expectant smile on her face. I sang, the sound just as eerie and as beautiful as before. To my astonishment, I heard the lock clicking itself open and as my hand pushed, the door swung out, opening. I stopped in disbelief.

"I knew you could do it" Stacey said beaming "A siren cannot be confined or held, just as the stories say."

My mouth was dry. "I never thought" I stammered "If I had known..." I trailed off.

Even if I had known I wouldn't have had the courage to free myself. Alpha Jaxon had made it abundantly clear that he would have patrol straight on me if I tried to flee. Although now that my powers worked, I wondered if his Alpha command would be useless to me.

"Listen little one," Stacey said, flipping her hair over her shoulder "I think you need to decide something and soon. Your mate is being a stubborn asshole" she exhaled and shook her head in disapproval "but his fear stems from old stories and rumors. Anybody can see by looking at you that you're not a killer. You're like a puppy dog, no offense" she said unapologetically as I stared at her "and he's acting like a jackass because of his fear. You need to decide if you want to be mates with him or if you want to leave. Because the mate bond is sacred, even in our community," she said with a sigh "and something to be treasured. You could run and regret it" she said raking her gaze over me "or stay and fight for the mate that's fated to be yours."

I hesitated. The urge to run and not look back was tempting. I looked at the open door with hopeful eyes. Alpha Jaxon had been nothing but cruel to me. But there had been times I had seen a hint of kindness in him. "What about a second chance mate?" I asked quietly "do they not exist?"

She looked at me pityingly "Few and far between and that's only if you survive the rejection process" she allowed "which considering your a halfbreed may be different to the usual process as well."

"But he hates me" I protested.

"He doesn't know you" she countered back "he thinks he does which is different. He doesn't know the real you, just what he imagines you to be like."

"Why are you pushing this?"

"Because to have a mate, a real mate is unlike anything you've ever experienced" she hissed, her eyes glowing red for a brief moment "and the pain of losing them its more painful than anything I would wish on anyone."

I fell silent. I glanced again at the open door that led to freedom and who knew what else. "What do you suggest then? He's been ignoring me since he threw me down here."

Her eyes twinkled with good humor. "Well" she drawled, folding her arms across her chest and observing me "I don't know if you've heard but he's holding a party in a few days in order to choose his chosen mate" she said with complete calmness while I scowled at her.

"How does that help me?"

"It's a masquerade party" she said scoffing "so that it creates mystery and intrigue when he falls for somebody. I suggest you attend" she said as though it were that simple.

"How would I do that? I don't have anything to wear and as soon as he sees my blue hair he'll know its me."

She rolled her eyes "I can sneak a dress and shoes down to you and a mask" she looked excited by the prospect "and as for your hair, well that's what hair dye or spray is for."

"It never lasts long" I warned her "a few hours at most and then it goes back to blue."

"Long enough to enjoy a party" she shrugged "Perhaps we'll dye it red and have you look like a modern day Ariel" she joked.

I laughed and then softly reached out and closed the door. "Fine, you've convinced me. I just hope I don't regret it."

"You won't" she said softly "There's a few of us who would like to see you become Luna of this pack, where you rightfully belong."

I looked her in the eyes "Thank you. I won't forget this."

"See that you don't" she said turning to go back upstairs "and only use that trick to get out when you know nobody is coming. I would hate for you to get caught before I could smuggle an outfit down to you for the party."

I watched in silence as she began to make her way out of the dungeon, my mind whirling with all sorts of thoughts and ideas.

Rivalry

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Alpha Jaxon POV

We still hadn't found Damien. He had gotten clean away and I frowned as I stood next to Callum, watching the training going on in the ring. "The preparations for the party are going smoothly. A lot of the packs have already sent their RSVP back saying they are attending" Callum said, his gaze intent on the two warriors currently sparring.

"There are over twenty packs coming. I should be able to find a chosen mate out of all of them. The idea of having a masquerade party was genius" I said, as the two opponents punched and dodged each other "it means that I don't know whoever is behind the mask and the person I choose will be anonymous."

There was an inscrutable expression on Callum's face. "That was the general gist of the idea. That way you don't just go for the most obvious higher-up statuses as well. I know you would prefer an Alpha female but this way you might find yourself drawn to even a female warrior" he explained with a nonchalant shrug "somebody who knows what it's like to be able to fight for and defend their own pack would come in useful to our Blood Moon Pack" he explained.

"That would be true" I murmured and then held up a hand halting our discussion "You" I pointed to the warrior closest to me in the ring "shift into a better stance and correct your footing. You're giving him too large an opening to attack you with and leaving your right side vulnerable" I shouted.

The warrior hastily corrected his stance, looking at me for approval. I nodded and gestured for them to continue. Callum chuckled. "You're a hard taskmaster," he said shaking his head but his eyes were filled with amusement.

"I expect the best from our warriors and some of them have come from the other pack" I growled "which means they are going to have to work harder in order to reach the high standards I expect."

"I'm not disagreeing," Callum said raising a brow "merely commenting."

"Good" I snarled "I also expect you and Cody to be attending the party. It would be a great advantage if you and he were to find your fated mates at this party. It would strengthen both your positions as well" I said.

"I don't expect to find my mate," Callum said surprising me.

I frowned "Why not?"

This was the first I had heard him mutter such a thing.

He exhaled "To be honest I'm not sure I want a mate. Seeing how you've reacted to yours" he shot me a pointed look "what if mine isn't a full shifter? What if mine is a hybrid as well?" he asked me tersely "would you accept her or would you insist I reject her?"

I was astounded by the question and a little hurt if I was honest. I never thought that Callum would think I was capable of asking him to do such a thing. "I would leave that choice up to you," I said confused "I would never want you to do something that would make you unhappy Callum. You are one of my best friends, you and Cody."

He nodded tightly "but you make yourself unhappy," he said turning to me as I looked him in the eyes "anyone can tell looking at you that you're missing Riley. How many times have you attempted to sneak down to the dungeon and been caught by an omega, only to turn around and pretend to be doing something else?"

Damn. I hadn't thought anybody had picked up on that. I flushed. "I don't know what you're talking about" I denied.

He didn't look convinced "and then there's the look of pure disgust on your face every time you talk about taking a chosen mate, as though you can't stand the idea but are forcing yourself to do it anyway."

I forced myself to remain calm "It's what's best for the pack."

"Is it?" he asked challengingly "because with the powers that Riley possesses she could easily help to make our pack stronger. She can lure men to her which means they would stop fighting. Do you know what kind of advantage that gives us? How much of a benefit that would be if we were to go to war against rogues or other species?"

He made a good point but there was something he was forgetting "She's a siren Callum, no matter which way you look at it" I pointed out gravely "what if she turns on us? I'm immune to her singing as her mate, but the rest of the pack isn't. Do you think I would be able to prevent her from slaughtering every male in the pack if it came down to it?"

He eyed me askance. "You're not helpless Jaxon. You act as though the women would stand back and let it happen. If push came to shove, wouldn't you, in order to save the pack, end her life?"

I inhaled sharply. It was a fair question. An honest question and one I hadn't wanted to admit had gone through my mind over and over again as I tried to rationalize accepting Riley as my mate. The longing I felt every time I thought of her was only growing stronger and every time I thought about her being locked up in the dungeon, I could feel my chest tighten as my wolf growled, furious at the decision I had made.

"To kill my own mate is something I would abhor but you're right" I admitted lowly turning to him "if it came down to the pack and her, I would kill her to save the pack."

It was something I wasn't proud of. But I was the Alpha and hard decisions had to be made.

I watched the two warriors finish sparring and two new ones replaced them with a frown on my face.

"Then why not just accept her? Her lineage is not her fault. Heck she didn't even know she was a siren" Callum argued "and she's so innocent that I have a hard time imagining her as a bloodthirsty mermaid killing people."

I snorted "She's nothing of the kind" I admitted "but that's part of their disguise. To look beautiful in order to seduce men."

"Begin sparring in wolf form" I shouted at the warriors and watched as they began to carefully strip before they shifted into two wolves who immediately began to circle one another looking for an easy opening to take advantage of.

"So you admit she's beautiful" Callum's voice was tinged with humor.

"Of course she's beautiful" my voice was crossed "it's what makes this so hard. She's one of the most beautiful girls I've ever seen."

"Then stop fighting it" Callum shouted in desperation, turning to me with a crazed look in his eyes "Do you even know how lucky you are to find your fated mate? I would do anything to be in your position. So would Cody" he yelled as I looked at him in shock "and if it were me, I would have accepted Riley in a heartbeat, Siren or not. She's a sweet girl and she deserves better than to rot in some dungeon because of you, you asshole."

"Remember who you're talking to" I growled.

I was still the Alpha and Callum was the beta and he needed to remember that.

"Not everyone gets to find their chosen mate" Callum said a little quieter "you have yours right in the palms of your hands and you're torturing her."

"I'm not she's just in the cell. I wouldn't physically harm her" I denied.

"You're emotionally torturing her. Do you think she won't feel it when your with your chosen mate intimately? Or that she won't feel it when you mark another? She'll feel everything you do. It will hurt. It will be so painful that she'll wish for death. Did you take that into consideration Jaxon?" his voice was mocking as I clenched my jaw "deny it all you want but that's torture, pure and simple."

I glared at him. "Stop now Callum" I warned "you overstep your role."

He glared back at me. "You overstep yours. I knew you could be ruthless but this coldhearted? This much of a bastard? The friend I knew wouldn't be capable of doing such a thing to an innocent female."

I gritted my teeth "Stop."

"No. You just don't want to listen because every word I've said is true" Callum growled, getting in my face "and you can't stand to face the truth. You make me ashamed to call you my Alpha, Jaxon. You make me embarrassed to be your friend while your like this. You need to get your head out of your ass" he snarled and then he did the unthinkable as the warriors gasped in shock. He shoved me, hard, sending me staggering backwards slightly.

There was a mutinous expression on his face. His hands were clenched into fists. He was breathing heavily and there was a look of defiance on him. Before I could stop myself, my fist was swinging out and connecting with his face.

"Big mistake" I growled.

Betrayal

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Alpha Jaxon POV

Callum looked unrepentant as he swung back at me and I dodged. Our anger was visible on both our faces now. I could see the shocked look on the crowd as we began to fight, our bodies a flurry of punches and kicks as we began to fight against each other with both of us determined to injure the other one. I split Callum's lip with a well-placed punch to the side of his face and I felt my knee almost buckle beneath me when he attempted to kick it out from beneath me.

My anger grew. Callum's disrespect had gone beyond the bounds of a Beta who should know his place. I shifted, my bones cracking and breaking to form the transformation of my large black wolf that snarled at Callum who was unfazed, doing the same, although his wolf was a plain silver in comparison to mine and although large, was still smaller than my impressive Alpha wolf.

I snorted, my fur standing on end. The idiot. There was taking it too far and then there was Callum who had leaped past the barrier and continued on recklessly. I sideswiped him and felt my paw connect with his midsection, my claws drawing blood as he neatly darted sideways and turned to stare at me challengingly.

How far was he willing to take this? How far did his anger extend? We had fought before but this was different. This was a whole new side to Callum I had not seen before. He was beyond pissed at me. As though I had done something to personally offend him. I didn't understand what he hoped to gain from this, other than a few broken bones and a brutal hit to his pride. He had no hopes of winning this fight. At the very least he would do some damage, minor to me. He tackled

me and I bucked him off, sending him sprawling to the floor, my lips curled back in a sickening grin.

He circled me warily. The other warriors watched silently. Nobody had the nerve to try and break us up. They weren't that foolish. None of them wanted to lose an arm or a limb in the attempt. Callum rushed me and I kicked out with my leg, sending him rolling backward. This was stupid. This was a monumental waste of time and energy. Why didn't he just give up and admit that he'd lost? Was it pride? It was expected that you would lose to your Alpha. I cocked my head and watched him rush me again, neatly swerving and whacking him with a large paw that made him stumble. This was getting old now.

"What the fuck" I heard the shout and turned my head, my eyes seeking Cody who stood there looking outraged as he glowered at the both of us as we fought each other. "What the fuck do you two think you are doing?" he shouted, shaking his head "shift back to human form right fucking now" he exploded "Jesus christ you two are meant to be friends" he roared.

I glared at Callum's wolf daring him to shift first. He snapped his jaws at me and then bowed his head, shifting back to human form and standing there uncomfortably, large gashes on his midsection which were slowly beginning to heal thanks to his wolf. Cody glared at him. "What?" he snapped "Jaxon started it" he protested.

I snarled at him. He folded his arms and looked away, clenching his jaw. Cody looked like he was ready to put both our heads together and whack them. His eyes were narrowed. I reluctantly shifted, glowering at my Beta who had sorely tested my patience.

"Explain what the hell the two of you were fighting about" Cody shouted, while the warriors and those watching began to subtly move away. "You're best friends for heaven's sake" he added exasperatedly.

"I'm not the one who initiated this" I growled while Callum continued to stare at me in defiance.

"Callum?" Cody said, running a hand through his hair and disheveling it further "what the fuck man?"

His lip curled back in disgust "I'm not the one treating my mate like shit and keeping her in some damn dungeon like she's a fucking dog" he shouted, gesturing wildly as Cody took a step back in shock "he finally finds his fated mate and look what he's doing! What we're all letting him do" he thundered angrily "that girl deserves better. The friend I knew wouldn't be such a fucking coward and would have the guts to reject her than keep her here on a darn leash!" he exploded.

Cody sighed and turned to me as I clenched my hands into fists, ready to tear into Callum again. "What you're doing is disrespectful against the Alpha Callum" he said quietly as Callum gritted his teeth and bowed his head "and I understand where you're coming from. I don't agree with Jaxon's decision either" he said turning to me as I glanced at him in surprise "but he is still my Alpha and I have to respect that however much I don't want to."

"You've never said a word" I objected "not one word until now Cody. Why are you suddenly against it?"

He sighed. "That girl's been abused her whole life and we're only adding to it. It would be far kinder to reject her and let her find somebody who loves her."

"She could kill us" I argued back "do you not understand the danger she puts us all in?"

Cody looked at me with sympathy "you fear her because you don't know her. Maybe if you bothered to learn more about her and what she's like, you wouldn't see fit to treat her the way you are."

"So you're just like Callum" I sneered, my eyes glancing between the both of them "acting like I'm being some kind of monster instead of trying to think of the pack and the jeopardy we could be putting it in."

"No one is saying that" Cody yelled as I began to stride away from them "but so help me god" he warned as I swung back to look at him in disbelief "has it ever occurred to you that either I or Callum could take her as a chosen mate if we so chose?"

Silence. The sentence hung in the air. I swallowed hard. What Cody had just said was the ultimate betrayal and yet, by the looks on both their faces, neither one of them was joking about it.

"You wouldn't dare" I hissed.

Callum's eyes were unblinking "Try me" he said folding his arms "if you take a chosen mate and try to keep Riley as well, I will take her for myself" he said as I growled at him and my nails dug so hard into my flesh that blood began to drip down my hands "or Cody will. You're being too greedy Jaxon. You're not thinking straight. I'm not going to let the girl in the dungeon remain down there forever to suit your selfish purposes."

I looked at Cody who was nodding in agreement. "You would both betray me" I said in disbelief "for the sake of a girl. A girl I might remind you that is a dangerous siren?"

"A girl who is kind and loving" Callum interjected "and who has done nothing to deserve the fate you intend to give her."

"I'll kill you before I let you do that" I said breathing hard.

"You won't have a choice. She can still reject you."

"I won't accept her rejection" I snapped.

"It won't matter if she decides to take a chosen mate," Cody said quietly "Rethink what you're doing Jaxon. We're your friends but this is something neither of us agrees with. You are abusing your power and abusing the mate bond."

"You would be giving up the chance to find your own fated mate" I blurted out in desperation.

"That's a decision both of us are willing to make."

"Bastards" I roared "the both of you are going to regret this" I added, glaring at them hatefully.

"We've told you our decision Jaxon" Callum said looking me straight in the eyes "Now it's time for you to make yours. If you take a chosen mate at the party, be prepared for Callum or me, to take Riley as our chosen mate. You don't get to have two, it doesn't work that way."

I said nothing, my anger so high by then I could feel the blood rushing through my ears. I couldn't speak. I couldn't move for a minute. All I could do was stare at my two best friends who were betraying me for the sake of that thing, that siren. I was repulsed. I shook my head and then began to storm towards the pack house. They might think they could convince me to change my mind, but I wasn't averse to using my Alpha tone on them if it came down to it. It was harder to persuade the Beta and Gamma but not impossible.

Preparation

Chapter 34 - The Beastly Alpha's Mute Omega

Riley POV

Just like she promised, Stacey smuggled a dress and accessories downstairs to me, while I gaped at her. The dress was stunning, a white strapless gown with a sequined waist that flowed to my mid-thighs. There was a zipper down the side. It was almost bridal and she had included shimmery ballet flats so that I could walk with ease. There was a matching mask as well. "About that hair" she began looking at me intently.

But I was through hiding. I was through being less than what I was. I was through being the victim. I had thought long and hard about this. About constantly accepting the abuse, of accepting what life threw at me and never fighting back. Of always being the one who had to bear with the punches and never take a stand. That ended now. It ended today.

"The hair stays," I said quietly "Because while I appreciate the effort that you have gone to, truly, I will not be going to the party as you intended for me. I'm sorry."

I apologized, sincerely as she looked at me confused. But my voice was steady and there was a hint of fire in my voice that had not been there before. She looked at me closely, sensing there was more to it than that.

"You're not planning on staying here though are you?" she asked softly "You're not going to stay in a cell anymore like an animal trapped in a cage?"

I smiled at her softly as I put the shoes on and turned to her. "I had time to think," I said quietly "and I don't want to remain here on my mate's whim while he does whatever he wants. I've been an idiot to think he's ever going to accept me. To think he'll ever love me when all he does is fear me. I've spent so long being hurt and being somebody's punching bag that it's all I know" I whispered as she looked at me with sympathy "but I don't want that for me anymore."

Best gifts for your loved ones

"So what is your plan?" she asked softly "at this moment the omegas are setting up for the party outside. Guests are going to be arriving within the hour and soon the grounds will be flooded with both pack members and guests from other packs."

I met her eyes "That's what makes it so perfect" I said cocking my head "there will be so many people mingling about that he won't have time to think about me or even see me if I begin to enter the crowd. I should be able to slip through and go straight towards the forest."

She raised a brow "You intend to leave for good? But where will you go? I'm told you have no family" she said softly.

"I don't, although my brother has apparently made a run for it" I answered nonchalantly "but if I stay here, I risk losing who I am, everything I'm capable of doing for the sake of a man and that's not right. At the very core of it, if you take away the fact that I'm a siren what is left?" I asked her, my voice filled with desperation.

She blinked, not expecting such a question. She looked at me hesitantly. Almost as though she didn't know quite how to answer.

"A girl," I said softly as understanding dawned "a teenage girl who wants what every other girl her age dreams of. Love, family, marriage. I want to know what it's like to be cared for and showed affection. I want to have romantic walks on the beach and watch the sunset with somebody I love. I want all that sentimental crap" I laughed through the tears that threatened to fall "I want everything that has been denied me up till now. I want a life that isn't revolved around an arrogant shifter too big for his britches."

Stacey's eyes were shimmering "Love is precious," she told me looking nostalgic "it's something that can't be faked or forced. When you experience it, it's like something out of this world and you can't live without it. If you ever find somebody that loves you for who you are, embrace them with both hands and never let them go" she said sadly "you never know just how much time you have with them."

I could see the look of pain in her eyes and heard the longing in her voice. She was remembering and she was hurting. I felt nothing but grief for her.

"You don't have to do this. I don't want you to get the blame" I said, looking at her fretfully.

She shook her head. "Nobody saw me sneak down here, nobody will see me leave. I wanted to see you one more time and it turns out it might be the last time. You are something else Riley" she laughed softly, "and your path is going to take you somewhere you didn't envision. I don't envy Alpha Jaxon when he discovers you are missing and not waiting around for him to make a poor decision. I wish you the best of luck" she told me solemnly "and you should head south, away from where the supposedly feral alpha is. You don't want to be torn limb from limb" she said evenly.

"No" I agreed "but I don't fear a feral shifter anymore, I fear the wrath of a mate when he realizes I'm gone and there's nothing he can do about it."

She smiled and then hugged me softly. "Good luck Riley and may you find the happiness that you deserve."

"Goodbye Stacey" I whispered past the lump in my throat as I hugged her back "I appreciate everything you've done for me."

"If it goes pear-shaped" she paused and pulled back, her eyes narrowing "you sing for your life siren girl. Use the powers that the moon goddess saw fit to gift you. Your mate won't be affected, but the others will be. It should be enough to get you out," she said softly "god speed and good luck little Siren girl."

She let go of me and turned, heading towards the stairs as I watched regretfully. I would have liked to have spent more time getting to know her and her friends but I had already made up my mind. For once I had resolve. I was focussed and my own interests were at the forefront of my mind. I was putting myself first, instead of leaving myself at somebody's mercy. I put the mask on and smoothed the feathers that were on the edges of the mask, feeling how soft they were. Stacey had put a lot of effort into the mask and I wondered why. Had she thought maybe I would change my mind or had she wanted me to stand out from the crowd? Knowing Stacey it would have been the latter.

I had time to spare. The party was still being set up. The omegas would still be rushing to and fro and it would be chaotic. I needed to wait until most of the guests had arrived before I could even attempt to leave my cell. I sighed. More time to wait, more boredom. At least I was the only one in the dungeon, I consoled myself. I knew that everybody would be too busy to come down and see me. Stacy had brought me food but I didn't dare eat in case I spilled food on the dress. I wasn't hungry, I was more nervous than anything. I needed tonight to go smoothly. I needed to head straight towards the border and keep running. I knew Alpha Jaxon would feel me pass the boundary line. I shivered even though it was warm in the dungeon and musky.

"I cannot say that I'm going to miss this place" I murmured, touching the hard stone of the walls with my fingers.

It still felt strange to have my voice back. I touched my throat and felt it seize up. I shook my head. All those years of not having a voice and now I had one and could barely use it still. The irony was not lost on me. I sat on the mattress, curling my legs up beneath me. I had patience. Plenty of it. I glanced up towards the ceiling, listening intently to the sounds of the omegas as they moved about in the pack house, heard the clanking sounds of silverware and glasses as they transported them and smiled slowly. Now, it was just a matter of time. I sang and the cell door shut, leaving me confined, but not for long. Freedom was within my grasp and only an hour or so away. I could feel the music gathering in my ears and in my mind as I closed my eyes and listened to the sound of the eeriness of the voice that begged to be let free once again.

Distraction

Chapter 35 - The Beastly Alpha's Mute Omega

Alpha Jaxon POV

The omegas were rushing about, fastening decorations, others carrying refreshments on trays and more were carrying food as guests began to arrive and enter the fray, coming onto the grounds in their various costumes, masks covering their faces. I hadn't spoken to Callum or Cody since the incident, but we were drawn together for this occasion, and as a result, our voices were civil, our expressions guarded.

"Alpha Derek is here with his daughter Stephanie," Cody said, introducing them to me.

The girl was pretty, with brown hair and dark eyes, fluttering her eyelashes at me.

"Alpha Jaxon" her voice was high-pitched and caused me to wince "your reputation proceeds you" she giggled and I almost wanted to thump my head on the nearest tree trunk.

"Welcome," I mumbled "Please help yourselves to refreshments and food. I sincerely hope that you enjoy the party. You may even find your mate tonight" I said kindly and saw a flash of disappointment in her eyes.

Her voice alone had been enough to put me off but I hid it well and she nodded, her father quickly bowing his head respectfully and leading her away so that I could begin to greet the other guests.

"This is Alpha Malcolm and his Daughter Amber" Cody introduced.

Amber was a pretty redhead woman with long hair and ruby-red lips. She sashayed towards me, her hips moving seductively and I held out my hand for her to shake, a wry smile appearing on my face.

"It's a pleasure to meet you Amber" I purred.

She looked me directly in the eyes, her mask a lace concoction that didn't hide her facial features at all. She was a beauty. She flipped her hair over her shoulder as she placed her hand in mine, shaking it gently.

"It's so nice to meet you Alpha Jaxon" she breathed, her voice husky and smoky "I've heard you are handsome but the rumors don't do you justice" she added fluttering her lashes and looking at me from underneath them.

I fought back a grin. Her father was oblivious to our flirting or he was hopeful that we would make a match as he shook my hand. "Welcome to my party," I said sincerely and with a wink at Amber who giggled "Please enjoy the food and I hope to come and see you again very soon" I added meaningfully.

She was the only female I remotely had any interest in at the moment. Every other girl I had been introduced to was insipid, dull, annoying or plain. This girl was a bombshell and I could feel my cock beginning to harden as she walked away. Damn. She was hot.

Are you an idiot? She doesn't even remotely compare to our mate! Our mate is the most beautiful woman in the world. That woman that you have a hard-on for is nothing but a goddamn slut.

Do not speak of Amber in that tone mutt. You knew that we were going to be seeking out a chosen mate tonight. Amber is one of those choices. At least she's pretty and isn't hard on the eyes. I could have picked somebody far more annoying.

You could just choose our mate you stubborn jackass he roared, furious with me instead of this stupid game you're playing. You're going to lose her and it's going to be all your fault. The best thing that's ever happened to us. How stupid can you be he thundered.

Shut up. I will not let you talk to me that way. I am an Alpha and you will obey me. If I want to take somebody else as my chosen mate, there is nothing you can do about it.

Is that right?

Suddenly my wolf's tone was almost mild and condescending. Instead of feeling relieved a sense of fear washed over me. What can you possibly do mutt? You can't stop me from marking another woman I scoffed, trying to hide my fear.

No, I can't his voice was mild But I can prevent you from being able to shift into your wolf form even though it may kill me in the end.

You wouldn't dare go that far!

Wouldn't I?

Suddenly I wasn't so sure. Now my own wolf was threatening me. I let out a low growl of frustration. My wolf chuckled Now you know what it feels like to be frustrated. Think carefully about what you do tonight he advised me coldly because the end result will be the consequences of your own actions.

Before I could open my mouth to continue the argument, my own wolf put a block up, preventing me from discussing it further. I tried without success to reach him and was forced to give up in exasperation. I was sure that he was only threatening it out of desperation though. Without shifting we could turn feral or worse. He wouldn't really risk that would he? I shook my head and began to stride through the crowd.

"Alpha Jaxon" I turned and saw Callum bowing his head respectfully, although there was a look of anger in his eyes "the party is going smoothly and there have been several matches or mates that have found each other already."

I nodded pleased although part of me was concerned that Amber had found hers. I searched the crowd for her vibrant red hair, quickly spotting her.

"Keep an eye out on security. The last thing I need is for rogues to attack" I muttered to Callum who eyed me intensely "patrol need to be on their guard and if anybody so much as takes a step away from their placement tonight, I'll whip the skin off their backs" I warned.

"I will be sure to notify them all of that fact."

I tried to detect if there had been a hint of sarcasm in his voice but couldn't discern any.

"Callum you should mingle after that. Who knows you might even find your mate" I said blithely.

He said nothing but I sensed angry eyes on me as I walked through the crowd and made my way towards Amber who turned and smiled at me, a glass of wine in her hand. There was no sign of her father anywhere.

"Alpha Jaxon" she purred, thrusting her chest forward and giving me a magnificent view of her cleavage "to what do I owe the honor?"

I licked my lips, my eyes on her breasts and the generous size of them. Christ, this woman had breasts begging to be held in my hands. My wolf let out a low snarl and then put the block back up, disconcerting me for a moment before I regained my composure.

"Well, Amber...." I trailed off uncertain of her name "Amber Reid" she supplied helpfully "Of the Red Moon Pack."

"Well Amber Reid," I said, undoing two buttons of my shirt to reveal part of my chest as she watched with interest "I was considering going for a walk and wondered if you might like to join me? It's a beautiful night" I added with a curl of my lower lip and glancing meaningfully up at the sky "and the moon is nice and full, lending light to the darkest parts of the forest in case you are afraid" I gently teased.

Her plump lips curved into a smile "I don't fear the dark Alpha Jaxon" she laughed softly, reaching out and taking hold of my hand, surprising me with her boldness "and I would love nothing more than to take a walk with you."

I glanced around "Do you need to inform your father on your whereabouts?"

She giggled "My father is not my keeper Alpha Jaxon. He cares nothing about where I go or" she paused and looked me directly in the eyes, not a hint of subterfuge in them "whom I go with. My choices are my own to make" she quipped without an inch of embarrassment.

I gave her a slow grin "Then this is my lucky day. Beautiful lady" I said causing her to giggle again "may I escort you into the forest for a walk?"

My voice was loaded with meaning.

She didn't pretend not to comprehend. She didn't protest. She didn't play games, which I was grateful for. She merely grinned "Of course."

I began to lead her away from the party, my eyes focussed on taking her to a clearing in the depths of it, that had lush soft grass that I might be able to lay her in and visions of what her beautiful hourglass body might look like naked danced around in my head as we began to make the trek, my cock growing harder at the images that entered my mind, while Amber held my hand, oblivious to what I was thinking or feeling. I felt anticipation flood through me. If I wanted to forget about my fated mate, this would be the perfect way to do it. Maybe now, my infatuation with the deadly siren girl would finally stop and I could take a chosen mate that was both beautiful and smart.

Freedom.

Chapter 36 - The Beastly Alpha's Mute Omega

Riley POV

It was time. Time to stop hiding. Time to leave. I sang the lock open and stepped out, listening to the sounds of the guests outside and the sound of feet rushing back and forth. I adjusted the mask on my face, tightening it although it would do little to hide the brightness of my eyes. I shrugged, not bothered by that in the slightest. I crept my way towards the stairs, my footsteps light in my shoes, heading up them. I listened at the key hole but there were no discernible sounds of anybody on the other side. I lightly sang again and the door unlocked itself. I grinned. So far everything was going according to plan. It was working. I slid out of the dungeon and closed the door silently behind me, hearing it lock. Now nobody would think I had let myself out.

I walked the hallways, familiar with the way to the grounds. I was taking the back way. The omegas were so busy doing everything for the party, that no one stopped me. It shocked me. They assumed that I wore a costume and even my bright blue hair didn't raise suspicion. Did they think it was a wig? Did they not put two and two together? Were they merely oblivious because I was dressed as one of the guests? I did not think to question it too much, walking slowly onto the grounds. It was as busy as I thought it might have been, guests walking and milling about everywhere, chatting, grabbing drinks off nearby waiters, some even dancing slowly to music on a dance floor. I might have stayed to enjoy myself, had I not been aware of the time and the possibility of being discovered missing. I sighed. Maybe next time.

My dress certainly stood out. I guess white might not have been the wisest choice for being stealthy, I thought with some amusement. I walked confidently to the forest, and nobody made an attempt to stop me. As I walked I overheard one of the guests ask where Alpha Jaxon had gotten to.

"Has anybody seen Alpha Jaxon? I could have sworn he was here not too long ago?" the man mumbled.

"I'm certain he was taking a walk in the forest but should be back out shortly sir" a waiter answered him politely.

Just my luck. Now I had to worry about Alpha Jaxon coming across me as I tried to escape. I could have sworn out loud. Instead I stepped deeper inside and used my senses to guide me. I strange feeling ripped across my abdomen and I clutched at it gasping, feeling pain shoot through me, grabbing at the trunk of a nearby tree to prop myself upright. What was this? Why did it hurt so much? I fought back the scream that wanted to erupt from my lips. I couldn't afford to give myself away. Not now. I was so close. The pain continued to come in waves. I gritted my teeth and stumbled on. It was excruciating. It hurt so much that tears came to my eyes. I placed a hand on my stomach wondering what it was. I had never experienced it before. I knew it wasn't period pain but something else. It felt like I was being torn apart. It was all I could do to keep walking.

I wouldn't let this stop me. Not now. I stumbled blindly. My feet tripped over twigs and broken debris. The moon was shining brightly in the sky and on any other occasion I would have found it beautiful and the light comforting. It would have reminded me of the moon goddess and I would have prayed for her guidance as I made my way. But the pain was almost unbearable. I

was practically on the ground and I gave a long moan of distress. My body felt like it was on fire. It was hot. I dropped to the ground and then I heard a voice not far up ahead. It was a girl's voice. She sounded, well it sounded as though I was about to ruin a moment if I didn't pay attention to where I was going and I was careful to place myself downwind so that they didn't catch my scent as I crept towards the trunk of a tree and listened.

"Oh god" she was moaning, her voice rising in ecstasy, "god you're so big" she said huskily, complimenting the male who currently had his back to me, her body pressed against the trunk of a tree as he expertly lowered her and raised her onto his throbbing cock.

"More" she moaned.

Damn he must be good if she was begging him like that, I thought wickedly, even as the pain continued to shoot through me. This presented a conundrum though. How was I supposed to get past them without them seeing or smelling me? Granted they were a bit, distracted, I allowed, but I was fairly certain they would see the white dress no matter how hard I tried to slither past them quietly. I frowned and bit my lip. Maybe I should wait until they are finished? But it seemed wrong to just eavesdrop on them like this, didn't it? Although if they didn't want anyone to see or hear them, shouldn't they be doing this somewhere private? The voice inside my head was unapologetic. If they wanted to be private, they should be doing it in a bedroom, I thought a little nonchalantly.

"Harder" she squealed as the man grunted at her.

She was clutching at his hair and throwing her head back in ecstasy.

They were going at it like two animals rutting in heat, I marvelled. Didn't the bark of the tree hurt against her back, even with her dress on? The mechanics of it escaped me. I could see his bare back, her nails digging and clawing at his flesh in supposed enthusiasm.

Another flare of pain. I dropped to one knee trying not to swear. The girl let out another long moan. "Oh, oh, oh" she whimpered.

Hurry up already, I thought impatiently, I want to get past and you're blocking me!

I debated throwing a rock but they might still smell me. I sighed.

I heard scuffling and their bodies moving and it seemed they had changed position, her back now to him as he began to rut her from behind, holding tightly to her hair as she rocked her hips back and forth. She was crying out and scrabbling at the tree as though the man was some kind of god or something. I wondered if she was on something. Was this normal behavior when you had sex? Did the man have some kind of magic dick or something? I peered around the tree feeling like a perve.

He slapped her ass and she gave a short whimper. He gripped her hips and began to move even faster. I hoped that meant he would be done quicker. She began to shout, her voice echoing throughout the woods. I saw several birds take flight in fear.

"God, just like that" she shouted "I'm going to cum, fuck, yes, yes, yes" she screamed, her body looking like it was convulsing.

Jesus. I gritted my teeth as pain tore through me. I almost dropped to the ground. Fuck. I dry heaved feeling sick. I forced myself back on my feet, clenching my hands into fists and digging my nails in so hard that I could feel myself drawing blood, in an effort to distract myself from the pain.

The man continued to keep ploughing her from behind. She mewled. I was about to start slithering past them when he finally spoke. It was the first time I'd heard his voice. Before now all I'd seen was the back of him in costume. I froze.

"Take it, take it all you little bitch. You're mine, mine now" he growled.

No. No, no, no. Not him. Anybody but him. My body was almost paralyzed. No wonder the pain was ripping through my body. He hadn't accepted the rejection. I would feel this everytime he was with another. He had betrayed me. Knowingly betrayed me and didn't care about the pain I would be feeling while he fucked somebody else. Anger flared through me.

I stifled a sob. Forced myself to step forward. Grabbed a large rock off the floor. While he was distracted I needed to take the chance. Hatred simmered inside of me. Resentment, bitterness. The girl was too lost in her enjoyment, her eyes closed to see what I was doing. As he began to growl and his body began to stiffen, signalling he was almost done, I brought the rock down on his head and then as he was dropping, hers. One by one they fell, unconscious, bleeding from the backs of their heads. I dropped the rock carelessly next to them. It wouldn't be long until they woke up but I guaranteed that if they were found the father of the girl was likely to have questions. I no longer felt the pain of him betraying the mate bond. I staggered forward, my eyes on the boundary line and the closeness of it. Within minutes I was right there.

"I reject you as my mate Alpha Jaxon for now and evermore. I reject Blood Moon Pack as my pack" I screamed and jumped over it. I didn't look back as I began to run.

Foreboding

Chapter 37 - The Beastly Alpha's Mute Omega

Alpha Jaxon POV

The last thing I remembered was being lost in the throes of ecstasy, my body draped over the luscious girl who was with me, Amber, with her pretty red hair, my cock deep inside of her. She was fucking tight and I was enjoying plowing into her tight little hole, grabbing her hair and pulling it. She rocked her hips back and forth, fucking me back for all she was worth. This was what I had needed, I remember thinking, a good lay and to relax some more, no matter how angry my wolf was at me.

But something was wrong. I didn't know what it was but I began to feel uneasy, even as Amber came and convulsed all over my cock. I was so close to releasing that I didn't want to stop, so I began to slam inside of her, my body craving to spill my seed and just as I was in the throes of doing just that, I felt something hard hit the back of my head and then darkness had surrounded me, my body dropping automatically to the ground.

I put a hand to my head now, feeling the blood trickling down the back of it, and glanced at the unconscious girl next to me. She had been hit over the head as well and was bleeding, although not as heavily. Whoever it was had taken us by surprise. I scowled, feeling like an idiot. What kind of Alpha lets himself be snuck up on like that? let alone injured by somebody weaker than himself? I let out a low growl of frustration, grateful that nobody had come looking for me yet, and glanced around the clearing, sniffing. My eyes widened as I smelt a familiar scent that had my wolf panicking.

NO. NO, NO, NO. It was impossible. There was no way she could have made it out of that dungeon. I would have seen her if she'd made it to the grounds, wouldn't I have? But the smell was definitely Riley's scent, there was no mistaking it. I could hear my wolf snarling as he bade me to follow it and I groaned and stood up, leaving the girl on the ground and beginning to walk unsteadily on my feet, following the scent.

I didn't get far before pain ripped through me, sending me back onto my knees, my fingers scrabbling desperately at the dirt as my back arched and my mouth opened into a silent scream, my heart feeling like it was being torn from my chest. I panted and then felt something else like a sharp jolt going through my mind. What the hell was that? Some instinct told me, but I refused to believe it. I didn't want to believe it. The pain began to subside but didn't leave. My body began to throb as I climbed awkwardly back to my feet and desperately sniffed, following the scent.

This couldn't be happening. Not now. I already knew how Callum and Cody were going to react if I had to tell them the news. They would not be happy with me, not that I cared what they thought. But if Riley had made it safely to the border...I continued to stumble and trip, my feet crushing leaves and stomping on twigs while I remained heedless to any pain I was experiencing on top of the throbbing pain I was feeling. I began to pray but something told me it was already too late.

"Fuck" I muttered, as I reached the boundary line, that signified the end of my territory and the start of neutral territory.

Riley's scent continued to permeate the air. She had left. She had fucking left my territory. Where was the patrol? They should have been keeping an eye out! How had she managed to get past my guards?

I slammed my fist into the nearest tree trunk, pain shooting up my arm.

"Fuck" I roared, my voice echoing throughout the forest.

She was gone. The pain I had felt and was still feeling was her no doubt rejecting me again as well as the pack and becoming rogue. I was furious. My shout frightened birds and nearby creatures to take flight and run from me.

It wasn't long until Callum appeared behind me, an indecipherable expression on his face as he sniffed out Riley's scent. His eyes narrowed and he looked at me "Riley's gone isn't she?" he said.

His tone was remarkably calm in comparison to mine. I turned and glared at him "Yes, she's fucking gone. Where was patrol?" I shouted waving a hand "they should have stopped her. They should have seen her. They are all fucking useless" I thundered "and I'll have their heads for failing me."

Callum winced "Patrol moved away from this location in order to..." he hesitated.

"To what?" I demanded icily "what possible excuse did they have for moving away from this particular area?"

"To give you and Amber privacy while you fucked loud enough for everybody in the nearby vicinity to hear," he said bluntly as I glared "so I doubt he can be blamed for that, considering that generally you would have demanded your privacy."

"Well I didn't this time" I snarled.

He looked at me as though I was acting like a wayward child. "Get my best trackers," I said breathing heavily and clutching at my chest as another jolt of pain shot through it "I need to find her and I need to find her now. Before she's gone too far into neutral territory" I babbled on, waving my arms wildly.

"Do you even hear yourself?" Callum said incredulously "you know the laws Jaxon as well as I do, perhaps even better than I do. Neutral territory is just that. You can't snatch a person up and force them back to your pack while they are on that land. You had your chance when she was still in your pack but she's gone now. If you try and bring her back, the elders will have your head" he said furiously "it's time to admit that she's gone."

"No" I shouted, turning around and shouting at him "I cannot have my fated mate leave me. My wolf will weaken" I continued "and she could come back and kill us all" my voice lacked conviction and even Callum looked unconvinced by that argument.

"Then you should have accepted her while you had the chance," Callum said unsympathetically "instead of thinking you could have your cake and eat it too. You only have yourself to blame," he said folding his arms and staring at me steadily.

"I swear to god Callum, I will use my tone on you" I swore.

"Then do it. Because I won't disobey the law, not even for you. You risk execution if the elders get wind of what you're trying to do, regardless if she's half siren. Are you willing to lose your life over this?"

My wolf was growling and snarling so loudly in my mind it was almost impossible to concentrate. I ran a hand through my hair, my hand shaking slightly.

"Callum, I can't live without her. My body hurts all over" I whimpered.

"She rejected you. The pain will go when you accept it" he said nonchalantly "all you have to do is say the words Jaxon. Just let her go."

His tone was almost pleading. For a moment I wavered. But my wolf was angry. It was filled with rage that our mate had run away from us. Slowly my eyes began to darken and I could see resignation on Callum's face as he glanced at me and slowly shook his head.

"You're heading on a path of destruction" he said quietly as I looked at him stony faced "and I can't save you from yourself. But you should give a thought about the girl you left back there" he added, gesturing with his hand as Amber herself came staggering towards me, from the shadows, a scowl on her face as she stumbled "because her father is furious and looking for both of you. You wanted a chosen mate" he reminded me as I stiffened, "it looks like you have your wish, whether you want it or not. He's going to take one look at his daughter and know exactly what you two have been up to. So congratulations" his voice was heavy and filled with sarcasm "I hope the two of you are happy together."

He turned his back on me. I opened my mouth to retort when Amber slid in front of me and put her hands on her hips.

"You left me lying there, you piece of shit" she hissed, as I rolled my eyes at her dramatics "I was bleeding and unconscious. Anything could have happened to me" she continued to vent as I listened detachedly "I could have been raped, I could have been attacked by rogues. Do you even care?" she demanded as I heard ominous footsteps approaching, the scent of her father drifting towards me "because I'm telling my father exactly what you did" she shrieked just as Callum chuckled and her father stepped into the clearing, a furious expression on his face.

The situation had just gone from bad to worse. I had no hopes of catching up to Riley now.

Bailey

Chapter 38 - The Beastly Alpha's Mute Omega

Riley POV

I'm free. I'm fucking free. As I make my way out of the Blood Moon Pack's territory, my first instinct is to slow down. But I don't trust my ex-mate. He's sneaky, he's conniving and he's a right bastard. I keep running. My feet stumble and the shoes I'm wearing aren't made for it, but the possibility of being dragged back kicking and screaming is enough to keep me going. It's cold and there's a slight chill in the air, making me rub my arms as I continue, trying to keep the blood circulating.

I can hear the roar behind me as he discovers I'm gone and I can't help but smile grimly to myself. He must be pissed to find out that I wasn't going to just stay there and accept the fate he had decided for me. It must be infuriating to him. I hoped it was. I hoped it made him so angry that his heart stopped beating. I was a little angry myself for taking everything he'd thrown at me and not fighting back. I was using that anger to fuel myself to keep going when the hours had continued to pass and my legs grew tired and my body shivered violently as the temperature continued to drop.

"Damn, it's cold" my teeth chattered.

I wrapped my arms around me. I was tired. Drained. But hesitant to stop. I hadn't come close to another territory, or at least not that I knew of. I could hear something though, the tiniest sound that made me halt in my tracks. Had I imagined it? I cocked my head and listened but there was nothing. I waited. I slowly placed one foot in front of the other and then I heard a sound that made my blood chill and my heart begin to race in my chest. I knew that sound. It was one that I had hoped not to hear while alone in the forest.

The sound of thudding paws along the ground. I sniffed but there was no scent of rotten meat like it was a rogue. This meant this was another shifter or...My mind refused to contemplate the alternative. It couldn't be a feral wolf. Stacey had to have been mistaken about that. It had been years since the last one had been seen. I began to run as the sound grew louder, looking frantically for a tree I could safely climb. It was times like this that it would be an advantage to transform into a wolf, I thought wildly. I cursed the fact that I couldn't and continued to look for something that would benefit me. Even a damn branch as a weapon would suffice I thought desperately.

I didn't have time to do anything as a wolf skidded into my midst. It stopped a few feet in front of me and I stared. I knew it wasn't Jaxon's wolf. It was huge. It was bigger than a shifter wolf. This wasn't an ordinary shifter wolf, this was different. It was....what was the word? They so

very rarely ventured from their pack, and were considered to be higher in status than shifters. For all I knew this could be a royal one except for the fact that it looked quite mad. Its whole body was shaking as it looked at me. It was on two legs, not four. This was a Lycan? What was a lycan doing all the way out here?

It was eyeing me hungrily. I swallowed hard. Its eyes watched my every move. I slowly slid my eyes to the side but it wasn't falling for my trick. Fuck. There wasn't much I knew about Lycans except that they were more powerful than shifters and a lot of them were royal. I wasn't sure if I should approach it, run or scream. The lycan snarled. It was like a huge gust of wind washed over me.

"Okay," I breathed as it watched me "Maybe we could just talk to each other?" I suggested hesitantly, feeling stupid the moment I made the suggestion.

Its keen eyes observed me and then it crashed through the bush and a little closer, causing me to almost have a heart attack. I didn't think it was taking my suggestion. It was frothing at the mouth and I felt it was about to leap at me.

You idiot. Sing. It wants to hear your song. It will calm down the monster inside of it. This is what everyone thinks is a feral wolf. Morons. Sing.

Sing? It would probably eat me before I could get a single word out, I thought almost hysterically but the voice inside my mind was insistent and incredibly persistent, to the point of being annoying.

Sing! Sing damn you. Do not lose this chance to free what must be freed!

My mouth opened of its own accord and despite my reservations, I began to slowly sing, my voice wobbly at first and then growing stronger as my song came out of me. It was just as eerie as before but the creature seemed surprised, pausing in its movements and then slowly sinking down onto the ground. I was a little stunned. It wasn't entranced though, like the men had been. It merely looked as though it was enjoying the sound. I had this deep craving or desire to touch it. A foolish desire perhaps but it was growing stronger by the second. It was eyeing me carefully. My hand twitched. I took one step forward and it just looked at me. It didn't look angry or even concerned, merely curious by what I was doing.

I continued to sing, my feet moving forward on autopilot. There was something about this lycan calling to me. I should have been afraid of it. After all the way they were spoken about by shifters, they were practically described as monsters, but wasn't I a monster as well by their standards? Didn't they consider me repulsive? I felt a strong amount of camaraderie with this lycan. I got closer, close enough to touch its head. Its dark eyes observed me, as though it was watching to see what I did next. My lips curved into a small smile.

My hand reached forward. I touched the top of its head and it closed its eyes as I stroked its fur. It felt different to a shifter wolf. More coarse and rough to the touch. A jolt of electricity shot through me, and my song grew louder and different. It changed. It was almost coaxing in nature.

My hand stroked his head and my body was tingling all over. My head flung itself back and the song continued to pour out, but it was like my very soul was trying to escape with it. The lycan began to growl, low at first and then louder and more ferociously as my voice got louder along with it.

I stayed where I was. I could feel the Lycan moving beneath my hand, his body rippling and shifting, heard the sounds of bones cracking and breaking. A loud scream sounded and dimly I realized it was mine as my body dropped to the floor. Where the Lycan had been, now a handsome man stood there instead. Naked and shocked, he glanced at his hands and his body before looking down at me as I stared upwards, my vision growing dim. I wasn't sure what had just happened. The man looked equally confused but he sprang into action. I felt his arms swoop down and gather me up with ease, felt the strength of his muscles as he lifted me. I had never seen a man so beautiful before. It was like looking at a god, I thought hazily.

His black hair was messy and disheveled and his green eyes were like big emeralds as I stared into them. He was tall, over 6" and his body was a gorgeous honey golden color that made me long to touch him all over. My mouth watered. He was careful to wrap his arm around me and carry me bridal style as I flopped like a rag doll in his arms.

"Who...you" I mumbled, my voice hoarse.

My throat hurt. The singing must have injured my voice slightly.

The man looked puzzled. He began to run with me in his arms. Had he forgotten who he was? Did he not know? I longed to hear him say something, anything if only to hear his voice.

When he spoke it was with an unsteady voice, as though he had not used it in a very, very long time.

"Bailey," he said gruffly and nothing more was said.

I could feel darkness surrounding me and in the safety of his arms and assured that he wasn't about to eat me anytime soon, tingles continually running through my body, I let it consume me and knew no more as the stranger continued to run with me in his arms.

King

Chapter 39 - The Beastly Alpha's Mute Omega

Bailey POV

I can barely remember who I am anymore, let alone how to shift back. My body is hurting all over and I have been wandering for what seems like forever, my lycan seemingly determined to go in one direction and not allowing me to change it. It's drawn to something or is that someone? The most delicious scent drifts towards my nostrils and my lycan growls deep in my throat, the smell becoming intoxicating the closer we get to it.

We see her. The girl. She's stunning. The hair is a vibrant blue that reminds me of the ocean and the sea. Her eyes are like giant jewels and her skin is almost glowing. My lycan wants to lunge towards her but I struggle with it, trying hard to hold him back, not wanting to scare this beautiful girl away, who stares at us intrigued, although not as afraid as I would have thought she would be. I want to touch her. I want her to touch me. I feel this insatiable need to be with her. My lycan is furious at my stubbornness.

She opens her pale pink lips and sings. The song is eerie and yet it calms me, my soul feeling peaceful for the first time in a long time. I sit, closing my eyes, my lycan practically purring at the noise. I hear her approach and feel the softness of her hand as it strokes my head and feels the coarseness of my fur. She's gentle. Tender. One touch from her and I feel the sparks that I never thought would happen to me in a million years. My body begins to feel heated. I know what she is. I know who she is to me. Does she feel it too? Does she know the reaction she's bringing to the surface? Is she aware of what she does to me, my Lycan?

Mate. A sacred bond that even lycans are desperate to find. The second half of their soul. They don't feel complete until they find them. No wonder she smelt so amazing and why my Lycan refused to change direction. I've been cursed in this lycan body for over a year now, unable to change back, and yet, I've not gone feral or lost control of my senses. I've merely remained lost if that makes sense. But now, now I feel different. The more she sings and the more emotion she puts into it, the more my lycan feels and the more my body begins to change.

What is this? Magic? She has to be a hybrid of some kind. The song is a clue. I don't care what creature she is. She's mine and she'll stay mine. She steps away and I feel my body beginning to ripple, feel my body beginning to change. It's painful due to not shifting for over a year. I keep my screams inside until I'm standing there, looking down at my naked human form in amazement. She did it. She managed to make me human again. I quickly scoop her up in my arms as I notice that she's about to lose consciousness. She must have drained her energy or something, I think absent mindedly, turning back in the direction I had come from.

Mate. We have our mate at long last.

I don't answer. I'm kind of pissed that my lycan took over for so long. Lycans are dangerous when they transform and are quicker and stronger than the usual shifter. My lycan senses my anger and merely chuckles in my mind. I stride swiftly back towards my pack, the Shadow Moon Pack, my eyes on the slight female in my arms, enjoying the feel of her against my bare chest. She's so light, she barely weighs more than a feather.

Won't my pack be surprised to see me? Their king, come home at last. I begin to run, feeling the hardness of the ground beneath my feet, feeling my strength beginning to return to me. Instead of

being exhausted or drained, I feel rejuvenated. Like I've been hibernating and just woken up. I'm excited to see my Beta Thomas and how he's managed the pack in my absence after dealing with my problem for so long. We had agreed he would be in charge while I tried everything to transform back. My friend would be pleased to see me and no doubt happy to pass the reigns back to me.

I had my Queen. The female moaned slightly in my arms and I tightened my grip, concerned she might try to roll over or fall out. I felt protective of her. My lycan was ready to kill anybody who tried to touch her. He was fierce but this went beyond that. He would rip another shifter or lycan limb from limb if they tried anything with her. I guess the mate bond is enough to make another jealous but it's scary how determined he and I are to protect her. Once we reach my pack she'll be safe though and there should be nothing she needs protecting from, I think grimly.

Hours pass. She continues to slumber, surprising me. I don't mind though. I like keeping her safely ensconced in my arms. I'm careful to keep an eye out for annoying rogues but they tend to keep well away from Lycans. We have a particular smell that warns them away from us. Unless they desire death or are so far gone they've become irrational, they tend to leave us alone. We gave them the same courtesy. Rogues weren't all bad, as shifters like to claim. Some of them had been turfed out of their territories for stupid reasons or because their Alpha had banished them. My own pack consisted of Lycans and a mix match of shifters as well as other supernatural creatures. Our kind tended to have mates from all different races and we didn't judge or discriminate. A mate made you stronger, so you would have to be pretty stupid to reject them based on what they were.

I finally reach the border of my own territory. I'm slightly winded from the running. It would have been quicker to run in lycan form, but after being stuck as one for so long, I'm not so eager to transform so quickly again. I stride over the boundary line and am immediately accosted by a patrol who surround me as I hold tightly onto the girl, refusing to let go of her.

"State your business" a voice booms, that sounds oddly familiar.

Could it be him? I almost want to laugh. What a coincidence he happens to be out on patrol right now.

"Do you not recognize me?" my voice is even by comparison and I raise a brow, staring at them challengingly.

Silence. The group glances uneasily at their leader, a man with dirty blonde hair and green eyes who studies me intently. He shakes his head and then peers at me again.

"King Bailey?" he says hoarsely as though unable to believe his eyes, while the rest of the group gasps in disbelief "is that you? It can't be" he says but his eyes widen as he looks me over "it is you" he whispers, flinging himself forward and clapping me on the shoulder.

"Forgive us King for not recognizing you" one of the guards say and they immediately drop down to one knee and bow their heads.

"Do not fret. I hardly recognize myself right now" I say, nodding down at the woman as the men look towards her curiously, causing my lycan to growl lowly in my mind.

"Thomas" I say nodding down at her "I found my mate."

His mouth drops open "Your mate? Is she the reason..." he pauses.

"She is the reason I am back here in human form today. I wandered from our territory and followed her scent. She sang and I changed" I said with a frown as the guards stood back up "I have an idea of what she might be but I won't be able to find out until she's awake. Dare I to assume that my bedchamber is still empty and awaiting me?"

"Of course but um" Thomas pauses "because you've been sleeping in it as a Lycan it is torn up" he pointed out "maybe a guest bedroom while we fix it up?" he suggested.

"Good idea" I tell him, beginning to walk "I had forgotten the state I left it in. Get that fixed immediately. I have a feeling I won't have as much trouble shifting to lycan form and back so much anymore."

He grins "Your wish is my command my king. It's so good to have you back and be Beta once more" he sighs "but you might regret becoming King once more" he warns as I stare at him amused.

"Not if I have my queen" I tell him meaningfully "and not if I have anything to say about it."

We strode into the large pack house.

Second Chance

Chapter 40 - The Beastly Alpha's Mute Omega

Riley POV

I force my eyes open, feeling the softness of the mattress beneath me, my eyes blinking to adjust to the harshness of the bright sunlight coming through the open window. I can feel the gentle breeze as it caresses my skin and I can hear the sounds of the birds singing in the distance. I frown and glance around the room that is unfamiliar to me. I don't recall how I got here. The last thing I remember is the man that had shifted from his lycan form after I sang to him and then nothing but darkness. I must have fallen unconscious. Did he bring me here?

There is nobody else in the room. Just myself and I climb awkwardly out of the bed, spotting another door which I'm relieved to see leads to an adjacent bathroom. I quickly do my business and then come back out, mulling over what to do. Should I leave? Did I stay and wait for somebody to come to me? I was hesitant. I didn't know what this pack was like but I knew that Lycans were more deadly than shifters and I didn't want to offend the man who had brought me here. There was something about the man, something I was trying to remember but I couldn't put my finger on it. I hesitate and then shrug as my stomach lets out a long growl. I'm starving. I decide to go and find the kitchen. If it's like any other pack house it will be on the ground floor somewhere I figure and nonchalantly open the door.

Still no one. Strange. Normally pack houses would have omegas running around but perhaps this was a different pack or Lycan's did things differently? The house contained various scents though. I quietly make my way down the hallway and spot the stairs, walking slowly down them, my nose sniffing for the smell of anything cooking. My mouth waters as I smell what seems to be cinnamon and sea salt? Weird. I follow my nose and stop abruptly as I come across the dining table and the man himself who is sitting at the head of it, all by himself.

"You're awake," he says pleased while I stand there, speechless and feeling like a complete nincompoop.

I wasn't even sure I knew his name. But he had this delicious intoxicating smell coming from him and I sniffed, my eyes widening slightly.

"I um" I stammer still unable to find the words.

"How rude of me," he says as I gape and he gets to his feet and moves towards me while I fight not to take a step back in alarm.

"Are you okay?" he asks in concern, peering into my eyes while I gulp.

Damn, this guy is hot. Smoking hot. My body is heating up just looking at how gorgeous he is and I squeeze my thighs together, feeling flustered. His eyes narrow "Are you okay? I'm afraid I don't know your name?" he asks apologetically, while looking eager at the same time.

"Riley" I wheeze, barely able to think straight.

The man was too pretty to look at. I could feel myself blushing bright red. He seemed unaware of the reaction he was having on me.

"I um, your name" I stammered like a fool.

He laughed, showing off his pearly white teeth. He looked completely at ease. "It's Bailey," he said warmly.

"Nice to meet you."

God, could I be any more awkward?

"Well Riley how about you take a seat" he suggested "and I get you something to eat?"

I look at him surprised as I sit down at the table.

"You're going to cook?" I ask doubtfully.

He puffs out his chest. I try not to stare. "I make a pretty mean omelette," he says wryly "Otherwise I can do cereal" he looks a bit deflated.

I laugh. I can't help myself. "An omelet sounds delicious," I say agreeably and see his eyes light up.

"I'll be back," he says and heads into the nearby kitchen while I sit there, drumming my fingers on the table.

Should I help him? Did he honestly know what he was doing? I began to feel hesitant. If he was sitting at the head of the table, did that mean he was the Alpha of the pack? I had so many questions on the tip of my tongue. To my shock, he came back within minutes bearing a large plate of omelets with toast and a glass of juice which he placed proudly in front of me. I let out a moan of appreciation and swore I saw his eyes darken slightly.

"Eat," he said hoarsely "you look hungry."

"You're not eating?"

"I already did" he answered, "not long before you got up."

He looked a little sheepish.

I shrug and begin to dig in. It was heaven. He'd made a bacon and cheese omelet and it was huge. I barely managed to eat half of it and the toast while he watched me, making me feel self conscious. He was beaming though, happy to see I was eating the food he'd prepared.

"You're a good cook," I told him appreciatively as I began to sip at my juice.

I pushed the half-eaten food towards him "I'm afraid I can't finish it though."

He devoured the rest while I watched in stunned silence. I tried not to laugh.

"So um, I hate to ask this because it sounds crass" I waited till he was finished.

He raised a brow looking amused "but are you the Alpha? Is that why you sit at the head of the table?"

He looked flummoxed. I heard a laugh and turned to see a man with sandy blonde hair and blue eyes standing there, looking highly amused.

"Thomas" Bailey said warningly but the man just snorted.

"Alpha" he laughed, while I stared.

God were all the men in this pack hot and drool-worthy? He was clearly a lycan. Maybe lycan's were just hotter than shifters? I wondered how I would prove that theory.

"Alpha" Thomas repeated sounding tickled "that's funny. He's the King of the Lycans" he informed me and I almost fell over.

This man, the one who had brought me here, was the King? I stared at him slack-jawed. Bailey rubbed the back of his neck, eyeing his Beta, I assumed that's who he was, with a piercing gaze. "Did you have to tell her? Now you've ruined it" he complained "she's gone all quiet."

I coughed. Thomas grinned "she was going to find out eventually, now she has. You can thank me later," he said smugly while Bailey glared at him. "Maybe you should tell her the other thing" he added while I glanced between them confused.

"Thomas don't you dare" Bailey growled.

"Tell me what?" I asked.

Bailey exhaled looking frustrated. "It's nothing bad," he said quickly "or at least I hope you won't think it is. I know that for some, Lycans can seem like dangerous creatures or scary or..." he trailed off as I began to laugh out loud.

It seemed ridiculous to me that he thought I would be afraid of him. Thomas eyed me uncertainly "I think you broke her" he commented "she's broken, look" he added.

I snorted. "I'm not broken," I said indignantly "I'm just not afraid of you. Why would I be?"

"Um, cause we kill shifters? Cause we are bloodthirsty, coldhearted bastards who can't control our lycan side?" Thomas said sarcastically.

Bailey looked like he was about to tear Thomas apart. Thomas eyed him with a grin.

"I've heard all that, but the Lycan I met in the woods didn't frighten me," I said quickly, afraid the two of them were about to come to blows for real.

"About that," Bailey said, still glowering at a nonrepentent Thomas "I still can't quite comprehend how you managed to free me from my lycan form."

"What do you mean?" I asked puzzled.

It had been relatively simple to do.

"I mean, I've been trapped in that form for a year" Bailey said with infinite patience "unable to shift back and you managed to do it with just your voice and maybe magic" he said thoughtfully "I suspect I already know what you are, but I want to confirm it for myself."

Immediately my heart sank. As soon as Jaxon had discovered what I was, he had considered me a danger to the pack and everybody else. Fear flooded through me. My body began to shake. I saw his nostrils flare and his eyes narrow as he took in how frightened I was. I couldn't help it. The thought of being thrown in a dungeon again and having to run for my life was making me feel physically ill. I didn't want to have to go through it again. I couldn't.

"Shhh Riley it's okay" he said, kneeling in front of me as I stared at him between watery eyes "you don't have to worry about me hurting you. I would never do that not in a million years."

I give a bitter laugh "How can I be so sure of that? How do I know you won't hurt me when I tell you what I am? What's to prevent you from killing me the second you know?"

"Because we're mates. You're my mate Riley and I would never harm a single hair on your head."