

## CHAPTER 15

Damien POV

I'm hanging around behind the school building, waiting for my mates and subtly smoking when I hear the snooty cheerleaders coming past. Christ, I can't stand shallow, vain creatures. For some reason, Jessica keeps trying to search me out and I know it's because she likes me. A shame because I really, really dislike her. I press my back against the brick wall and pray I'm not seen as they walk past.

"I gave that little bitch what for," Jessica says, flipping her long hair and inspecting her fingernails.

"We sure did", another girl laughs, and I wonder which girl they are talking about. Jessica had so many enemies it was hard to keep track of them.

"Did you see how she couldn't even get up", Jessica sneers and the girls all laugh out loud as I roll my eyes. Clearly, they'd beaten up some poor girl in a pack. It was pure cowardice to gang up on a single person, but then, since when was Jessica fair in anything she did?

"She deserved it. That Alpha Johnathon is going to be mine and she needs to learn her place", Jessica huffs. So, this was, over the Alpha, now attending our school. Why am I not surprised Jessica now has him in her sights? She certainly got around, that was for sure.

"I heard he rejected her."

"Of course he did. An Alpha is never going to be with a lowly shifter such as her."

It's just my luck that they stopped right in front of me, gossiping in their group, their backs turned to me. I silently swear. If I move, I'll be noticed.

I'm stuck where I am until they choose to leave, which, judging by the way they were talking to each other, wasn't likely to be anytime soon. I sigh.

They are still talking in those loud, high-pitched, annoying voices that I swear every damn cheerleader in the school possesses.

"She's so disgusting."

"She's pathetic."

"She didn't even try to fight back"

"That's because she's weak. An Alpha needs a strong Luna by their side, like me", Jessica declares, and I almost scoff as the other girls begin to agree. Spineless cowards, every single one of them.

"Do you think we'll be punished?"

"As if she's going to tell. How many times have we hurt her and she's said nothing, just stood there and taken it? Besides, the principal is a friend of my parents, there's no way he would dare try and do anything. "

Now I'm beginning to become suspicious, pressing myself against the wall and venturing slightly closer in order to hear their whispers.

"I wonder if she's still in the classroom?"

"Do you think we should go back?"

Jessica looked incredulous. "I'm not going back to check on the little bitch. Someone will find her eventually" she said dismissively, and her friends fell silent.

"Winter will be fine," Jessica says, beginning to walk to the car as her little clique group follows, waving goodbyes and blowing kisses to each other. It's nauseating.

She'd said Winter was beaten up. I hesitated, but this time I couldn't help myself and began to turn toward the classrooms. One of my friends runs

up. "Just so you know, Winter was taken to the nurse's office", he says with a sly grin, thinking that I won't care as usual. He's in for a shock because I instantly take off on a run, heading straight to where Winter had been taken, crashing through the door and effectively startling the nurse.

"Where is she?" I growled, my hands clenching into fists. The nurse fairly gapes at me as my eyes sweep around the room, narrowing in on the bed which was empty. Surely Winter hadn't walked home? Not in her condition.

"Are you talking about Winter?" she says timidly and I give a short nod, impatiently waiting for her to tell me where my little sister has gone.

"She's gone to the hospital" she offers before her own eyes narrow on me, her arms folded. I flinch from the look on her face.

"Your sister," she said pointedly, glaring at me, "was badly beaten and needs to be checked out. Not only that" she snaps ", but she has old bruises on her body. You wouldn't happen to know anything about that, would you?" she growls and I feel a sense of remorse and regret. I have no doubt that a lot of the bruises were ones inflicted by me. The nurse knows it too, for she looks at me with nothing but contempt in her eyes.

I said nothing. After all, she's right, I have hurt my little sister, and for what? The approval of a drunken father who never even knew we existed half the time? God, I feel sick to my stomach. What have I done? Why had I let father mold me into a monster? I'd failed Winter and my poor mother would be devastated if she'd seen the way I treated my little sister. I said nothing, however, and hurried out to my car.

I get to the hospital but Winter is gone, apparently having gone home with the Alpha of all people. I'm angry that he's been by her side this entire time when I know that it should have been me helping her. Her big brother should be the one looking out for her and even though I know it's irrational, part of me is going into overprotective mode. I slammed my hands down on the steering wheel in frustration. Winter had to be at home

and I started the car, slowly peeling out of the parking lot, my thoughts coming in droves. How did I convince Winter that I would change? She only had my past actions to go on and I knew that it was going to take a massive effort on my part to show her that I could be the big brother she'd always wanted, could be relied on to be there for her. I would have to beg and work for forgiveness from her, but that seemed only right. God, what had I done? I could blame my father, but I was also equally to blame for my own actions. I should have stopped listening to him by now, started thinking for myself, and refused to do what he wanted. I would never make that mistake again, I decided, just as I pulled my car into the driveway.