

CHAPTER 29

Winter POV

Damien has been in full-on overprotective big brother mode all night and today while taking me to school. Don't get me wrong. I appreciate it. After all, it's a nice feeling, but part of me is annoyed as well. He seems to think I'm some helpless victim and, while I'm nervous about the fact I can't speak, I know that I'm going to have to adjust to that and attend school whether I like it or not. I've also noticed Alpha Johnathon keeping a close eye on me and it angers me even more. Why can't he just leave me alone? Why does he care so damn much? because if he had wanted a mate, he wouldn't have rejected me out of hand. Would he?

My first class went miserably. The second the teacher leaves the room to photocopy some papers, Jessica butts her nose in. Somehow, I'm not even surprised.

"Winter," she said, turning to me while the class snickered "I heard you can't talk anymore" she sang, getting up from her seat and sauntering over, throwing her groupies a big grin as they watched, eyes wide in anticipation. I know something's coming and sure enough, her hand shoots out, gripping me by the hair and she smacks my face into the desk while I gasp. I can't yell, can't shout, all I can do is make a small gasping noise as she giggles.

"Oh, this is going to be so much fun" she declares as the whole class erupts into laughter "she's mute, can you believe it? Poor little Winter" she drawls, slowly going back to her seat, evidently realizing the teacher is making his way back to the classroom. I merely rub my cheek and stared resolutely out of the window. I'm not going to let them get to me. I chant

to myself but I feel deflated. I feel vulnerable without my voice. I feel even more afraid than I was before.

I should have realized Jessica would take advantage of me not being able to call out. But part of me had hoped she might have an inkling of compassion and leave me alone, but she clearly has a heart of stone. There's no compassion or empathy in that girl at all, she's just a nasty bitch and I had better remember that if I want to survive the next few weeks of the term.

The bell rings and I make sure that I'm the last one to file out, wanting to make sure Jessica's made her way to her next class, which thankfully isn't the same as mine. The teacher gives me a glance but says nothing. It's not like they've ever helped me anyway and I'm not about to start thinking they will now.

I'd have to be an idiot not to see my brother or Alpha Johnathon watching my every move as I walked to class. I can feel them staring at me and it's embarrassing. I shouldn't need protection; I shouldn't be wasting their time when they need to go to class as well. It's almost a relief when it's lunchtime and I can escape outside. I never sit inside the cafeteria, it's far too crowded and there are far too many students for my liking. Instead, I take my lunch and sit outside under a tree, breathing in the cool, fresh air and enjoying the warm sunshine. Then a shadow falls over me and I glance up to see that Jessica and her groupies have followed me. I swallow hard and frantically search for anyone to help, but everyone pointedly looks away and there's no sign of my brother or Johnathon, for that matter.

"Is it true you're a murderer?" Jessica asks and I don't answer, wanting to get to my feet and she shoves me back down, my back hitting the trunk of the tree as I slide down. She smirks.

"I didn't think you'd have it in you," she says mockingly, and I stare up, blinking, waiting for her to do whatever it is she came to do and then leave.

"Thomas didn't deserve what you did to him, he was one of us Winter and we always take care of our own" she threatens, and I tremble.

Thankfully, I hear a voice and it's Alpha Johnathon who looks pissed. "Leave her alone" he growls, and they scatter as he turns to me and helps me to my feet.

"You really need to learn to stand up for yourself", he scolds me, and I just look at him. Jessica and her groupies outnumbered me ten to one and he wanted me to fight them with no wolf? Was he an idiot? Jessica's parents were rich and would have no problems getting me kicked out of school. Does he not realize that? Although now my grades don't seem to matter to me, not like they once had. I've changed and I know it's not for the better.

I duck my head and hear him curse, as though realizing he's upsetting me. Without a word, I started to make my way inside. He catches up to me and pulls my arm, halting me in my tracks. "Winter, I'm sorry" he apologized, "I didn't mean to make you upset, it's just that I hate to see you bullied and not take a stand against them. I don't understand what you're afraid of", he adds, sounding exasperated. Of course, he wouldn't understand, we're both from different worlds. He's an almighty powerful Alpha that can pretty much do whatever he wants without consequences. I'm a lowly omega for now and am restricted by my lack of power as well as having no one to look out for me. I can't do what I want without suffering the consequences and if I did stand up for myself, I would most probably find myself being expelled. I feel tears come to my eyes. He had no idea how much I was suffering right now.

All I saw in my nightmares last night was Thomas's face, seeing every moment of my ordeal over and over until I woke up, unable to scream, unable to do anything but force myself to try and sleep again, so that Damien didn't realize just how scared and cowardly I was. They didn't know anything about me, either of them, and I don't even know if I'll be able to move on as easily as they are expecting me to.

I slowly released my arm, thinking about my situation. A plan started to form in my mind, one that I'd considered before but never had the heart to follow through on anymore. Now it seems to be the only option for me. Jessica's never going to stop and neither are her groupies. Damien can't be by my side every hour of the day and without my voice, I'm useless, unable to defend myself. There's only one thing for me to do, and as I walk away, plotting what I'm about to do, I pray that one day Damien and even Alpha Johnathon will forgive me. Because the harder I think about it, the more certain of the plan I am.