

A Broken Alpha Heiress' Revenge

Chapter 3

Riley's POV

Time dissolved in that cell—hours bled into days, days into the endless gray of existence. I lost track of seasons, of the moon's cycle, even of my own reflection in the polished metal sink.

My knuckles scraped concrete as Harper's boot slammed into my ribs.

“Choose, mutt—shank across the face or ten slaps?”

Her breath reeked of rotting meat, but I kept my eyes fixed on the rusted drain in the corner.

Five years in this pit, and I'd learned the first rule of survival: when wolves bare their teeth, show your throat before they tear it out.

“Slaps,” I croaked, voice rough but steady.

The first blow snapped my head sideways, blood flooding my mouth with copper heat. I counted each strike like a prayer.

Seven.

Eight.

Nine.

“Pathetic,” Harper muttered, spitting at my feet before storming off with her pack of hyenas.

I stayed hunched, the sting on my cheek already fading beneath the deeper ache of memory.

This is how I've lived for 1,825 days—choosing the lesser evil, swallowing my pride like broken glass.

My mind wandered, as it always did, to day one at Ebonclaw Pack.

Kael had cornered me in the library, his cologne sharp like pine needles.

“Blood or not, Scarlett's my only sister,” he said, voice low and threatening as his fingers clamped around my wrist, leaving bruises.

“Touch her again, and I'll make the Rogues look like babysitters.”

I'd nodded like a fool, still naive enough to think family meant protection.

How laughable.

He'd rather see me in chains than believe I hadn't lured Tessa into the Black Forest.

Maddox...

I squeezed my eyes shut, but his face floated up anyway—his smile, the one that made my ribs ache.

The first time we met, his pupils dilated, his wolf howling in recognition.

“Mate,” he whispered, pressing a daisy behind my ear.

Those early days were all fireflies and stolen kisses.

Until Scarlett started spraining her ankle on our dates. Until every birthday dinner came with an “urgent” call from her.

And he always left—murmuring apologies that tasted like ashes.

My parents?

Father never looked me in the eye.

Mother flinched every time I tried to hug her.

Once, I baked them a pie with wild berries I'd foraged.

I found it in the trash, untouched.

On the counter, Scarlett's macarons sat pristine, waiting for praise.

And Tessa...

She and Scarlett were inseparable.

I saw them sharing a picnic by the lake the day she was attacked.

So why would Tessa follow me into the Black Forest?

A guard's baton slammed against the bars.

“Visitation,” he grunted.

I didn't move.

Didn't even lift my head.

I'd stopped looking forward to those words years ago.

Here, the rules allowed family visits once a month.

Sixty months. Sixty chances.

Not once had anyone come. Not my parents. Not Kael. Not even Maddox.

I used to sit by the glass, brushing my hair with my fingers, pretending the bruises weren't so bad.

I'd stare at the hallway, waiting for a silhouette that never appeared.

Not a letter. Not a whisper. Not even a lie.

Eventually, I stopped hoping.

Stopped pretending I mattered to anyone.

Stopped being Riley—the daughter, the sister, the mate.

And became something else entirely.

I pressed my forehead to the cold wall, breath ragged, fists clenched.

Let them live their perfect little lives.

Because one day, that door would open.

And when it did, I wouldn't be walking out as the girl they threw away.

I'd be walking out as the storm they never saw coming.

The clang of a deadbolt jolted me from a fitful sleep, the sound ricocheting off the walls like a gunshot.

"Prisoner 4729," a voice boomed, followed by the scrape of heavy steel. "Stand and face the door."

I pushed myself up from the cot, bones creaking like rusted hinges. The guard's uniform was stiff and starched, his expression unreadable. But there was something different about his stance. Then I saw the warden behind him, holding a sheaf of papers. His usual scowl was replaced by a cold, neutral mask. "Riley Ebonclaw," he began, clearing his throat. "By order of the Werewolf Corrections Board, your sentence has been served in full. Effective immediately, you are granted release from—"

The rest of his words bled into static. My eyes fixed on the open doorway, a rectangle of blinding light beyond. For five years, that threshold had been a taunt. A mirage.

Now it gaped before me—real, raw, and waiting.

“—proceed to intake for processing.”

He extended a clipboard, but my hands trembled too hard to take it.

I stepped forward. Each footfall was leaden.

The air beyond the cell felt different—thicker, richer, laced with forgotten scents: antiseptic, metal... and freedom.

As I crossed the threshold, the guard snapped a bracelet around my wrist.

I braced for the shock collar.

But it was only a plain tracking band, humming faintly with suppressed magic.

“Good luck,” the warden muttered under his breath.

I didn’t answer. Couldn’t.

My gaze locked on the glowing red EXIT sign ahead—a beacon blazing through the long corridor.

For 1,825 days, I’d survived by crawling. By choosing pain over pride.

Now, stepping into the courtyard, sunlight hitting my face for the first time in years, something deep inside me stirred—

Something ancient. Something wild.

Something that hadn’t whispered in a long, long time.

The door creaked open, and I squinted against the light.

They thought they’d broken me.

They thought I’d crawl forever.

But as the fresh air filled my lungs, I smiled.

Let them tremble.

The storm has just stepped outside.