

Unwanted

Riley's POV

Sixteen. A sweet birthday for most girls. A time when most dream of boys and a future as they get prepared to leave the pack for college. A serious birthday, especially for shifters, as it's the day when we transform for the first time into our wolf. Usually.

It was approaching midnight however and I had failed to shift, something almost unheard of in a pack. It was considered the ultimate betrayal, worse than being human, to not possess your wolf. Tears shimmered in my eyes. I had suspected, when the morning light had broken and I remained whole, that my wolf would not appear, for I had never heard her, not once, in all the years I had spent in this pack. When midnight passed and it became the next day, we would know for certain. I would have given anything to have heard the sound of my wolf right then as the pack glowered at me as a whole.

Bruised, battered, beaten. I can feel the pack's eyes on me as I'm dragged to the center of the crowd. My hair covers my face as I fall to the ground, my knees hitting the hardness of the floor with a loud thud. My brother sneers at me as he spits on my prone form.

"We should have known that you would always be a worthless and pathetic little b****h" he said loudly, the crowd echoing the same sentiments, while my father observes in the background, making no move to stop them.

I keep my face covered. I hurt all over. My frame is thin, painfully so. My hair is a bright dark blue with tinges of black in it. No matter how much I dye it, it never changes color to my father's disgust. He forces me to wear contacts, covering up the glacial blue of my eyes and making them a dull brown color. I awkwardly get to my feet, the moonlight shining down upon my pale skin and causing me to look almost transparent in nature. I look nothing like my brother and my Father. Something else that my father abhors.

I stand, shivering in the cold, my arms folded tightly across my chest. The pack forms a circle, keeping me coned in the center. Their gazes are filled with hatred and hostility. My own brother looks triumphant as he eyes me coldly. There is no love lost between us. He has always hated me, courtesy of my father's influence. I'm grateful that he hasn't hurt me worse than he already has tonight.

"It looks like we have an unwanted in our midst," Damien said loudly, as the pack continued to watch me, some glancing uneasily at the night sky as the minutes passed by "A shifter with no wolf. By rights, my sister here" he drawled, holding everybody's eyes as they looked to him, the next Alpha in line for the title "should be killed for being a hindrance to our pack."

I stared him in the eyes, my hair moving to reveal mine. Part of me wishes to beg for death. It would be a damn sight better than anything I have to endure in this pack. My brother's lip curls and I know that he's not going to let me get off the hook so easily. My father clears his throat and glances down at his wristwatch, tapping it pointedly with one finger "It's now past midnight and Riley James has failed to shift as witnessed by the Crescent Moon Pack" he announced solemnly "As Alpha it falls to me to deem what should now be done with an unwanted shifter. Unfortunately, she also contains Alpha blood, meaning that her life must remain whole" he added snidely.

Who would have thought that being the Alpha's daughter would save me from certain death? It was almost laughable, it was that unjust. My brother looked at my father, disappointment on his face. The pack was silent. Anticipation oozed through the air. I knew this was not the end. The pack began to murmur amongst itself.

"What good is she if she can't shift?"

"She can't defend our pack."

"She's useless. Even more than an omega is!"

"At least an omega can shift. This girl has been weak since she was born."

My father held his hand up, demanding silence. The murmurs slowly died down. Anger was palpable in the air. The crowd was restless. I stood still, waiting for the verdict. I felt hatred curdle inside my heart. This pack was filled with nothing but cruelty. I had suffered at the hands of everyone here, one way or another. There was no mercy, no sympathy and no kindness to be found in this pack. My father was ruthless and so was the pack. There were times I even found myself wishing that the pack would be taken over by another Alpha, just to give me a chance to prove I was worthy of something more than this miserable existence.

"Now, now, settle down," my father said sharply.

The pack shot mutinous looks at me. My father gestured for the women with children to take them to bed. They hurried away, without a second glance. This left me with the males, the warriors, and the omegas. The elderly never attended pack meetings.

"I understand your frustration" my father continued as Damien winked at me, a smug expression on his face "and I sympathize with how you are feeling. I despise having such a blight upon my impressive lineage and am thankful that I have Damien to show off how impressive my bloodline is. I will not allow this girl to go unpunished, simply because she is an Alpha's daughter."

The pack already knew that. I knew that. Damien was grinning widely now, almost rubbing his hands together in glee. I glared at him. Of all those that hurt me, he and father were the worst. "Damien" my father called out, causing Damien to reluctantly turn his head and regard his father with a serious expression on his face "as the next Alpha in line, I hand over the punishment to you. I believe that you will find one suitable for this, this disgusting piece of trash" he spat out, visibly shuddering as he looked at me.

My brother chuckled. "Of course Alpha Maxwell" he was careful to use my father's title in this instance, out of respect.

My father nodded "I leave you to it then" he said nonchalantly and then turned around, striding back to the pack house without another word while Damien stepped closer, a look of satisfaction on his face.

I could see the vicious gleam in his eyes. I swallowed hard. Damien eyed the pack, of which there were still a considerable number. "Everybody line up in single file" he ordered, putting a random pack member at the beginning of the line, facing me.

Before I could move, he stepped quickly behind me and I felt my arms being wrenched above my head and held firmly in place. I struggled silently. He chuckled lightly in my ear, as we watched the pack line up.

"Hit her as hard as you can, one at a time, while she can't defend herself" he ordered the pack, keeping my body still "Let's see if she lives through this," he said smirking.

"The Alpha said we couldn't kill her" one of the pack members tried to protest.

Damien grinned "He did, but if Riley dies, he's hardly going to complain" he shrugged

"And she's survived all manner of beatings, I doubt she won't survive this. It's freaky how she manages to heal without a wolf" he muttered under his breath, the pack members nodding in agreement.

I saw the first pack member move a little closer. Damien wrenched my arms higher and I felt the first punch as the pack member hit me deliberately in my rib cage. I felt the bone break, my mouth opening in a silent scream. My vocal cords had never recovered from what my father had done to me when I was six and I was mute, further compounding Damien's joy. Tears pricked my eyes as the pack member moved to the side and the next one moved up to take his place. My side throbbed in pain, and I could feel a bruise forming already.

"Pathetic little b****h, I hope this breaks you" Damien whispered in my ear, his voice venomous "You'll be wishing for death by the time this is over" he added gloating.

I looked at the long line of pack members waiting patiently for their turn, all with wide grins on their faces, and forced the tears threatening to fall down my cheeks back. Weakness would only encourage them to go even harder on me.

The second pack member reached back and then punched forward, hitting me in the sternum, and causing me to lose my breath for a moment. He exed his knuckles and stood to the side. By the time we reached the end of the line, Damien was the only thing holding me upright.

As the last pack member took their shot, Damien allowed me to drop bloody and bruised to the floor, tears oozing down my cheeks. I was in agony. I curled up in a fetal position, unable to move.

He stood over me and grabbed my hair, yanking my head up to face him "Shame you're still alive" he grunted "But maybe you'll do us all a favor and die in the next few hours" he added, dropping me back down.

He walked off without another word, while I lay there, wondering what I had done to make the moon goddess so angry with me and contemplating whether death was preferable to living.