

BRIDGET BLAKE



Happy
HALLOWEEN
ΩMEGA

SHORT & STEAMY OMEGAVERSE

Happy Halloween, Omega

Short & Steamy Omegaverse

Bridget Blake

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Foreword

HOLD UP! Before you jump into this short and steamy Omegaverse standalone story, you should be aware of a few things.

If you haven't read Omegaverse before, I recommend visiting my website (bridgetblake.com) to clear up any confusion. This book is for adult readers only and contains sexual content.

This story is set in the same contemporary alternate reality as my book *Happy Birthday, Omega*. It's Halloween themed and contains a main male character with a penchant for stalking our lovely leading lady. Never fear, they have a happily ever after.

I'm an independent author self-publishing this book and while it's had many eyes check it over, some errors may have slipped through the cracks. If you spot any, please reach out and let me know. In fact, get in contact if you just want to have a natter about Omegaverse.

Trigger Warnings: stalking, kidnapping, parental death, mentions of blood, descriptions of violence, swear words, graphic descriptions of sexual acts, exhibitionism, paranormal sexual themes such as knotting, slick, and claiming bites. Please visit my website for more information.

1



Every Halloween, I get a fright.

In fact, my earliest memory is feeling frightened while watching the glow of the lit jack-o'-lanterns disappear into the fog as we sped away from our home. I don't remember my father, or why we left, but the way my mother shakes in the company of Alphas tells me all I need to know. It was my first taste of fear, but not my last.

My mother was beautiful. The epitome of what an Omega should be. There wasn't a day I didn't hear her complimented for it. She was lithe, with a slender neck, large brown eyes, and a delicate mouth. Her jet-black hair fell to her waist, and her skin was creamy and soft. Others didn't see the jagged white scar that marred her mating gland, or the fear that lurked beneath the surface. The memory of a trauma she refused to speak about haunted her every waking moment.

She never wanted me to go through whatever made her unable to sleep at night. So, she made me fearful. Or at least she tried.

I've always preferred the darker side of life, the shadowed underbelly that skulks unseen and drips with secrets. As a child, instead of playing with the other children, I'd seek hollow logs in the woods behind my home – the perfect place for spiders to build their webs and catch unsuspecting prey. I'd watch the spiders with fascination, studying how they cast their webs, laying traps for their victims. They were so cunning and agile, spinning webs so intricate and delicate, yet so strong.

The books I read weren't found in the children's section, rather from the shadowy depths of the horror genre. They were filled with vampires, werewolves, witches, and ghosts – creatures of the dark that I both feared and longed to understand. I loved unpicking the mysteries woven through the pages, discovering the solution before the author could devolve the conclusion. Soon, I wove my own stories, taking the lessons I'd learned and applying them to my life, creating a realm of possibilities only I could unlock.

Through movies I further fostered my love of murder-mysteries, drawn by the window they offer into society's darkest recesses and the electrifying thrill of piecing together the puzzle to unveil the truth.

The first mystery I solved in the real world was my mother.

She hid it well, yet I discovered her secret nonetheless. My mother was terrified I'd present as an Omega just like her.

“The world is not a nice place for Omegas, Celeste,” she said as I grew older. I'd hear her say it when we went for a walk in

the garden, her eyes always surreptitiously glancing over her shoulder, or when she'd tuck me into bed.

When I turned sixteen, I felt different. Irritable and moody and desperate for something I couldn't identify. I pilfered every soft blanket and pillow in the house, stuffed them in my closet and buried myself in the pile. I was confused, but my mother knew what was happening, and I think it broke her heart. Her daughter was an Omega. Her greatest fear.

Even though I didn't like what was happening to me, I found it interesting and exciting. I didn't care about the dangers of becoming an Omega. It all sounded like a chance to discover another world with all of its secrets ready to be unearthed. So few people present as Omegas, making The Omega Academy the ultimate shadowed doorway to step through.

I waited anxiously to be sent to The Omega Academy, but it never happened. In fact, I was never confirmed by a doctor as an Omega at all.

Instead, a small packet of purple pills appeared on my nightstand with a glass of water. Despite my curious nature, I didn't question what they were. I trusted my mother. I wanted her to be proud of me. So I took the pills. They made my blossoming scent dull, prevented my glands from rising into bright red bumps, and halted my developing curves. By the time I realized what they did, to the rest of the world I was a Beta.

The older I grew, the more my mother's fear morphed into paranoia, and she became hostile when questioned about the

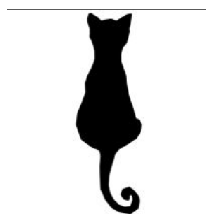
pills or her past.

Like a curious cat, unable to help its nature, I questioned... everything.

Why was my mother allowed to be unmated as an Omega? Where was my father? What happened in our home that made us leave?

My mother was the ultimate mystery to solve. So I pulled that thread, following it back to her past and unwittingly opening doors to monsters lurking beyond.

I don't spook easily, but this is the story of my haunting.



Every Halloween, I get a fright. Instead of hiding from it, I embrace the anticipation of the thrill.

The music is pumping as I dance wildly in the thrumming crowd, my hair whipping around me and sweat dripping down my back.

Halloween is the one day of the year when pretending to be someone else is not only acceptable, but encouraged. Others are dressed in lazy costumes, a pair of fairy wings dug out from a kid's fancy dress box or a foam sword strapped to a belt. Not me. I've always gone all out for Halloween.

My outfit is an accurate replica of the costume worn by Halle Berry in the 2004 movie "Catwoman." A sleek black leather suit clings to my form, complemented by a black mask with pointy ears, long black leather gloves tipped with sharp claws, and thigh-high heeled boots. Clipped to the cinching belt is a thin, coiled whip. The ensemble is tailored to fit me

like a glove, and cost me an entire paycheck. It's utter perfection and entirely wasted on this mindless crowd. No one even looks twice at me, and it's just another reason I love Halloween – the anonymity. I don't have to worry about being caught pretending here, because everyone is pretending too.

The DJ puts on a song that makes the girls beside me scream with excitement, and I dance harder, losing myself in the moment. I'm so lost in the music I don't notice the guy standing next to me until he speaks.

“Nice costume!” he shouts.

I open my eyes and look at the Beta. He's wearing a shitty Zorro costume, his mask made from a black necktie with uneven holes cut for his eyes. I want nothing to do with him. My trusty vibrator takes care of my sexual needs, and I definitely don't need a clumsy fumble in the sheets from this guy.

He looks around, a dopey-looking smile kicking up the corners of his mouth. “I've never seen you here before.”

I don't make a habit of clubbing; it's too risky with so many bodies grinding together. Halloween is the exception. I love Halloween despite the role it plays in most of the big moments in my life. There's always a mystery of some sort to solve at the end of the night. Who puked in the neighbor's garden? Me. Who took all the full-sized candy bars from their ‘help-yourself’ bucket? Me, again.

I narrow my eyes and act like I can't hear him. Usually I'm good at disappearing into a crowd, but it's a little too late to

dart away now without drawing even more attention to myself. So I keep dancing to keep up the charade of nonchalance. Inside, I'm scheming. My mother's voice echoes in the back of my head, reminding me of her number one rule, *'stay aware of your surroundings.'*

Her voice is always there, telling me what to do and how to do it. I wish I could block her out. I wish a lot of things were different.

“What are you supposed to be, baby?”

I blink at him, ire rising rapidly in my chest. Is this guy serious? I'm fucking Catwoman! Every inch of this costume is accurate, down to the silver cat-shaped buckle on the belt. I'm far more enraged that he can't tell what my outfit is than by his weak attempts to hit on me.

I consider telling him I'm a fortuneteller and his future features a cat kicking him in the balls, but that would break rule number two: *'don't stand out.'*

I don't know why I still follow her stupid rules. My mother doesn't control me anymore, and it's not like I haven't already broken the rule by coming out tonight. It might be worth drawing unwanted attention for the chance to put this douche-bag in his place.

I look up at his dumb expression. I heave an exasperated sigh and roll my eyes, muttering to myself, “Nope, not worth it.”

As I turn back to the DJ, I see him.

A dark figure in the sea of riotous color.

I inhale sharply.

An Alpha.

He's standing deathly still in the thrashing crowd behind the clueless Beta, his arms folded over a barrel-sized chest and his legs planted in a wide stance. The Alpha is easily a foot taller than everyone else here, lording over the thrumming crowd effortlessly. A skull mask covers his eyes and nose, and the rest of his exposed, chiseled features are painted to complete the skeleton. He's gorgeous. The muscles in his arms and chest bulge against his shirt. Dark brown hair buzzed short on the sides make his jawline appear sharp.

My mouth goes dry. Screw the Beta. *This* is the real threat.

He's wearing a black tactical stab vest with all black clothing beneath. His bare hands are painted the same black and white as his face, creating the white bones of a skeleton. A holster with a gun is strapped to his thigh. His stoic gaze is locked on me.

I'm rooted to the spot, transfixed by the way the strobe lights reflect in his dark eyes.

The gun is fake. Right? It's Halloween, and people carry fake guns as part of their costume. Something tells me there is nothing fake about the Alpha staring unblinkingly at me.

"You want to dance?" the sleazy Beta asks, sidling closer with each pound of the baseline.

“No,” I say, my voice coming out shrill, and I wrinkle my nose at the weakness.

“Why not?”

“I’m busy.”

I’m still dancing, but I’m distracted. My eyes dart back to the looming Alpha constantly. He hasn’t moved an inch and his eyes are still locked on me. Can he tell? Surely not. I took my suppressant pill this morning. I know I did.

“I’m pretty sure you aren’t busy,” the Beta says with a grin.

He reaches for me, and I dodge his touch. My mother’s third rule. *‘Don’t let them touch you.’*

I flinch as his hand wraps around my wrist, dragging me forcefully towards him.

“Fuck off, dude. I’m not interested,” I shout, swatting at his hand like the cat I’m dressed as. The claws on my costume are hard points of plastic, but they’re useless as a weapon.

“What? I can’t hear you.” He’s still smiling, still tugging at me, thinking my resistance is all a big joke.

Panic bubbles up inside me and I try to jerk away, but the grip only tightens, and my delicate bones protest.

I glare at him. “I said fuck off, you swashbuckling dickbag.”

“I can’t hear you,” he shouts again, leaning in close. “You should come back to my place. It’ll be quieter there.”

“I said back off, creep!” I yank my wrist free from his grasp, and he stumbles back a step.

He doesn't get far. I watch as the Alpha wraps his huge hand around the back of Zorro's neck in a submissive hold and drags him backwards in the heaving mass of dancers.

I stare unblinking at the spot they disappeared. They were swallowed by the crowd so fast it felt like I might have imagined the whole scenario.

The dance floor suddenly feels oppressive, and before I know what I'm doing, I'm bursting through the emergency exit and into the alley behind the club, my heart pounding in my chest.

Fuck. That escalated quickly.

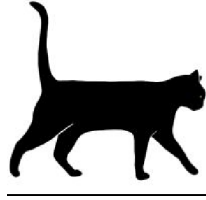
I'm usually good at avoiding lecherous looks and dodging unwanted touches. Even without an Omega's scent or voluptuous body, I have the strange magnetism that subconsciously draws Betas to Omegas.

It was the Alpha. He distracted me and put me off my game. Fucker.

Shaking my head, I tighten the hair tie holding my hair away from my sweaty neck. I don't know where the Alpha dragged the Beta off to, or why, but I'm glad the threat is gone. Both of them. I lean back against the cold brick, take a few deep breaths to slow my racing heart, and try to ignore the concerning pulse in my panties that matches the beat from the club.

I frown. I have an unhealthy relationship with fear and mystery, but it's never turned me on before.

The cool air feels good against my heated skin. I'm still wearing my mask, and I'm sure my black smoky eye is smudged with sweat. The night air is cool against my damp skin and it smells like rain. I should just call it a night and go home, but I can't quite bring myself to leave. This is the one night of the year I allow myself to let loose. I'm not about to let some asshole ruin my joy. I'll give myself five minutes to calm down and then I'll head back inside and enjoy the rest of the night. I don't spook that easily.



Every Halloween, I get a fright.

I guess this encounter counts as my annual cage-rattle. It's tamer than usual. Although, after last year's doozy, anything the universe has in store for me will pale in comparison. I'm glad. I couldn't handle anything worse than *that* night.

I push off the wall, intent on enjoying the rest of my Halloween. I'm a few steps down the alley when I hear the heavy steel door of the club slam shut, followed by loud footsteps.

My blood runs cold and I duck into the shadows. I can see a figure standing in the light from the streetlamp.

It's the Alpha, so unmistakable with his formidable frame.

He's pacing back and forth, searching for something, and muttering to himself. "Fuck."

The gun is still strapped to his thigh, and he keeps glancing up and down the alley. I press further into the cold wall, the

brick biting into my back. He can't smell me. If I were an unsuppressed Omega, I'd have no chance of hiding from an Alpha. But I'm not. As far as he knows, I'm a run-of-the-mill Beta.

Besides, there's no way he's looking for me. He hadn't been staring at me in the club, just the Beta. The sleazebag probably got on the Alpha's wrong side.

"Fuck!" he says again, his voice strained.

I watch him pace for what feels like forever. He's agitated, his hands clenching into fists at his sides. I wonder what he did with the Beta creep, and quickly decide I don't want to know. I also don't want to know what has him so upset. Nope. I really don't. The mystery holds no appeal to me whatsoever. I will not allow myself to be sucked into solving this riddle. It's too dangerous. Alphas who are this riled up are unpredictable and violent. It's best to stay hidden.

Finally, after what feels like an eternity, he turns and walks away, his footsteps echoing through the alleyway. The door slams shut with a resonate bang. Only then do I let out a sigh of relief. I step out from my hiding spot and brush off my leather outfit.

I'm about to turn back towards the club and continue my night when I hear a sound that makes my heart stop.

It's the smallest shuffle of movement, barely audible over the roar of the rave, but I know in an instant what it is. The Alpha didn't leave. He pretended to, and he's watching me. Why would he do that?

I make a split-second decision and break out into a run, racing towards the door, driven by a prey instinct I thought was suppressed under years of medication. I intend to launch into the crowd and lose him in the masses, but I barely take two steps before I'm pushed into a wall. My face is shoved against crude graffiti, and while I can't turn to look at my assailant, I know exactly who it is. A scaldingly hot body presses against my back, and I'm fully encased by a wall of pure Alpha. His breath is hot against my neck and I can feel his nose tracing the curve of my shoulder.

“Caught you.”

His voice is a deep growl that sends a shiver down my spine.

“Please,” I whimper, “just let me go. I've done nothing wrong.”

“Shhhh,” he purrs, running his nose up the column of my throat. “I know. I'd never hurt you.”

I gasp as his hips press into my ass, and I can feel his thick length pressed against me. He's hard. I squeeze my eyes shut, willing myself to stay still. To not fight. My mother's voice rings in my ears, reciting her fourth rule, *'don't challenge an Alpha.'*

His lips ghost over my dormant mating gland, and my body trembles. He can't know I'm a suppressed Omega, can he? There's no scent. No physical markers. He can't even see my gland... and yet, he's found it with unerring accuracy.

“Don't,” I whisper.

He groans as his tongue laves over my skin. I bite my lip to keep from moaning, and a wetness pools in the crotch of my catsuit. An Alpha's touch shouldn't feel this good. It certainly shouldn't feel right. My body is basically a Beta, and yet it's behaving like an Omega.

My mind is spinning, and I can't seem to catch my breath. The heat of his body is seeping into me, and I can smell him. It's faint, but it's there. I shouldn't be able to smell Alphas or Omegas.

"I don't know what you want, but I'm not it," I huff, my fear waning as I sift through the information. A mystery is forming before my eyes, questions layering on questions enticingly.

"You have a secret," he whispers against my ear, and I shiver.

I feel his hands on my wrists, pinning them against the cold metal door. I try to tug my arms away, but his grip is unbreakable. His teeth graze over the sensitive skin of my mating gland, and I release a whimper, a sound so unmistakably Omega that we both momentarily freeze in shock.

He exhales in amusement before his grip on my wrists tightens. I tug defiantly, but instead of moving away, my body arches into him.

I squeeze my eyes shut, willing my body to stop reacting to the Alpha like a lover instead of an assailant.

“You’re a little puzzle to solve, aren’t you?” His lips graze the shell of my ear lightly, hot breath puffing against my damp skin like a caress. “And I’m great at solving mysteries. I love the hunt.”

I bite my lip to stop myself from replying with an empathic, “me too.”

I’m buzzing from his declaration of love for mysteries and puzzles. Hearing him talk about the greatest loves of my life as if they are his own does something strange to my insides. I’ve never met someone who has openly admitted to enjoying the thrill of the chase and, if possible, my curiosity is further piqued.

This Alpha has aroused both my body and brain in a single interaction.

With startling clarity, I realize that *this* is my Halloween fright. The Beta was a red herring. The true twist is the temptation this Alpha offers to forsake my hidden identity and play his game.

I bite down harder on my lip, my teeth close to drawing blood. I won’t let myself fall for his seduction. My mother’s final rule clicks into place. Rule number five, *‘if all else fails, fight.’*

I twist my body, using the abrupt momentum to wrench my wrist free from his grip and do exactly what I planned to do the Beta creep. I knee him in the balls. I move fast, and he’s faster. He catches my knee before I can connect with his family jewels, but it’s enough. I’ve caught him off guard, and

with a final shove to his broad shoulders, I push him off balance.

I run, sprinting down the alley away from him as fast as my heeled knee-high boots will let me. How Halle Berry made it look so easy to move in this costume, I'll never know.

I can hear his heavy footfalls behind me, sauntering in an effortless lope. He's not trying to catch me. Instead, I can hear his breathing – harsh and excited. He's getting off on the chase! He even told me he likes the hunt, and I'll be damned if I'm not flush with excitement as well. Danger, fear, mystery, thrill.

It's all a repressed secret Omega could ask for!

I burst out of the alleyway and onto the footpath at the front of the club, my adrenaline pumping furiously. There are dozens of people milling around outside, and I scan them with bright, excited eyes. The Alpha won't try to accost me out here, not with so many witnesses. I slow to a fast walk, and flag down a passing taxi.

Just as I'm reaching for the door handle, the heat at my back returns. He doesn't touch me, not this time. My hand hovers, waiting with bated breath as he leans over from his imposing height and whispers the words that will haunt me.

“Happy Halloween, Omega.”

White-noise drills through my brain as panic grips me.

He knows.

He wasn't pretending to know my secret. He knows!

I don't remember getting into the taxi. I suspect the Alpha guided me inside, as I recall his amused huff of laughter at my stupor.

"Where to, kitty-cat?" the driver asks, chuckling to himself at his little joke. I don't correct him, despite his grievous under-appreciation of my costume.

"Just drive," I breathe.

The driver gives me a look in the rearview mirror, but puts the car in gear and pulls away from the curb. I don't dare look back. I don't dare wonder how he knew my secret.

I don't spook easily, but my secret being revealed scares the whiskers off me.



Every Halloween, I get a fright. And on the Halloween two years ago, I experienced the mother of all shocks.

It was the night my world crumbled in an instant. My heart shattered and I was left hopelessly alone. It happened so fast, and it was all my fault.

For the last two years, I've sat on the edge of my bed and stared at the little purple pills on my bedside table with accusation. I don't want to keep taking them, and yet, my mother's fear passed to me like a twisted inheritance. Her trauma still influences my choices, as if it were deep in my bones.

So I take the suppressants and try to be a normal Beta. It doesn't work, because lurking beneath the surface is the truth. My entire life is false and I don't truly belong with anywhere. I'm not a normal Beta. I'm not a normal *anything*. It's exhausting. I'm exhausted by the charade.

I work as a bookkeeper for a construction company. It's not because I'm particularly good with numbers, but because it allows me to hide away from the rest of the world in the dingy back office. I chat with my coworkers about superficial things, but somehow I even manage to screw that up.

They ask "How are you enjoying the weather?", and I tell them I'm not enjoying the sunshine because I like it when it's dark and rainy. My response evokes frowns.

They ask "What are you doing this weekend?", and I tell them I'm going to make a timeline of an unsolved kidnapping that occurred in 1962. They quickly shuffle away with disturbed looks on their faces.

Safe to say I haven't made friends at work, and I'm therefore safe from anyone discovering my secret. Even though it's a secret I no longer understand or want to keep.

My best friend is my cat, Grizabella, a gorgeous rag doll with jet black fur and bright blue eyes that match my own. I like to think it's because she's my familiar, sent to be my steadfast companion. She's affectionate and loving and all the things I need to keep from spiraling into despair. After *that* Halloween two years ago, I became so soul-achingly lonely that something had to give. She appeared on my doorstep one evening as if she was left as a gift. The moment I held her, I felt a kinship with the sassy little fur ball. Since then, she's been my confidant and friend, and I spoil her rotten. She's the one person I know who will love me no matter how dark my answers to her questions are... as long as I feed her on time.

“Griz, do you think I would make a good Omega?” It’s a question I ask often.

The cat’s only response is a purr from her place on my lap. I stroke her soft fur absently and stare at the TV screen. I’m watching a Halloween movie marathon, but I’m not really paying attention.

Tomorrow night is Halloween, and I’ve agonized over going out clubbing again. The interaction with Ghost, the name I gave to the Alpha dressed as a skeleton, has hung heavily over my head for an entire year. I haven’t been able to unravel the mystery, and it’s been eating me alive.

“How did that Alpha know?”

I swallow hard, remembering the feel of his breath on my ear and his lips grazing my neck. He saved me from that Beta, and he *knew* my secret.

The thought of it sends a shiver through me. What if he’s there? What if he isn’t? I can’t get the thought of him out of my head. Everything about him was exactly how I imagined an unmated Alpha male to be. Aggressive, predatory, dominating. Taking without asking and refusing to give an inch. There was also something measured and controlled about him. A restraint buzzing underneath his skin.

“Should I go back? If he’s there, I can find out how he knows I’m an Omega.”

Ghost is a menacing figure that has only grown larger in my mind in the past year. By rights, I should be terrified of him.

After all, he knows my deepest darkest secret.

As twisted as it is, I'm not terrified of him *because* he knows. I feel a link to him. He is the only other person in the entire world who knows the real me. I'm definitely messed up. I've created a para-relationship with the memory of a man who physically assaulted and chased me. I both loathe how he treated me, and long for even a morsel of the attention he gave me that night.

I liked the way he looked at me as if I were a fascinating puzzle. Like I was desirable. Hell, I even liked the way he made me fearful. The thrill was unlike anything I could glean from a book or movie.

“What are the chances of him being there again?”

Griz purrs and blinks lazily at me.

“It's not *him* I want to see, it's answers to the mystery. The questions have been keeping me up at night. Not *him*.”

She doesn't respond this time. She knows as well as I do that I'm lying. Or, you know, cause she's a cat.

I sigh. My mind is racing, and I can't seem to focus on the television. The twist has just been revealed, and it's truly lazy screen writing. I figured it out within the first ten minutes.

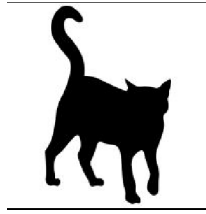
My phone chirps from the coffee table, and I reach over Grizabella to grab it, paying the kitty tax for the disruption with a scratch behind the ears.

It's a notification for an email promoting the Halloween rave at the club. My finger hovers over the “Buy A Ticket” button.

It's a risky decision. If I go, I'll be throwing myself back into the fire. It could be exactly what I need to stop thinking about Ghost and what he knows. Or, it could make things worse.

Grizabella meows impatiently at me, and I smile down at her. "You want me to go?"

I tap on the button and buy a ticket to the Halloween rave. I'll go, and if Ghost is there, I'll get closure. I'm prepared for him this time; he won't spook me.



Every Halloween, I get a fright. I must be messed up, 'cause I'm excited to find out what it will be this year.

I'm wearing my Catwoman outfit – the same one from last year. I've justified wearing the same costume two years in a row because it cost me a buttload. It's a lie. I have a really cool Morticia Addams from The Addams Family replica dress hanging in my closet. I'm Catwoman again because I want him to recognize me. I wonder if he'll wear his skeleton costume. My mystery-loving, secret-knowing Ghost.

I arrive at the club later than usual. Excited faces fill the streets as they head towards the same destination. I join the throng of people waiting to enter the club, my eyes scanning shrewdly for a glimpse of a skull mask. The line quickly moves and soon I'm inside.

The pulsating music ripples through the humid air, and my nose fills with the sour smell of sweat and alcohol. The huge

dance floor quivers beneath the stomping feet of lively costumed dancers. It's an ocean of chaotic anonymity and perfect for what I need. Despite my mission, Halloween is still the one night of the year I can let go and be free. So I disappear into the crowd, allowing myself to meld into its wild embrace.

The deep bass thrums through me as I move. The heat of the sweaty bodies is electrifying and I come alive. But I can't let go completely. Not yet. I'm constantly searching the crowd for a tall, haunting form. I still haven't quite figured out what I'll do if I find him.

Eventually, after what feels like hours of hunting, I lose myself to the thumping baseline.

I should have realized it's when he'd strike.

A large, warm hand wraps around my waist and my heart clenches in panic, but I don't pull away.

It's him. I know without a doubt.

I'm pulled against a firm, muscular chest, and my body reacts instantly. My nipples pebble and my pussy throbs. Tilting my head back to look at him over my shoulder, I gasp at how close his face is. The white contours of the skull mask accentuate the sharp planes of his exposed features and make the dark depths of his eyes appear endless.

I should be terrified that he's touching me with an intimate familiarity. Yet, I'm not afraid. I know what murderous intent feels like, and this isn't it. This is a delicious danger of a

different kind. I resume dancing, swaying my hips slowly, and he moves with me. I can feel his cock pressed against my ass through our clothing. He's rock hard.

"You came back." His voice is a low growl which vibrates through his chest. I detect a hint of a lilting country accent, and I store it away in my mental case file. He's from somewhere rural.

I don't respond, waiting to see what other clues he'll drop unbidden, and continue dancing against him, picking up the pace to match the music. My heart is racing and I can't stop the satisfied smile spreading across my face.

My Ghost found me.

He leans down, his mouth close to my ear. "Did my little kitty want to get caught?"

I suspect he's trying to bait me into talking. I should stick to the plan... but he's pulled my metaphorical tail, and I bite. Turning in his embrace, I poke his chest with my claw.

"I'm not a kitty, I'm Catwoman," I protest, my tone firm despite the ridiculous words.

A flicker of amusement crosses his face, almost imperceptibly beneath the mask and paint, and I take careful note. Interesting. He has a sense of humor. Good to know.

"My mistake, Miss Berry."

I lick my lips to conceal my pleasure with his accurate reference. Why is it so hot that he knows exactly who I'm

dressed as? I wonder if he appreciates the effort it took to create it.

His grip on my waist tightens, pulling me closer.

“Do you know who *I* am?” His words should be drowned out by the rave, but I hear him clearly as if we were in an empty room together. In fact, all of my senses feel heightened.

He’s not asking about his costume.

I shake my head.

Frown lines appear at the sides of his mouth as if he’s disappointed. “Are you sure?”

He seems to think I *should* recognize him. I’m almost certain I’d remember crossing paths with someone who sets my skin alight so deliciously. It’s another clue to add to my list. I need to investigate where we might have crossed paths.

I eventually shrug. “You’re my Ghost.”

He flashes his teeth in a specter of a smile, and it makes my toes curl in my boots. Such a deceptively simple expression has a myriad of complex implications.

Alphas don’t expose their teeth to Omegas. It’s an etiquette to protect Omegas from feeling intimidated or frightened. After all, it’s not a smart strategy for a predator to flash teeth at prey. Especially when you’re trying to convince your prey you won’t bite if they come sit on your dick. Which is a lie. They totally will.

I know he's playing games with me. Testing and taunting my suppressed inner Omega. I think he likes how my pulse flutters in my throat. I think I like it too.

As if he can't resist its allure, he leans over and nips lightly at the side of my neck.

“Aren't you scared of ghosts, kitty cat?”

I shake my head. No. I'm not scared. I feel lightheaded and soft. Like I trust him, despite knowing an unmated Alpha is dangerous to an unprotected Omega like me. I'm a sitting duck. If he decides to claim me, there is nothing and no one who can stop him.

The thought causes a full body shudder to ripple through me. I'm turned on. I want him to bite me, to claim me. I want to feel his teeth in my skin and his cock inside me. I want to lose control. To forget about my past and my future and live in the moment.

“No?” His fingers dig into my hips and he presses his cock against my belly. “You should be.”

I moan as he grinds against me – the friction sending sparks straight to my core.

“Do you want to know a secret?”

I hum, licking my lips before responding in a breathy voice. “It's only fair, seeming you know mine.”

His hand slides up my back, fingers tangling in my hair.

I'm struggling to focus on his words. His touch is changing something within me. I don't know what it is, but it's coming to life.

"I'm *obsessed* with you." He tugs on my hair, tilting my head back, giving him more access to my vulnerable throat. With a snap of his teeth, he could bite my jugular, killing me. Or, he could bite my hidden gland. More liquid pools between my thighs.

"There isn't a day that goes by which I don't think about my little kitten hiding away as a Beta."

Pride washes through me and I feel vindicated in my own obsession. He thinks about me, too.

"Do you have any idea how addictive you are?"

I shake my head, or at least I try. His grip on my black shoulder-length hair is tight.

"Answer me," he snarls, his teeth nipping at my skin. If he bit any harder, he'd draw blood.

"No," I whisper. "I didn't think you'd remember me."

"You thought I wouldn't remember the single most bewitching Omega I've ever met?" I can hear the disbelief in his voice.

There. He said it. He called me an Omega.

He chuckles darkly as I squeak, eyes widening and scanning the writhing crowd around us. I can't risk anyone overhearing him.

“Don’t worry, I’ll keep your secret.”

I take a deep breath and close my eyes. His lips are constantly grazing over my neck, his breath hot on my skin. It’s like a drug, soothing me and making the rest of the dance floor fade into the background again. The music is a dull throbbing that matches the same pulse in my core.

It’s not him I’m worried about knowing. It’s everyone else. Hell, if I’m honest, I want him to know my secret. I want him to know me. It makes me feel connected to someone. No, that’s another lie. I don’t want to be connected to just anyone; I want it to be him.

“I’ll keep you safe until it’s time.” He nuzzles at my cheek with his nose, his mask bumping into mine. “You need to prepare for the changes coming.”

“What?” I respond in confusion. Changes? What is he talking about?

His lips are planting slow, soft kisses across my cheeks, our masks bumping together. “You can’t stop it from happening, Kitten. Your body is already changing, haven’t you noticed? It knows you’re mine.”

You’re mine.

His declaration echoes around my head, and it dumps a bucket of ice cold water over my desire.

My mother’s voice rears to life, morphing my thoughts to sound like her. Her wishes for me to live as a Beta definitely don’t include belonging to an Alpha. It’s everything she didn’t

want for me. I might be fearless, but her fear lives on. It's ingrained in me and is enough to bring me crashing back down to reality.

I press my hands against his rock-hard chest.

"No," I murmur, trying to push him away. "No, I'm not yours."

He growls, his grip on my hair tightening. "Yes, you are. You've been mine since the first moment I saw you."

I shake my head, panic rising in my chest. "I can't be what you want me to be."

He sighs. "You already are, Kitten. You just have to stop fighting it."

The music blares in the background, the sound of the crowd coming back into focus. His words echoing in my head. *You already are, Kitten.*

I take a deep breath, my mind racing. I want him. I want him more than anything. But I'm not ready. Not yet. My mother's voice is still so loud. So insistent that I'm a Beta.

I feel the dark depths of his eyes studying my features. The frown lines next to his mouth deepen.

"You're still running, Kitten. That's okay, I'm enjoying the hunt. I'll let you solve the mystery. Are you looking forward to finding out my identity?"

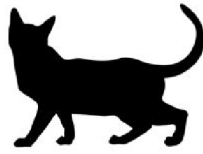
His fingers release my hair, and he takes a step back. The pang in my chest physically hurts as I reel from his abrupt

departure. He went from scorching hot to ice cold in a snap.

“Tell me!” I splutter. I feel cold without his arms holding me close.

He looks down at me through the skull mask. Haunting. Promising.

“Happy Halloween, Omega.”



Every Halloween, I get a fright.
Except this time, the haunting didn't stop at the end of the night.

It's like he pulled a loose string within me and I've been unraveling ever since. It's been seven months of trying with half-hearted effort to put the Alpha out of my mind. But it's impossible. He's haunting me. He's *changed* me.

The purple pills now feel like lead when I swallow them every morning, and I question what my existence is really for. I wake up, take my pills, go to a soulless job, and return to watch Halloween re-runs with my cat. It's not living. I realize the irony of calling the Alpha a ghost. If anyone is a soul trapped within the planes of living and dead, it's me.

For the past year, I've slowly changed both physically and mentally. I'm coming alive and seeing the world in a whole new light.

I swear I can smell better. I can tell who is about to walk into a room before they appear. I shouldn't be able to discern my coworkers' unique scents as a Beta, yet day by day my senses sharpen. I thought it was all in my head until I heard a rumor of an Alpha at my construction company showing signs being near an unmated Omega.

My eyesight has improved and I no longer need glasses to read the spreadsheets at work. My breasts are heavier and my nipples hyper-sensitive. My stomach is fuller, softer. In fact, all of me feels *more*.

I should be terrified, but I'm not. There's a strange sense of relief, like the mask is crumbling off and I'm finally becoming who I really am. I couldn't say why the changes are happening now. I'm in my mid-twenties and long past puberty and presentation. I've never missed a pill.

I know what I want the cause to be. I want it to be as he said last Halloween. I want it to be because of my Alpha ghost. I want him to be the one triggering my inner Omega to reveal herself. It's baffling and impulsive, but I want to see him again.

I know he sees me.

It's a shadow at the corner of my periphery, causing the baby hairs on the back of my neck to prickle with awareness. A teasing scent in the air, so faint I can almost believe it's not real. The brush of heat on my flesh, telling me I'm being watched with intensity.

He leaves no trace, just lingering hints, and I can't shake the feeling that he's always there, waiting for me. Watching me. My own personal ghost. It's exciting and terrifying all at once, and I'm thoroughly addicted.

I know it's not right, to want someone to continue stalking me and to foster the growing attachment to a person who could have nefarious intentions. There's a force within me driving my desires and actions which I don't understand. I've spent years learning how to manipulate the system to live as a Beta, but I know nothing about being an Omega. I'm woefully ill-equipped to deal with an Alpha showing interest in me.

Is that what this is? An Alpha showing interest in an Omega? Or is it a deranged man stalking a woman?

My mother certainly didn't explain the mating process or the dynamics of the relationship between an Alpha and Omega. I've done everything I can to avoid those topics and information.

So, when I find my search history filled with *'how to tell if an Alpha is your fated mate,'* I know I'm in trouble. What else could be the reason I'm so inexplicably drawn to this mysterious Alpha? I can't stop thinking about him. His eyes, his scent, his body. He's intoxicating.

I've dedicated hours and hours to uncovering his identity. I use the clues I gleaned and the information he told me, but it gets me nowhere. I don't have any recollection of meeting him before.

I've turned the photo of my mother that sits on my mantle to face the wall. I know I'm betraying her with my yearning. I sift through my muddled emotions, searching for the guilt that has been fading for months, and come up empty.

She's gone. I've realized her wishes aren't as important as my needs.

In fact, I'm coming to terms with the reality of my situation. Since *that* night, I've avoided thinking too hard about it. The woman I still refer to as my mother was deeply flawed. She's not a part of my life anymore and I need to let go.

It's late when I return home from work one evening, and I know that he's near. I can't explain it, but I know he's watching me. I can feel it. As if to confirm my suspicions, I catch a whiff of his scent as soon as I enter the building – cedarwood and amber.

I take the stairs instead of the elevator, my heart racing. The thrill of being prey to a highly skilled predator, because there is no doubt he is hunting me, has become my drug of choice. I don't know why he doesn't show himself, but I suspect he's getting off on my skittish behavior. It must be an Alpha thing. Or maybe just a *him* thing.

When I reach my floor, I pause outside my apartment door, my hand on the knob. I strain my hearing, listening for footsteps or movement, but there is nothing but the wails of the baby in 2C.

I open the door and step inside. The lights are off and the curtains are open as usual. I love how the moonlight streams

into the room, bathing it in a soft blue glow. The prickling of awareness doesn't relent. I flick the switch, and light floods the living room. The space is empty. I breathe a sigh of relief, and the door snicks closed behind me.

I drop my bag onto the table and take off my coat, hanging it on the back of a chair. Grizabella comes running to greet me, meowing and weaving between my legs. I reach down to pat her and my hand freezes mid-air.

I blanch.

Blinking rapidly, I stare at a pink collar sitting starkly against her midnight black fur. Grizabella doesn't wear a collar. She's not an outside cat after her repeated fights with the neighborhood strays.

I look around the room, my heart racing. Nothing else seems out of place.

I touch the collar, my hand shaking. There's a note attached.

Happy Halloween, Omega.

The note flutters to the floor as I drop it in shock. It's not Halloween, but it *is* the calling card of my Alpha ghost. He's been here. In my home. He's touched my cat. He's left a message.

I stride to the windows and fling them open. I need fresh air – I feel like I'm suffocating. The cool breeze washes over my skin and I take a deep breath, trying to calm my racing heart.

This is crazy. It's dangerous and exactly what I've been trying to avoid my entire life. I've worked so hard to build this life as a Beta, and now it's all in jeopardy. I'm frustrated that my heart is racing from not just fear, but the rush of a thrill.

My eyes fall on the note again, my mind racing. This is tangible proof. More than just a feeling of *knowing* he's close by. I've spent so many nights dreaming about him, wishing he would come to me and feeling his eyes on my body even as I lay in bed. But now that he's reaching out, I feel like I'm teetering on the edge of a cliff, my feet precariously close to slipping over the edge.

Stepping back from the window, I reach for the collar. I unclasp it and let it fall to the floor, the metal clinking against the tiles. I scoop Grizabella into my arms and she purrs loudly, her tail flicking against my arm.

I bury my face in her fur, taking comfort in her familiar scent, trying to calm my racing heart. Except it isn't her usual natural, earthy aroma. She smells like *him*. The little hussy purrs with delight, pleased with her part in his twisted game.

I drop her, stumbling backwards. Grizabella lands on her feet, meowing indignantly, and I stare at her, my mind reeling. He's marked her with his scent glands.

Now he's gone too far.

It's one thing to stalk me, it's another to place his claim on the one thing I love most in the world as his own.

Rage bubbles up inside me. He's crossed a line. The intrusion into my safe space has pushed me too far.

How dare he?

How dare he enter my home and touch my things?

How dare he use my cat to send a message?

It's enough to jerk me away from my dark delusions of connection and fated mates. There was nothing about this in my research on what flirting looks like between Alphas and Omegas. This is *him* toying with me.

A little voice in the back of my head that I've never heard before slinks forward and whispers coyly. *Alpha has been in your nest.*

I shake my head, wholly freaked out by the intrusive thought.

Nest? What the fuck?

I snatch up the collar and hurl it across the room, a dull thud as it hits the wall. Grizabella scampers away, hiding under the couch.

"Fuck you, Ghost!" I yell, my fists clenched at my sides. I'm shaking with anger and fear. I feel violated. I've spent my entire life hiding from Alphas, and now one has managed to get past all my defenses to breach my nest. Worse than that, I've been pleased with his attention.

Wait, no! Not my fucking nest. My brain is scrambled.

I sit down on the couch, my hands covering my face. I try to take deep breaths, to calm myself down, but it's no use. This is what I've been secretly craving. The thrill of the chase that has been hovering at the edge of my awareness since his arrival in my life two Halloweens ago. But now that it's happening, I'm terrified.

I want to call the police and report the break-in, but I know it's pointless. They won't do anything, and if they do, it'll only make things worse. I can't go to the Omega protection services, because... well, that would be admitting I've been in hiding for most of my adult life.

No, there's no one to turn to. No one who can help me.

I'm on my own and I'm officially spooked.



Every Halloween, I get a fright. It's two days before the 31st, and I'm on edge waiting with anticipation for the bite of fear. This year feels final. At the end of the night, everything is going to be different.

The wind is unrelenting, howling down the streets like a wind tunnel and whipping my hair against my face painfully. I wrap my arms around myself, trying to stay warm in my too thin jacket. The weather turned abruptly at the start of fall, like Mother Nature flipped the off switch on the heat of summer.

I hitch my tote bag emblazoned with a bat on my shoulder and pick up my pace, eager to get home and out of the harsh conditions. It's been a long week at work, a mix of mind-numbing office tedium and a relentless hyper-awareness of my Alpha colleagues. All I want to do is curl up in my nest with a cup of tea, a spooky book, and feel *safe*.

I've come to terms with the fact that I have a nest. I finally relented to the whining voice I now know is my Omega, and converted my spare closet into a cozy nest. The walls are

padded with soft fabric and fairy lights are strung along the ceiling. I love it.

It's been months since I've had any interaction with my Ghost. Not since he broke into my home and left me his calling card. Despite his absence, my body has continued to change.

I stopped taking the purple pills and watched with fascination as I became who I always should have been – an Omega.

I've had so much fun buying clothes that fit around my new breasts and stomach and hips. I stare in the mirror each morning before work, simply admiring how I look more like me than ever before. Embracing my darker aesthetic, I've bought alternative fashion styles that actually bring me joy instead of whatever blended me into the background the best. I have big, comfortable stomping boots and also pretty black Mary-Jane heels. I wear lovely dresses with intricate lace and bell sleeves. Hell, I even have black cat earrings which look like Grizabella.

I'm excited about blooming into an Omega, but I'm not stupid. I know I'm courting danger and it's only a matter of time before someone realizes I'm not the Beta I've always pretended to be. I just can't find it in me to care. I'm enjoying my freedom far too much.

I turn off the cracked sidewalk and take a shortcut through the local woodland. It takes an extra twenty minutes to walk around the gloomy copse of trees, and most people avoid

entering it in the evenings when the shadows plunge it into an eerie dark void. Not me. I enjoy the walk through nature at the end of my day.

The auburn leaves crunch under my heavy, black boots, and I gleefully seek the extra crunchy ones to stomp on.

As I reach the center of the woods, the sounds of the city fade and I can only hear the forest – the trill of crickets, creaking sway of the trees, the fresh smell of the damp undergrowth. I'm reveling in my enhanced Omega senses, fascinated by the small and seemingly insignificant sounds I've missed over the years.

A familiar prickling feeling at the nape of my neck breaks my peace, and I stop dead in my tracks.

I whip around, my heart hammering in my chest. There's nothing but trees and fallen leaves, but I know I felt *something*. I scan the area, searching for any signs of movement, but there's nothing.

I take a step backwards, my eyes still trained on the trees and their inky shadows. The hairs on my arms stand up, and I know I'm being watched.

I also know who it is.

Excitement wells in tune with fear and anticipation.

I inhale sharply, and my eyes almost roll into the back of my head at his scent. It's so much *more* than I recall. Before, he simply smelled like a man's cologne with woody notes. Now I get a whole buffet of fragrances. There is a zing of citrus,

before slowly unwinding into a deep cedar scent. It's *him*. He's here.

"I know you're there," I say, trying to keep my voice steady. There's a beat of silence, then movement.

My Alpha ghost steps out from behind a tree. He's wearing black jeans and a gray hoodie, a gun holstered at his hip, clipped onto a belt with an array of other equipment. He's not wearing a mask this time, but in the fading dusk light, I can't see his face beneath the shade of his raised hood. Even without the skeleton costume, he looks just as intimidating as the first time I saw him, tall and broad with a stiffness to his toned muscles, like he's poised for action at any moment.

I take a step back, my breath catching in my throat. "What do you want?"

He doesn't speak, instead he takes a step forward. His footsteps are silent despite the leaf litter beneath his feet, and I narrow my eyes. Ghost indeed.

I repeat my question, frustrated at the whining tone in my voice. My hands curl into fists at my sides.

He takes another step, coming closer, and I can feel his presence like a magnet, pulling me towards him. I force myself to take another step back, my breath coming in short gasps.

He tilts his head to the side, and I imagine those dark eyes boring into mine. I just know a seductive smirk is sliding across his features. "You look incredible, Kitten."

I don't know where to look, so I settle on where I imagine his eyes are. His scent is all around me, filling my nostrils and invading my senses. It's intoxicating.

"Tell me." He speaks with a firm authority that demands full attention. "Am I still the only one that knows your secret?"

My body is responding to him, my heart pounding and my skin tingling. I can feel the pull of the strange connection between us, drawing us together. He's the only one that makes me feel this way.

I nod, my mind racing.

He grunts and folds his arms over his broad chest as if to stop his twitching fingers from reaching for me. "Are you sure? It's only a matter of time before someone discovers the truth. You don't smell like a Beta anymore, and you certainly don't look like one either."

I swallow hard, my eyes darting to the gun holstered at his hip. Why does he have a weapon? I don't think he wants to harm me, but my self-preservation skills are notoriously faulty. Flashes of *that* night intrusively pierce into my mind, and I shake my head as if I can dislodge the memories of blood and pain and betrayal.

"It's none of your business," I say, trying desperately to drag up the anger I felt after discovering he'd invaded my nest. I come up with nothing, just a mild frustration that he'd disappeared for months afterwards. I've missed his firm presence following me.

“Oh, Kitten. That’s where you’re wrong.”

He steps into my personal space, and this time I stay put. A rumbling sound echoes from his broad chest, a satisfied purr that has my eyes fluttering closed in delight.

“Your body is preparing for *me*.” He leans forward, and I can feel his breath fanning across my face, but he doesn’t uncross his arms. “Everything about you is my business. Your scent is blossoming for *me*; it’s calling out for your mate. Your curves are softening, widening to take the full power of an Alpha in rut. Do you feel how your body responds to your mate?”

I inhale sharply, my eyes flying open, and my feet crunch in the leaves as I take a step back.

“I’m not your mate,” I say, but the words sound hollow even to my own ears. I’m shaking, my legs like jelly. “I don’t even know you.”

He laughs, a deep, rumbling sound that vibrates through my body.

“Then why is your pussy dripping with slick?”

My cheeks burn. He’s right. From the moment he appeared, my body flared to life. My thighs are clenched together, trying to stem the flow of slick. He hasn’t so much as touched me and I’m vibrating with need.

“You disappeared!” I blurt out in accusation, desperate to shift the focus from my treacherous body.

“You’ve missed me,” he states, and in the shadow of his hood, a flash of teeth appears as he smirks with predatory pride.

“But you’re wrong. I never left. I’m always watching, Kitten. I know where you are every second of the day.”

A full body shudder wracks my body that has nothing to do with the howling wind making leaves around us swirl dramatically.

My loneliness has never been so apparent as I preen, knowing I haven’t been as alone as I thought.

I frown, reminding myself that this isn’t normal behavior. Alphas and Omegas that attend The Omega Academy have strict courtship processes that prevent mating pairs from descending into a primitive cat-and-mouse game. It’s the reason the establishment was created in the first place, to protect vulnerable Omegas from being hunted like prey.

I shake my head at him.

“You can’t do that. It’s illegal. You have no right to invade my privacy.”

He laughs again, a dark sound that sends shivers down my spine.

“Oh, Kitten. I have every right. The law is on my side, I should know.” He pauses, and I feel a tingle as his eyes rove over my face. “You really don’t know who I am, do you?”

I narrow my eyes at him. “No shit. You’ve worn a mask every other time we’ve met.”

He hums and tilts his head like he’s thinking.

He takes a step closer, and I respond with a retreating step. I squeak in alarm as my back bumps into the rough bark of an ancient swaying tree. The first true sliver of potent fear creeps past my arousal and excitement. I'm trapped, just like I was in that alleyway. Just like I was *that night*.

His hand raises, and I flinch. He huffs in disapproval at my involuntary reaction before unceremoniously flipping his hood back.

My blood runs cold as recognition slams into me with all the force of a freight train. I swallow my gasp, instead making a withering sound animals make when they're dying.

He's gorgeous. Like all Alphas, he's strong jawed with sharp features. He has neat stubble and a professional haircut. His eyes aren't as dark as I originally thought. They're a warm brown with flecks of gold glinting in the waning light, and there is a softening in the creases beside his eyes. He studies me like he knows where the tension cracks will show. Like he knows exactly how I'm feeling.

I know him.

How could I not? He was there for the single most traumatic night of my life. The incident that changed my world and shattered the very foundation of who I am.

He was there the night I almost died.

His face dances in and out of fear-laced memories like the ghost I've accused him of being. He was there when I held onto my mother and screamed hateful words at anyone who

tried to drag me away from her. I remember digging my nails into his broad shoulders as he scooped me up, held me to his chest, and took me to the ambulance.

“You’re my Omega. I knew the moment I saw you that Halloween night, covered in blood and in pain, but still fighting like a hellcat.”

He moves so fast I barely register his movement. In the blink of an eye, his face is inches from mine. I can feel the heat radiating off his body, his scent washing over me like a tidal wave. I’m drowning in him, my head spinning. Still, he doesn’t touch me.

He peers down at me from his lofty height, and I watch with the same wide-eyed stare as when I watch horror movies with morbid fascination.

“I’ve been obsessed with you ever since. You just haven’t known it.”

8



Two years earlier

It's Halloween, my favorite night of the year, and I'm dressed as the vampire warrior Selene played by Kate Beckinsale in the movie Underworld. The floor-length leather trench coat alone took an entire year of failed eBay bids to acquire. To ensure ultimate authenticity, I've even cut my black hair to shoulder length. I'm proud of my efforts and ready for a night of fright and mystery.

I say goodbye to my mother, who watches me leave with a disapproving purse on her lips. She hates when I go out on Halloween, yet she doesn't stop me. After all, it's the only night of the year I truly act my age and go out clubbing.

Except this year, I'm not heading to the club. I'm going somewhere much more thrilling. I've spent all of my spare time employing my budding sleuth skills in solving the ultimate mystery in my life. Who is my father and why did we leave?

I've finally found him. He's not even that far away, only two towns over. During the year, my mother keeps careful tabs on me as she's constantly worried my secret will be discovered. Tonight is my only opportunity to follow this lead.

I should feel frightened to be boarding a bus alone to a different town to hunt down my estranged Alpha father who is possibly violent. However, the magic of Halloween is flowing through me. Tonight, I'm not Celeste the hidden Omega

frightened of the world. Tonight, I'm vampire warrior Selene, on a mission to uncover a decades-long mystery.

It takes an hour and a half on the bus with the constant stopping to collect more passengers. A zombie cheerleader passionately makes out with a surprisingly convincing Freddy Mercury in the seats across from me.

Finally, I step out into a normal looking suburban street. The houses are mid-sized, with topiaries carefully trimmed into perfect spheres. I blink. This is not the kind of place I imagined my wicked father to live. I remember the house I watched disappear as we drove away that Halloween night as a menacing ancient building filled with horrors, and expected something equally sinister.

Glancing down at the scrap of paper I scribbled the address on, I amble up the driveway of a nondescript home.

I don't let myself consider the consequences, too enshrouded by the thrill of the hunt. My need to solve this mystery, to reach the final crescendo, has blinded me to the real implications of what I'm about to do. All I see is the goal.

I push the doorbell.

My shoulders deflate as a middle-aged Alpha answers the door with a questioning expression. Just like his house, there is nothing remarkable about him. Sure, he has the typical massive Alpha body, his height close to at least seven foot, and his face is carved from granite with the occasional wrinkle and sunspot. But he's normal. Not an eyepatch or wicked glint in his eye to speak of.

I gape at him for a moment, like a fish, until I squeak a simple sentence that changes everything. “Hi, I’m Celeste, and I think I might be your daughter.”

I’ve never seen a person break before, especially an Alpha. I swear I see a fissure crack through him as he releases a guttural sob and tears well in his eyes. He leads me inside, offers me a cup of tea, and then he tells me the truth.

The actual truth of the fateful Halloween night my mother whisked me away from my home.

An hour later, I’m sitting on the couch, nursing the same lukewarm cup of tea and feeling equally broken as he is. I no longer want to solve the mystery. I just want to feel the ground under my feet again.

It was all a lie. My entire life. My whole existence is a fucking lie.

“She’s not my mother.” I utter the words as if saying them out loud will help me wrap my mind around the concept.

“No.” He’s staring at me with disbelief and awe. His eyes, the same hazel color as mine, dart over my features like he’s trying to imprint them in his memory.

“She was a friend of your wife?”

“Yes.”

“And she took me.”

It’s not a question, it’s reality. It all abruptly makes sense. The reason I’ve had to hide as a Beta. It’s not because she

wanted a better life for me away from an oppressive Alpha, rather to keep from caught when the authorities arrived to take me to The Omega Academy. My documents wouldn't match. Hell, did I even have documents? She's kept me in a cage with my wings cut for her own selfish reasons.

I know I should ask more questions, to ask to see my birth mother, but I'm already overwhelmed and the words don't want to come.

Our tense silence is broken by a hammering on the front door. The sound reverberates around the foyer and makes the glass windows shiver.

I look at the Alpha, my father, with alarm, and he frowns. The moment he opens the door, the last person I expect storms into the room as if she's possessed.

My mother. Or, at least, the woman who has pretended to be.

"Celeste!" she screeches, her eyes wild and bulging. "What are you doing here?"

I simply stare at her, looking at her face and seeing her for what feels like the first time. Her features are elegantly cut, while mine are round and soft. Her mouth wide, while mine is a small pout. In the stark light of the truth, I can finally see what has always been in front of me. We're not related. She's not my blood.

I step backwards and out of range of her reaching hand.

"No."

“No? Come, let’s get you home. We can forget whatever this lapse in judgement is.”

My face is pulled into a sneer of disgust. “I’m not going anywhere with you.”

She blinks in shock.

“Celeste, I’ve called the police,” my father says to me through gritted teeth before turning to stare at my mother with true hatred. “Tonight we’re finally going to get justice for what you did. You’re going to rot in jail.”

Wait, rot in jail? Sure, she did something unforgivable, but... she’s still the woman who raised me. The person who loves me more than anything in the world. I’ve never doubted for a second that she cares about me.

She looks imploringly at me, speaking in a rushed tone. “Honey, come. We have to go. I’m not mad, just... come home with me.”

“Celeste, you need to know something else.”

“Conor, don’t. Please. I... I’ll wait for the police. I’ll comply with anything, just don’t tell her.”

“Tell me what?”

My father looks at my mother with tears welling in his eyes. “You don’t deserve to have her love.”

“Please...” she whispers.

He looks back at me, and I can see the pain shimmering in his eyes. A pain so deep, so mournful, it almost hurts to

maintain eye contact.

“Do you know what happens to an Omega when their child is taken from them?”

I shake my head. I know little about Omegas, my mother never wanted me to know.

“They mourn, they cry, they wither, and then they go insane. Not only did I lose my baby girl, the light of my fucking life, but I lost my mate. She died a horrible, lengthy death from a broken heart.”

My mother, I’m not even sure who she is to me now, looks pleadingly at me. Her beautiful face is contorted by desperation and terror. “I didn’t kill her.”

“You might as well have.”

“No. No, listen to me, baby girl.” She reaches out again, and this time I let her stroke my hair and wipe the tears slowly tracking down my pale cheeks. I don’t flinch or move. I’m not sure if I’m even really listening to her attempts to explain herself.

“I was mated to an Alpha selected by The Omega Academy as my perfect match, but he wasn’t a good Alpha to me. He made my life hell. He denied me the one thing I was told my whole life I was built for – making babies. I just wanted to be complete. To have a child. And when I visited my best-friend Melanie and I saw her perfect house, with her perfect Alpha who doted on her and gave her everything she dreamed of, I was jealous. It wasn’t until you came inside from playing that

I knew what I was going to do. I wanted to start again and have the life I was owed.”

“So you took someone else’s life.”

“Please, Celeste. You feel it too, don’t you? The Omega inside you isn’t gone, she’s just asleep. The yearning for *more*. You have to understand. You have to forgive me. I’m your mother.”

I stare at the woman who I’ve always considered otherworldly beautiful and see her for the ugly creature she is.

“You’re not my mother and I’ll never forgive you.”

It’s like a switch is flicked, and the pleading stops. Her face twists into a snarl of rage, and with venom I’ve never heard in her voice, she screeches at the Alpha. “You did this! You took her from me!”

It happens so fast. I blink once and she’s launched herself across the room, throwing her petite body at the Alpha with unexpected strength.

They stumble and I catch the first glimpse of red.

A deep bellow roars from the Alpha, his large hands fumbling over the small frame of his attacker, trying to tear her off him.

She pulls her fist back, revealing the metallic glint of a knife. I’ve never seen her be violent. I certainly didn’t expect her to have a knife.

The blood doesn't have time to drip from the blade before she viciously plunges it back into my father's chest.

He wrestles with her, but she's too quick and his hands are slippery from the blood he's tried to stop pouring from his wounds. She keeps stabbing. Again and again until the gray fabric of his shirt turns red.

It takes far longer than it should for my brain to understand what is happening. She's killing him. Stabbing him to death before my very eyes.

I react.

I jump into the fray and try to push myself between them to stop her, but in her haze of crazed rage, her knife connects with my chest and I scream in pain.

As fast as she started her attack, she stops. She stares at the cut in my trench coat with a horrified expression. Her pause is long enough for the Alpha to finally get the knife out of her blood-soaked hands, and he doesn't hesitate to jam the knife into her throat to the hilt.

She screams and he twists the blade, burrowing the blade deeper with a snarling shout, "Die, you fucking bitch."

I remember little from that moment on. I lay on the ground beside the woman who'd been everything to me, a mother, a friend, a confidant, a protector, and watch her struggle for her last breath. Blue and red lights flash across her face as she watches me back with wide, sad eyes.

She can't speak, blood bubbling up and trickling out of her gasping mouth.

"I'm sorry, Mom. I'm so sorry."

I hold her close once she's still, and scream bloody murder whenever someone tries to take me from her. She's mine. She's all I have, and they won't take her from me.

Strong arms scoop me up, and I fight with all my might to stay with her.

"Stop, Omega."

He says the word and I freeze in his embrace. How? How does he know my secret?

I tilt my tear-stained face up to look at my captor and gasp at the intense, knowing face of an Alpha.

"You're safe now. I'm Detective Romulus Fox, and I'm going to look after you."



Every Halloween, I get a fright. It's still not Halloween yet, but I'm shaken to my core.

"Detective Fox," I whisper in a hollow voice.

Like a crash of icy water over my head, the frigid memories of that fateful, bloody night flash through my mind. I gape, struggling to draw a breath. All the thousands of dollars invested in therapy dwindle away as his handsome face drags the buried trauma back.

I fumble behind me for the trunk of the tree, my fingers scrambling in the coarse bark for something to steady me while my universe quakes. Out of every Alpha on the planet, why did my Halloween ghost have to be *him*?

As if summoned by the flood of emotions and confusion, my inner voice morphs into my mother's eloquent accent, honed at The Omega Academy in her youth. "*He wants to own you. Possess every thought. Become your entire world, and he will*

give you nothing but pain and heartache.” This is everything she warned me about. The allure. The pull. The need.

And my heart *does* ache. From the confusing mix of triggered traumatic memories, fear of the unknown, and my out-of-control attraction. I want to scream, cry, and laugh all at the same time.

He leans forward and inhales deeply, his nose grazing my neck. An errant moan escapes my lips as he nuzzles against my skin.

“This is where you belong, Kitten,” he whispers, his voice low and husky. “You belong with me. Your body, your mind, your soul. I told you I’d keep you safe that night, and I keep my promises. You’re mine to protect and cherish.”

I press harder into the tree. I’m trapped, his body blocking my escape. I can smell his scent straight from the source. I want to lick him and rub all over him so every Omega knows he’s taken. That he’s *mine*.

“You need to quit your job.”

His words break the spell, and I tense, jerking away to throw a confused look at him. “What are you talking about?”

“You’re not safe there anymore.”

I can’t dispute his claim. I feel the stares from the Alpha contractors that come into the administration office, their nostrils flared with questing curiosity.

“I have bills to pay. I have to work.” My jaw aches as I speak through gritted teeth, trying to sound braver than I feel.

He looks the same, and I can't believe I didn't recognize the stiff way he holds himself. I spent hours with the case detectives while they questioned me from my hospital bed. To be fair, it's all a bit of a blur. I was in shock for what felt like weeks after the incident.

“You don't need to worry about your bills. I've paid them.”

I make an incredulous noise at the back of my throat, utterly perplexed by his statement.

The Alpha leans back down like he intends to continue nuzzling me.

I shove at his shoulders, ignoring the warm tingling in my hands where we touched. “What? Why the hell would you do that? You're a stranger!”

“Not a stranger, Kitten. Like I said, I'm your Alpha, and I protect what's mine.”

I shake my head, trying to understand what he's saying. I feel like I've stepped into an alternate reality where nothing makes sense.

“Protecting? Is that what you call stalking me and breaking into my home?”

His eyes flash with anger, and a trickle of fear cuts through my ire and attraction. He's so intense and in control, while I feel like I'm falling apart in front of his eyes.

“You weren't ready for me yet.”

What does that even mean? Is he really trying to gaslight me into believing my trauma is the reason he was forced to become a crazed lurker? I gulp back the fear and clasp to my reckless bravery. I want him to feel as off kilter as I do.

“Do you know what I think?” I ask with a sneer.

His nostrils flare, and his heavy brows pull down into a warning glare. It sends another potent shock of fear spiraling into my gut, and it spurs me on.

“I think you get off on it. You like being a predator stalking his prey.” I match his raised eyebrow with one of my own, challenging him in blatant defiance of all of my mother’s rules for survival as an Omega. “I don’t think this is part of the macho Alpha protection act at all. I think there’s something twisted in your brain and you enjoy having me at your mercy. You like it when I know you’re watching and my heart beats faster.”

His lips curl up into a smirk. “Like I said, you weren’t ready for me. You were still a victim and pretending to be a Beta. Do you have any idea how hard it is to be an Alpha who knows exactly who his fated Omega mate is, but can’t approach her? I was going insane and became so violent I almost lost my job so... I improvised.”

I narrow my eyes. He’s lying. Alphas don’t hold themselves back, they take what they want.

Don’t they?

“You followed me to that Halloween rave.”

“Oh my sweet, sweet Kitten. That was just the first time I let you *know* you’re my obsession.”

I blink rapidly, suddenly feeling entirely out of my depth with this conversation. Obsession?

“I’ve watched over you from the day you got out of the hospital. And while I’ve spent years patiently waiting for you to unlearn the hateful things that woman taught you and become the Omega you’re supposed to be, I may have developed a bit of a... compulsion.”

“You’re a stalker.”

He nods, licking his lips. “I developed a taste for haunting you, yes. You yourself called me a ghost.”

“Do you... ‘haunt’ anyone else?”

He makes a face that can only be described as revulsion, and a sick satisfaction swirls through my belly. My Omega is pleased the Alpha is only interested in her.

“Only you. I can’t sleep without coming to watch you through your curtains from the park across the street. My silly little Kitten, you never think to close them, do you?”

He brushes a stray hair off my forehead with a tenderness that belies his unsettling words.

“So yes, you’re right. I enjoy having you at my mercy. While you’re my prey, you’re safe. Even if I can’t touch you, you’re still mine, and I’ll do whatever it takes to protect what’s mine.”

I swallow hard, my heart hammering in my chest. I know he's right. I *am* his. My body yearns for his touch and my mind is consumed by him. But I can't give in. My mother's influence is still lingering like a stain on my soul.

I take a step forward, my chin raised and my eyes blazing with determination. "I'm. Not. Prey."

His smirk grows into a grin, and he shakes his head. "You're so stubborn, Kitten. So beautiful, so strong-willed." He steps forward, closing the distance between us, his eyes locked on mine. "But you can't deny you love the thrill. I can smell how slick you get when you feel me watching you."

His lips crash against mine, his hands tangling in my hair. I gasp, my body melting into his. His scent envelops me, his taste intoxicating. I'm lost in him, my mind spinning. He pulls away, his eyes burning with desire.

"Mine," he growls, his voice husky. "All mine."

And then I slap him.

He's momentarily stunned, and it's long enough for me to spring into a full sprint.

My legs pump furiously as I race through the woodland, my breath coming in ragged gasps. The cold air burns my lungs, but I don't slow down. I can hear him behind me, his heavy footsteps crashing through the undergrowth. He's gaining on me, and I know it's only a matter of time before he catches up. I'm no match for the speed and strength of an Alpha.

I dodge around trees and leap over fallen logs, my heart pounding in my chest. My legs protest, but I push myself to keep going.

It's the same panic and thrill from that first Halloween in the alleyway. The same desperate need to escape and have him chase me. The same delicious fear coursing through my veins. He's right, I love this. I'm just as twisted in the head as he is.

I can't let him catch me. I can't let him win. Not yet. Not yet.

The sound of his footfalls are getting closer, and I can feel his presence, like a dark shadow looming behind me.

I run faster, pushing myself to the limit. I can see the streetlight illuminating the path ahead.

I reach the edge of the woods, grasp the lamp pole and use it to slingshot me down the road towards my apartment complex.

Then I hear it, a satisfied snarl of pleasure.

“Fuck yes, Kitten. I love it when you run.”

He's not following me anymore. I slow to a stop and glance over my shoulder and see his shadowy form emerge from the trees. The streetlight illuminating the quiet street makes his broad nose stand stark against his features. It looks like it's been broken more than once.

Our eyes lock, and I can see the hunger in his gaze.

“This is the last time I let you run from me, Omega. Time's up. Halloween night, you're mine.”

A tingle of excitement shudders through me. I turn and continue my journey home at a brisk pace, knowing he'll follow me from a distance, skulking in the shadows like the ghost he is.

When I reach my apartment building, I hurry inside and close the door behind me. My heart is racing, my breath coming in short gasps. I lean against the door, my eyes closed, and try to calm my breathing. It occurs to me that my short legs were never a match for his long strides. He'd been playing with me, loping along behind as I pushed myself as fast as I could. I huff. Didn't anyone teach him not to play with his food?

“Are you alright, Celeste?”

My eyes snap open and I see the neighbor from across the hall, an elderly gentleman named Harold. He's standing in the doorway, his brow furrowed in concern.

“Oh, yes. I'm fine,” I say, trying to smile.

“You look like you've seen a ghost,” Harold says, his eyes twinkling with amusement.

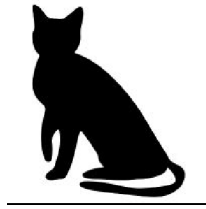
I release a breathy laugh of tension. “You have no idea.”

My limbs are shaking from exertion as I open my front door and flip on the lights. The moment I enter, I groan. I can smell him. He's been in my nest again. I wait for the rise of venom, of distaste at the intrusion in my home. It doesn't come. Instead, there is a pleased warmth that my Alpha has been in my space. Did he see my nest? Did he like it?

Laying on my kitchen counter is a clothing bag, and I unzip it with a mix of curiosity and apprehension. I snort a laugh when I recognize what is inside. It's a blood red velvet cloak. Little Red Riding Hood. The ultimate prey. The message is clear – he wants me to wear this to the Halloween rave. Three guesses who'll be the big bad wolf.

As I pull the garment from the bag, a slip of paper flutters to the tiled floor. Spiky handwriting scrawls across it in black ink.

Happy Halloween, Omega.



Every Halloween, I get a fright.

And I'm done with being scared. I'm not the same girl he scooped off the floor that night. I'm older, wiser, and braver. He might be a ghost, but I can haunt him too.

The first thing I do is fire up my laptop and search for his name. Detective Romulus Fox. His details are easy to find. He's been the lead detective on many high-profile cases, including mine. His socials are a little more bare-bones, and they don't give me much information. I find a grainy photo from his time at The Alpha Academy, and a short blurb about the working-class Alpha born to two Betas being selected for the detective track with the police. There is no betrothal announcement or sign of an Omega mate, and my swell of satisfaction is immediate.

He's older than I am and approaching his thirty-fifth birthday. As far as I can tell, outside of work, he's the ghost I accuse him of being.

I take the time to consider the state of play. I've run out of excuses and can't keep ignoring my stone-cold reality. I'm an Omega and he is undoubtedly my Alpha.

Halloween is in two days, and it looms before me with increasing insistence. He'll be there and he'll make good on his threat. Or was it a promise? On Halloween night, he'll claim me as his.

Truthfully, there is nothing left of my old Beta life. My body has changed and so has my mind.

I examine the lingering emotions I have about the woman who raised me. Referring to her as my mother in my mind feels wrong, and I decide to call her what she is – my kidnapper. I'm not sure why I still hear her voice in my head, reciting her rules like they're a moral compass. So, I poke at the festering wound that I avoid daily; why do I still let her toxicity affect how I live my life? I examine my emotions like I would solve a mystery. Coolly detached and focused. I follow the breadcrumbs and clues until I finally come to a conclusion.

I've been holding onto her because she was the only person who truly knew me. The Omega beneath the Beta. The woman under all the layers of fear she imposed on me. But that's not true anymore. I'm not hiding and I'm not afraid. I'm out of the shadows.

There is a new reality. I know who I am. And so does someone else.

He knows my story and where the bodies are literally buried. He knows the broken patchwork of my history and isn't

frightened by it. In fact, I think he likes the darkness that surrounds my life.

I have a decision to make.

Do I want my ghost to possess me?



Every Halloween, I get a fright.

And this year, I can't wait. Here, Alpha, Alpha. Kitty wants to play.

I don't fit into my Catwoman costume anymore. It was tailored for my Beta body and I'm sporting some serious Omega curves. So I don the Red Riding Hood costume he left for me, my inner Omega crooning with pleasure at wearing his gift.

I create a sharp cat eye with a steady hand and paint my lips red to match the cloak. I look at myself in the mirror and smile. Seeing myself as an Omega soothes my anxiety. I hadn't realized how much living in the wrong skin affected me mentally. The daily wear of feeling wrong was like a lead weight tied around my neck. I'm not wearing a mask and I don't care. I'm not hiding who I am for a moment longer. Every Halloween, I've chased a glimpse of freedom. This year, I am free to be me.

The club is already in full swing when I arrive, the baseline thumping through the walls like a heartbeat. There's a strange concoction of emotions bubbling within me, one part nerves and two parts excited anticipation. I'm not afraid of my ghost. Not anymore.

Tonight, everything will change.

I'm ready to take on whatever the night has in store for me. Come on, Halloween, give me your best shot.

I take to the dance floor with vigor, dancing off the nervous tension in the throbbing crowd. I take gulping breaths, letting the humid air expand and fill my lungs. The strobe lights make my eyes water and sting, so I close them and let the music take over.

Dancing wildly, I twirl so my red cloak flares around me, and I imagine it's like a red flag to a bull. The heaving dance floor is hot and I'm sweating beneath my costume.

And then I feel him.

I have no illusions that he hasn't been close by since I arrived. I'm attuned to the buzzing sensation at the back of my brain which occurs when he's nearby. He's in control, and I leave it up to him when he reveals himself.

His citrus-woody scent weaves around me, far more potent than the smell of the writhing Betas. The press of his gaze is intense, and I lean into it, chasing the warmth of his attention.

This is it. He's waiting for me to give him a sign. I'm not even sure if it matters to him whether or not I'm ready. He said

he's done waiting for me, and I believe him.

Tipping my chin up, I tilt my head and sweep my hair to the side in the perfect display of submission. My scent gland throbs. It looked pink and swollen in the mirror this evening. I imagine he can see it from wherever he is in the room, and the message is clear.

Come get me, Alpha.

The beat of the music slows down, a new sensual song comes on, and I sway my hips to the deep baseline.

There's a gentle puff of air on my gland, the brush of his clothes, and then the heat from his body radiates through my costume.

My body vibrates and I realize with a start that I'm purring. I've never purred before.

My heart races as his hands settle on my waist. His touch is firm, holding me exactly where he wants me, and there's nowhere I'd rather be. The last thing I want to do is leave. I'm done fighting who I am and I'm finally taking what should have always been rightfully mine as an Omega. My mate.

“Is this your final answer, Celeste?”

His deep voice rolls over me, and I purr louder. I haven't said a word, but my body is doing the talking. I grasp his hips for stability and I grind back into him, swaying to the slow, deep baseline. The heat of his breath fans over my scent gland, and my eyes flutter at the sensation.

“I’m done pretending, Alpha,” I whisper back, tilting my head further to the side, offering myself to him. I know he’s going to bite me tonight. It’s time. My Omega status is undeniable, and I suspect the only reason I’ve remained safe is because of my ghost haunting me. Protecting me from afar.

“Good girl,” he croons, and I moan softly. His praise makes me wet. I don’t doubt his Alpha nose can smell it.

His hands move, one presses over my lower abdomen, pulling me ever tighter to him. His hard length twitches against my ass. The other hand collars around my throat, his long fingers making me feel delicate and small. My purrs grow louder at his show of dominance, and a telltale trickle of slick slides down my inner thigh.

I arch my back to grind my ass against his hard cock.

He hunches over, his massive body cocooning me from the outside world. In his embrace, the rest of the dance floor fades away.

The hand on my belly slides down and slips inside the waistband of my skirt. When his fingers find my dripping wet pussy, he grunts and swipes a single finger through my folds. I gasp, and my knees buckle. He effortlessly holds me upright and chuckles.

He brushes his lips against my ear, so very close to my gland. “You’re such a good Omega, Celeste. So fucking wet for me. Have you missed me? Have you missed my touch?”

I can barely think straight. My body is humming with sparking energy and my skin prickles with a growing heat.

He gently pinches my clit, making my hips jerk at the jolt of pleasure. “Answer me, Omega.”

“Y-yes, Alpha.”

He grunts with satisfaction and sets a steady pace, circling my clit. It’s a smooth glide with my slick coating his fingers. It feels incredible, far better than the unsatisfying fumbles with Betas in the past. Hell, even better than my own touch. It’s as if he intuitively knows exactly what my body needs. There is so much I don’t know about mates, and I suspect this is one of them. A sexual synchronicity, and I’m all on board for it.

He quickly works me into a trembling, desperate mess. I’m shuddering and gasping and mewling without a single care for our public location. I need him to fuck me and fill me. I need everything he can give me. My climax rises rapidly, my muscles bunching in anticipation, and then he stops and my orgasm slides away.

I snarl in frustration, bucking my hips and digging my nails into his hips.

“Ah-ah. I need you to pay close attention to what I’m about to say,” he growls, his fingers resuming a slow circle around my swollen nub. It’s enough to keep me worked up but not enough to drag me to the edge again. I huff but listen to him anyway. How could I not? His deep voice has me utterly captivated.

“Tonight, I’m making you mine. I’ve been patient. So fucking patient, Kitten. Tonight, I’m not holding back anymore.”

My breath catches in my throat. I hear the truth in his words, the clawing desperation to own and possess every part of me... and I love it.

“I’ll be your best friend, your confidant, your protector, whatever the fuck you need, I’ll be it. Omega, if you thought I was obsessed before, it’ll be nothing compared to how I’ll be once you’ve taken my knot. I have an addiction and you’re about to feed the monster. Are you ready, Kitten?”

I nod, desperate for him to speed up. For him to make good on his promises. To anyone else, they might sound extreme, but to me, the girl who was taught to be invisible, it’s perfect. I want to be stalked and hunted and seen. I want to be his *world*.

“Now, my little Omega is going to come on my fingers, and then I’m going to take you to my den and fuck you all night long.”

“Yes, Alpha! Please!”

“Good girl.” He purrs in my ear, nipping at the shell, and rewards me by speeding up his touch. My thighs quiver as the pressure builds in my core. His cock hardens against my ass, and my pussy clenches in anticipation of taking it. I want to be so full of him I can’t think and I forget my name.

My eyes roll back in my head as he pushes me right to the edge. “Now, Celeste. Come for me,” he demands, and I tip

over the edge into mind-blowing bliss. I gasp and tremble, and he holds me upright as I cry out my pleasure.

The sound of the club fades back in as I float back down from heaven. I'm barely coherent as he turns me around to face him. I distantly note that he is wearing the same skeleton costume with the skull mask, but he's forgone the black and white paint. He wraps an arm around my waist and pulls me to his chest, leaning down to press our foreheads together. His breath fans across my face, his lips so close to mine.

"You did so well, Kitten. Such a perfect Omega," he praises me again, and I preen. His praise does things to me.

The flames that have been teasing my skin flare into an inferno. My insides squirm and clench. The flashing lights are now almost intolerable, so I close my eyes again as I lean up and press my lips to his, licking at him desperately. He opens his mouth, and I delve in, tasting him. I can't get enough, and I make a noise of protest when he pulls back. His thick brows furrow, lines forming around his mouth as he frowns.

"How are you feeling, Celeste?" he asks in a firm voice, different from the seductive one he's been using. I recognize it as his serious detective voice, and it's enough to drag me back to a hazy version of reality.

I'm suddenly very aware of the sweat pouring from me.

"Hot," I pant, rubbing against him like I can douse the burning inside me with friction. "Needy. I need you so bad, Alpha."

His frown deepens, and he leans down to sniff my scent gland.

“Fuck,” he snarls, and the sound of makes an alarming amount of slick dribble down my thighs. I should be embarrassed. My thighs are soaked with my release and arousal. I rub them together, enjoying how it feels.

He growls at me disapprovingly, and I freeze.

“We have to get you out of here,” he grunts, and grabs my hand, leading me through the crowd.

“Where are we going?”

“Home.”

“Why?” My voice is whiney and entirely unlike my usual tone.

He doesn't answer, and I don't have the mental faculties to keep asking questions. My thoughts are consumed by the heat building under my skin. The desperation for... something that involves him and the hard rod tenting in his pants.

He leads me outside, the cool air pricking at my overheated flesh. It doesn't last long, the heat quickly surging back in with a vengeance. I feel a little more clear-headed, though.

“Alpha?” I ask, panic settling in, and he finally stops to look at me. The people lining up to get into the club are staring at us, some with curiosity and others with something much darker.

He cups my cheeks, making me focus on him.

“What’s happening?” I ask, my lip trembling. I don’t feel like the smart, confident woman I’ve become. I feel small and vulnerable. I want him to hold me close and whisper sweet nothings.

“Hush now, it’s okay, Celeste. Your body has been preparing for me, and it’s ready.”

“I don’t understand.”

“Kitten, you’re going into heat.”

I blink back at him, my sluggish mind taking a moment to register his words. Heat. I’ve heard stories about Omegas going into heat and being driven mad by their need.

“I don’t know how to…” I say, my voice weak and shaky, fear lancing through me. I don’t want to go insane, and I don’t know how to be a proper Omega that goes through heats.

He frowns and shakes his head, “No, none of that. You’re coming home with me and we’ll get through this together. I’m going to take care of you.”

My knees wobble and my vision swims. “Okay,” is all I manage to get out.

He scoops me up into his arms, cradling me to his chest, and starts walking.

I hear distant shouting and his pace picks up, breaking into a run.

I cling to him. “Alpha, please. It hurts.”

“I know, Kitten. I’ll make it better. I promise.”

He stops at a black, nondescript cruiser and settles me into the passenger seat, taking care to buckle me in and kiss my forehead. When he closes the door, a mix of a whine and a sob rips from my chest. I can't bear the thought of him leaving. Even for a second.

He quickly circles the cruiser and hops in the driver's seat. The engine roars to life and we take off.

The trip is a blur of pain and pleasure. The heat under my skin is unbearable, and I bring myself to climax twice with my fingers, trying to create some kind of relief. It's not enough. My channel clenches repeatedly, seeking something to clench down on.

My Alpha doesn't touch me. Not once during the drive. His knuckles turn white as he grips the steering wheel. I hate it. I need him.

I'm sobbing by the time we arrive. I can barely see a thing through the tears welling in my sensitive eyes, but the place feels familiar. It's not until he's bundled me into the elevator that I realize where we are. He's brought me to my apartment.

I frown. I thought he said we were going to his home.

The elevator dings as the doors open, and he carries me out into the hallway.

I squeak in protest as we walk past my front door. He of all people should know which one is mine. The bugger has broken into it at least twice. He stops in front of my neighbor's

door and pulls out a key. I gape up at him in confusion as he swings the door open and carries me inside.

“What—“ I choke, the sound wet from my tears.

“You didn’t think I’d leave my Omega living all alone, did you?”

I look around in a daze as he carries me through the apartment. I’ve never been inside the other apartments in my building before, and this one is far bigger than my place. Mine is a single room with a small kitchenette and an ensuite. This is a full three-bedroom apartment.

“You live here?”

He chuckles, tapping the tip of my nose with his finger like my confusion is adorable. Even in my vulnerable state, I swat at him like the kitten he accuses me of being.

“I own the building. You don’t live here by accident, Kitten. I made sure you’d be somewhere I could control and keep watch over.”

He nudges open a door and soft light floods the room. It’s dim enough that my eyes don’t hurt, and they quickly adjust. There’s a huge bed in the middle of the room, and the walls are covered in photos.

I gasp.

They are all of me. Hundreds of them. I recognize some from Halloween and others from my daily life. There are ones of me asleep, taken from the park across the road through my windows. Others are from inside my apartment.

I should be afraid, terrified beyond belief, but I'm not. I purr, a deeply content sound at odds with the situation. My mind is foggy and all I can think is, I wasn't alone. I was never actually alone.

“You've been here the whole time?”

“Always.”

He sits down on the edge of the bed, but doesn't put me down, arranging my legs to straddle him. Holding me close to his chest, he runs his hands up and down my back in soothing circles.

I giggle. It's a strange sound for me. I'm not the giggly type, yet this whole situation is so absurd I have to laugh.

He grins and presses his thumb to my bottom lip, pulling it down.

“You love it, don't you? My twisted, little Kitten.”

I nip at him, feeling playful, giving him a wide grin.

“Fuck, you're perfect.”

I can feel the heat within me growing again, and I squirm in his lap. He doesn't stop me, just watches with those dark, mysterious eyes.

“Alpha,” I whisper, leaning down to press a kiss to his lips. I'm not as panicked now and I listen to what my instincts are telling me. “I need to nest.”

He nods. “I have something for you.”

He shifts me off his lap and onto the bed. I curl up around his pillow as he goes over to a chest of drawers. He pulls out a bundle of blankets, pillows, and soft materials and brings it back over to me. His scent is interwoven in every fiber.

“I’ve slept with these on rotation to make sure they’d smell like me,” he explains, a vulnerable expression flashing across his face briefly.

I reach out, pull the items into my arms, and bury my face in them. As I arrange them on the bed, the heat in my body settles into a consistent simmer. Nesting is instinctual and comes naturally. I don’t know how long I spend creating the nest, but I place and replace the same cushion at least five times until I’m happy.

Alpha watches me, a fond smile on his lips as he does so. “I’ve imagined this moment a million times, but it doesn’t do it justice. My Omega making her nest in my den, ready for me to knot her.”

I shudder at his words, my core clenching, and I whimper. He chuckles and reaches down to unzip his jeans. I watch with rapt attention as his cock springs free. It’s massive. I’ve seen Alpha porn and know they only come in ‘wreck your pussy’ size. I’m still overwhelmed by it.

I lick my lips, my nest suddenly forgotten.

“Alpha, I need you.”

He grunts and fists his cock. He gives it a few slow pumps, smearing his pre-come across his length. “Do you want to taste

your Alpha?”

I nod eagerly and crawl across the bed to him. I kneel in front of him, my thighs wide, and I lean forward to lap at his cock. He tastes amazing. Salty but with a hint of something undeniably Alpha. He groans, his fingers sinking into my hair.

“Fuck, Kitten. Finally. I’ve thought about you tonguing me for years,” he rasps.

I take him in my mouth and suck, running my tongue up and down his shaft.

His fingers tighten in my hair, and I look up at him. His jaw is clenched and his eyes are blown wide.

“That’s enough, Kitten.” He pulls me off and then drags me up onto the bed with him. “There will be plenty of time for you to milk my come later, but right now we have business to attend to.”

With the taste of his cock on my tongue, the desperation is back. I’m wriggling and rubbing my thighs together, the heat growing and growing. My costume, that had previously felt soft, now feels scratchy. My skin feels stretched too tight. I burrow my face into his blankets to breathe his scent in and it briefly soothes me, like a balm to a wound, but it’s fleeting. I need more.

His hands work with sure, steady movements, and he quickly helps me out of my clothes. My hands shake as I try to help him. I need him so badly. I can feel my slick pooling on the bed below me.

I lie back in the middle of the bed, watching him as he reaches back and drags off the black shirt of his costume. The muscles in his chest and stomach ripple, and I whimper, my hips bucking up as I press the heel of my hand against my clit, seeking some kind of relief.

He chuckles at me as he crawls over me, pushing my legs apart so he can fit his much larger frame between them. I reach up and run my hands over the tanned skin of his shoulders.

“You’re mine,” he whispers, kissing and licking a path across my collarbone.

I nod, “Yours.”

“I’m going into rut, Kitten,” he croaks as he kisses the spot just behind my ear before tracing a line down my neck with his tongue. “It’s going to be intense.”

“How intense?” I ask, my breath hitching as his hand slides down my stomach and cups my sex. He runs a finger through my slit, gathering some of my slick. He brings his finger to his lips and licks it clean, making a rumbling growl.

He smirks as he looks down at me. “You and I are going to fuck for days. I hope you remembered to take your birth control, cause I’m not going to stop until you’re leaking my come from every hole and then I’m going to fuck you some more. I have years of pent-up frustration.”

I moan at his words, my mind going to all the possibilities. I haven’t had sex in years. The idea of being fucked for days sounds amazing. And his come, God, I can’t wait to taste him.

“I want that. Please. I want it. Need it.”

“Good, now spread your pretty pussy open for me.”

I part my nether lips and hold them open, exposing myself to my stalker.

He aligns his cock with my entrance and slowly pushes inside. With every inch I can feel my walls stretching, burning, but it doesn't hurt. It feels like I'm being filled up. It feels so right.

My inner Omega crows with pleasure. *Alpha is breeding us!*

He grunts and groans, the tendons in his neck straining as he holds himself back. “Fuck, you're so tight.”

I bite my lip, digging my nails into his shoulders as I try to relax. He pauses, allowing me to adjust to his size. When the discomfort eases, I rock my hips, taking him deeper. He groans, the sound so primal and deep, it makes my pussy flutter.

“Alpha,” I moan.

“Good Omega.” He thrusts forward, and I gasp at the sensation of him fully seated in me.

His chest rumbles and I purr, the sound rising from my throat unbidden.

He leans down and brushes his nose against my mating gland, scenting me, and I do the same. His scent has my head swimming. My heart pounds in my chest and my breathing is

ragged. I claw at his shoulders, the urge to be even closer overwhelming.

“Fuck me, Alpha,” I beg, tilting my head back to bare my throat to him in perfect submission.

He growls, the sound so animalistic it makes my pussy clench.

“Mine,” he snarls, and moves.

I gasp at the feeling of him sliding in and out of me, so big and thick it feels like he’s touching every part of me.

“Yours,” I agree.

The fire within me builds, racing through my veins as he fucks into me over and over again. My pussy is already clamping around his cock and I can feel my orgasm rushing towards me.

“Alpha, I’m close.”

“I know,” he grunts. “Come for me, Omega.”

He grinds his pelvis against my clit, rubbing it just right, and my back arches as I fall apart. I scream his name, my whole body going stiff as the wave of pleasure washes over me.

His hand comes to my throat, squeezing lightly and drawing my attention back to him. My mouth opens in a silent scream as a second orgasm crashes over me. This one is stronger than the first, and it doesn’t end. The pleasure keeps building, sending me higher and higher until I feel like I’m going to fly apart.

Is this what sex is like for mated Omegas?

“Alpha!” I sob, my nails digging into his back as I hold on for dear life. I need something. I need it or every cell in my body is going to scramble and fry.

He growls and his thrusts become more erratic, his movements losing their rhythm as he chases his own release.

“Alpha, please,” I beg. I don’t know what I’m asking for, but I need it. Now.

“Yes,” he hisses. He buries his face in the crook of my neck, licking and sucking the skin as he continues to fuck into me. “Going to knot you. Fill you with my seed.”

I gasp, my whole body shaking as he thrusts one last time, burying himself deep inside me. I feel his knot swell, locking us together, and then he bites down. My eyes roll back, and my body convulses as the most intense orgasm yet tears through me. I can feel his come filling me up, and the thought alone is enough to make my pussy clench down again.

We’re both breathing hard as we come down from the high. His hips continue to rock, a gentle grind as his cock pumps strings of come into me, trapped from escaping behind his thick knot.

Releases his grip on my neck, he licks tenderly over the weeping bite mark. His lips trail soft kisses across my cheek before he presses a chaste kiss to my lips.

I sigh, leaning into his touch, my whole body feeling like jelly. “That was...” I trail off, not having words for what that

was.

“It was worth the wait,” he says, nuzzling his nose against mine.

I smile, my eyes fluttering closed. Already, I can feel the simmering heat building beneath my skin and know it’s only a matter of time before I’m demanding a repeat performance.

I fall asleep in his arms, sated and happy.

He leans over and presses a kiss to my shoulder. “Happy Halloween, Omega.”



Epilogue

Every Halloween I get a fright, but this year I think the curse has broken.

After our mating last year, Detective Romulus Fox escorted me down to the designation office, where I officially registered as an Omega.

I was extensively interviewed by his colleagues about the illegal suppressants I'd taken for years, and Romulus steadfastly held my hand through the entire ordeal. I couldn't tell them a single thing about the pills. After all, the substantial stockpile was acquired by my dead kidnapper many years ago. Romulus promptly registered as my guardian and mate, and the police released me into his care.

It's outrageous how they treated me like a commodity – a ditzzy little damsel in distress. I wanted to shout 'I've been taking care of myself for years!' but I kept my rage under control until we returned home. Romulus listened calmly as I ranted and raved about the injustice of it all. When I wore myself out, he bundled me up in my nest like a vicious little

kitten and licked my pussy until I couldn't remember why I was angry. I eventually conceded that while I didn't need my Alpha to take care of me, I didn't mind when he did.

We never discussed moving in together. I simply didn't leave after my heat broke. I suspect Romulus wouldn't have let me leave, anyway. Despite my status as a mated Omega rendering me safe to continue working at the construction company, I quit. I was done living a false existence, including a shitty, lifeless job, and was ready to embrace my future.

I have a tentative relationship with my father. We've met up a handful of times in the past year to chat. There's a lot of trauma to wade through, and we're taking it slow, for both our sakes. He's a grumpy Alpha. Who wouldn't be after the life he's been dealt? I think having closure on my disappearance has encouraged him to begin living again.

With encouragement from my Ghost, I took some time to pursue my passions. Two months later, and a million cups of coffee, I had a rough manuscript of my murder mystery romance novel. I published it and immediately started crafting the next book.

As a side hobby, I embraced my morbid fascination with true crime. I have an insatiable need to discover clues to unearth the truth behind each case, and share my findings with others who have the same interest. I'm part of a lively online community that collaborates on cases. My screen name is '*Ghosts_girl*', which my Ghost is particularly pleased with.

As an actual detective solving crimes daily, Romulus finds my hobby strange and amusing. He won't admit it, but he's invested in some of the harder to crack cases I ask for his opinion on. He finds my morbid fascinations quirky and indulges my endless questions about law enforcement.

It's a good thing I like morbid and quirky too, because he hadn't been wrong. His obsessive addiction to me didn't stop with our mating. It grew.

Our home is a protected place. In our nest, he's a sweet and doting Alpha.

Everywhere else is fair game.

Sometimes I know he's there. Stalking me from afar, simply content to watch me without approaching, letting me feel the familiar prickle of prey being hunted by a predator.

Our mate bond has only made it more exciting for him. He can feel when my blood pumps and the trickle of fear seeps in. It's also made it infinitely harder for him to sneak up on me because I can sometimes feel when he is near like a phantom limb. The other day, while at the grocery store, I flipped the stalking script and followed *him* through the aisles. My Ghost punished me with a two hour long edging session for that little stunt.

Totally worth it.

The little cafe I write from must have the best police coverage in the entire city. I'm sure his detective partner is sick of taking detours so he can stalk his Omega while she eats

chocolate chip muffins. Most of the time he doesn't let me know he's there until I receive a zoomed in photo of me mid-bite with a little message: *'You have chocolate on your bottom lip. Lick it off for me, Kitten. Slowly, so I can watch.'*

The thrill it gives me is addictive. It's an insidious obsession which binds us like a mating bite, a dark dance between predator and prey, and I'm just as enthralled by being his victim as he is with stalking me. A relentless, twisted game. It feeds my insatiable need for attention and acknowledgement – a yearning caused by years of neglect. My Omega needs constant validation from her Alpha.

Our relationship might seem toxic to some, but for us, it's perfect.

While he satisfies my needier side, sometimes he needs to indulge in his darker desires. I look forward to those moments the most.

My Ghost starts off slow. His stalking gradually increases, until the day I wake up and he's gone. He disappears into the shadows like the ghost I accuse him of being, and the game begins.

I like to make it harder for him, putting in extra effort to change my routine and dressing differently, so I blend into a crowd easier. By the second day, my blood is usually pumping, and the thrill is delicious. I put on a bit of a show for him, masturbating in front of an open window, knowing through the bond that he's watching with growing intensity. The tension

grows and grows until I feel that flicker of fear when shadows move and footsteps echo behind me. That's when he'll strike.

A hand will clasp around my mouth to smother my scream of shock. My Ghost will bend me over the nearest surface and fuck me like he'll die if he doesn't. Some of the most intense orgasms of my life come from that release of tension. Like everything else in our relationship, I shouldn't like it ... but I do. I really, really do.

It's Halloween night and, as predicted, my heat is due to start. I'm beside myself with excitement. I have a feeling my Alpha is going to pull out all the stops to make this a memorable evening.

The sun is setting by the time I exit the elevator to our apartment. Romulus is running late from work. He called earlier to say that he'd be home within the hour.

The lock clicks when I turn the key, and I bustle through the door. I refresh Grizabella's water and serve up her dinner, calling her name in a high-pitched, silly voice.

The black cat comes skidding down the hall, sliding on the tiles like a drifting car and diving to her food bowl.

Grizabella and I had our first fight when I discovered she didn't arrive on my doorstep by magic. She was an anonymous gift from Romulus. The sly little cat had been a double-agent the whole time! It took awhile, but we eventually made up and are back to watching Halloween re-runs on the couch together.

I bend down to pet her, then my hand freezes.

There's a blue collar around her neck.

“That motherfucker—“ I hiss, unclipping the collar from the cat's neck.

As I suspected, there's a note attached.

*It's time to start a new Halloween tradition,
Omega.*

Follow the clues on the nightstand.

A wide smile stretches over my features. My Alpha knows me too well. I can't resist a hunt, a mystery, or a chance to solve a puzzle.

The nightstand has a map, four surveillance photos of me doing errands from a month ago in various locations, and a large ornate key.

Another note in his spiky handwriting rests on top.

The clock is ticking.

*You have a thirty-minute head start to solve the
clues and travel to the destination revealed.*

Your prize is bragging rights for a year.

Gritted determination flares within me, and I know I'll try my very best to win. He's definitely tipped the scales in his

favor by picking tonight. The closer I get to my heat, the fuzzier my thoughts will become.

The next words on the note make me swallow thickly.

If I catch you before you arrive, your ass will take my knot.

Adrenaline pumps through me as I reread his threat.

My ass? He's put fingers in there before, but I'm not sure if I can take his cock, let alone his knot. Would it even fit? It might split me apart!

Trepidation and anticipation war within me. The familiar twist of fear makes my breath hitch, and I smile. I'd wondered if my Halloween fright would happen this year. I should have known my Alpha would want to be the one to give it to me.

Happy Halloween, Omega.

Let the hunt begin.

Xxx

Your Ghost



Thanks for reading! If you enjoyed this spooky tale, I have a series set in the same world. Help April find her secret birthday admirer in Happy Birthday, Omega.

Happy Birthday, Omega

Every birthday, reluctant Omega April receives a card from a mysterious sender.

Sign up for my newsletter to keep in touch and receive this short story as a gift from me to you.

Class Dismissed

Whoever had the idea to hire a young, hot Alpha to teach history at The Omega Academy should be rewarded. Or fired



Other Books

Presented to the Feral Alpha

Ten years ago, my fated mate walked away from our bond. Now he's back to claim what's his. Knot a chance.

Outback Claim

(Aussie Alphas Book 1)

One Omega artist with crippling anxiety. One Alpha cowboy with a devastating need for control. A plague that threatens their sanity, their sense of self, and their freedom.

Outback Heat

(Aussie Alphas Book 2)

One Omega nurse who cares too much. One Alpha cowboy with a wild, reckless streak. A plague that threatens their sanity, their sense of self, and their freedom.

The Omega Gambit

(The Omega Rebellion Book 1)

An Alpha on the hunt. An Omega with an ulterior motive. One explosive heat.

The Omega Play

(The Omega Rebellion Book 2)

An Alpha determined to win. A feisty Omega who refuses to submit. One steamy struggle for control.