A Box Full Of Darkness

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Summary

In a world where omegas are essentially a slave race, orphaned Rey is lucky to present as a rare female alpha, even if she is bullied relentlessly while at school. When she learns that Ben Solo, the boy who makes her life hell, is hiding a deep, dark secret, everything changes for them both.

Notes

See the end of the work for notes.
Chapter 1

Chapter Notes

Ayo! I don’t read a lot of ABO, I have never written it. World building is hard! This is my spin on the trope and I’ll try to lay things out as best as I can, as I’m sure this au will differ slightly from what you’re used to seeing. Feel free to ask me any questions!! This fic is gonna be a little dark, and it focuses on a very black and white gender binary through most of it, so if that’s a no go for you please be aware. Tags may change as the story grows. Thanks for reading

“Someone I loved once gave me a box full of darkness. It took me years to understand that this too, was a gift.”

Mary Oliver

Rey Johnson is a ward of the state, always has been.

She spends her childhood in Otto’s Home for Wayward Children, an orphanage that allows kids of both designations to reside together until they present.

It’s not horrible, not really, but Rey knows that she’s on a countdown.

Once she presents as an omega she will be sent off on O Track, a specialized education for omegas.

Rich, beautiful omega women are trained to be docile, sweet tempered breeding machines. They learn to cook, to clean, to hold delicate and simple conversations about politics and economics. They are sold at high prices to whichever male alphas can afford them.

Poor, parentless omega girls like Rey are usually mated through a government program. Every female omega must marry a male alpha, unless they are defective. Defective omegas, as well as the rare male omega, well… they take the lowest jobs. They scrape shit out of stalls in public parks and mop floors, they’re useless, not meant to breed or even to be born.
Rey knows what her future looks, knows that hers will be a life of servitude and sex she doesn’t want. All she can do is pray that her alpha is kind.

She plays with the other kids in her orphanage, especially Finn and Cassian, until Cas presents as an omega and is taken away.

They never see him again.

Finn presents as an alpha the next year, but he will never be wealthy enough to buy an omega—he will be assigned one, and the odds of it being Rey well... it’s foolish to even hope.

Rey presents a week after her twelfth birthday, right on schedule.

Only it’s not what she was expecting, she doesn’t wake up to find her bed wet with slick, instead her insides are cramping and she feels anger like she’s never known before—huge and red hot inside of her.

She’s taken to the house doctor, poked with needles and hooked up to tubes as tests are run.

I’m defective, she thinks, they’re going to send me to work in the sewers.

But they don’t. Because Rey isn’t a defective omega. She isn’t an omega at all.

Rey Johnson is a female alpha.

*** six years later ***

Rey is one of only two alpha women in her school. There used to be another girl, but she disappeared a year ago. No one knows what happened to her.

Female alphas are so exceedingly rare. There are more than three thousand kids at her school, The Carsonville Academy for Alphas.
Almost a thousand kids, and only two females.

The alpha boys don’t ever look twice at them, it’s common knowledge that alpha women do not have sex.

Alpha women make great CEOs, they make excellent lawyers, surgeons, even war generals. But they are not mothers. Besides, who would want an alpha without a knot?

She’s heard stories, the defective male omegas breaking free to mate with alpha men. Not even they want female alphas.

But it means that she will never be forced to marry, never be forced to carry children.

She’s fine with it. All in all, this is a better life than she possibly could have hoped for.

She may be a pariah in a school full of rich alpha boys but she isn’t stupid, she knows the alternative to this probably would have killed her, or led her to kill herself.

She’s getting a good education, she wants to go into politics, or maybe law. She can have her choice of professions. A luxury that very few women are afforded.

She just has to survive high school first.

She’s in her last year, eighteen already and as an alpha she will be given a government stipend and a small apartment to live in when she graduates. It’s more than she could have ever asked for. She’s never been interested in sex, and she’s never had a family either, so she doesn’t feel like she will be missing out much.

As much as she gets made fun of now, there is a sense of awe and respect around adult women alphas in general.

They’re powerful, dangerous creatures.
Rey doesn’t feel that way, she still feels like her designation is a mistake. Sure she’s fast, and strong, taller than omega women, she can see how her muscles and her sharp eyes inform her alpha nature, but she still feels like an imposter.

It doesn’t help that the Rat Pack, a nickname picked out for the group of nasty boys who torment her, won’t ever let her forget it.

“What do you call an alpha without a knot,” Huxley Martin, a sneering boy with orange hair, says to her as she’s leaving History class.

“Hmm,” next to him Ben Solo pretends to think long and hard.

Ben is terrifying to Rey, she isn’t quite sure why. Something about it seems ready to strike at any moment. He’s poised for a fight, eager to show off how little control he has over his rage, over his sharp tongue.

“I think,” he says slowly, “I would call that pathetic. It must be hard to know that no one will ever want to fuck you, huh Johnson?”

She doesn’t care, she tells herself that over and over and over. It doesn’t matter. She’s destined for better things than breeding, than being mated. So what if she never has a family, lots of people don’t have families. At least she isn’t an omega slave.

She doesn’t care.

Except that she does, except that his words more than anyone else’s seem to bury under her skin.

And there have been a lot of cutting words over the years.

“You know you’re always going to be a little stupider and a little weaker than any real alpha could ever be,” and “How’s it feel to know you’re too dry to ever take a knot, Johnson?” And the worst, “Enjoy a life full of cats and masturbation, I can smell the loneliness from over here.”
He had even plugged his nose that time, flinching away from her.

Then again he does that anyway sometimes, flinch away from her.

Sometimes she will walk into a classroom and his head will snap to her and his eyes will go dark as all that alpha rage simmers up to the surface.

She ignores his jab this time, rolling her eyes and hoping her shoulders aren’t too stiff, she doesn’t want him to know she even hears it.

Alphas can’t scent other alphas, not really. Maybe if the rut is in full swing, or if they just bred an omega. But alphas and omegas can smell each other’s moods. It’s a kind of intimacy that terrifies Rey.

So much of her life has been dependent on keeping the facade of control.

She’s an alpha, they all are, so she’s allowed to run and box and fence as much as she wants. It’s encouraged. But she hates the idea of her control slipping in front of other people.

She hates that she is at the mercy of any of her baser instincts.

The Rat Pack follows her down the hall and into physics. She can’t hear what they’re saying, but she knows they’re talking about her. It makes the skin on her neck stand up and her mating gland throb in an unpleasant way.

Rose sits down next to her and it’s like a breath of fresh air.

Rose’s family was rich, of course, like all families who are allowed to breed, but Rey knows that her father lost a lot of money a few years ago, and when Rose’s sister presented as an omega she was taken away to work in the coal mines.

Rose doesn’t talk about her much.
“I can’t believe we have to write a six page paper by Monday,” she groans. “Seems like torture.”

Rey nods in agreement, trying to strain her ears to see if the boys are still talking about her.

“You okay?”

Rey looks at Rose finally and smiles tightly. “Yeah, Sorry,” she says. She misses Finn so much on days like this, but he graduated two years ago and is already married, has a baby. He texts her sometimes.

“Don’t pay attention to them,” Rose says, shaking her head. “They’re scum.”

Rey knows Rose misses Finn too. They had gotten very close. Rey has never even heard of an alpha mating with another alpha, but she thought maybe… with those two…

For some reason this makes her think of Ben again, and she groans, digging her fingers into her temples and vowing to forget everything and just focus on physics.

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The Academy is a boarding school. There’s an entire building dedicated to dorms. The girls have their own room, just the two of them, while the boys sleep four to a room.

They don’t have their own hall or anything, it’s not like there’s any risk of alphas sneaking off to have sex with other alphas. The idea is laughable. And besides, it’s not like the girls aren’t invited to participate in all alpha activities by the school, they are, it’s just… awkward.

Rey hates being around all of them, which she supposes isn’t abnormal.

Alphas tend to rile each other up. There’s more fighting, more yelling, more blood than she would prefer. So she usually keeps to herself, or sticks close to Rose.

Since showers are communal, and since the girls don’t have their own she usually goes late at night,
when everyone is sleeping.

But tonight there is a bonfire and every alpha is burning from the inside out just like the wood they keep throwing on the pyre.

So Rey figures it safe to go earlier, she’s sure that no one is willing to miss the big event outside.

She grabs her shower kit and towel and heads down to the showers. It’s dark and muggy here, and it always smells like sweat and what she thinks must be semen.

She drops her stuff on a bench and pulls her hoodie off, then she freezes.

She sniffs the air, and her eyes flutter shut. Something smells good. Weird, but good weird. Like gasoline, almost, or woodsmoke, is it from the fire outside? That seems impossible.

Without thinking she’s moving down the tile floor, head tilting side to side as she searches for the root of— of whatever this is.

Omega, her brain supplies, but she knows that can’t be true. Any omega on this campus would be ripped to shreds and fucked on sight. Plus, what does she know? It’s not like she’s ever smelled an omega. She’s hardly ever seen one.

Her heart is racing and her stomach is doing a weird flip thing as she pads around a corner and stops dead.

The smell is intense. She recognizes semen again, but this time it isn’t acrid— it’s almost mouth watering. She can smell sweat and cloves and the salt of the ocean, darkness so black it swallows up stars. Omega. Omega.

Standing there in just a pair of shorts, his hair wet and cheeks stained with blood— is Ben Solo.

Maybe it’s because he’s half naked, or because his hair is wet and she can see his ears, maybe that’s the only reason he looks vulnerable.
“Caught.”

“Omega,” she says, without even thinking.

Ben’s chest is rising and falling fast.

“What the fuck are you talking about, Johnson?”

His voice is dripping acid but his eyes are terrified and Rey is moving closer without thinking, circling him, and he isn’t moving.

“You’re an omega,” she says again, “I can smell you.”

“That’s fucking insane,” he says, shrugging his shoulders.

He was jerking off in here, she can still smell it, has half a mind to drop to her knees and see if she can see any proof, clinging slimy and wet to the drain.

She licks her lips, head tilting a little bit.

“It is,” she says slowly, “absolutely insane. But it’s also true, isn’t it.”

Ben snorts at her, reaches for his shirt.

“Stop,” she says, and the words aren’t new but the way she says it is, and Ben just— stops.

He’s breathing so fast, blinking fast too.

How… how could he possibly have hidden this? Not alone— not without help.
“Look at me,” she says, and he does. He looks fucking murderous.

“I could kill you,” he says. “It wouldn’t be hard. And besides, no one would even miss you.”

She can hear his heartbeat, she can smell his fear, now that she’s caught the scent. His words don’t even register with her because all she can do is smell that he is so, so scared.

She doesn’t know when she got this close to him, only that now she can smell his skin too, and he’s close enough for her to touch him. She wants to touch him. She reaches up and cups his jaw.

Ben Solo whimpers.

“I won’t tell anyone,” she says seriously. She means it, too. If anyone found out— if they knew— Ben would be jailed, killed probably.

“I mean it,” he says, but he’s not moving away from her. He’s sort of shaking, trying not to lean into her touch. “It would be so easy, and it happens sometimes, alpha fights, too much bloodshed—”

“Ben,” she says gently, and his words choke off. “Calm down.”

He slumps, his shoulders relaxing and his face nuzzling against her palm and he whispers, “Fuck.”

“I’m not going to tell anyone,” she says again. “I promise you, okay? Just— calm down. I can feel your heart and it’s making me want to explode.”

“You shouldn’t— you shouldn’t be able to scent me at all.”

“I never have before,” she says, and her hand is just sort of tangling in his hair, playing with it.

“I’m on— “ he gasps and then shivers, “military grade suppressants.”
That explains it then, how he can live in a den of alphas but— it still seems impossible to her.

“No one else can smell you,” she tells him, and she isn’t sure if it’s true but it makes his heart slow down. “You’re okay.”

“Stop doing that,” he snaps at her.

She blinks in surprise. “Doing what?”

“Talking like that— like— commanding me— fuck that.”

“I didn’t mean to,” she admits, “I’ve never met an omega.”

“Don’t fucking say that, either, Jesus. Let me go.”

She realizes that she’s been holding him here somehow— some strange magic she didn’t know she had.

She backs away from him and Ben looks visibly relieved but his hands are shaking.

“I— I have to go. Don’t— don’t tell anyone.”

“I won’t,” she says yet again, but Ben just shakes his head as if he doesn’t believe her, he moves as quickly as he can, essentially running away from her.

When he’s gone, Rey slumps to the floor where she stays for more than an hour, her own shower completely forgotten.
Ben Solo grows up in a world of privilege.

His father’s family is rich, old money, and so Han Solo is able to afford any omega he wants.

A lot of alphas choose their mates for looks, or for scent. The meetings that are arranged for courting are usually more like an inspection.

But not for Han Solo and Leia Organa.

Leia comes from money too, an extremely coveted bloodline, and maybe that’s why Han agrees to the meeting in the first place but it isn’t why he chooses her.

She chooses him, really.

Leia is not like other omegas. She isn’t docile or dull or easily confused. She is quick witted and sharp and Han falls in love with her the minute they meet.

A marriage for love, real love, it’s almost unheard of.

Ben’s parents aren’t like any of his friends parents. The mothers always looking drugged or tired or stupid. Not Leia. She runs their household, she works for Han, albeit quietly, and she tells Ben stories of how the world used to be.

“A long, long time ago,” she says, when he’s tucked in bed with a stuffed rabbit under his chin. “Omegas were allowed to be part of society, they had jobs, they had families, they had lives.”

“What happened?”
Even at six years old, this idea seems unthinkable to Ben. He has only ever met a handful of omegas, all married, all the mothers of his friends.

The others he has seen wear dull, grey clothes and tracker bracelets. They don’t speak. They scare him.

“Well,” his mother says, “some people decided that there was too much fighting. That omegas couldn’t protect themselves, and that the government should step in. At first, the omegas thought it might be helpful. New rules to keep alphas in check. But that’s how it happened, they were slowly rounded up, only those with a substantial amount of money were able to keep themselves from being sold into slavery, and within twenty years, every omega was tagged and controlled.”

“Is that a good thing?” Ben is confused, it must be, if everyone agrees to it.

“No my love,” mom says, and she has tears in her eyes. “But we must never speak of it outside of the house, do you understand?”

Ben nods, even though he doesn’t fully understand. He wants to, he tries to.

Eventually, he does.

Leia and Han have always assured him that he will be an alpha.

Ben feels that this must be true, since he is so much like his father, and even his mother has alpha traits, an alpha twin.

There is virtually no chance that Ben could be anything else. But the fear still sits low in belly.

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Ben’s entire life is charted for him, the academy he will attend for school, the law degree he will get afterward, going to work for his father.
He is tall, and he is strong, of course he will be a mighty alpha… right?

“Mom,” he says one day, finding her in the kitchen. He’s eleven, less than a year away from presenting, and he cannot shake his fears away. “What if I actually am an omega?”

“You’re not,” she says, turning to face him. “Male omegas are so rare, and with your bloodline, you don’t have to worry.”

“But what if I am? What if they take me to the sewers?”

Leia sighs and touches his face.

“Ben, I will never let that happen. Do you understand?”

He doesn’t, but she sounds sure. He nods his head.

He trusts her. He has to.

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Ben goes into a soft heat at twelve. It’s not the same as a full heat, he’s too young for that, but his body changes nearly overnight. He runs a high fever, his body cramps, he cries and cries and cries. They don’t need the bloodwork, they don’t need the tests. It’s obvious.

Ben Solo is an omega.

When the fever breaks the next day, Ben is hysterical. He screams that he doesn’t want to be taken away.

Please don’t let them take me away, please.
But Leia has a plan. She always has a plan.

“Listen to me,” she tells him. “You’re going to have to be very, very brave now.” Ben is hyperventilating but he’s hanging on every word. “Can you do that for me?” Ben nods, tears streaming down his face.

“Okay, here’s the plan…”

The plan is this: Ben is homeschooled for middle school. It’s not unheard of, but it is rare. Leia and Han have a network of sorts. People in positions of power who dislike the way Snoke runs the government, the way that omegas have been segregated. There are doctors who help Ben. He’s put on a cocktail of medication that suppresses heat, instinct and scent. It’s military grade stuff, and by the time he is old enough to question where it’s coming from, he already knows the answer.

His parents are involved with highly illegal activities, groups.

A rebellion.

Ben has a tutor who helps him tap into his aggression. It’s there, waiting to be tapped into, he gets that from his mother.

He is tall, and he’s made to work out daily to increase the appearance of being an alpha.

He spends three years like this, training to blend in, to be one of them.

“No one will ever take you away,” his mother promises him the night before he leaves for the academy. He’s fourteen and terrified. “I promise you. No one will ever know.”

“Why can’t I just stay with you?”

“It’s suspicious,” she says. “Keeping you home for middle school was odd enough but if we don’t let you go to the academy… people will ask questions. Look at me, Ben, my love, I would not let you
go if I didn’t know you could do this. You’re a spy, you’re a double agent, you’ve been trained for this, Solo.”

She’s trying to make him feel better, but Ben just feels sick.

“Okay,” he says softly.

“We have no choice my love, not yet. I promise you, things will change. You just have to be strong. And no matter what happens, never, ever let anyone know the truth. Do you understand?”

“Yes.”

“Good. Now get some sleep, we have an early morning.”

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Ben adjusts to being an alpha. He continues to work out and run fast and be loud every chance he gets.

The first week at the academy is the worst of his life, but as the days go on and no one suspects a thing, it gets easier. He stays on a heavy cocktail of medication, he makes sure he appears extra aggressive, extra intimidating, extra alpha.

And he plays the part so, so well.

In fact, within a few months he finds it’s easy to slip into the role. It fits him in a way he didn’t expect.

His meds keep him from scenting the alphas also, and they work well most of the time except… well except for when it comes to Rey Johnson.

He doesn’t know why he can still smell her, but the fact that he can is a huge red flag. It means she might be able to smell him, too.
So he does everything he can to make sure that she stays as far away from him as possible. He’s *awful* to her, and it feels good. It feels necessary. He doesn’t care that he can see the way her face falls, or that she will turn on her heel to avoid him.

She should. She has to.

It’s hard enough for Ben to keep his head straight and leave his dick alone while living in a fog of alpha hormones, he doesn’t have any room for error, any room for slip ups.

His scent is hidden, he knows it is because while he does try to shower alone it’s not always possible. And he has to change in front of the other guys, and he sweats while he spars and runs. So he *knows* he’s safe, no one is looking for an omega here and so no one is going to find one.

It’s fine. He’s fine.

Until he isn’t.

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Rey Johnson knows. She *knows*.

He can’t stop replaying the entire scene in his head. The way she *looked at him*, the way she circled around him like that.

The way he couldn’t move, didn’t even want to.

He had never been that close to her before, had never felt her skin.

*Fuck.*

He’s been nothing but fucking awful to her always, why would she actually keep his secret? She has
He could kill her, but the idea makes him feel sick and he isn’t sure he could live with himself, no matter what he might have said to her.

He could buy her off, maybe. She’s poor, a ward of the state. The government stipend she receives can’t be enough to really make her comfortable.

Maybe he can bribe her.

His mother is going to kill him.

Ben has to stop in the hall bathroom on the way back to his dorm to throw up, and then he’s shaking so badly he just crawls under his covers, skipping the bonfire completely.

*It’s going to be okay,* he tells himself, but he doesn’t believe it.

He can’t sleep, just keeps his eyes shut tight and prays that the feeling in his gut will go away.

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He’s watching Rey closely. Can’t take his eyes off of her during breakfast the next day.

She looks at him, finds him staring and drops her eyes back to her cereal.

*Good, he thinks, be afraid.*

He keeps an eye on her, tries to see if she’s plotting something, but she just sort of looks— sad. She even gives him this weak little smile during history class and Ben wants to punch something.

Pity is almost worse.
It goes like that for three fucking days before she finds him alone.

He’s walking across the green, trying to get to the gym so he can lift weights, and she’s walking right toward him.

He almost turns around and walks the other way but he thinks he might look like an idiot so he just stops walking until she reaches him.

She’s in her school uniform, a green and black plaid skirt and black tights and a wool sweater.

He can smell her, a garden of flowers: jasmine, gardenia, honey, sex.

“Hey,” she says, “can we talk for a second?”

Ben’s heart is racing, he doesn’t like being this close to her, it makes everything inside of him want to drop the floor at her feet and he’s so disgusted with himself.

“Do we have to?” he snaps. “Is this like, blackmail or some shit? Because I’m sure you could use the cash and if you’re going to threaten me I’ll just pay you—“

“Jesus, no,” Rey looks so disgusted, she takes a step back and Ben has to fight the urge to follow her, stay in her space.

“What then?”

She looks disappointed. She shakes her head a little, huffs a tiny breath that’s barely a laugh. “I was actually going to see if you wanted to like— go for a walk, or something. But hey if—“

“Okay,”

The word is out of his mouth before he can think. He didn’t decide to say it, it just happened.
“Okay?” she says slowly, “like yeah you’ll hang out with me?”

“Yes,” he says, and his hands are shaking so badly.

“I’m not— you don’t have to. I'm not making you, right? You know that?”

He isn’t sure that’s true.

“Okay,” he says again.

“I just— I want you to know you can say no I won’t tell anyone, I just— if you wanted to—“

“I said okay, Johnson Jesus. Let’s just go,” his eyes flick back over to the brick building that houses the gym. He doesn’t want to be seen like this.

“Oh okay,” she says, and then together they walk down the dirt path, and into the woods.

Chapter End Notes

Sorry there’s not a lot of Ben/Rey together here but hopefully you have a better sense of the world and Ben’s life and how he’s managed to stay hidden. Your comments mean a lot to me, please let me know what you like and what you’re still curious about knowing or would like to see :)


Please note the changed tags. There is mention of rape in this chapter but it is not graphic and it does not involve any main characters, it’s more to highlight the way the society functions as a whole in this world. The world is dark and awful. These poor kids are just trying to survive it.

Also!! The lovely and talented VANTA-GOLD made some stunning fan art. Check it out here!!

Rey and Ben walk into the woods.

It’s Saturday, and they don’t really have anywhere to be but she’s never been into the woods before. She’s not sure it’s technically allowed.

It smells damp and earthy here, but it doesn’t drown out Ben. In fact, she hardly notices the smell of mud or leaves because she can smell his skin—clove, smoke, salt. It’s not good the way food smells good, it’s good in a different way.

Gasoline. The ocean. Sex.

She feels her stomach twist.

Female alphas are not supposed to feel like this, even around omegas. Right?

They walk silently until they’re deep in the woods, and then she stops.

He stops too, and turns to her. He doesn’t look happy, he looks angry, kind of like he hates her.

“You didn’t—you didn’t have to come with me,” she says softly. “I meant what I said I won’t—won’t make you do anything.”
“Sure,” Ben says, like he doesn’t believe her.

Rey can see him shaking, she can feel his heart echoing.

“Can I touch you?” She wants to take the words back as soon as they’re out of her mouth.

“No,” Ben says, and then he shifts, shakes his head. “I— I don’t think it’s a good idea, Rey.”

His voice is like a warm, dark pool, she wants to sink into it. She’s never felt anything like this at all.

“Do I smell good to you?” she whispers.

“Yes,” he says.

“Does everyone here?”

“Yes— but— you’re different.”

“How do you do it?”

“Carefully.”

“No,” Rey steps closer to him, he doesn’t back away “I mean how do you handle it?”

She can’t help it, she puts a hand over his heart and she feels it speed up under her fingers. A trapped bird in the cage of his ribs.

“Rey,” he says, and she feels him begin to tremble.
“Sorry,” she steps back, shaking her head, and she’s blinking back tears. “Ben, I’m so sorry. You don’t—you don’t have to pretend with me. If you don’t want to. You can just be you, when it’s me.”

And Ben—Ben drops to the ground, head between his knees. “Jesus, Rey—shit, do you have any idea—”

Rey squats down next to him, one knee in the dirt. She has never wanted anything as badly as she wants to touch him.

*He’s hurting.*

She cannot explain the urge to comfort him, to prove to him that he is safe, and protected, and cared for. She would burn a city down, right now, if it meant he wouldn’t feel like this.

Slowly, she reaches for him, pulling him closer. He slumps against her body, letting himself be held. She runs her fingers through his hair, brushes the pad of her thumb over the shell of his ear and then over his scent gland, just below his ear. She hears his breath hitch.

“I think you are very, very brave,” she whispers.

“I don’t feel brave,” Ben says bitterly. “Mostly I just feel terrified.”

“That’s the only time being brave can happen.” Her fingers work softly through his loose curls and he lays, his cheek against her thigh. She cradles him as best she can, he’s big.

“I’m sorry about what I said. All of it, I was awful to you and I didn’t mean—“

“It’s okay, you did well.” She needs to tell him, to let him know that she isn’t angry, she’s *impressed.* He has played this part so well.

He shivers under her, body jerking a little in response to her praise and there’s a heat burning through
Rey. She wants to crawl inside of Ben— but even that wouldn't be close enough— couldn’t give her what she needs.

It feels massive, this wanting.

“Thank you for coming here with me,” she whispers.

“I can’t help it,” Ben says.

The words clear her head again. She remembers the truth, that even male omegas don’t want female alphas, despite how she might be able to command him. She is meant to be above this, uninterested in it, and even if she were, interested in it, that is, there is no hope. No future.

Holding Ben Solo in the woods is as close as she will ever get to being with someone and it makes her stomach clench and her senses return.

He keeps telling her he doesn’t want this; she keeps not listening.

Rey gently pulls away from him, trying not to look as hurt as she feels.

“I’m sorry,” she says. “I can just— I can just make sure I leave you alone, stay out of your way. I don’t want you to— to have to do anything.”

Ben looks a little bereft once she isn’t touching him. She pulls her knees to her chest and all of her emotions are so close to the surface, she feels her eyes fill with tears despite fighting them off.

“I just—“ Ben says gently. “I don’t have any room for error, you know? I can’t— I have to make sure I don’t slip— ever— and you—“

“Make that harder.”

For whatever reason, biology or a cruel joke from the universe, Ben is compelled to listen to her, to follow her. He even fucking scented her, and he still doesn't want anything to do with her.
This should not feel disappointing, but oh it does. She feels herself losing something she has never had, and had never even wanted until—

“Okay,” she says, and she makes her voice as steady as she can. She’s an alpha, she’s a warrior, she will not let this break her. “You should probably go.”

She says it with enough force that she expects him to stand and leave right away but he doesn’t.

When she looks at him, he looks like a stranger, like no version of Ben Solo she has ever seen before.

He looks like someone she could have known.

He swallows thickly and then stands, turning away from her. He doesn’t look back as he leaves the woods.

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Rey stay away from Ben. She goes out of her way to avoid him and the entire Rat Pack, even when it feels a little ridiculous.

She doesn’t let herself think about why she’s avoiding them so carefully until they catch up with her again.

She isn’t even sure she why she feels so afraid until after, when the pieces have fallen into place and Ben’s words ring her in her ears.

It’s nothing unusual, they always taunt her, and it isn’t even Ben who starts it, it’s Hux.

“Well if it isn’t the frigid bitch,” the redhead sneers. “Can you imagine having a nice little cunt and never being able to use it?”
Rey blushes despite herself. She turns and tries to ignore them, but it’s Ben’s voice that brings her eyes back.

“It’s pathetic,” he says, “every female alpha is a waste of space, just some more than others.”

It is not the worst thing he’s ever said to her, but the way she feels the words hit her is unprecedented. She actually can’t move for a moment, frozen in shock. Ben’s face is blank, neutral. Bored.

She blinks a few times, forces herself to breathe, and then walks away.

***

Rumors spread so quickly amongst teenagers. Before Rey has even noticed that five students are missing, she begins to hear about why.

“I guess they caught scent of an omega,” Rose says. Rey’s eyes snap to Ben without thinking. He’s with Hux, pushing eggs around a plate with his fork.

“They all snuck out last night, I don’t know what they were thinking.”

“So what happened?”

“They went into rut, all of them, dragged this poor girl back to the green and—” Rose looks away, shaking her head. “I guess they were found this morning, still going at it.”

“What happened to the omega?” Rey asks.

“I don’t know, I have no idea what she was doing so close to an alpha academy or how they found her or if she—if she even made it. I’m just hearing bits and pieces.”

“That’s sickening,” Rey whispers.
“Yeah, well, you know if she did live she’s going to be punished worse than the boys are. They’re alphas, they can be forgiven. But the omega? They’ll say she was taunting them. No way she’d be here if she wasn’t.”

Rey winces. It’s true, the boys will be in trouble but they won’t be expelled. Good alpha blood is too valuable.

Whoever the omega is, her life is effectively over.

Rey looks back over at Ben, still just pushing his food instead of eating it. She wants to feed him. She wants to take him far, far away from this place.

But that’s not the way that life works, and Rey is surprised to find that despite a lifetime of not getting the things she wants, the realization that she cannot fix this, cannot have this one thing— it cuts bone deep.

End Notes

I would love to know what you guys think!

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