

Chapter 5 - Their Burning Touch on my Skin

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EMMA

I wake up with my heart bouncing in my chest.

But that's not the first thing I notice as the room is filled with his mouth-watering scent.

Sitting up, my eyes don't need long to adjust to the darkness.

Ace is standing leaning against the wall, his arms crossed over his broad chest.

"Wow," I say, scoffing. "What honour for you to take time off your day to come to visit me."

"No need to be petty, Em," he answers, his deep voice reawakening the nerves in my body with a buzz.

Laying back down, I sigh, "I'm not being petty. I just thought that you had run again."

My heart hurts so much just thinking of that, but I don't think that him standing there makes it better.

He lowers his head, inhaling exhaustedly before he looks back up to meet my gaze.

"Now you are just being cynical," he comments, and I turn my head to look at the full moon hanging high in the sky.

His burning gaze is way too much for me to bear and I prefer having it on my skin than having to hold it.

I enjoy the comfortable silence enveloping me as long as I can because I don't know when the next time will be when I will be able to have him this close.

Or we will be alone.

"I don't know what you want me to do. You can't expect me to be all bubbly and trusting around you," I whisper, keeping my eyes on the moon until I feel like its beams are scorching my retina.

“Well, thank you for saving me from falling, I guess,” I say, disrupting the comfortable silence he usually loves to create around us.

At least a few years ago, we filled that time with kissing or something.

My heart squeezes, the pain I had tried to forget for so long, resurfacing as it breaks out from its locked up stage.

Damn it...

“You can’t be serious! You can’t thank me for keeping you from falling!” he growls, making me turn my head to him. He has his jaw clenched, and my heart hurts at the thought of how gorgeous he has become.

Just like Kai, and still so different.

“I would have cremated you if Kai hadn’t ripped you out of my arms, Em!”

“Yeah, yeah. Your bad demonic power is the only stupid excuse you need to push everyone away from you. But I’m done with your excuses just because you are too scared to let me close,” I say lowly, hating how my tears prickle in my eyes.

He steps closer, his slow steps resounding on the tiled floor making goosebumps rise on my skin.

“You don’t know how hard I trained,” he starts telling me in a whisper as he clasps the metal rail of my hospital bed. “Thinking that one day I would be able to touch you again.”

I gulp, holding up our gazes to not lose my defiant look, nor my false self-esteem that risks crumbling, leaving back a sobbing mess. He leans in, the air sizzling as he inches closer and reaches over me to grab the rail on the other side of the bed. “And I tested it. I am able to touch other people now.”

“Just not me,” I add in a sad tone, making him sigh.

“As my wolf recognized you as my mate, I thought that this might be it. But I was wrong.”

Not being able to look at him any longer as it hurts, I turn back around, hugging my blanket closer.

“I’m sorry that I hurt you, Em. You know that I would never have risked it if I wasn’t sure about it.”

I breathe out, emptying my lungs as if I needed to cleanse them. “How would you even know if you don’t risk it? And if you had decided not to risk it... Would you have let me fall, just to be able to play it safe?”

“Yes,” he answers, making me close my eyes as my heart cracks under the weight of his words.

I feel how the temperature of the air around us rises, and I guess he is setting the metal bars on fire. I scoot a bit further from one side, getting closer to him.

His lips hover just inches over my shoulder, making me shiver pleasantly, my skin screaming for his touch.

“Em, look at me,” he orders coldly, making me look at him over my shoulder.

He is so close, and I ignore the heat rising as I look at his lips, before I lift my gaze to his dark eyes.

As he seems to lose himself in my gaze as well as I am, he takes his time to speak again.

And my stomach churns, as he should have just stayed silent.

“If I can’t touch you, we aren’t compatible as mates,” he says in a whisper, my heart exploding as if he yelled it at me while pushing a sword through my chest.

My first instinct is to throw a tantrum, screaming and crying to beg him because my love for him is far from being extinct, even if he dropped me years ago.

But I swallow it.

Once again.

“Do you want to reject me then?” I ask, my voice nearly failing me, even though I put all my strength into it.

He grimaces, studying my face. “Of course not. But...”

“There is a she-wolf you can actually touch in this pack, isn’t it?” I ask, my voice mirroring my body which is turning numb as I fight to keep looking at him.

He shakes his head, but even if he denies it, his words just seem empty.

A residue of the sentiment he once felt for me.

“That’s not—” he starts, but I interrupt him.

“Don’t even bother, Ace. Just go. You left us a long time ago, and we accepted that. Don’t worry about going on with your life as you were doing just some days ago as you weren’t busted by us,” I sigh, covering my heart breaking as I turn away, determined not to turn back around to him.

My wolf whimpers in the back of my head but I deny her this moment of grief as I can’t take it anymore.

We have to let him go.

“You didn’t bust me,” he snarls, and my skin sizzles as his warm breath fans my shoulder. “If I hadn’t come to see you, you wouldn’t even have known that I was here!”

I scoff, doing my best to ignore the sparks igniting on my skin, solely by his vicinity as I push myself further into the bed as if I could escape him this way. “Oh, how noble of you. So, have you got that rejection ready or do I have to wait for much longer?”

“Your cynicism is getting worse, Em,” he comments coldly, and I chuckle sadly.

“Good thing it’s not your problem then, is it?” I say dryly, but my words resound into the void as he has already disappeared, leaving me behind to collect the shards fallen from my heart alone.