

Forever in the Past and Forever in the Future by Neener

Chapter 2

I look at the nurse who is staring at me. When she

realizes I caught her, her eyes dart away. What's that about? Okay, lady. Rude.

"I'll leave you now," she says, "You can go in the bathroom and wash up. Just take that pole with the IV solution with you. There are lounge shorts and fresh underwear in the bag. You need to leave the hospital gown on until your back heals. Alright?"

"Yes, ma'am. Thank you, Diane," she nods and leaves the room.

It's the first time in my life people have been kind to me. I mean, I think it's part of their job but still. All I have known so far were insults, physical misery, and hard work. Never any kindness, never any love. I feel like I

can trust the doctor but I'm still wary of Nurse Diane. The way she stared at me just now makes me uncomfortable.

I pick up the duffle bag and go to the bathroom. I avoid looking in the mirror. I'm not sure I'm ready to see the damage on my face. Everything in the bathroom is fresh and white. There's a shower, but I'm worried the pressure of the water will hurt my back. I decide to fill the tub halfway and get in. The water is warm and

soothing. There's a washcloth and a fresh bar of soap. I clean myself until the water is gross. All the dried blood tinges the water pink. I drain the tub, wipe out the ring of dirt around the edge, and fill it again. The water is not nearly as dirty as I finish washing. It hurts to raise my arms, but I don't want to call the nurse to help me. I gently wash my hair and use a cup to rinse it. I dry off and wrap the soft towel around my hair.

There's a toothbrush and a small tube of paste on the shelf by the sink. I'm living in the lap of luxury in the pack hospital! I pick them up and start brushing my teeth. I can't avoid it anymore, I need to look in the mirror. I finally worked up the courage to take a peek. What I see makes me drop the toothbrush.

My face is still covered in bruises, but that's not what made me drop the toothbrush. The iris of my left eye is violet. Not like a shade of blue that could be a little purple in the right light. No no. My right pupil is still the drab gray I'm used to but my left pupil looks crazy. I blink my eyes hard a few times. Still the same. I try rubbing my eye but it doesn't make a difference. There's no mistaking it – my eye is bright, practically glowing...violet.

The two days seem to last forever. I'm not complaining though. I've never gotten so much sleep in my life and as a bonus, I get three meals a day. Three! I keep looking in the mirror. I can't get over how weird my purple eye looks. I wake up on the second day and go to the bathroom to freshen up.

I stare at myself in the mirror for the millionth time. My left eye is still violet. Now my right eye seems like it's starting to turn violet as well. There was nothing I can do about it, so I decide to try not to worry. Since Silver Moon is a pretty big pack, we have a high school on pack territory. The library has a really big werewolf lore research section. I will do some research during lunch.

As I tilt my head to the side to brush my hair, I notice a chunk of my hair has changed color. Instead of my normal mousy brown, it is silvery gray.

Okay seriously now. What is going on? What is happening to me? Is this a trick? Is there bleach in the shampoo or something? If it is a trick, it isn't funny. I pick up the bottle and smell it. It smells like strawberries, not bleach.

Weird. I have never heard of a wolf's eye or hair color changing when they are coming of age but that's what the doctor thinks is happening.

Diane comes in just after lunch with paperwork and pamphlets for me. She hands me another little bag, "Just a little something to help you stay incognito until you are finished healing," she says.

"Thank you for everything," I say as I open the bag. There is a baseball cap and a pair of dark sunglasses.

"How do I look?" I ask as I model them for her.

She giggles at my poses, "You're a star, darling." Maybe she isn't so bad after all.

She gives me a gentle hug and sends me on my way. I have another two hours before I need to start prepping dinner. I decide to take my new clothes to my room and clean up the mess down there so I can sleep tonight.

Something smells different as I walk down the hall of the dungeon, like a cleaning solution. I turn on my lamp to find the room has been transformed. My lamp is not sitting on an old stack of milk crates. It is on a nightstand. There is a new bed too, my old cot is gone. I have a proper bed. Complete with new sheets and blankets. There is also a small desk and chair with all my school books arranged in a basket next to it. I must be dreaming. That or I walked into someone else's room by accident, except no one else lives down here. You can

barely tell it was an old dungeon cell. It looks like what I imagine a dorm room would look like.

I peek out of the doorway to make sure I am in the right place. I seem to be. What gives? I walk over to the bed and sit carefully as if it will disappear if I move too fast. It is like a cloud. The gray and turquoise linens are fresh and new. There are even two pillows. I never had a proper pillow before, let alone two.

As far as I know, Diane is the only one who came down here while I was in the hospital. Could she have had all this done? Surely she will get in trouble when Alpha Graham finds out. Then I remember she doesn't know how much the Alpha hates me. I don't know how I'm going to explain it when he finds out but I won't tattle on anyone for trying to help me either.

I put my new clothes away in the drawers of the nightstand. I stash the duffle bag under the mattress. Once I am seventeen, I will figure out a way to get out of this place. Find a new pack that will accept a violet-eyed weakling of a wolf.

I sit at the desk and write a thank you letter to the doctor and Nurse Diane. I turn in the chair looking around the like-new room. I am in awe that someone would do this for me. I must have been daydreaming

because I don't hear the door at the top of the stairs, but I hear two sets of footsteps coming down the hall.

Instantly I freeze. I can smell Alpha Graham's scent getting closer. I don't know who the other scent belongs to.

Instinctively, I scramble and stand in the middle of the room just as they get to the doorway. He leans against the frame and crosses his arms in front of himself. I can feel my whole body trembling as he stares. My eyes are glued to the ground. I definitely do not want him to see my new eye color shining through.

"C-can I help y-you, Alpha Graham?"

"That little stunt you pulled cost me a lot of money," he says with a calm, gravelly voice, "And when you cost me money, you cost my whole family money."

"I'm sorry, sir," I apologize, although I have no idea what stunt he is talking about. I look up just enough to see Ryan, the Alpha's son, is also standing in the doorway.

Ryan takes a step closer and I can feel tears starting to sting the corners of my eyes as my arms shake uncontrollably. How am I going to face him at school? I haven't had a conversation with him since his mom made me live in the dungeon, anyway. But as far as I know, he had no idea I live down here now. He is going to tell everyone for sure.

"Surgery and hospital stays aren't cheap, Kas," Alpha Graham sneers from the doorway, "And do you know how disgusting the food has been for the past two and a half days?"

I just nod, still looking at the ground. I'm not trying to argue with a lunatic. It isn't my fault I had to have

surgery. He's the one who broke a bottle and threw me

into the broken pieces! If he hadn't, I would have been just fine. I would have been able to bounce back the next day and make breakfast like I was supposed to, even if I was banged up.

There is a pause and he finally growls, "Where did all this furniture come from? Did you steal it?"

"N-no, sir. I-I...it was here when I g-got back from the hospital wing. I don't know wh-who brought it."

"You owe me, Kas Latmus. You also owe whoever turned your room into the Ritz-Carlton. You'll work in the packhouse until you pay it back every cent. For the rest of your life if necessary. No more school. You don't need education to cook and clean."

He uses his Alpha tone. I cannot disobey. With those words, the small flame of hope in my heart extinguishes. I don't get paid so I don't know how I could ever pay back any debt. Luna Caroline told me years ago that the room in the dungeon was payment enough for my services. I am less than an omega now. I am a slave.

"Ryan, teach her a lesson for wasting our money." "Yes, Alpha."

Tears stream down my face as the reality of my fate sets in. Alpha Graham is passing the torch of his cruelty down to his son. But I know better than that. He will never stop hurting me.

Ryan reaches forward and claps the back of my neck. He forces me down into a bowing position and growls

deeply, "You should be grateful my father doesn't banish you. If you were a rogue, I would make damn sure you never made it to the border of the territory."

A squeak escapes my throat. I am so scared I feel like I am going to pass out. I can feel blackness in the edges of my vision as my heart races.

Ryan turns to his father, "Don't worry, Alpha. I've got this situation covered."