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“Tell me about your family.” Eric suddenly demanded early the next morning. Lying on her side with Eric’s body spooning against her back, Rebecca forced herself to focus on his words and not the warm fingers he was presently trailing up and down the valley between her breasts. Brushing his caressing hand aside, she reached down to adjust the thin sheet over her breasts, effectively adding another barrier against Eric’s relentless touch.

“Why?” she asked suspiciously.

It had been strange waking this morning with Eric’s arms around her—if that what you could call it. The embrace she’d found herself in wasn’t what she’d envisioned for a typical morning after cuddle. She’d awakened with one of his large hands covering one of her heavy breasts beneath her blouse while his other hand cupped her tender sex between her thighs possessively.

“Because I realized last night that I know next to nothing about you,”

Not turning to look at him, Rebecca shrugged nonchalantly. “Sarah told you about me the week I was hired.”

“True. But back then I was avoiding you.” He replied. She felt as though she could practically hear the smile in his voice that he must be wearing. She wasn’t used to Eric being...nice. It threw her off and confused her.

“Is that what you call being a total ass face?”

Chuckling, Eric clicked his tongue at her scolding. “Such language.”

Nuzzling his face in the curve of her neck, heat blossomed between her thighs as a shiver slid over her body at the contact. Behind her, Eric’s grin widened at her attempt to brush him off. How could the simplest touch from him cause this much of a reaction from her?

Gulping, she forced her voice to emerge even and not to quiver like the rest of her. “You’re a bad influence.”

“We’ll see.” He responded cryptically as she felt his teeth nip at the sensitive dip of her neck. “Go on,” he began, his hand trailing down her exposed arm in a gentle caress. “What is your family like? Your parents?”

Even at the heat his touch brought her, at his question Rebecca felt her chest tighten with pain at the memory of her loving parents. Her mother had been kind and gentle, always volunteering for some event in their community or filling their home with the smell of her delicious cooking. Her father was—had been reserved but a bit of a clown during the right moments. Like a flash of lightening across the sky, the memories of laughter and love were replaced by the images of her parent’s deaths, their torn bodies lying in dark pools of their own blood.

Squeezing her eyes closed, her hands fisted against the edge of her pillow as she fought against the burning tears. Taking a deep inhale, with her heart shuttering in her chest, her eyes slowly opened.

“What of them?” she quietly asked, returning his question with a question.

Tightening his arm around her middle, Eric brushed his lips softly against her ear. “Is the subject of your family a hard one?” he inquired, the teasing note gone from his voice.

A part of Rebecca was thankful that he’d sensed how upset she was at the mention of her parents, but it didn’t change the fact that she couldn’t tell him the truth about them either. Or the truth of what she’d seen that night.

“A bit.” Taking a breath, she told him what she could without calling about danger to herself. “My parents are dead.” The relaxed feel of Eric’s body against her back suddenly changed as he stiffened.

“I am sorry. What happened?”

Rebecca sighed wearily at his question. Obviously he wanted answers. But it had taken her years to not see that night over and over in her head. Nightmares of the monster that had attacked her and killed her parents had haunted her ever time she’d closed her eyes and still lingered in her thoughts. As much as she detested the thought of reliving it all over again, she had to tell him something.

“They were murdered and that is all I wish to say on the subject.” She said curtly.

His stubble covered jaw rubbed against the side of her throat as he nodded slowly. “Very well.” pausing to take a breath, Eric reached toward her face. His hand gently cupped the side of her face before turning to face him. Meeting his gaze, she was surprised to see that his blue eyes were soft with a gentle shine to them. “You know you can talk to me about anything, don’t you?”

Pressing her lips together, she fought the urge to reply to him, but lost. Rolling onto her back, she forced herself to meet his gaze. “I don’t talk about my parent’s deaths, Eric. There are parts of me; my past and secrets that you won’t ever touch.”

Unaffected by her firm refusal to tell him more, Eric’s wide shoulders lifted in a careless shrug. Smirking down at her, he replied. “Give me time and I will.”

Rolling her eyes, Rebecca fought not to return his smile with one of her own. She was toying with fire and she knew it. If she were smart; she’d jump out of his arms and his bed, get dressed and leave.

Last night was meant to simply satisfy her curiosity. But instead she now found herself lingering in his embrace. Why? Why did it feel so good to have his arms around her, holding her? His touch caused her body to flare with heat that bloomed in her chest. It was a feeling she’d never known before and deep down, she knew once she left him that she’d never know it again.

Mentally shaking herself, she moved to push space between them. “You never speak of Emma and Travis’s mother.” She remarked. As she’d predicted; Eric tensed beside her before putting a small amount of space between them. The gentleness in his eyes faded to be replaced by his usual cold mask.

With his jaw clenched tight, he bit out. “Why would I? She’s not worth mentioning.”

Turning on her side to face him, her face rested against her palm as her elbow braced against the mattress. “I just wonder why she’s not here. Sarah never mentions her and neither do you. I’m just curious is all.”

Eric scoffed, giving her a cynical look. “Well you know what they say about curiosity.”

When he made no move to say anything else, Rebecca rolled over onto her back, putting more space between them. Turning to glance toward the blind covered window, she could see the hint of morning light streaking across the dark sky. She needed to leave before Emma and Travis knew she was here. She wouldn’t be able to look at their sweet, innocent faces and tell them goodbye. It would hurt them so much and it would kill her.

Tugging at the hem of her blouse as far as it would go, she shoved the sheet aside before sitting up and swinging her legs over the edge of the bed. Rising to her feet, Rebecca frowned when she saw that the bottom of her blouse barely fell beyond the

upper swell of her buttocks. No doubt giving Eric a show as she stood. Heat flooded her face when she made the terrible mistake to glance back at Eric.

Much to her embarrassment, his eyes were in fact on her uncovered bottom as he smirked at her knowingly. If that wasn't bad enough; she realized that when she'd shoved the sheet from her body, she'd also thrown the thin material off of Eric as well. With nothing to hide him from her gaze, Rebecca got her first real look of him. All of him. Her hungry eyes took in the sight of his muscled chest that was dusted with dark hair that led a hypnotizing trail down his abs, stomach and then to...

Whoa...

Air froze in her lungs as her eyes widened in wonder. If it was possible for her to blush further—she did. She'd never seen a male's body before. Well; she had, but never had she beheld any sight like this. Eric's body was the perfect mix of danger and beauty. His cock stood out, strong and proud, drawing her gaze. Mouth going dry and her womb clenching at the sight, it took everything in her not to return to the bed and touch him. Her hands itched to wrap around his hard length, to feel the texture of him and memorize every inch of him.

“If you wanted to look at me, all you had to do was ask.” Eric teased his voice heavy with meaning. It was no mystery what thoughts were swirling in his mind at that moment. “Come here.” He beckoned with his hand as his lips curved into a wolfish grin.

Gulping at the sudden lump in her throat, Rebecca cursed her trembling body as she fought not to cave in. Already she could feel the addicting pull of him, of what it was like to be held, kissed and touched by him. It was that same addicting need that she needed to run from...now! If she stayed even for a second she was risking everything. It was time to go.

Shaking her head at his soft command, she turned away from him. “I have to get going.” With a trembling hand, she brushed one side of her tussled hair behind an ear, all the while surveying the floor for her missing skirt and underwear. Even now she could feel Eric watching her, yet he said nothing. His eyes were like a fiery brand on her skin.

Just get your stuff and go. She mentally screamed at herself.

Never hearing a single sound of movement from the bed, she let out a startled gasp as two strong arms encircled her waist, pulling her against her back against Eric's very naked form. “Stay, it's early still and I'd like you to eat with us.” He whispered

against the side of her throat as his lips trailed gentle kisses up to the sensitive skin of her ear.

Sparks of heat shot through her womb, making her breasts feel heavy and ache. Within seconds her body was burning with need simply from the feel of his lips. Even though her muscles echoed with tenderness, she wanted him. She needed him.

Stay strong. Stay firm. Her stupid, ill timed reason reminded her.

Gripping his wrists, Rebecca forced his enticing hands away from her waist. Though Eric was ten times stronger than her, she knew she was only able to step out of his embrace in that moment because he let her. Ignoring the warm tingling sensation at touching his skin, she released his wrists as though touching him burned her.

“No. I’m leaving, Eric.”

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Deep inside his being, Eric felt his wolf howl at her emotionless spoken words. Taking a deep breath, he slowly released it, attempting to calm his agitated beast. “No. I’m leaving, Eric.” The simple words shouldn’t have made his chest tighten with worry, but they did. Somehow he sensed that she was telling him something. Leaving? Technically today was his day off and Rebecca usually didn’t work. Had she meant that she simply wished to go home or was it something else? Pondering her words, Eric was surprised to find that his wolf came to realization before he had.

She plans to run from us! Stop her! Claim her before she is lost to us!

Shock at his beast thoughts, Eric started at the stiff line of Rebecca’s back as she searched for her missing skirt with a horrified expression. Did she really think she could simply give herself to him last night and then disappear?

Never!

Fists clenching tightly at his sides, he fought to keep his overwhelming anger out of his voice as he gently asked her, “What’s your rush?”

After discovering her flimsy skirt under the bed, Rebecca bent to pluck it up. She held the thin material to her chest with a look of victory. Turning to look at him as though she hadn’t known he was still standing behind her, she seemed to remember his question. She shook her head with a look of regret that she quickly masked before speaking.

“I have to get home. I need to shower, change clothes and then...” her words trailed off as a shadow of doubt flashed across her eyes. He studied her in silence. What thought had crossed her mind and made her eyes fill with the dark sadness he now saw?

“Why? Shower here. I have something you can wear for now and I promise I will take you back to get your car and take you home later if you wish.” He neglected to tell her that he’d be dragging her right back to his home directly afterwards. She was crazy if she thought he’d let her run and hide from him again.

To his amusement, he saw that Rebecca’s heated gaze had shifted from his face as he’d spoken to take in every detail of his naked body. He felt his cock pulse with need at the touch of her eyes. A beautiful wash of embarrassment at being caught staring so blatantly at him rushed up Rebecca’s neck and into her face.

He was quickly discovering that the best way to handle his human mate was to put that heat in her face as often as he could. She was less unpredictable when she was embarrassed. So if she was unnerved by his unclothed body, he would use it as the weapon it was.

Jerking her eyes from him, she quickly began shimmying into her skirt. To his amusement she kept attempting to stretch the length out as the bottom edge of her skirt fell barely to the tops of her knees.

Avoiding his gaze, she kept her eyes downcast before asking, “What would delaying this help?”

“This?” what the hell was that suppose to mean? “You have no intention of returning do you?”

In an attempt to straighten her blouse, Rebecca kept her back to him. “Why would I, Eric?”

Turning in a way that said she was reluctant to face him, she ran a shaking hand through her hair, hesitantly meeting his hard gaze. “You fired me, remember?”

“I accept your resignation but never your absence.” He said fiercely.

“Too bad.” She whispered with a hint of regret. “What outcome did you think we’d have after last night, Eric? I don’t harbor any girlish fantasies about what happened last night.”

Eric stood silently watching her like she was a strange mystery that he couldn't solve. She acted like last night was a onetime thing. For him it was from it. Last night had shattered his rational world to pieces. Rebecca was his...mate, his true mate. And she thought he'd just walk away from her?

Over my dead body.

He no longer cared about the consequences of having a human as a mate. He'd accepted her and by God she would do the same. Striding towards her he felt a surge of male pride when her eyes widened with fear as he forced her to back against the wall.

"What are you doing?" she hissed out in a low voice. Her wide eyes watched his every move like he was a hungry wolf and she the wary doe. The metaphor had him smirking.

"Proving a point."

Without touching her with his hands, his lips covered hers in a demanding kiss, without hesitation she eagerly returned it. Her hands rose to grip and knead his shoulders as she pressed her body against his. With a groan of need, he pressed her tightly against the wall at her back, branding her with his heated skin.

He knew the moment her senses returned to her as her fingers stilled on his shoulders and she jerked away from him. Pulling away from him, panting with her well kissed lips flush with color, her arms dropped from his shoulders.

"You've just proved my point, Rebecca. Last night wasn't us just acting on some pint up lust. I belong with you as much as you belong with me." Eric's words emerging rougher than normal, he sounded dangerous and fierce.

"You're wrong." Shoving at him, she slid away from him before turning to glare at him while she shook her head in denial. "You'll move on."

Sweeping up his discarded sweats from last night, he shoved his legs into them with nearly angry jerks. "When will you get that I don't want to move on? You are the one I want and that will never change." For a moment he could have sworn he'd seen fear in her eyes, but it quickly was replaced by stubbornness.

"I'm leaving, Eric. Goodbye." She said with a hard look. At her refusal to submit to him, his wolf rose up in anger. He wouldn't allow her to escape him—escape this. He didn't care what it took. He'd tie her to his damn bed before he allowed another mate

to walk away from him. Before he could close the distance between them, Rebecca had just reached the bedroom door when it pushed open slowly.

Rubbing at her tired eyes; Emma squeezed through the door, her innocent gaze searching for him. When her eyes fell upon Rebecca whom stood frozen, Emma's face lit up like a Christmas tree.

“Becca?” Emma said with a happy smile.

Flushing, Rebecca quickly recovered and attempted to appear decent for the small child's sake. “Morning Emma, how'd you sleep?” her words echoed with the gentleness that she reserved only for his children.

“Kay. I'm hungry. Are you staying?” Emma's innocently asked with hope shining in her tired face.

Eric smirked at how torn Rebecca looked in the face of his beautiful daughter. It would appear he had more than one weapon available to him when it came to wooing his mate. Before Rebecca could gently shatter the hopeful look in Emma's eyes, he stepped forward, dropping his arm around Rebecca's hips before addressing his daughter.

“Of course she is, Emma. I can't start my day without Rebecca's famous pancakes, can you?” after dropping the name of Emma's favorite breakfast food, Emma's smiled widened as a inner light seemed to infuse her.

“Pancakes!” Emma repeated, happily jumping up and down.

Smiling back, he motioned toward the door. “We'll be down in a minute, why don't you go watch cartoons with Travis.” He said as he watched his son stumble from the twin's bedroom, barely awake as he headed toward the stairs like a robot.

With a cry of excitement, Emma bound after her brother, talking excitedly with him on the way down the stairs. As soon as Emma and Travis were out of ear shot, Rebecca turned toward him with flames of fury dancing in her eyes. The sight of her temper made his shaft hardened with the need to claim her all over again.

Damn. Had she always looked this bewitching when he pissed her off? His contemplating thoughts were cut short when one of her small fingers began stabbing into his chest above his heart.

“What do you think you are doing?” she hissed out between clenched teeth. “Why would you go setting your daughter up for her hopes to be dashed?” a flash of pain swam in her eyes.

“I did no such thing.” He denied with a smug grin.

Her hands tightened into tight fists at his smugly spoken words. “Liar.” She bit out with a cold glare. “You knew I wasn’t staying and yet you told her anyway.”

“If you think I lied to my innocent daughter, then by all means go tell her the truth. That you intend to leave and will never be coming back.” he dared, waving his hand toward the stairs. When Rebecca bit her lip with hesitation, Eric stepped closer. Cupping the sides of her face with both of his hands he tilted her head up to look at him. “Call it a battle strategy. I am simply using the weapons most effective on you.”

Jerking her face from his hands, Rebecca scowled up at him with confusion. “You make it sound like we’re at war.”

Grasping the back of her neck as his other hand cupped her bare buttocks beneath her skirt, Eric jerked her towards him. His lips claimed hers in a rough kiss, stealing the breath from her lungs and her gasp of surprise along with it. Squeezing her against him, he smiled against her lips when her hands shot up to claw at his chest and shoulders, grappling to hold on to something as he dominated her mouth.

Pulling away nearly as quickly as he’d snatched her, he murmured, “We are. It’s just a war you have no chance at winning.”