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Lifting her face to the morning sun, with a sigh of contentment, Rebecca closed her eyes. From her position on the back kitchen patio, she could hear Emma and Travis playing in the yard a few feet away. Their excited squeals were such a joyous sound. Much better improvement from how they had been yesterday. Opening her eyes, she smiled down at the scene. Scooping up another spoon full of her sliced fruit, she savored the sweetness that lingered in her mouth.

As her thoughts drifted to the previous night, she found herself smiling. Eric had seen her scars. When he'd stepped into the shower with her, she'd thought her heart would explode with fear. She'd wanted to fight his arms as they came around her, holding her close. His finger tips had traced each one then followed his trailing fingers with his mouth. She never imagined she'd feel his hot mouth on her scars, the same scars that one of his kind had given to her. He'd seemed to buy her excuse of how those scars came to be, but she'd feared that she hadn't closed the lid on that conversation.

“It's good to see them laughing again.”

Smiling faintly, Rebecca turned toward the gentle sound of Sarah's voice. Never taking her eyes from the two children playing, Sarah took a seat beside Rebecca at the small table. Following Sarah's gaze, Rebecca watched as the twin ran, chasing and tossing a large rubber ball back and forth, their laughter ringing in the air.

Rebecca's heart warmed at seeing them so happy. She nodded. “It is good to see.”

Laying a gentle hand on her arm, Sarah leaned closer to Rebecca. “How are you doing since the attack?”

Looking down, she set her spoon down inside her bowl, shrugging. “I'm alright.” Raising her eyes, she gave Sarah a pleading look. “I just wish I knew what was going on.”

Giving her arm a gentle pat, Sarah gave her a hesitant smile. Would she tell her something? Too quickly Sarah waved her hand dismissively before saying, “Eric will handle it.”

With those words she felt her hands clench so hard she thought she'd break every bone. What made it worse was that she could practically hear Eric's scoffing, superior voice echoing the same words. Ugh! If he kept up with the whole “I'm superior because I have a dick” thing, she may not be responsible for her actions.

“My God’s what is that smell?” a husky, prissy sounding voice suddenly said from the open door behind them.

Brows dipping with curiosity, Rebecca found herself turning toward the open kitchen door. Standing in the doorway was a woman that Rebecca supposed others would qualify as beautiful. She was tall and lean with long flowing blonde hair falling nearly to her hips. The woman was dressed in a spaghetti strap halter top that barely concealed the generous swelled of her breasts and a black mini skirt that would make a hooker blush.

And Eric thinks my clothes are streetwalker ware?

When the woman approached them, the heels of her flashy shoes clicking loudly against the wood, she pursed her lips rudely as her eyes seemed to be studying Rebecca.

Coming to a stop beside their table, the woman rested one hand on her hip as she flicked her long manicured nails at Rebecca. “It must be you. Your kind always did pollute the air of our world.”

Rebecca felt outrage fill her. Had this woman just had the gull to insult not just her but her species too? Knowing that this woman was more than likely a shifter, Rebecca bit her tongue. Literally.

Who the hell was this skank and why was she attempting to pick a fight with her?

Rebecca jumped with surprise as Sarah’s voice erupted beside her with anger. “Myra! This is Rebecca, she is a guest here and you are not. You will show her the respect she is owed in my house.” Never before had Sarah sounded so feral, so dangerous. Whoever this Myra was; Sarah was not her biggest fan.

Smirking down at her mockingly, Myra crossed her thin arms over her ample breasts, chuckling softly. “I don’t owe her my respect and we both know why.” The comment had Rebecca’s eyes rolling as she turned back around in her chair. Filled with disgust and irritation as the woman’s “I’m better than you” attitude, she forced herself to focus her attention on Emma and Travis as they continued to play.

“Besides,” Myra began with a musing sigh. “This won’t be your house for much longer once Eric chooses me as his...partner.” She said, eyeing Rebecca with a meaningful look. “This will be my domain.” Sauntering past them, Myra came to lean against the waist high, patio railing. Her lip curled with disgust as she took in the sight of Emma and Travis playing.

Rebecca stiffened at the woman's words. Damon had said that she was Eric's true mate. What if he'd been wrong? Was Eric involved with this woman as well? The thought made her sick.

Whoever this woman was; she obviously thought she had some claim on Eric. For the first time, Rebecca felt her chest tighten with pain at the thought. In the past few weeks since her relationship with Eric had changed, she had begun fearing the loss of him. Though she also feared what her future would hold for her once she came clean with Eric, deep down; she wanted to be his fated mate—his soul mate. She didn't understand it; she couldn't fight how right it felt to be with him. Like needing a drug, she craved to belong to him as much as she wanted him to be hers and only hers.

Glancing back at the snide woman as she inspected her perfect nails, Rebecca felt anger and jealousy rush through her veins at the thought of this woman near Eric. God, she would have given anything in that moment for some claws of her own to tear at Myra's perfect, Barbie face.

Dropping her inspecting hand, Myra's face jerked up all of a sudden to turn toward the door. Her eyes darken like a stalking predator while her expression lit up with obvious desire. "Eric." She purred.

Meeting Sarah's eyes, Rebecca saw that she had the same look of disgust on her face that Rebecca felt. Turning around, she watched as Eric's towering frame filled the open doorway. When he stepped out into the morning light she felt her heart thunder in her ears. He was dressed in a pair of faded jeans that seemed to be made for him, a plain navy t-shirt. His ruffled dark hair and the stubble along his jaw made him look a combination of sexy and dangerous.

The only thing she could think of that would make the sight of him better would be if he didn't have a slutty bimbo pressing her fluffed up breasts against his chest. Rebecca had expected to see Eric return Myra's attention. At the least she'd thought he would be eyeing Myra like the temptress she was attempting to be. However; to her surprise, she saw that his blue eyes were locked sourly on her alone.

Not liking that she wasn't getting the reaction from Eric that she'd hoped for, Myra did her best to draw his gaze from Rebecca, but he didn't even blink. Myra looked like a cat in heat the way she was pressing and rubbing herself against Eric, but much to Rebecca's bemusement; he didn't even look at the bimbo.

"I've been waiting here for you, Eric." Myra purred, attempting to nuzzle the side of Eric's throat in a desperate attempt for attention. Not that Eric gave it to her of course. Rebecca found herself torn between astonishment and choking laughter when Eric

shoved Myra's arms away from him before nudging her aside. Myra stumbled on her high heels briefly as she watched him with a flabbergasted expression.

With his eyes locked solely on Rebecca, Eric wasted no time in coming up to the table until he stood beside her. Gulping with nervousness, she turned back around to avert her face. Out of the corner of her eye, she saw Sarah flashing Myra a smug look. Did Sarah know about Damon's suspicions that she was Eric's mate?

She flinched when a pair of heavy hands settled on her shoulders from behind. Chills raced up her body causing her to quiver with excitement. Her heart nearly leapt from her chest when a warm pair of lips began trailing from the side of her face and down the side of her throat.

Normally, she would have cried out in embarrassment at Eric doing such a thing in front of others, but now; it just felt right.

"Good morning." His voice rumbled against her skin like a caress.

Pressing her thighs together tightly as her clit pulsed in response, she swallowed nervously. "Morning, Eric."

At the other side of her neck she could feel his hand palm her neck with a possessive touch before sliding up into her loose hair. His fingers twisted in the soft locks, as if he needed to hold her to him in some way. The feel of his possessive hand trailing through her hair was more erotic than she would have imagined. Was he even aware of the effect that he was having on her?

"Did you sleep well?"

With a smile, she recalled how it had felt last night when she'd slept in that large bed with Eric. After spending the day with Sarah and the twins in an effort to distract them from not having their favorite toys near, she'd gone to bed alone. She had awoken in the middle of the night to a sound of footsteps in her room, before she could lift her head to inspect it; Eric had crawled into bed behind her, pulling her close. His strong arms wrapped around her like two thick bonds, preventing her from moving even an inch away from him. With the sound of his heart beat echoing close to her ear, she'd been lulled to sleep without realizing it. Never before could she recall sleeping so well.

Turning her head to look up at him, in time to see his lips curling at the corners, she knew he was remembering their night as well. "I had a good night." she said with a nod.

Never losing the satisfied curl of his lips, he straightened up to hold out his hand to her. "Come with me." Was it a question or a demand? Regardless, she found herself thrown off guard.

Clearing the haze of her mind with a shake of her head, she asked, "Why?"

In typical Eric fashion, he clasped her wrist to pull her to her feet. "I want to show you something." When he began leading her away from the table, she scowled at him, whispering under her voice. "This better not be a sex thing."

Sliding his hand from her wrist to weave his fingers with hers, he bent to whisper in her ear. "With you; everything is a sex thing."

Ignoring Myra's huff of outrage as he led her down the patio steps onto the grass, he began making his way toward the forest that circled the back of the lodge's back yard. After they walked for some time, Rebecca spoke.

"I met your girlfriend." She attempted to keep the tone of disgust from her voice, but she failed miserably.

Eric scoffed as if she'd just told him something amusing. "Girlfriend? What are we; in high school now?"

Rolling her eyes at him, she twisted her hand from his grasp. The moment her hand left his, Eric's long strides came to a stop. His head turned towards hers with a perplexed expression as she continued. "I'm talking about Myra; Miss Barbie-Slut back there." she explained, hiking her thumb over her shoulder toward the lodge.

Slowly, Eric's expression turned heated with pleasure as he flashed a knowing grin. His eyes dancing with amusement. "My, my, are we jealous, Rebecca?"

Hell yes! She thought silently.

Flinching, she felt heat fill her cheeks as she blushed. "No! Of course not." She replied indignantly. When his grin widened, she grew worried and hastily took a step back. Each step she retreated, he erased with one of his own. When her back hit a tree, preventing her from retreating any further, Eric planted a hand on the trunk above her shoulder. "I want you to say it; otherwise I may think that I imagined it."

Pushing her shoulders back and her chin lifted, she glared up at him. "You did."

Chuckling deeply, he shook his head in denial. “I don’t think so. You didn’t like seeing another woman with her hands on me, did you?”

“It wasn’t her hands that she kept rubbing all over you.” She pointed out dryly before shifting her eyes from him.

Tucking a curled finger beneath her chin, Eric lifted her face up until their eyes met once more. “While it amuses and pleases me that you’d feel possessive of me; I feel the need to point out to you that I’m a one woman type of man. Here’s a clue for you, angel; the one woman I want, isn’t Myra.”

His words pleased her, making hope bloom in her chest. With happiness radiating through her from his words, she lifted up on her toes to meet his lips as he bent forward to kiss her. Eric smiled against her mouth as he clutched the nape of her neck.

Pulling back from her, Eric murmured. “I could get used to your jealousy.” Taking her hand once more, he tangled his fingers with his own. Giving her hand a reassuring squeeze, he took a step back and tugged gently on her arm. “Come on, I want to show you something before I forget and we spend the day in this very spot.”

“I doubt I would complain.” She murmured with a teasing look.

Following behind him, it wasn’t long until the loud sound rushing water reached her ears. Where was it coming from? Looking for a direction of the sound, she asked, “Is there a river nearby?”

Turning to meet her questioning eyes over his shoulder, Eric nodded. “I use to come to his place as a boy. I know you will appreciate it.”

With every step she took the sound of the pounding water grew louder to almost a roaring. Chills raced up her spine as Eric came to a stop the edge of the tree line. With his free hand outstretched toward what appeared to be a drop-off, he motioned for her to check it out. Raising an inquiring brow at him, she pulled her hand from his to do just that.

Stepping from the shelter of the trees, sunshine hit her face, causing her to wince at first. Walking close to the edge; but not too close, she peered down and gasped. Below them was a large pool at least twenty feet wide that appeared to join the river later further down. The at the far left of the inviting pool was a stone face the color of silver with a waterfall rushing over the rocks into the pool below. In that perfect moment, the sunlight hit the rushing water, casting a misty rainbow of colors up into the air. This place was paradise.

“Whoa...” she breathed out with astonishment at what she was seeing. “This is incredible!” she gasped out with excitement, turning to watch as Eric strode towards her.

Smiling at her, he nodded. “I thought you would like it.” keeping his gaze locked on hers, Eric gripped the collar of his shirt, tugging it over his head in one smooth motion. The strong muscles in his arms flowed and rippled with movement, drawing her gaze. Apparently she wasn’t the only one doing some ogling. Glazing away from the sight of his naked chest, she saw that Eric’s gaze was roaming over her body like she was a porterhouse steak and he was starving.

She scoffed with laughter as she shook her head at him. “I thought you said this wasn’t about sex.”

Jerking the zipper of his jeans down, he smirked at her. “It’s not—yet.”

“Then why are you...?” her question trailed off when he shoved his pants down to reveal a pair of black boxers. Spying his erection pressing against the loose material, she felt her womanhood clench in response. Perhaps it wasn’t Eric that she should worry about. If he came a step closer she very well may jump him herself. How had she kept her hands off him all this time?

Because that was before he turned me into a freaking nymphomaniac.

“Did you think I brought you out here to just look?” he laughed. Jerking her eyes from his concealed shaft, she saw that he was looking at toward the pool and not at her. Like a child she felt so excited she felt like she would burst. She knew that she must look ridiculous with her eyes widening at his words. Quickly pulling off her shirt and shorts as well, she stood in only her purple cotton bra and matching simple underwear.

With confusion she looked left and right, searching for a path or a way to climb down to the pool below. Not seeing a way, she shook her head with disappointment. She turned toward Eric to see him striding back toward the tree line with their clothes in his hands. Carefully he laid each item of theirs over nearby branches for safekeeping.

“How do we get down there?” she asked.

Without turning around to face her, he simply said. “The typical way; we jump.”

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Eric couldn't ignore the laughable way that Rebecca's mouth parted and her body cringed at the thought of jumping over the edge. For a moment, a concern crept into his mind. Could she be afraid of heights? Taking a whiff of her scent, he didn't detect an overly amount of fear. She seemed more scared of the idea of jumping than where she was.

"Excuse me?" she gasped out with a hysteric laugh. "You can't be serious."

He shrugged his shoulders carelessly. "Do you have a problem with that? That's the way we all did it as children." He explained as he slowly made his way back to her.

"Are you insane?!" she exclaimed, her eyes wide and her face paling. "That's got to be a fifteen foot drop, Eric!" she said, waving her hand toward the edge.

"It's actually a ten foot drop." He pointed out.

"Shut up." She bit out. "You want to go and kill yourself, be my guest. I'll stand up here and watch. I'll even write your obituary for you. It will go something like this, 'Poor Eric would have lived a long fulfilling life if he hadn't stupidly leapt to his death instead of using his brain. Too bad.' "

Shaking his head at her with humor, he waved her words away. "I won't die from jumping at this height, so don't worry yourself. Trust me on this. I will even do it with you." He offered.

Crossing her arms over her breasts, she shook her head stubbornly. "Not going to happen. There's got to be another way." she murmured softly, as she turned away from him to look around the drop off again. Instantly, Eric's eyes fell on the tempting curve of her waist and her luscious ass. It was a struggle not to reach out and touch her. His eyes were drawn away from her sinful curved like a magnet to the white, raised scars across her back.

Frowning, he remembered the whole reason he brought her out here in the first place. He wanted to take her somewhere secluded. Where she would feel safe and could forget that they'd nearly been killed yesterday. Hopefully, if she was relaxed enough and was not so on edge, she would finally confided in him about her most guarded secret.

He didn't want to rush her or force her; as many had advised him to. He wanted her to trust him, to cleave to him, to want him as much as he needed her. But this little road block with jumping over the edge of a small cliff may prove an issue to his plans for

wooing her. Remembering the best way to handle Rebecca was to keep her off balance and take the reins himself, he did.

Moving closer to her, he waited until she turned back to face him. “I have a solution. Let’s do this instead.” He said in a compromising tone. When she seemed to relax, waiting for him to continue, he lunged for her. Bending to scoop one muscled arm behind her knees and the other behind her back, he quickly lifted her up in his arms. He smiled with triumph when she cried out with surprise.

“Eric!” she gasped out, squirming and fighting his arms as he held her against his chest. “What do you think you are doing?!” pausing, she followed his gaze toward the ledge.

He wouldn’t...would he?

Yep he would.

“Don’t even think about—” Her words ended abruptly and morphing into a scream of fear as he rushed toward the ledge and jumped.