

# 7

Hands clasped firmly behind his back; Eric paced back and forth across the kitchen, all the while his wolf snarled within him with impatience. Where was she? For the third time, he glanced at the large clock that hung on the far wall of the kitchen. It was barely past two and Rebecca was due back from picking Emma and Travis up from school at any moment.

The seconds ticked by like hours. Several times he thought about turning around and heading to the seclusion of his home office instead of this senseless waiting. There still were piles of paper work that needed his attention, but every time he started to leave, he felt his wolf recoil and found himself turning back.

He shook his head with disgust. What the hell was he doing? His sudden—well; maybe not sudden—obsession with Rebecca was perplexing to say the least. He didn't know what hold she held over his body and his wolf; but he found that he wanted it. Craved it. He didn't know what had driven him to his actions the other night in Rebecca's apartment; but he didn't regret a single second of it. He smiled at the memory. The way her chocolate brown eyes watched him with uncertainty and then melted with need; a need only he could full fill.

He struggled not to dwell on what else had occurred that night, but it was impossible to push the images from his mind. Rebecca—his Rebecca—had actually gone on a date with Damon—that mongrel! He suspected that she'd only done so to prove a point to him, to prove that he held no control over her.

That's where she was wrong.

He didn't want to control her, but he'd be damned if he idly stood by as Damon put his roman hands on her or any other part of her body. Growling in the back of his throat, he fought against the memory of Damon pulling Rebecca into his arms as his lips crashed down over hers. His wolf became enraged at the image.

No matter how hard he thought about it, he couldn't figure out why he felt this way about her. He was unfamiliar with the feelings that roiled within his chest. It was a strange, belly clawing, heart wrenching feeling. It was obsession boarding on the need to possess her.

His pacing strides froze at the thought. Could that really be the reason? Did he simply just want her? Was it possible that he could simply claim her body and this

unexplainable need would leave him? No. He shook his head in denial. What he was experiencing went far beyond a simple sexual attraction.

Before he could pondering on his thoughts any further, his head jerked toward the front door at the soft sound of a car coming up the gravel driveway. Inside his mind, Eric felt his wolf come to attention at the sound. She was here. His chest expanded with the knowledge as his lips curled into a smile.

Crossing his arms over his chest, he forced himself to remain still and wait. Just as he thought his impatience would be his undoing, the front door swung open; echoing with the excited voices of his children. The twin's eyes widened with happy surprise at seeing him home early. Both rushed at him with excitement as they both proceeded to tell him of their day simultaneously. Struggling to listen to both, he chuckled as his eyes lifted to see Rebecca cross the threshold.

Her eyes briefly lifted from the floor as she turned to close the door behind her. Moving further inside, the moment her eyes met his, she froze. Her face quickly paled at the sight of him. Eric had no doubt that she had hoped to avoid him after the other night, just as he had anticipated. All too quickly, Rebecca dropped her gaze from his and turned into the main section of the kitchen, pretending to do something in there. He smirked. Did she really think that she could hide from him?

We'll see about that...

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Heart thundering in her ears, Rebecca felt her mouth go dry as she came into the house to find Eric waiting for her. What was he doing? Why was he home so early? Suddenly all her hopes of putting off facing him; especially after what had happened at her apartment, went up in flames. Needing to put some space between them for her peace of mind, Rebecca quickly ducked into the kitchen, keeping her back to Eric.

Emma rushed to her side as her twin's excited voice held Eric's attention. Curling her fingers around the bottom of Rebecca's t-shirt, Emma tugged insistently. Thankful for the distraction, Rebecca turned to smile down at Emma's soft face.

"Can I have a snack?" her voice was so soft, echoing with sweet innocents that Rebecca felt her heart squeeze.

Rebecca nodded. Turning away she moved past Emma to the opposite counter beside the sink, reaching for the white and blue ceramic cookie jar that sat against the wall. Lifting the lid, she pulled out two chocolate chip cookies that she'd made earlier in the

week. Replacing the lid, she turned to hand them to Emma who eagerly held out her hands.

Holding the cookies out of reach for a moment, Rebecca paused handing them to her. “One is for your brother, Emma.” She said with a firm look before lowering the cookies within reach.

“I will.” Emma promising words were tossed over her shoulders as she ran from the kitchen and towards the living room. As she past her twin, Travis quickly followed her once his eyes fell upon the treat clutched in her hand. The excited voices of the twins were quickly droned out when the TV was turned on in the other room.

The soft smile on her face faded as a heavy stone settled in her stomach once she realized that she was now alone—with Eric. The sound of his footsteps drawing closer had her heart lurch. Frantic, she searched for any reason, any excuse to keep him at arm’s length—or further from her. Turning to face the freezer, she began pulling out cuts of meat for dinner.

“I want to talk to you.” Eric’s voice slid out like a caress against the back of her neck, drawing a shiver from her in response.

Her stomach tightened. He felt so close. She drew in a shaky breath as her tongue darted out to lick at her bottom lip. What could he possibly want to talk about? Couldn’t they just go back to him despising her? Things were much easier when he simply growled out his rude responses to her every time they’d talked in the past.

“I’m busy.” She mumbled, keeping her back to him. Her shaking hands clutched the packs of frozen meat like a lifeline.

Moving to the side of her, Eric eyed her with a hard look. “No, you’re avoiding me and I won’t let you do that; not anymore.” He argued calmly. Reaching out, he took the packs of meat from her hands.

“I’m not avoiding anything.” She said with stubborn disagreement. “I just don’t want to talk to you.”

“Well, that’s just too damn bad.” Continuing to give her a hard look, he tossed the meat onto the counter to his left. The frozen meat landed with a loud bang, causing Rebecca to flinch at the sound.

“There’s nothing to talk about.” She bit out, lifting her chin stubbornly. Jerking her gaze from his, she attempted to step around him. Eric moved so quickly she barely

saw his hand shoot out to snag her arm and spin her toward the counter until she was pinned, facing him.

“Let go of me.” She hissed out, her eyes flashing up at him as he pressed her back into the edge of the counter.

She breathed out a gasp of surprise as she felt his hard bulge brush against her stomach. The touch sent electric sensations to her womb. Her cheeks flooded with heat when she recalled how he’d touched her and how he’d made her feel. She couldn’t do this. She had to get away from him. With him this close it was impossible for her to pretend. She couldn’t pretend that the scent of him didn’t fire her blood and she couldn’t pretend that the other night hadn’t happened.

His hands slid slowly up her bare arms to massage her upper arms. His hands felt as though they were burning through her skin and stealing all the strength she possessed.

“Do you think about it?” his words softly whispered close to her face.

Startled, she pressed her hands to his chest in a vain attempt to prevent him from stealing more of her personal space. “Think of what?” she scowled.

“The other night.” his lips curled into a teasing smile. One of his hands lifted to trail a finger teasingly across the high neckline of her t-shirt. “The way I touched you...” he slid his trailing fingers up the slope of her neck as she gulped nervously until he stopped at her mouth. “...and the way I kissed you.” His thumb smoothing along her bottom lip as he moved closer to her.

Panicked, she shook her head and in doing so; dislodged his caressing fingertip. “No.” she lied.

It was true that she had thought about what he’d done to her that night. She couldn’t stop thinking about it, even when she was asleep. Sensual dreams of her and Eric; a tangle of limbs and silken sheets had invaded her night and left her needy. That night he’d awakened something in her that she wished would have been left buried. She couldn’t trust what she was feeling. Getting involved with Eric would put her in jeopardy. Her life was more important than submitting to the sexual need he’d awoken within her. Plus; if she had to, she was more than capable of taking care of the problem herself.

“I know you’re lying.” Eric whispered low, his tone dark. “Why are you fighting this?”

“Because it is wrong. You’re my boss and I won’t be one of your one-time flings and that’s what I would be to you.”

Much to Rebecca’s relief, Eric sighed heavily before taking a step back from her. “I don’t know what it is that I want from you, Rebecca. All I know is that you are mine.” He practically growled out the word “mine”.

Glaring at him, she slashed her hand through the air as if she could whip the word away with such a gesture. “I am not your anything.” She bit out.

“You are. That means you don’t get to repeat what happened the other night unless it is with me. No dating other men or kissing them.” he hissed out low enough to where they wouldn’t be over heard. “You are my woman; whether you understand this yet or not. If nothing else; the other night when I touched you should have been a clue to you.”

“The other night meant nothing!” she bit out, pacing away from him. “You didn’t do anything to me that I couldn’t do to myself. Anything you did that night...” she trailed off, her face flooding with color once more at the memory. “...was just you attempting to prove a point.”

He stalked closer to her. His eyes flashed dangerously at her, causing her to step back. “Then you need a recap if you didn’t see what I was showing you that night.”

“If I never had to relive that night again; I would be very happy.”

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Lies! Make her tell the truth! Eric’s wolf snarled at her words.

The scent of her lie swirled around her and mingled with the scent of her fear. From the slight tremble of her hands as he regarded her; Eric could see that Rebecca was terrified. He was pushing too hard and she was lashing out at him. Though it angered him that she would deny that what had happened between them didn’t mean a thing, he forced himself to not lash out at her.

He would get nowhere with her while she was hissing at him like a cat on the defense. He would have to wait until Travis and Emma went to bed for the night, when they did; she wouldn’t be able to run from him.

His first mistake had been giving her time to contemplate his actions after pleasuring her that night. He should have taken her right then. Everything else would have

worked out later on. But he'd stupidly thought she would come to him on her own. She thought that she could hold herself back from him.

His lips thinned at the thought. He couldn't—wouldn't go back to before that night. He didn't understand what was drawing him to her, but he'd be damned if he listened to her fear induced words. He would give her space—for the moment. But she wouldn't be leaving this house until this was settled between them.

Rebecca stabbed both of her hands through her hair in aggravation. Without saying a word to him, she retrieved the meat from the far counter and laid the packets on the stove before bending to pull out a skillet.

"I have work to attend to. I will be in my office; in case you need anything." He stated flatly.

"I won't." she argued, not bothering to look at him.

Her stubborn response was nearly his undoing. If Emma and Travis hadn't been home, he probably would have been on her in a flat second after that. Hell; he'd probably would have dragged her up to his bedroom and kept her up there until she admitted that she felt the same hunger within her.

Taking a deep breath, he fought down his animal nature; the need to dominate. He had to force himself to walk away and head toward his office. Each step he took caused him to feel his wolf growing stronger. Rebecca had won herself a short reprieve; but it would be the only one she would ever get again.