

Chapter 176

Introduction: Welcome to the world of Vamps and Weres. please forgive any little mistakes that slip through. Fingers crossed, I promise to make this story worth your time.

STORY TITLE: A Long Walk Home

Summary: Breaking down barriers is never easy.W@w.Növelw(ö)r.m.cÖm

Read and enjoy.....

Dayton Alexander released his hair from the leather thong holding it back and ran long tapered fingers through it. A flash of silver caught his eye and he let out a slow breath as the constant reminder of his pain fell forward into his face when he took his hand away.

A inch wide strip of hair at the front was prematurely bleached silver. It had been for over half a century now. It was as if he had gone to some fancy hairstylist and asked them to streak the first inch of his hair silver but leave all remaining tresses their normal dark brown colour. If only that was the reason for what he termed his 'Mark of Sorrow' when he was particularly drunk.

The silver made him look older in human terms, into his late thirties but it belied his real age. Dayton was a Were of the wolf variety and was in fact just over two hundred years old. He was born in the same 'litter' as his brother Connor though he was the second to be born and wasn't classed as the oldest of the Alexander clan.

A few years after, Cedar and Brody arrived and then after a longish gap for Weres of fifteen years, along came Willow and Aaron. He hadn't seen his siblings in a long time, not since he'd left the pack. Aaron checked in every so often and left a voicemail. Dayton never answered the calls but he did listen to whatever news his brother imparted.

There were also the weekly emails sent blindly to an old address. His youngest sibling assumed the account was active despite the lack of response his messages garnered, just as he dialled the same cell number to verbally reach out to him.www.növeÖwÖr.m.cöM

It was the mark of just what kind of man Aaron had matured into. He was a Beta in the Pack; a guardian and a protector. It was built into him to protect his pack mates and more so his brother.

Before his life had turned to shit Dayton had shared a deep affection for Aaron, mirroring Cedar's fondness for the youngest of the Alexander family. Truth be told there was something about Aaron that all the family just adored and couldn't help feeling a little something extra special for him.

Dayton had had a bit more interactive contact with the Pack when his best friend and adopted brother, David, had still been alive. It had been easier to send back brief messages to his family through his friend. The Bryant family had welcomed him into their tight knit group when it had become obvious that he and David were inseparable. He had effectively had two families as well as the Pack to draw strength from.

Despite all those who loved him and tried to ease his grief, nothing could have kept Dayton with the pack once it had happened. Jared and Aaron had somehow managed to keep him from going Rogue, had held onto him so tightly with all their love and determination. It had worked to some degree.

The sheer force of their personalities had battled the ferocious anguish which has threatened to rip all his humanity away until there was nothing left but an insane wolf who would have needed to be put down to protect the innocents he would kill and maim. Sanity had prevailed in the end, but the man Dayton Alexander had once been was destroyed along with his beautiful Faith.Ww.növelwÖr.m.cöM

Faith. Beautiful, headstrong, vibrant Faith. She had been his world, his reason for existence, his precious mate. And she had left him as only a mate could. She had died, killing him in the process.

Cold, emotionless emptiness filled his soul when he once more came back to himself, when the threat of going Rogue had receded. He could look at his family objectively and know that they loved him but he could no longer return that emotion because he had lost all power to feel.

The only way to remain sane was to root out every link within himself which tied him by love to another person, and to ruthlessly sever it by crushing the emotion completely dead. His link had lasted longer with David but even that had faded until it was obvious that he couldn't remain with the pack anymore.

He'd spoken with Jared, his tone lifeless as he told his Alpha he was leaving. It had been a tense meeting because Aaron had been there too, hurt and anger washing over his brother as he listened. His Alpha had watched him, piercing blue eyes intent for a long time before finally nodding his agreement.

Aaron's pain had filled the room, harsh accusing words being hurled until Jared had stepped in and Commanded his Beta to be quiet. The words had stopped but the accusation in his little brother's eyes couldn't be contained.

Deep down a part of him had felt a flicker of remorse for the pain he was causing his family. But it wasn't anywhere close to being strong enough to change his mind. It was merely the last remnants of the man Dayton had once been slowly dying inside as his heart turned to ice.

Dayton had been visiting Japan, a Gallery showing promoting his work when the first Vampire/Were conflict had happened. He often wondered if he would have returned to the pack to join in its defence if he'd known what was happening. Would he have helped his family? His best friend and his surrogate family too?

He couldn't honestly answer that question. Part of him liked to believe that there was some decency still within him somewhere, that he would have been able to put aside his own selfishness and protect those who loved him, but he was honest enough with himself to know that he most probably wouldn't have.

Dayton Alexander told himself he was dead inside. That he had been dead for over fifty years. From the very second he'd opened his mouth and teased his beautiful Faith into that ill fated race. Not a day didn't pass that he didn't think 'If only.'(w)w.w.növelwÖr.m.cöM

If only he hadn't challenged his feisty mate. If only they had stayed in bed that morning instead of deciding to go for a run. He knew there was no point to thinking that way. Nothing could ever change what had happened. It was in the past. But still he wished fervently that things had been different that day.

He had challenged Faith and she had taken off in wolf form, her sleek black fur rippling in the light morning breeze as she bounded gracefully through the trees. He was a fraction of a second behind her, ready to pounce to trap his mate and ravish her when she had darted to the side unexpectedly. It had caught him off guard and also Faith. She had lost her footing, gone down awkwardly.

Dayton shuddered and tore himself away from the memory even as his mind replayed the resounding crack that had ensued when Faith fell forward. Agony flared through him, calling him a liar, laughing at him. One memory remained that could shatter his heart over and over again and did so on a daily basis. That one memory proved that he wasn't as dead inside as he believed.

Fifty years on and Dayton Alexander still felt his mate's death as keenly as he had the day it happened. It was the only thing that slipped through his iron self control, that breached his carefully raised barriers to touch him on an emotional level. Faith. She would forever be the only thing who could reach inside his dead heart and make him feel, even if it was just a never-ending agony he perceived.

The voicemail message he'd received from Aaron telling him the Bryant family had been wiped out almost got through to him. They had been good people. He had adored them all. He knew the youngest daughter had survived, knew she would be going through a world of agony at losing David and the rest of her family. For a fraction of a second he had considered going to her even though he had never met the girl before.

But not even that tragedy had been strong enough to break through his defences. He had coldly and analytically weighed up the impact of what Ashleigh Bryant's grief would do to him personally and had taken the coward's way out and stayed away.

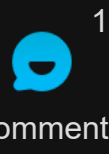
He had hardened his heart further, closed himself off that much more and gone up to his studio instead and pulled out a large canvas. All night long he had painted, slashing dark reds and blues, purples and blacks streaking across the canvas as he worked out the icy coldness he felt deep inside at losing his best friend and all the other pack members who had died that day.

The abstract hung in his small gallery through the door from the office he was currently sitting in. It wasn't for sale but it took pride of place so that everyone could see it instantly when they walked in the door.

The painting screamed of pain and loss, rage and despair. It summed up what Dayton thought of the world, that it was a cruel, heartless place to live in. Loving people made you weak and vulnerable. It invariably brought you to your knees in mind numbing agony.

Logically he knew he loved his family. No matter how hard he tried to deny it, he knew those feelings still lived somewhere within him. But he buried them so deep they didn't have the power to hurt him anymore. No one had that power. Not now Faith was gone and David too.

The sound of the Gallery door opening distracted him and he stiffened a second later. Scents washed over him, confusing him deeply. The first scent was that of a wolf and felt vaguely familiar though he couldn't place the Were it belonged to. The other was a vampire, a sweet scent of cherry blossom with a hint of musk assaulting his nostrils. His hackles rose instantly. Why was a wolf and a vampire in his Gallery?



Comment



Subscribe

Next Chapter →

Previous



Reviews (1)



Kathryn Muraywed

I wonder if the writer really is done with the previous story or if they overlap.

2024-06-14 03:46:31

👍 0 🗨 0