

Chapter 82

Emily's pov

* Three months later

I took a gasp of air as I emerged from the water, clutching the edges of the tub as I pulled air into my lungs.

I saw his face again.

I've been dreaming and thinking about him more recently now and it may have to do with me holding his pup in my stomach. The guilt was obviously eating me alive and now I have forced his image to haunt me whenever I close my eyes.

The guilt for leaving him without an explanation gnawed at me daily. I missed him so much.

I swallowed the painful lump in my throat, resting my palm on my round stomach. The baby was growing fast. Very fast. I was as big as a balloon.

I could no longer shift to, nor can I walk properly. I literally waddle around like a duck.

My dad said the baby should be here in three or two months, depending on my body. I love the baby growing in my belly but it was admittedly uncomfortable and still new to me.

Still, I smiled as I watch the life Bryson and I created, rubbing my hand over the roundness as I whispered.

"I know daddy isn't here but I am. I'll protect you with my life I promise," my voice cracked at the end of my words, the emotions bubbling in my being.

I didn't think I could do this without Bryson and wished there was a way he wouldn't miss out on this special moment.

For a second, just a second I let my feelings win and try to figure out a way to get back to him without suffering the consequences, but then I recall why I had to leave in the first place and cried my eyes out.

This was hard.

This was painful.

But I knew I had to be strong for our baby.

As got out of the tub, I wrap the towel around me, the sobs shook my body. Oh who was I kidding. This wouldn't get easier without Bryson. I needed him here.

Lucy must've heard the painful sobs leave my throat because a second later she knocks her knuckles on the door.

"Are you okay in there Em?" Her soft voice reaches my ears.

No. I was not okay.

But of course I swallowed those words and instead cracked out a lie. "Yeah, just pregnancy hormones I guess."

A second ticks by without a response and I knew she didn't believe me.

"Okay," she whispered. "If you need anything let me know. I'm here for you Emily. You don't have to do this on your own."

I know she was. Both she and dad. But I needed Bryson here with me to, to hold my hand and say that everything would be okay.

I needed my mom to reassure me that I wouldn't split in half when I am about to give birth. I needed all my parents here with me.

But now this was just wishful thinking and it dawned on me even more that there will always be a hole in my heart now.

"I'm fine Lucy, I promise." I said faintly, looking out the small window.

"Okay," Lucy sighed in defeat, followed by her footsteps growing fainter.

I palmed my growing belly. "I'll give you the love of both parents little one. I promise."

I dried myself and when I got dressed, I stepped out of the bathroom. Dad's looking at me in pity from across the room and Lucy who was cutting up some raw meat turned around when she heard the door part.

"Feeling better?" She asked with a smile. "I'm cooking up some soup for you since you've mentioned you have an upset stomach. It might not be top chef worthy but thats all we got."

I nod with a grateful smile. "Yeah I'm okay, I promise. And thanks."

My eyes returned to dad and he motions for me to come here. I do.

When I am standing beside him, he pushes his hand out and his palm lands on my stomach. He smiles gently, a warm glow radiating off his face as the sun beams down on him.

"He's going to be a warrior," He motioned with his hands after he felt a slight kick from the baby.

I smiled. "Dad how do you know if the baby is a boy or girl?" I giggled while palming my belly. It's crazy how just in a few months things changed in my life.

Dad's eyes twinkled and he reared a loopsided grin. "By the shape of your belly."

I looked down, peering at my belly in thought. It was round but that was about it. I didn't see what he saw.

Dad begun to hand motion again and I tried my best to understand every sign.

"He's saying it's an old wives tale. some say if the baby bump is round and high, it's a girl. But if it's more pointy and low, it's a boy." Lucy said from the kitchen as she looked at us with a grin on her face.

"Oh," I uttered, a little bit intrigued by this old wives tale. "But my belly is round dad. Aren't you suppose to guess it's a girl?"

He motioned again. "From my point of view it isn't. It's pointy and low."

I pouted, my eyes falling back on my belly. "Are you saying I have an ugly baby bump?"

When my eyes returned to my father's, I quickly noted the look of horror that flashed in his eyes. I bit my bottom lip to stifle my laughter as he rush to motion. "No! You have a very cute bump."

This time the laughter came out full force, so strong my belly shook. The baby kicked as if sensing my mood change. My heart squeezed when I felt the kick right above my belly button.

I loved to feel him or her. Loved when I could feel a part of both Bryce and I cuddled in my womb.

It made my heart sing. Because even though I was forced to leave Bryson, I still had a part of him here with me.

Lucy who was still busy with the cooking, chimed in from the kitchen area. "We're going to need a name too, once we find out the gender. Have you thought about any names yet Em?"

I sighed, my fingers tracing imaginary patterns on my round belly. Names had crossed my mind, some female names and some male seeing as I didn't know the gender yet.

But nothing felt right without Bryson's input. He would've be so happy to help. "I've thought about it, but it's difficult without... well, without Bryson."

They understood instantly and tried to make me feel better.

"Well when the time does come, I believe you'll give him or her, the cutest name." Lucy cracked a grin, trying to change the sudden shift in the mood.

I hope so too.

Despite my future ahead, I held on to that little string of hope that someday, somehow Bryson and I will be reunited and our family will be whole. But that was just wishful thinking.