

## Chapter 11

Ember

I try to **open my** eyes, but it's like a heavy weight **is** keeping them in place. It's the same when I try to move my arms or my legs. Nothing.

**It's** like I'm in some sort of limbo. The worst part is that I can feel everything, smell everything, and hear everything. I just can't move. If I could open my eyes, I'm sure I would see everything too.

The last thing I remember was the burning pain, as though my whole body was on fire, **and** although I can't see where **I** am, I know I am close to him, the alpha, the one who put my body through all this pain.

I can smell him. I feel like I'm wrapped in his scent. It's all around me, enveloping me in a cocoon. This must be his bedroom, and his bed.

I can hear him talking to others about me. They talk about wolfsbane, about forced mating, about horrifying options that I can do nothing to refute, frozen in place as I am.

After the other voices leave, I hear the rustle of clothes and something lands on the bed. For once, I'm grateful that my eyes are glued shut.

Alpha Damon is undressing. The last thing I need to see is my alpha naked—because whether I like it or not, the mark on my arm means I’m now a member of this pack. At least until he realizes I’m worthless.

I feel the bed dip. Panic begins to surge through me. I feel his fingers graze my skin as he lifts the hem of my dress.

Despite not being able to move, tears escape my eyelids and trickle down. my cheek.

I realize now why he didn’t want anyone else to mark me. He wants to use me as a breeder. It’s not unheard of for mate less alphas to use a mate less she—wolf as a breeder so that they can have an heir.

They don’t usually force them, but this is Alpha Damon of the Dark Moon Pack. The same alpha who is rumored to have killed his mate. He still needs an heir, and he is going to use me for **that** purpose.

As soon as my mind begins to spiral, I feel the hem of my dress drop. The rough pad of Alpha Damon’s thumb wipes away the tears that streak my checks.

“Ember?” His voice is so deep it sends a shiver down my spine.

I want to tell him I’m here. Tell him I don’t want this.

His fingers gently card through **my** hair. “You’re in there, aren’t you? I know you can hear me,” he whispers, his voice soft and low.

I feel him take my hand. “**Just** squeeze my hand if you can hear me.”

I try, I really do, but my body is useless to me.

He sighs. “I don’t know **if you can** hear me, **but** I’m just going to change your clothes, that’s all.”

I don’t know if I should believe him, but it’s not like I can **do** anything to stop him if he’s lying

He continues to lift the hem of my dress, and then I feel the warmth of his hand on my back as he sits me up. I shouldn’t like the feeling, but I do.

I feel **a** chill as he pulls the dress over my head. Goose bumps emerge from my skin before it’s wrapped in something soft; his shirt. It still smells of him. In a **way**, it’s comforting, but I don’t know why.

He gently lowers me back onto the bed, and then I feel something heavy cover me.

**His** warm hand rests on my forehead. “Sleep well, little wolf,” he whispers. Then I hear **his** footsteps recede, and the sound of the door opening and closing. He’s gone.

I should feel relief that he didn’t take advantage of me, that he’s gone and has left me in peace. For some reason, **though**, I don’t. I feel lost and empty without his presence.

I put it down to the pack bond, even though I don’t feel that due to my current lack of wolf.

Instead of trying to puzzle things through any further, I allow whatever the healer injected into me to take hold. As I drift, I pray that I'll somehow come out of this limbo, and that my wolf will return.