

Chapter 5

Ember

I don't need to open my eyes to know where I am. The smell of disinfectant gives it away, familiar from my long hours working at the hospital back home. At first, I'm confused, but then all the memories come flooding back.

My wolf attacking the alpha. Being chained up in my wolf's form with a silver collar. The alpha releasing me and forcing me to shift. Why did he chain me up just to let me go?

Then I remember the doctor. The needle. The alpha telling me this was for my own good. **Panic** grips me **as** I reach out for my wolf.

Nothing. I can't find her. It's like she doesn't even exist.

A sob escapes my lips. How will I function with no wolf? It feels even worse than when Noah rejected us; I no longer feel whole.

Being chained in a silver collar would be better than this. At least then, we still had each other. What she felt, I felt. Now that she's gone, I feel nothing. I'm like an empty vessel. What sort of cruel bastard would take away a person's wolf?

When I open my eyes, I realize that I'm alone, the hospital room dark and quiet. **I** scoff. I'm destined to be alone; it seems.

Sitting up, I swing my legs over the side of the bed. I glance at the drip attached to my hand, then rip it out, ignoring the new sharp pain that joins the dull aches all through my body.

I should know better than to take out an IV that way—I've done plenty of work gently removing others' IVs, after all—but right now I don't care.

Lifting the hospital gown, I see the bruises that cover my body. With no wolf, I won't heal. They must have known that. Bastards.

I touch my throat and wince. I'm still sore from where the silver collar touched my wolf's skin. When she hurts, I hurt.

I have to admit now: she was right. We should have ended our miserable life before my pack sent us here. Now I'll do what I wouldn't allow my wolf to do before. I'll end our life. Not here, though. Somewhere there will be no interference.

I slide off the bed and attempt to stand. My legs are so weak that **they** collapse underneath me, and I hit the **floor** with a resounding thud.

I glance at the door, worried that someone may have heard me. But it seems that even here, no one cares that much about me.

I push myself to **my** feet, and this time I manage **to** steady myself. Now isn't the time to be weak. **I** need to be strong. If not for me, then for my wolf.

I glance toward the door again. Despite not arousing any suspicion when I fell, I know that trying to escape that way would be foolhardy.

Instead, I head for one of the windows and slowly slide it open, cringing when it squeaks against the frame. Still, the noise doesn't rouse anyone.

I climb through the window, and my bare feet land on the damp grass below. The temperature has dropped, and I immediately feel the cold biting into **my** very bones.

Perhaps I'll die of hypothermia before I can find a cliff to throw myself off or a lake to drown in doesn't matter. Death is death; however, I find it.

I don't know how long I've been in the hospital, but that doesn't matter either. The drugs they pumped into me have dulled the ache from the bruises. Hopefully, by the time they wear off, I'll be gone.

I start walking. I have no idea where **I'm** going. I just walk in the opposite direction to the pack buildings.

I wrap my arms around my body in a vain attempt to keep warm. I can barely feel my feet.

After walking for what feels like hours, I stumble and fall over literally nothing. I wince when my hands make contact with the cold ground. The last thing I need now is to break a wrist because I'm not looking where I'm going.

How **far** away is this pack's border? If I had my wolf, she would know, but without her, I have no idea.

I don't cry at the thought of my lost wolf. It won't achieve anything. Besides, I need to be strong if I'm going to do this. My

wolf was strong and resolute in her determination to end **our** existence. She failed, but I won't.

I've lost all feeling in my feet when I start to hear yells and footfalls coming after me. I try to run, but stumble and fall into the wet grass again, making me colder than ever.

I panic a little; I can't let them catch me. I scramble on all fours to try and get away, before lurching back to my feet and breaking into a run...

I barely make it a few hundred yards before I feel strong, muscular arms wrap around me, pinning my arms to my sides and lifting me off the ground.

I scream and try to thrash. Every so often, my foot makes contact with something hard, but it probably hurts my foot more than this beast of a man who holds me.

It isn't him. Not Alpha Scopus, who I'm learning to fear and hate and trust in equal measure. His voice is different, but just as determined and low.

He chuckles lowly. "Don't waste your energy. Even if you had your wolf, you would still be too weak to fight me. Besides, the alpha commanded me to bring back his little tribute, so bring you back, I shall."