

## Whispers Pt. 1

Emmaline Richards looked at her I.D. That was my name now. I was no longer Evelyn or Evie. I chose Emmaline because it reminded me of my birth name. I picked Richards because it means brave. Which I was determined to be. I was mulling over the new information I'd just gotten.

The school I'd been attending for the last year had burned down. They would be busing groups of students to new schools. My group was going to be at Blue Moon high school. The names of schools in this state were weird. I assumed it was based on the pack names. Most of the people I attend school with are werewolves. They just didn't know that I knew that. I had met a few werewolves that had come to David for help, so I knew what kind of aura werewolves projected.

I think they assumed I was human. Or they thought I didn't know I was a supernatural, which was not by me. They left me alone, and I left them alone. Which worked out really well during the way the werewolves just had. Peter Kyle and Drake McAlister watched me in school, but I was certain they didn't know I was fairy for sure or not. I didn't even really know what I could do as a part fairy other than turn stones into water. Sometimes, if I touched someone, I could see a flash of their memories. I couldn't do it consistently though.

I sighed and sat down in the tent that I had made my home for the last year. No one wanted to rent an apartment, or even room, to a kid with no credit history emancipated or not. I was almost seventeen now, though. I'd been saving everything I could. I had hope that this place near the diner I worked at would take pity on me. I had enough for the first few months' rent.

I looked at the card that was my proof I was emancipated. Craig had given me an actual, laminated card that did not state my old name, and my parents weren't listed on it either. I snorted. I guess I should say parent, since I didn't know who my biological father was. The one who raised me wanted me apparently wanted me dead.

I had only been running for six months when I discovered my Uncle and Craig were right about that. I had passed by a coven talking about how scary David was. They mentioned he put a bounty out on his own daughter. I knew they meant me. David would never let it get out I wasn't his daughter. He was too proud. After overhearing them, I had run from the place I had called home for six months. I had to keep shuffling between places after that. I never felt safe. Then I finally found a place I feel safe, and then the freaking school burned down. Most of the humans I was friends with were going to a different school than me. All because I picked a last name in the later part of the alphabet. The ironic thing is with my birth surname, I'd have been with all my friends.

Don't get me wrong. It's not that the werewolves weren't nice here, they were. They just usually stuck to their own kind. I sighed. I was excited that I wouldn't have to bike to the diner anymore for work then haul ass back to school. I smiled thinking of my job. Al, the owner, really worked with me and wanted to help me out. He was one of the people I'd gotten a flash of his memories. I reminded him of his sister who had moved away because she found her mate. I did look similar to her, but she was shorter than me. She also got regular meals so she looked like she had some weight on her than I do.

I shook those thoughts off. Thinking of food made me hungry. I hoped at this new school the swim coach would let me swim in the pool after hours. I couldn't swim on the team because that would be too obvious. David could easily find me if I started placing in competitions. The swim coach at the school that had burned down had let me practice with the team. She begged me to join, but I said I couldn't. I hated it, but that's what my life was. At least practicing with them was fun. I know the werewolves on the team didn't understand how I could beat them.

To be honest, I didn't either. I hadn't been able to learn much about fairies. They were very secretive, and I didn't have a fairy contact like my mom and uncle. I wondered if it was my dad who they spoke to or another fairy relative of mine. I liked to think that fairy's loved water just like I did. I was going to have to get the layout of the new school and figure out if any teams practiced in the morning so I could take my shower there.

I had it down to a science at my old school. The administration and teachers noticed, but they mostly thought I showered because I biked to work and back in the mornings. In reality, it was because I lived in a tent with no access to indoor plumbing.

I looked up at the sky. I missed my brothers and my sister. I always sent them a letter on their birthdays with no return address. If I could afford it, I'd sent a small gift too. Those days sucked because I would travel outside the state I was living in. I always sent them from different areas just in case David had found out. It was worth it though. Just to feel somewhat close to my siblings on their birthdays. I sent them to the apartment Dusty had lived in when I was still at home. I hoped he hadn't moved. I often wondered if they missed me like I missed them.

I always tried to see the good in things like the Princess Haley did in the stories my mom told me about fairies. I wanted to emulate her as much as I could. Like the fact that I have probably seen a lot more of the states in than most kids my age. I also knew I could survive on my own.

My lowest moment of realizing how alone I was happened four months after I left. I tried to use the burner phone to call my aunt and uncle to let them know I was safe, at least I had thought I was at the time, but the call couldn't be completed. I hoped it wasn't because they didn't want me to call them. My uncle did give me the phone after all. When I realized it didn't work, I threw it away.

I wished the bus schedule for getting us to school started earlier because I had an early shift at the diner. I had my trusty alarm clock with batteries so I could get places on time. The diner opened bright and early at four in the morning because they got a lot of trucker traffic. Al kept a close eye on me on the mornings I worked. Those guys were handsy. Our uniforms were the short little pink dress with an apron that most diners have. Al was a good guy, though. He'd step in and put people in line if necessary.

I closed my eyes to get some sleep. My alarm went off at two in the morning. I groaned, knowing I needed to get moving. I needed enough money for school supplies without dipping into my savings. I threw on my uniform and grabbed my bike. I enjoyed my little routine, as crazy as it was. It kept my legs in great shape too. I was going to have to move my living space closer to the diner and school with the change though. I'd scope out the woods in that area after school today. I packed up my tent, and all of my things, into my duffel bag. I put them on my back and began my journey to the diner. I enjoyed my morning ride; it was really quiet most days.

Some days I saw some wolves, but I knew they were from the pack around here. I didn't bother them, so they didn't bother me. I made it to work at three forty-five. I stowed my stuff in the little back room that Al let us all keep our stuff in. I sprayed myself with some perfume, slapped some deodorant on and went out to help with the prep for the morning rush.

The girls and Al smiled at me as I filled up the rest of the saltshakers that needed it. Right when we opened our first group of truckers came in. I sighed when I saw who it was. Every week this group came in and they always slapped my ass, but they were good tippers. I walked over, offering a smile. "Good morning, Ralph, Jerry, and Simon. Would you all like your usual this morning?" They always ordered eggs, bacon, and coffee. Sometimes Ralph would order pancakes, but not often.

Ralph leered, "Unless you're serving up yourself on the side with sugar, you know that's what we want." I hit him upside his head with my pencil. I admonished him, "Now, you know that I don't like that kind of talk, Ralph." Ralph laughed, "And you know I like it when you get rough with me. One of these days, you'll realize I'm a prize. I'll whisk you away from here."

Al came up behind me, "Is there a problem over here?" I turned forcing a smile, "No problem, Al." I turned back to the group. "I'll get your order in guys. It should be up shortly. I walked over and gave Fred, the cook, their ticket. He glared at the table, "You say the word, and I'll spit in all their food." I laughed, "They aren't worth it." Fred smiled, "I haven't met anyone worthy of you yet, Emmaline. I heard you'll be at the school across the street this year. That's good." I smiled, "It will mean I can stay longer in the mornings I work, so that's good."

He smiled, "Now if anyone gives you trouble, you come to me or Al. We will go to the Alpha... I mean Mr. Lyons." I smiled, knowing Fred was about to say their Alpha. I played dumb asking, "Who is Mr. Lyons?" For some reason saying his name gave me a little thrill. Fred told me, "He's an important man in this town. In fact, he owns most of it." I shrugged. "I've never seen him in here before." Fred admitted, "He stops by for lunch sometimes, but you are always in school." I nodded and walked away.

I got through the rest of my shift on autopilot. I had no idea why I couldn't get the thought of this man I'd never met out of my head. I shook myself. Hopefully, I never met him if his name alone could distract me like this. I waved to Al and Liz as I ducked out for school. I ran over to the front office. I wanted to get my schedule.

The secretary gave me a knowing look before I even spoke, "You are Emmaline Richards?" I nodded. She smiled, "Yes, I was wondering who our emancipated student was. Do you work at the diner?" I nodded, "Yes, I do." She smiled, "Good for you getting a job before everyone comes for those." I told her, "I've worked there for a little over a year now." Her face showed shock, "But... that's twenty miles from where you live." I just nodded without explaining.

She recovered enough for me to ask, "Where's the girls locker room? I'd like to change before class." She stood, "I'll show you where it is." She led me through the halls. I wanted to groan when I realized that it was on the opposite side of the school from my first class. The secretary evaluated me, "You are in all accelerated classes. Your grades are impeccable and you have a job." I nodded. "Yes ma'am." She gave me a long look then said, "You'd better hurry. You're going to be late for class. Here." She handed me an excuse slip.

I stared at her surprised. She told me, "This town has a soft spot for hard working students like yourself." My eyebrows furrowed, "Why?" She smiled sadly, "Because we hope that the kindness we show, is shown to one of our own until we get her back." With that she left. I was frustrated with myself for not shaking her hand to see if I could get a flash of her memory. I wanted to hear more of the story.

I pushed that aside and took a quick shower. I sighed in relief when I discovered this school had shampoo, conditioner, and soap available in the stalls; just like my old school. I jumped out of the shower and threw on the only pair of jeans I owned with a hoodie.

I ran my hands over it. It was Dusty's old hoodie. I missed him so much. Thankfully, the day I left my mom had packed this before I left. Tears pricked my eyes. I shoved those thoughts aside. My mom chose David. I'd like to think it was to protect me, but the older I got the more I understood she should've taken me and ran. Instead, she sent me off alone. It took a lot of time for me to stop hating her. I was still angry with her for what she did though. I just didn't hate her anymore.

I still didn't think it was fair that she was the one who had an affair, but I was the one dealing with the consequences. I lost my whole family because of it. I walked into my class and handed my excuse slip to the teacher. He smiled, "Please stay for a moment after class, Miss Richards." I nodded and quickly took a seat. I smiled at the boy next to me. He'd been at my old school. We weren't friends, but I knew who he was. He was popular, and a werewolf. His name was Drake McAlister.

I was stunned when he spoke to me, "Hi, Emmaline." I smiled in surprise, "Hi, Drake. I didn't know you knew my name." He laughed silently, "Oh, I know your name. We all do." I frowned, but before I could ask why Mr. Blaze began our history lesson. This was going to be a fun class. I took notes on the syllabus that was on my desk. After class Drake said, "Catch you around, Emmaline." I nodded to him.

I walked up to Mr. Blaze's desk. I said, "Hi, Mr. Blaze. You wanted to speak to me?" He looked up and smiled, "Yes, I did. I didn't get to meet your parents last night at meet the teacher. I usually ask the parents a few questions, so I thought I'd ask you instead." I nodded. He smiled, "You're supposed to be a junior, but this is a senior level class. Are you going to be alright in here?" I nodded, "I'm on track to graduate this year, I have a 4.0 GPA and I was in accelerated classes last year."

Mr. Blaze smiled, "Yes, I have your transcripts. Have you thought about colleges?" I shook my head and looked down. I whispered, "I'm not sure college is in the cards for me." He frowned, "I'd be willing to help you look into it. I know the guidance counselor would as well. If it's a money issue, our school helps students look for scholarships. I think you should really consider it, Emmaline." I nodded. He continued, "One more question, then I'll let you go to your next class. How are you doing with your school being moved to this one after yours burned down?" I shrugged, "It's not. I like it here so far." He nodded, "Alright, you can go to your next class."

I left, going on about my day. I noticed I had several of my old classmates in my classes. I started to suspect it was intentional. The school officials purposely put us together where they could. I walked into the cafeteria alone for lunch. Drake called me over to his table, "Hey, Emmaline! Over here." He beckoned me over with his hand too. I looked at him surprised but headed in his direction.

He told me, "Sit with us today." I nodded, "Ok... thanks." He smiled, "We gotta stick together in this new school. We are the Red Run group after all." I nodded, "Alright. You didn't talk to me at all last year though." Drake and the boys around him winced. Drake offered, "That was last year. We were jerks, and you were new. Now, we need to stick together." I rolled my eyes, "Sure." He smiled, "Anyway, I saw you in that little uniform this morning. How did you already get a job at that diner across the street?"

I laughed, "I've worked there for over a year now." His jaw dropped, "That's twenty miles away from where we live." Everyone was going to say that today. I guess, "I know, but I got a job at the place that would hire me when I moved here." He frowned. His friends looked at each other. It was awkward for a few minutes before they started talking about joining the football team. The school was having special tryouts for our school's athletes since we didn't know we were coming to this one when they had tryouts before school started.

The bell rang signaling lunch ended. I stood up telling them, "Thanks for letting me sit with you guys." Drake smiled, "You're welcome to sit with us anytime." I nodded, admitting "It's nice to know some people for once this year. I've switched schools a lot." Drake smiled and put his hand on my back, "We are all here for you if you need anything." I offered him a small smile before I left to go to my last few classes.

My last class of the day was the first class I didn't see anyone I recognized. I wanted to groan because it was my biology class. The person you sat next to was going to be our lab partner for the year, according to the white board anyway. A girl that had blonde hair and blue eyes smiled and waved me over. She asked, "Hey, you're new right? It's Emmaline, isn't it?" I just nodded and she pushed out the seat next to her.

She told me, "My friends are right behind us, but there's only three of us in this class. You seem pretty smart. I don't need one of the guys sitting next to me ruining my GPA. I've worked really hard for my grades." I smiled and sat down next to her. She stuck her hand out to shake mine, "I'm Chelsea Hanes. Behind us we have Valerie and Samantha." I shook Chelsea's hand.

Samantha immediately said, "I go by Sam. I heard you sat by Drake McAlister at lunch today. I didn't get to come to the cafeteria. I had an errand to run during lunch. I was out this morning too. Now, I'm catching a whiff of the most delicious smell my friends claim they don't smell." I nodded, "I did sit by him at lunch, he went to my old school." She asked, "Do you know Drake's friend, Peter?" I smiled teasingly, "Peter Kyle? Yes, I know who he is. Those are the two most popular guys from Red Run. Last year Peter wasn't in school for the first week though. It was some family thing. I'd imagine this year will be the same."

Chelsea seemed, asking, "Is he as dreamy as they say?" I shrugged, "The girls at our old school seemed to think so, but he never gave them the time of day." Now they were all three intrigued. Valerie asked, "Really? He's waiting for his ma... I mean he doesn't even hook up?" I smirked. I had gured out last year what werewolves call their soulmates. Witches say wick, but werewolves say mate.

My mom wasn't David's wick. It was a big deal when they got married, according to the stories I'd heard over the years. David's wick died a few years before he met my mom. I answered, "From what I've seen, Peter doesn't hook up or date. Drake does though." Sam smiled, "I know. I was hoping to date him, but he seems to have an eye on you." I studied her. She'd actually be perfect for Peter. I didn't know why that thought came to me, but they should definitely be together.

I quickly said, "Drake McAlister doesn't want to date me. He's just territorial about the students from his school. He was being nice at lunch. He'd never spoke to me before today." That seemed to satisfy Sam. I offered "I could introduce you to him tomorrow if you'd like, Sam." She perked up, "Really? That would be great. If I haven't gone insane trying to find that faint scent they don't smell." I nodded and our class got started. She seemed agitated. Smiling around the class. I wondered if something in here bothered her.

I focused on the class. I internally cringed at the amount of outside of class work the teacher expected. I would make it work though; Chelsea seemed really nice. I wouldn't let her down or shoulder all our work on her own.

When the teacher let us get to know our lab partners, Chelsea told me, "We should get together after school to go over a plan on how to get this all done." I nodded, "That's not. I have to be at work at six tonight, though." She smiled, "Oh, well we could go to your place if it's closer to your job." I shook my head, "Oh no... my place... no. I actually work at the diner across the street."

She smiled asking, "Al's place? I can't believe we've never seen you! We go for breakfast every Saturday." I admitted, "I don't work mornings on Saturday's. I'm either on the afternoon or evening shift." She told me, "Well, we will have to come see you at lunch. Let's head to my place then." I nodded, relieved she didn't push.

I collected my book, and quickly grabbed things out of my locker. I was happy I left my tent and due at the diner with Al. I didn't need these girls asking questions about why I had a tent. I know Al wanted to ask, but he respected my privacy. I left with Chelsea. Sam was still agitated and smug around. Valerie was dragging her to the car. I shrugged.

I got into Chelsea's car and I smiled. It was a nice car, a little red Jetta. Katie had this car when I left. I told Chelsea, "This is a nice car." She smiled, "My dad works for Alp... Mr. Lyons. He's his... I mean at one of his umm companies. My dad got this car for me for my birthday." I nodded. I wasn't going to ask which company, not wanting her to have to lie. She didn't know I knew about how packs worked.

I looked at the window of her car. I remembered David had bought my siblings cars when they turned sixteen. A pang of sadness hit me wondering if my real father would've done things like that for me. I didn't need a car really; I'd just like to know if my dad even knew I existed. I wanted to know why I couldn't have just gone to live with him. I had a lot of questions that I'd probably never get the answers to. I shoved that aside before I cried. I gasped when Chelsea pulled into what must be their pack lands.

It was beautiful. I almost drooled over the giant lake near the gorgeous castle looking house. I would love to swim in there. Sam pulled me out of my daydreams, "Come on Emmaline! Let's get inside." I nodded and got out of the car, staring at the lake. Sam bumped my hip with hers teasing me, "You'll have to come to one of our barbecues. We swim in the lake all the time." I smiled at her, "That would be a lot of fun!"