My Roommate

Freya

My brother performs yet another sharp turn as he drives his car through the gates of the school grounds, speeding hastily down the poplar lined driveway toward the car park.

"This has definitely beat Stephen dropping us off, surely?" my brother Austin says as he deftly swings the car perfectly into a parking spot in the student car park. I exhale with relief as the car stops with a sudden jolt.

We had made it.

"Yeah. I just love feeling car sick while you see local speed limits as a general guideline," I say with a hefty amount of sarcasm. I am just thankful we have made it back to school alive. Austin laughs heartily at my reaction. Typical.

He'd passed his test six months ago but he still hadn't quite moved out of the standard teenage 'rally driver' phase. He drove fast and I was very thankful he had near perfect reflexes or else we'd have ended up in a hedge somewhere well before we'd gotten anywhere near Exton.

I look over at him with an exaggerated scowl as he turns towards me and I tut loudly. He had the same thick, dark wavy hair just like me and we had the same piercing green eyes everyone in our family have always had. We also have the same generous dark eyebrows, except mine were kept very well groomed whereas his were perhaps a little on the wild side. He had grown a few inches over the summer and was now a gangly six foot two inches, while I was a rather respectable five foot nine, which was considered tall for a woman, particularly someone my age. I had only turned sixteen in June; I was annoyingly one of the babies of the year and I really hated that. We looked the same age, but there was only seventeen months between us and this was probably why we got on so well.

The adrenaline rush from his hazardous driving aside, I adored my brother and generally so did everyone else who met him. He was easily the most liked person in school, a fact he had always seemed entirely oblivious to which only made people like him more.

"Ouch, Freya," he says with mock sadness, "I will remember this when Stephen starts teaching you in the summer and you start to enjoy the freedom that driving brings," he says, flashing me his classic cheeky smile. I smile back at him and he chuckles! he's got away with it once again.

We both get out of the car and he starts taking my various belongings out of the car boot. He just has a single backpack. I wasn't sure how he was going to survive the school year on one backpack of clothes when he'd grown half a foot over the summer. Austin was useless when it came to having clothes that fitted. He also had a penchant for destroying clothes almost every time he shifted, so that backpack of clothes wasn't going to last long at all. Perhaps a fortnight.

If you're new around here, you may be wondering what I mean when I say 'shifted'. Austin and I weren't typical teenagers, or at least, we were not like the majority of the human teenagers in the country. There was still definitely plenty of us. Well over two hundred thousand across the country alone...but the human population was entirely oblivious to us and for thousands of years it had been kept that way.

We looked human, but we weren't. Not technically...and definitely not at night under a full moon.

We were Lycan.

We'd been called many things over the years, particularly 'werewolves', which was a mythological creature in pop culture. Definitely moreso thanks to the Underworld film franchise, Teen Wolf, Twilight and The Vampire Diaries. We weren't exactly like how they portrayed us. We hadn't been cursed or bitten, it was in our blood and written into our genetic makeup. We lived in packs across the entire world, much like normal wolves did. Lycans were however, much bigger than normal wolves and the key difference of course was that we were both human and wolf in one person. From the first full moon at the full onset of puberty we could shift into our wolf's form, taking on the appearance of the wolf spirit we became blended with, gifted to us by our Moon Goddess. We were blended with them for life. A best friend, an advisor, a partner in crime who would walk with us until our dying day, and then maybe...maybe we'd become a spirit ourselves one day and basically live on within someone else.

Here we are, back at our home away from home, I said inwardly to my wolf spirit Mira.

Hopefully your grandfather has sorted out the roommate issue from last year. Although a room to ourselves might not be so bad...I mean really, it's time for you to start mingling with the boys, Mira muses.

I shuddered at the thought of my roommate from last year.

Can't be any worse than an insane witch, right? I joke.

Maybe we will be blessed with a nice simple human or something...if we have to have one at all, Mira suggests.

I stare up at the grand building I knew and loved so much. I had been coming here as a student since I was eleven, but I had come here many times ever since I was very young; because this school was our family's legacy.

It wasn't a normal school like hundreds of others across the country. It was a school mainly for the supernatural, governed for hundreds of years by our family. Our family also led our pack, which was the oldest and amongst the largest packs in the United Kingdom. Our father Leo Landry was the alpha in charge of our pack.

I pick my things up, effortlessly. Wolf strength came in handy for moments like this, but most especially when it came to a heavy day of clothes shopping, something I'd not done in so long; which by my standards was roughly only two weeks...

I walk through the big oak doors and flash a warm smile to Lynda, who manned Exton's reception desk.

"Welcome back you two," she says, before turning a little to rummage in a tray of paperwork.

"My my, haven't you both grown over the summer," she then says toward the both of us, "you are becoming so handsome, Austin! You must be beating all the girls away with a tree trunk!"

She slides our timetables and room key cards across the reception desk toward us as I roll my eyes a little.

Austin had grown considerably over the summer and his baby fat days were definitely now far behind him. As such, there had been a lot more comments about his good looks, particularly from the other girls in the pack over the summer. I didn't mind it too much from Lynda, though, as she was something like a surrogate aunt to us while we were here at the school, and her comments were more maternal than anything else.

"Very kind of you to point that out Lynda. I hope you had a great summer," I say a little sarcastically, grabbing both items.

"I am loving the new hair cut on you Lynda, it really suits you," Austin says with a broad smile before following me towards the stairs. Oh for heaven's sake...

Turning the charm on as always. Get used to it, though, it's just going to get worse when he hits eighteen in a few months, Mira growls in amusement.

She knew how annoying I had found the fawning comments about him over the summer. Admittedly it was probably because no one ever made about me, but that was the life living in the shadow of our next pack alpha.

We both throw our usual respectful nod toward the golden wolf on the giant painting on the back wall. The painting was many hundreds of years old and supposedly featured our pack's founder.

The Landry bloodline was indeed very old, and very well respected. Our pack, the Golden Lycans, was the third largest in the country, and our name uniquely comes from a legend, rather than the area from which we originate. We descended from one of the original Lycans within this country and legend said he had fur of pure gold...soft to touch, and yet entirely impenetrable like armour. Supposedly, he had been impervious to fire and had been impossible to kill; but it was just a fancy story to explain our strange name, in my mind. Lycans only came in greyscale and browns.

We were regarded as a 'blue-blooded' family in the Lycan world. Not that it matters in the present day, of course. Nobody cared much about lineage anymore, just whether your pack happened to be the strongest. Every generation, our fur had gotten darker and darker and with it our strength and position had diminished a little. The gangly teen climbing the stairs with me was our father's heir, the next alpha to lead to our pack and, while I was also of alpha rank like he was, I had no zero interest in challenging my brother for the job. He was definitely the best person to do it by miles. Our father had been diligently preparing him for his future role for many years now, and that training was going to kick up several notches after he finished his final year.

This next year was a very important year for him. The year he would turn eighteen, finish school, and he was hoping to soon discover that his girlfriend, Ava, was his destined mate. They felt absolutely sure that they were, and over the last two years they had become the quintessential 'it' couple of the school. They were so sweet together it was rather nauseating at times.

Ava had turned eighteen just two days ago, and she came from a local pack not far from Exton. She was the beta daughter of two strong and fairly prominent betas, and she was expected to end up mate bonded to an alpha or beta, so the idea seemed to fit.

I was skeptical, but sometimes situations like theirs did work out...sometimes.

Well...rarely, actually.

I had an inkling he was heading for heartbreak. It wasn't unheard of at all to feel the mystical, destined mate bond before turning eighteen, but they'd know for definite once Austin came of age in January. I had nothing against Ava at all. Indeed, she was an exceptional and lovely person. I hadn't seen much of her this summer, though. She had been out of the country for a while on holiday in France.

"I hope to see you later at dinner, depending on whether I have a new roommate and manage to make it down to dinner alive or not," I joke. Austin laughs at this, and he waves behind him as we part ways at the intersection of the residential wing; one corridor for the lads, one for the ladies. I wander down the corridor a little way and arrive at the familiar door to the room I have had since I was eleven. I stop outside the door and have a quick sniff.

There is someone already inside and to my absolute relief she smells human.

Hallelujah, Mira sighs.

Thank the moon goddess! I agree.

I happily stick my keycard into the slot and open the door.

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Ella

I was standing in front of my wardrobe mirror staring at myself. I had changed my clothes a few times since I had arrived, wondering what might give the best first impression. I had studied the photos around my roommate's mirror and she looked so put together.

Flawless, actually.

I wanted to make a good impression on my new roommate but I wasn't really sure how.

I was a little taller than average for my age at around five foot nine. My P.E teacher at my last school said my long legs and generally slender frame was definitely built for running, which was the only hobby I really had back home. Well, it was a little more than a hobby; I was a national champion for girls in my age group.

I was perhaps a little on the skinny side, but I felt I was mostly average looking. Apart from my hair and my eyes, which were easily my best features as they were the thing people tended to comment on. My hair was naturally a very light blonde, was dead straight, and it came down just past my waist. It grew and grew and at times it was like the more I cut it, the longer it seemed to get. As such, I have had waist length hair for as long as I can remember. As I grew up, I had expected my hair to get darker like my parents, but if anything, it had gotten brighter and brighter as I got older. My skin was nicely tanned from a summer of sun worshiping, which really brought out the freckles I had across my nose and cheeks. My eyes were a very light blue with an interesting inner halo of aqua green, which again, didn't match my parents at all.

I swiftly pull my hair into a messy bun and secure it with a hair band. I was planning on heading down to dinner shortly, but I was feeling nervous about meeting the other students. I had always been quite introverted and preferred to try and blend into the background as much as possible. Starting a new school was daunting, but I was hoping to perhaps be a little less invisible at this school. I was turning seventeen in two months and I felt like now was the time to try growing up a little and pushing myself out of my comfort zone a little more.

My eyes fall on the necklace my mum had gifted me when I was much younger, which she told me had once belonged to my grandmother, and her mother before that. It was a pretty, silver sun charm on a delicate platinum chain, with an unusual yellow stone in the middle of the sun. I had never taken it off. I used to joke that it was our family crest, as we all just loved the sunshine. We holidayed in Dubai every year for the past eight and we had family out in Australia who we'd see every other Christmas during their summer. It was nice to feel like I had a bit of home with me, now, being on my own in an entirely new place.

I suddenly hear the sound of the door closing and I turn around sharply to see the girl from the photos standing by the door with a suitcase and a few bags at her feet. Somehow even prettier in person, I cant help but feel immediately intimidated by her, just as I had been by some of the more confident girls at my last school.

She really was flawless.

She stands there in a dark blue satin jumpsuit and gold sandals. Her long dark hair is in an immaculate french braid and her smokey eye makeup makes her bright green eyes pop. With her amazing bone structure she looks like a teen model and definitely older than just sixteen years old. I shrink back a little before I realise my expression is probably quite nervous. Thankfully, a warm smile spreads unexpectedly across her face and she excitedly comes toward me to give me a friendly hug. I freeze for a second before returning it tentatively. I was not used to being hugged by anyone except my parents.

"Hi! Welcome to Exton, I'm Freya, and I am really happy to meet you!" she says stepping back and looking me up and down with an intrigued look on her face. I look at her again too. She is ridiculously pretty and in comparison I now feel so plain, standing there in my jeans and a plain white t-shirt.

"Hi...I'm Ella. Well it's actually Eliana, but I prefer Ella. It s-sounds less like a character from a fantasy novel," I shrug, cursing myself for stammering a little, but I always do when I am nervous. She nods and continues to smile at me warmly.

"Cute. I quite like Eliana, but sure thing, Ella," she replies with a subtle wink. She starts arranging some throw pillows on her bed that she has taken out of her wardrobe and begins putting items from her suitcase into her bedside table.

I watch with interest as she unzips a large suit bag and removes a number of gorgeous looking clothes on hangers before stuffing them into her already packed wardrobe. She looks satisfied at the contents and somehow manages to push the door closed with some effort.

"The sure fire sign you have too many clothes is when you struggle to shut the doors properly," she jokes. She did seem nice and friendly and I feel a bit less nervous. I bite my lip and decide to take the plunge.

"Umm...I was about to head down to get some dinner if you wanted to join me?" I say timidly with my hands stuffed awkwardly into my back pockets. At least I haven't stammered this time, thankfully. She turns to look at me as if I had just said the magic words.

"Yes. Definitely. I am starving and it's SUNDAY. Trust me, you haven't had a Sunday roast until you've had one here," Freya says with excitement. My stomach growls; I do enjoy a roast dinner. I slip my running trainers on which were one of just two pairs of shoes that I own aside from my school shoes.

We exit the room and start to walk down the corridor together.

"So...what brings you here to Exton?" Freya asks me as we walk toward the atrium.

"Well...I've lived In London for a while and just felt like I needed a change. I just really needed to get away from the city," I sigh.

"But specifically...why Exton?" Freya presses on. I find this to be a bit of a strange question. It was just a school.

"Umm...I don't know really. I could've gone to a few other places in the area but it just seemed like a good fit. The front page of the website made everyone look so happy here. The Ofsted report on science was also really good-"

I am suddenly interrupted by another dark haired girl who is rapidly running up to us in the corridor.

"Freya! Oh my goddess you won't believe it," she begins excitedly, "Ava! Just now...she...ugh. Freya. It's...Chase," she says, barely able to contain herself.

Obviously I have no idea who Ava or Chase are, or what was going on in the slightest, and I stand there in silence while they have their exchange. Freya's immaculate eyebrows hit her hairline at this news....whatever it was.

"Wait, are you serious, AB? Chase?" Freya exclaims, looking incredulous and immediately pulling her phone out of one of the pockets of her jumpsuit.

"Yep, Chase. Man, Ava is just the luckiest girl, it seems," the girl says with a tut before sighing loudly, her face showing supreme disappointment.

I find the whole exchange utterly confusing and I wonder at what point they'll realise I am still standing here. I start to consider if I should leave or say something as Freya's fingers drum away rapidly on her phone for a minute before she looks up at me quite apologetically.

"Oh, gosh; I am so sorry, Ella...I am being so rude. This, is Annabelle. Well, I tend to call her AB for short. Annabelle, this is Ella, my normal roommate," she says, nodding toward the other girl before continuing down the corridor, still engrossed in her phone.

Did she just call me a normal roommate?

At least she thinks I am normal...

Annabelle is a little shorter in height and has a really cute, straight, shoulder length dark brown bob that suits her amazing bone structure beautifully. She has an almond shaped face and a deep tan, clearly having recently escaped the unpredictable British climate for somewhere far more glorious. Like Freya, she is dressed stylishly and once again I feel a little out of my depth. I notice a sapphire ladies Rolex on her wrist, that her top was definitely pure silk, and her cardigan was clearly made of high quality cashmere. Annabelle was evidently loaded. She smiles at me and offers me her arm.

"Great to meet you Ella, shall we go get some food?" I take a deep breath and nod anxiously, taking her offer of an arm as we follow Freya down the corridor. I am feeling very surprised at how welcoming they have already been. I'd been here less than three hours and already I had two girls treating me like I was their friend.

...and I was pretty happy about that.

Something seemed special about these two girls, they just oozed a level of confidence I could only dream of; I was dying to know what their secret was.

I am floored when we enter the main hall which is located down a corridor off the main atrium. It reminds me more of the main body of a cathedral merged with a conservatory rather than a school hall. It has the same baroque features and ornate elements as the atrium, but instead of a normal ceiling it has a huge glass dome that shows the evening September sky above. It is seriously cool. While I am wondering how on earth they keep the glass so clean, Freya links my arm with hers and marches me over to the food service area on the far wall to get food. Before us is the most delicious looking food. Several types of meat, crispy roast potatoes, fluffy Yorkshire puddings, roasted vegetables, stuffing...my mouth is watering. This did look really good.

"Every. Sunday," Freya says slowly and deliberately, nodding her head with excited eyes as if she can read my mind.

We sit down at 'their table' with our dinner trays and I notice Freya craning her neck to look around the room as if she is looking for someone. I decide to take a look around myself and I soon feel like I have wandered onto the set of a classic American teen movie.

Actually....it is weird.

The girls here all have perfect hair, perfect figures, basically perfect everything. Suddenly, Freya isn't the only modelesque looking person here, not by a long shot.

Was I actually on a movie set right now?

Don't even get me started on the guys.

I am not sure why they weren't all on the front page as the main focus of the website. Holy cow, I'd never seen this many good looking, buff guys all in one place before. The contents of the hall looks like a crowd of models auditioning for a high-end catalogue.

The table next to us features some stereotypical 'giggly girls' who are chatting endlessly about some guy called Austin. In my American teen movie scenario I assume he would be the school heartthrob, who probably plays for school's sports team. The equivalent at my last school wasn't a nice person in the slightest, wasn't particularly intelligent and yet still had girls fawning over him all the time - just because he was good looking. I never got the appeal of arrogance, but each to their own. The more I look around at everyone, the more I am convinced that I have indeed somehow stumbled onto a movie set. I am starting to feel like the plainest person in the entire room as I shrink down into my chair.

"Is it mandatory to work out here or something?" I mutter, as a male student walks past, his pecs and washboard abs being hugged by a tight white t-shirt.

Holy moly.

I feel my cheeks flush unexpectedly. I hadn't bothered to consider boys at all at my last school, but within the past few minutes I have started to think that might need to change.

"Ha...no, but I guess a healthy body means a healthy soul, right?" Freya winks at me, stung a whole yorkshire pudding into her mouth.

"If you're up for it, self defence and combat classes are on every morning at six!" Annabelle says happily, pretending to flex a bicep. I choke on my drink.

"Every day?" I ask incredulously, "are you expecting to be attacked or something?" I joke. Freya coughs and clears her throat, just as her phone buzzes loudly on the table.

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Freya

My skepticism had been right on point, as usual.

Austin's girlfriend Ava had just turned eighteen, but instead of Austin, it turned out her destined mate was Chase instead.

Chase was the recently appointed alpha of his pack, Sapphire Lake, after his dad had been killed during an attack on their pack. Their pack was two counties away and they'd had some issues with a neighbouring pack in recent times.

While I eat my dinner I wonder how Austin is doing.

I knew him well enough to know he was probably pretty damn heartbroken. He wasn't a cold hearted jerk like almost every other Alpha and Beta that went here.

All throughout dinner I look for him, but he doesn't come in for dinner.

Maybe he'd already been?

Would he come later?

Should I just bring him some food to his room if he doesn't want to come down?

Nah...his best friend and roommate, Ollie, would only eat it himself.

I was a little concerned. I was his younger sister but I was quite protective of him, especially now.

I notice Ella watching a group of annoying girls on the table next to us, and I hear them mention my brother's name excitedly several times.

I sigh loudly.

Alpha Lycans did tend to be quite physically attractive, so there had never been a shortage of female admirers for Austin. Now that he was apparently single, it would probably only get worse.

He wasn't going to be interested in any of them.

He had only ever really wanted to find his destined mate. There had been no casual dating or random hookups like every other high-ranking Lycan in our year and above, particularly like his friend Ollie.

Guess Austin is going to be even more of a hot topic now... Mira goads me. She knows I find the worship of him annoying.

Oh good. Well, they're free to waste their time, I guess! I reply sharply.

My phone buzzes on the table; it's a text message from our dad.

Dad: it's disappointing news for Aus, but young love doesn't always equal mates for life. We will have an eighteenth birthday event for him at the school and invite envoys from all the packs.

I snort out loud to myself. Austin would hate a huge party, but actually, that sort of thing was quite commonplace in the bigger packs, and I think it sounds quite fun.

We finish dinner and I head back to my room with Ella after we say goodnight to Annabelle.

Just before I go inside my phone buzzes again. I feel relieved when I see who it's from.

Austin: Usual place?

FINALLY.

"Hey Ella, I'll be back later, I'm just going to meet my brother for a bit. His girlfriend just...well, she...broke up with him. I need to go tend to his emotional wounds the way only a younger sister can," I tell Ella with an apologetic smile before I head back down the corridor.