

Letters Sent To Eternity

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Chapter 111

62 – Kennedy

I have been enjoying my time better in this pack. Sarah has been so amazing, she knows so much about the history and the way the pack works. I wonder if she is like an elder or something. It's been a long time since I have laughed this much and I am loving every second. She has no filter and tells everyone like it is, but with the kindest

heart I have ever seen.

“So then they were all running naked to the packhouse like their tails were on fire!” Sarah finishes her story about Ryker, Josh, Bennet and Danny when they were about ten and I am laughing so hard I almost fall out of my chair. Robin is slightly more dignified, but she has probably heard this story before.

“I wish I could hear more stories like this. With so many elders here I'm sure there is so much more history I could learn about his pack. It is so big and wonderful, it's like nothing I have experienced before.” I

can't even hide my fascination with Dark Moon. The more I learn, the more I want to know. It's nothing like the rumors that surround it. But, I see how the rumors probably work in Ryker's favor keeping rogue wolves in check and protecting pack members that are literally hours away. I have even started to bring my schoolwork out to the kitchen when I know Sarah will be here just to spend time with her.

She smiles at me. “I'm sure I could introduce you to a few other old timers like me. We all love telling our own versions of the same stories over and over again.”

“You are not old Sarah, stop!” I slam my book shut. I cannot take in another word and I am about to call it quits

anyway.

“Are you frustrated with something in your studies, girly?” Sarah looks at me while Robin checks the endless emails she has on her phone. “You have been rather harsh to your book. Did it offend you?” She chuckles.

“No, but the longer I spend here, the less I see the point in finishing any of this. High School and a business degree are useless. At least when I was home I had a business to study for. Now I don't know what to do and I'm not allowed to choose what I want to be when I grow up. Why waste money and time on something that will mean nothing in the end?”

That was way more word vomit than I planned on, but I'm frustrated. I was even planning on leaving Silver Crescent to get my degree and if I chose to return it would be on my terms with something to contribute to the benefit of the pack. Now I just feel like a mooch.

"Well, your alpha has plenty of money to throw around, so he should treat you to whatever you want. If it's school, then why not let him pay for it?"

"Because I haven't earned it. It's really that simple. He doesn't owe me anything, and I won't take what I haven't worked for. I have been living off of pack leaders' money for the last three years and everyone says it's fine or not a big deal, but I don't like it. I am paying for it with my personal choices and freedom being taken away. I don't like that decisions about my life have been made for me and about me without any input from me for so long. But because I can't fund my own things I can't really complain. It makes me feel ungrateful at the same time as I feel frustrated."

I scrub my hands over my face. I'm not making any sense now. This is what happens when you are cooped up for so long. The weather is finally too cold to go outside even with a blanket and heater, so my cabin fever has hit a

new level.

"I am so sorry ladies, I need to go answer these emails with phone calls otherwise nothing will get done right. Robin pops up from her chair and takes off as fast as one can in a pencil skirt.

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"What would make you feel like you are earning your place here, maybe I can help." Sarah finishes chopping veggies and scoots a plate towards me.

"At this point anything that helps to make the pack better, or more efficient. There's no way that I can't **help** with something around here. The pack is so big, Ryker has been in this packhouse less than a handful **of** times since I have been here. But, he clearly doesn't think I am capable of anything or doesn't trust me **yet**. I know my Aunt Beth was more busy than Uncle James at times. I know the luna is supposed to be working for the pack."

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"Well, we have a greenhouse that some **of** us oldies work at throughout the winter. We don't love the cold as much as the youngins do and it's the best place for pack gossip. And my lanterns have finally been put to bed for the winter, so that's where I will be." She chuckles at the conspiracy. "You've mentioned the pups almost every day, you could go play with them. Some of their mammas would appreciate their energy being burned off. And a few guys keep their field clear of leaves in the fall and snow in the winter so they never have **to** find a place to play. It keeps them out of trouble."

“Am I allowed to leave though? Do you know something I don’t? The last direction that was yelled at me after Bennet got attacked while protecting me was ‘don’t leave the packhouse.’ It was pretty clear.”

“If memory serves, Ryker is very much like his father in that respect. When something they care about is threatened, they lash out, even at the person they are trying to protect. I’m not excusing the behavior,” She puts her hands up like I might argue with her. “It’s an asshole thing to do, but it is an inherited trait. And usually an overreaction they don’t remember having.”

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“I know he cares about Bennet. But I think Ryker might have threatened him. Bennet and I haven’t spoken much since the attack.” It sucks how bad saying those words out loud hurts. “Ryker, for sure, has made his point that he does not care about me. He’s stuck though because his wolf wants me around or needs me around, or something like that. I’m not sure which is more accurate. I know a bit about mates, but it wasn’t anything I thought I needed to know about, so I didn’t pay close attention in school. I know he is trying to find a way to reject me so we can both move on with our lives. I just wish it wasn’t at the bottom of his priority list.”

“Did he say he was going to reject you?” She sounds horrified at the idea.

“Not in words, but the former luna has books in her office and I have been through most of them. One talks about mates, the good and the bad stuff that can happen. I was trying to figure out if it said anything about human mates. I haven’t found anything yet, but I did find one that talks about infidelity and how serious it is. Well, I have the marks to prove that Ryker doesn’t want me, if I am to believe the latest book.”

“What?! Let me see!” I jump as she shouts at me.

I’m afraid I said something wrong looking at her face right now. I really don’t want to show her. It’s embarrassing really. Clearly Amy’s accusation when I got here was right and I don’t please or can’t please the alpha, so he’s looking elsewhere.

“Kennedy, please show me.” She softened her look at me, now I see pity. She already knows what she’s going to find. I think Greta saw them last week too, but she didn’t say anything so I can’t be sure. “This is not your fault and you have done nothing wrong, but I need to see.”

“Will he get in trouble somehow if you find what you’re looking for?” I don’t know why I care, but I do. Stupid mate bond. Clearly it only works one way.

“Not any real trouble no, but I want to be sure for your peace of mind. Please.” I don’t believe that at all. This is bad, the worst type of betrayal.

I stand and meet her halfway around the island. There isn't anyone around that I can see and I don't really care if Bennet knows. He's lurking behind a wall. I wonder if he knows I can sense him near me? One more deep breath and then I raise my shirt. There are layers of tennis ball sized bruises in different shades of purple, yellow and green surrounding most of my abdomen and wrapping around to my back. I can't ever get a good look at the back ones in my mirror though.

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"Did these just show up?"

"Kind of, but I always had a stomach ache or cramps before. I thought maybe I did something in the gym or bumped into something or maybe was getting sick, but that's not what these are, are they? I've been getting them for weeks."

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Chapter 113

"Sarah! Seriously?!" Bennet barges into the room, eyes wild and sweating.

"Bennet are you okay?" I pull my shirt down and move towards him. He does not look well at all. "What's wrong?"

"It's nothing I can't handle, but why didn't you say anything about that sooner?" He's hurt and really angry.

"I'm not allowed to talk to you or be around any of you guys. I don't want to get you in trouble again." I reach **for** him, but he pulls away jittery, like it's against his will. I nod, not trying to hide the tears. "See. Being around me just gets everyone hurt or in trouble." I whisper and walk out of the room. I hear them talk as I round the corner.

"I swear to the Goddess..." Bennet grunts.

"I know. You are doing what you can, but the Goddess has a plan and they have to see this through." Sarah knows why I have bruises. Bennet knows and neither can stop it. I just let the tears fall. There is only so much neglect a person can take

I sat in my massive tub contemplating just sinking under the bubbles, but I couldn't do it. It's too **easy**. It gives Ryker the out he wants without getting his hands dirty. I'm going to go see the pups in the morning and come up with some way to feel better while my mate is literally f*cking injuries and pain onto me.

I tossed and turned all night, not in pain though, thankfully. I just can't turn my mind off. I don't know what I did wrong **or** what I can do to fix Ryker's perception of me. I shouldn't give a sh*t. I know better, but can't help it.

I didn't have any nightmares because I didn't sleep, so there's that bonus. I get dressed, but I don't even care if I match. I just want to be warm and comfortable. I throw my hair in a messy braid and pull on a knit hat. The wind has started to bite a little as it gets colder, but I will stay out as long as I can. Let's see if anyone tries to stop me or even says anything. Maybe my prison has been self-imposed because I care too much about people I don't even know.

Just like my first morning here I walk out the front door with no one around to give me a hard time. I am bundled head to toe in Rayna's fluffy snow pants and down winter coat. I don't know why she has this stuff, wolves don't tend to mind the cold or are even affected by it. But, my thin human skin is grateful for it.

No one even stopped me. I probably could have walked right out of the pack and never looked back when I first got here. Stupid assumptions. I roll my eyes and head down the long drive on the path to the pup's field. I take a deep breath of the clean air as I walk, just being outside makes me feel a little better, my head clearer. I can hear the pups' laughter and taunting voices as I approach the field.

"Kennedy!" Emily shouts as she runs up to me. "Where have you been? The boys said you was here like forever ago!" She waves her hands exasperatedly. "What took you so long?"

"I had a few things to do before I could come out and play. How have you been? I've missed you." She wraps her arms around my waist in a quick hug, then grabs my hand, dragging me the rest of the way to the field.

I say hi to the other kids and then they get started on a new game so they can show off how much they have all improved since I saw them last.

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Chapter 114

63 -Kennedy

As I watch, I know when Bennet found me. Maybe my assumptions weren't that far off. I can feel his presence like pressure from a storm. It pushes against me from whatever direction he's hiding from me. He's behind me to my right. Probably behind a tree. I don't even have to look to know. A constant, always here, always watching, just not close enough to be a comfort. Then it hits me. A sensation I haven't felt in a long time. I stop breathing, thinking maybe I have finally lost my mind looking for that connection since I got here. I blink slowly concentrating on the pressure coming from my left. Then the scent hits me, rosemary and mint. He's here, when I finally am ready to give him up, he shows up.

I take another deep breath to stifle a sob, blink again and keep my eyes forward. I'm torn between the need to know what he's up to and wanting to run away. I have barely had eye contact with him since the incident with Amy in t

he breakfast room. I don't know what he could want with me after confirming he hasn't been loyal. I see the massive black wolf step out of the tree line in my peripherals. I slowly inhale his scent again and I can feel my whole body relax. I feel light and calm all of a sudden and when his wolf sits next to me I can't resist leaning into the heat radiating off of him.

The alpha wolf doesn't move to look at me, just sits quietly observing the pups. Or, more likely, observing Bennet and my guards and probably berating them for something he finds wrong. There it is, my irritation is back. I have to keep it strong to fight this stupid bond.

A loud Whoop! comes from the field taking my attention and I see Emily barreling towards me.

"Did you see? Did you see? Kennedy! Did you see that goal? It was so amazing!" She jumps into my lap wrapping her arms around me and I can't help laughing. "Did you see?" She pulls back and looks in my eyes.

"It was amazing. But, tell me about it. It was hard to see from way over here." I have no idea what she's talking about, I was too focused on the Alpha wolf next to me.

She launches into a play by play of her moves around Todd and the other kids and how she was able to score around three boys when none of her teammates were open. Her story is barely done when she looks over my shoulder. "Ohmygosh! The alpha! You know the alpha?"

I giggle again. "Yeah, something like that."

She leans into me and tries to whisper, but five year olds don't really understand the concept. "He's really big and kinda scary."

I laugh again, this time looking at the massive black wolf next to me. He is gigantic and gives off an aura of power, but I have never felt afraid when he is around. "Eh, not really. I bet if you asked, Alpha would let you pet him behind his ears." I had to stifle a laugh as the wolf's head whips towards me. If he had eyebrows, they would be in his hair line right now.

I hear Bennet chuckle behind me but keep my focus and eye contact on the wolf in front of me. He's here and he has some atoning to do. I will start with some embarrassment and humility.

"Can I?" Emily's question comes out small but clear as she lifts her hand.

Alpha looks from me to her and back, but I won't give him any guidance. He can interact or not, I won't force him. This is his pack not mine. How his pack members see him is on him. This will set the tone for the rest of these kids forever. They have idolized him from a distance, now it's time for him to be real.

He tilts his head into her hand and she gasps. "He's so soft! I thought he would be scratchy like my daddy's face." She giggles again as he leans in and knocks her deeper into my lap. We both laugh as I catch her. She grabs both

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sides of his muzzle and looks deep into those ruby eyes. "You are still a little scary." she snickers and tilts her head. "But the scary bit helps you keep us safe right?" Alpha dips his head

a little in her firm grasp. "Then that's okay." She shrugs. With that she lets him go and runs over to the boys who have made a semicircle watching the interaction. I guess that conversation is over.

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Chapter 115

It is funny to see them tongue tied because the alpha is here. I know he helps with their training occasionally, but maybe he isn't as interactive as I thought. I sigh, stand and turn to head in, I'm getting cold, even with Alpha's body heat right next to me. I don't even know why he's here, but clearly the wolf part of him likes me more than the human part of him. I wonder if Alpha took over and brought him here.

I can feel him, Bennet and the other four warriors following me. It feels like having stalkers that are really bad at the covert part. No one talks or makes a motion to walk next to me. They all just trail behind, it's so weird. Once we make it back to the packhouse I head towards the office I have been using, shrugging off my coat leaving it on a bench in the entryway. I have one more final to turn in. I'm basically done, but I haven't had the motivation to really put effort into completing it. It's a valid reason to walk away from all of them. That is, if they ask, but they

won't.

Bennet and the guys stop in the foyer and do whatever they do while I wander around the house, Alpha keeps following me, silently. As I walk the last stretch of hallway, I make my decision, I should at least give it a try. I have been studying all of the books the former luna kept in here. There is a lot of history on wolves, the Moon Goddess, pack dynamics and mates. I found out how to reject a mate and nothing in any of these books says a human can't reject their wolf mate. I might as well get it over with while he's here.

I move towards the couch and table that is covered in my stuff and look out the window. I didn't really have a plan in place, but if this is my last look I am going to make it count. I take a deep breath and let it out slowly as I turn around. Alpha is just sitting there, in the center of the office. I think he's looking around, but without facial expressions, I can't really tell what he's thinking.

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"I don't even know if this is how it works, but here goes." Alpha tilts his head. That expression I understand. I'm not making any sense. I can feel my heart breaking and my eyes well up. It's just words, but they hurt. "I, Kennedy Matthews, reject you, Ryker Tryn as my....mmpf."

"Don't finish that sentence." Ryker growls in my ear as a single tear drips from my eye and down his fingers. He somehow shifted and got his hand around my mouth before I could complete the rejection. "Why would you say that? How do you even know how to reject a mate?"

I scrunch my eyebrows, sorrow replaced by irritation, and look at him in my best 'you're a moron' way while his massive hand is still secure around my face. He doesn't move, just keeps staring at me, so I gesture to the wall to wall shelves of books and roll my eyes.

"Why? Did you find someone else?" Does he sound disappointed? I tap his hand on my face and raise my eyebrows again. "I'll let go, just promise you won't finish that... sentence."

I let out an irritated breath and roll my eyes again, but nod. Fine. If he wants to talk we can talk...for about five minutes before I punch him in the hypocritical teeth. Oh yeah, there's the fire I need.

He lets me go slowly and steps back. "Give me just a second to get some shorts. Don't do anything or go anywhere." He steps backwards towards the door like I am a tiger ready to pounce. Not an incorrect assumption.

"I got you covered boss." Josh steps in the open office doorway, shorts in hand. Ryker's head whips around.

"When did you get here?" I ask, not very nicely.

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Chapter 116

"I figured he would do something stupid, so I came over when I got done with the new school."

"Hey!" Ryker tries to talk, but I cut him off with a wave of my hand.

"You built a new school? When? Where?" I don't even know why I am curious. I shouldn't care. "Ugh."

"We will have plenty of time to tell you about all the projects we have going on Luna, as soon as you're done here. And please remember that whatever you decide, we have all been feeling your separation, and we understand." He points out into the hallway where Bennet, Danny and Greta are piled behind him, faces unreadable. They all heard me start my rejection and did nothing to stop it. I don't know how to feel about that revelation either.

I rub my face and hear the door click. They understand. What do they understand? What do they mean they have been feeling my separation? None of this makes any sense.

“He means that they know you are unhappy.” I look up through my fingers at Ryker. Did I ask that outloud or can he read my mind? “Do you want to leave because you found someone else?”

I let my arms fall. “Is that really the only thing you can think of as to why I would not want to stay in your pack a second longer?” I am already exhausted with this conversation. “Ryker, you don’t want me. Why on earth would I want to be where I am not wanted and I have other options?”

“What other options?

You aren’t seeing someone else?” I can’t take it anymore. I move before my brain has registered what my body is doing and slap him across the face.

“NO! You asshole! Even if I wanted to, no one but the packhouse omegas are allowed to talk to me. AND YOU WOULD KNOW, JUST LIKE I KNOW!” I rip my t-

shirt up to show the mottled green and purple skin around my abdomen. “I f*cking know you’ve been with other women and it hurts.” I sob, letting all my emotions from the last month and a half flow out. “Do you have any idea how much it hurts when your mate cheats? Do you?!” I try to scream, but it comes out screechy and weak. “It is so painful at times that I have fallen down or thrown up. And there isn’t anyone around to help me, because

no one is allowed to be friends with me thanks to you. Bennet can’t talk to me or touch me. If he knew, he had to just watch.” I rub my stomach trying to hold back the pain that comes with deep breaths.

“I didn’t...know. You don’t have a wolf, I didn’t think it would affect you. I thought I just couldn’t feel you with anyone else. I...I’m...” His chest is heaving like he just ran a race.

“Don’t tell me you’re f*cking sorry.” I tug my shirt back down and start to pace in front of the couch. “If you would have just talked to me, we could have figured this out together. But you decided that you were the only one that could get hurt because I am a human and don’t feel the same way you do.”

“How did you know where to find the information?” He gestures towards the shelves.

“Seriously? What else was I supposed to do here by myself? You really just thought so low of me didn’t you? Is that all women are to you, s*x toys? F*cking stupid ornaments?”

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Chapter **117**

64 – Kennedy

I'm so angry that he bypassed how I feel and just moved on to how I know about rejecting. Was he just hoping I wouldn't figure it out so I can't hurt his wolf? My body is shaking in rage and I don't know how much longer I can stand here and have this fight. I already hit him once, I don't think He'll let me do it again. I need to work this out somehow or I might explode.

"No! Of course not." He growls. "Based on my interactions with Robin you should know that."

"You do realize I've never seen you interact with her right? Outside of your warriors and Amy, the only time I've seen you with people was at Rayna's party. And that was mostly flirting and schmoozing."

"Did my mother show you these books? It sounds like something she would do."

"No, I've never been introduced to her. I spend a lot of time in here, alone," I wave a finger around the office, "I figured no one would mind if I put everything back the way I found it. The days are long and sometimes the nights are worse." I slump on the couch. After that confession it's like my energy cord has been cut. Everything drained out of me all of a sudden.

"Greta said you have dinner with my mother a couple times a week." I take a deep breath in and just stare at him, his confusion is real. He's still glued to the spot in the middle of the office, arms hanging by his side. He's just as lost.

The only person, not a packhouse omega, I do anything with regularly is...f*ck, really? I sigh and look up at him slowly, my annoyance increasing.

I take a deep breath in and can't help the huff of a laugh that escapes me. "That tracks. Your mother wouldn't happen to be named Sarah, would she?"

"Uh, yeah." His confirmation is wary, on the defensive. At least he's caught on that I am angry.

"The one person who has been able to talk to me has also been lying to me. Or I guess leaving information out. Figures. Now I know why she can talk to me when no one else can. You can't command her." I roll my eyes.

"My mom is a meddler for sure, but I'm sure her heart was in the right place."

"She's able to ignore your stupid alpha command for people to stay away from me. But she never told me who she was. I'm done being lied to, Ryker." I let my head flop back. "Why are you here, now? You have been avoiding me since you told me we are mates. I have given up trying to do anything to get your attention and just talk. I am ready for you to let me go and find whatever you think is better. Just get on with it." I wave my hand flippantly.

He whispers so low I almost miss it. "I don't want anyone else. I don't want you to go anywhere."

I raise

my shirt again, not looking up at him. "Well, I have some pretty solid evidence that is complete bullsh*t."

"Tell me, in all those books you read, did you find anything that says how to make a human a pack member without hurting them? Or how to claim them, mark them without killing them? Because I haven't been able to find a thing and I can't risk it...risk you."

I finally look up at him. "What?"

"You are human, Kennedy. Fragile. I don't know what making you a pack member will do to you. I

don't know what marking you will do to you and no one has answers for me. The more time I spend with you, the closer I am to you the more attached my wolf gets. He is affected by you, if something happens to you it could fatally wound him. I can't risk him being distracted or having his priorities all over the place. The pack needs him, needs me, at

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full capacity. You have already been attacked twice since you've been here. I don't know the best way to keep you safe. Making you a pack member might hurt or kill you, which hurts everyone. Marking you might kill **you**, which hurts everyone. I have tried to distract myself. It's not a good excuse, but it's **all** I've got. Staying away from

you has hurt everyone, not just us. But my wolf won't **let** me stay away, my team won't let me stay away. Not anymore. We need you." He sits in a chair across from me. "I honestly thought Bennet was exaggerating when he came **to** me last night."

I wait for more, but apparently that was a whole thought. "What are you talking about?"

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"He came to see me and he has never looked that angry at me before. The look on his face was something I have only ever seen in battle." He rubs his face and looks right in my eyes. "I didn't even get out a 'hello' when he decked me, twice. Right in the same spot you hit me, actually." He laughs at himself, rubbing the top of his cheek with his thumb. "He said you were covered in bruises and he would punch me in the d*ck until I had the same visual pain that you did if he saw any new ones. Just so you know, he broke my nose and I would have two black eyes if I wasn't able to heal the way I do. Your gamma is fond of you and did you justice. Something I would expect from him towards anyone who disrespected you."

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Chapter 118

I let a small chuckle out. At least I know he does have my best interests at heart, even if he can't talk to me. "So what now? Where does this leave us? You won't let me reject you. You won't reject **me**. You won't make me pack. You won't mark me as your mate or luna. You don't want me to train, but hate that I am too weak to protect myself. You don't want me to leave the safety of the packhouse, but I am bored out of my mind and school isn't distracting enough for me. You don't want to teach me about your pack, but don't like that I'm learning things from your mother's books. If I am a luna, I should be doing something to help make this pack better, but you don't want my help either."

"You don't need a mark to show that you are a Luna. The pack can tell who you are to me and to them."

"You said your wolf won't let you stay away. What does that mean exactly?" I'm ignoring the luna comment since he basically ignored mine.

"I guess, like Josh said, we will start to introduce you to all of the projects that we have going on. If that is what you want. I would like for you to sit with me at meals, if that is alright. Bennet has made it difficult to get to know you through him. He seems to think I need to put some effort **in**." He gives me that half smile that makes butterflies flip around in my stomach. Shut up mate bond... I'm still pissed.

I can't help but smile at the thought of Bennet being difficult though. "He's a great gamma. I need to work on his patrol scheduling though. It's predictable. I manage to avoid my babysitters pretty frequently." I smile at the game I made for myself. Just another way to practice tracking and masking. The look on Ryker's face is just icing on the cake.

"What do you mean 'avoid them?' **If** you are in the packhouse, how do you avoid them?"

I just shrug my shoulders. I will let him suffer and feel the irritation of me coming and going as I please in the only place I'm allowed to roam around. "What else can I do?" I'm pushing his thing as far as I can.

"Ideally you would travel with me, but I don't know if I can handle that yet. Some close, short trips maybe, but I would lose my mind if you were attacked en route again."

I just nod. What else am I supposed to do? It sounds like I might be getting some freedom, even if it's not the way I planned. I'm not going to say anything that might change his mind. He seems to be reasonable right now.

“Can I help?” He points to my stomach, but my confusion must show. “I can help with the bruises and the pain.”

I look down, not realizing I was rubbing at one of the more intense bruises.

“Uh sure, I guess.” I slide to one side of the couch as he moves over, slowly. He must really think I’m skittish the way he moves around me.

“Umm...I need to...umm...touch your skin.” He’s so nervous. This is not the intimidating alpha I know. I lift my shirt to expose the bruises and lean back on the couch. I can’t tell if his sharp gasp is good or bad. If I’m being honest, the lean was to make me look more appealing as much as it was to give him better access. I can’t seem to help myself when he’s around. I seem to always be looking for his approval.

He places his hand on my stomach and it’s like an ice pack soothing the ache. His giant hand splay, his pinky is dangerously close to my waistband and his thumb is touching the underwire of my bra. It is not lost on me that he just needs to move his hand a little in either direction to turn this very innocent interaction naughty. The tingle in my nerves is also helping numb the pain. My fatigue has gone away at least.

I am dizzy, his scent engulfs me and I have no idea how long we sit here for. But I do know he is close enough for me to see the dark green flecks in his emerald eyes. He keeps looking from my face to my abdomen. I’m not sure what he’s looking for, but he says nothing. I try to keep my breathing even as the sensation goes from soothing to

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fiery tingles.

“Umm. I think it’s all gone.” I grab his wrist to pull his hand off of me. This is too intimate for me right now. I can’t have him this close. He looks at me, a dazed expression on his face.

“Oh, uh, alright.” He pulls back, slowly, unsure.

I look down at my stomach and it’s like nothing ever happened. It’s amazing what wolf healing **can** do.

“Knock, knock.”

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Chapter 119

65 – Kennedy

I scramble to stand as if we were caught making out. Well at least I know I can get a shot of energy whenever I need it. Just have to have contact with Ryker and it's like a bolt of electricity has zinged through me.

Sarah walks in with a look on her face like she was waiting for the right moment to interrupt. My Aunt Beth has the same look. Now that I know she's Ryker's mom, I'm interested to see what she says to me or if she acts differently, now that she doesn't have to pretend to be a servant in the pack.

They both have that look like they are having a conversation over mindlink without me and my anger flares again. This emotional sh*t is getting old. Why is trying to belong somewhere so f*cking exhausting? I don't say anything, turning to leave. They can talk about me when I'm not here.

"Wait, wait, wait. Where are you going? Don't go." Ryker wraps his arm around my waist to pull me back and I hate my body's reaction to him. My body likes it, even though my mind knows this is wrong. No one should have this kind of manipulative control over someone else.

"I'm done with people having conversations about me while I'm literally standing in the room. Let me go." I'm angry and hurt and sad and tired. What else do they want from me?

"It's not like that. Stay, please. This is your office. If you want us to leave we will go. Won't we mom?"

Sarah looks at me, making a decision. "You clearly have some more explaining to do. She is still ready to bolt. At least you made those bruises go away." She flips her hand at us and I realize that my shirt has ridden up where Ryker grabbed me. I snatch the hem to yank it down. Ryker isn't letting me go though. I don't know how this could get more embarrassing.

"Mom! Enough." His right arm pulls me closer to him while his left is clenching my hip bone. It's protective and possessive all at the same time and I really need to get my hormones in check.

"I just need some space, please." I tap his arm.

"Just don't run away, okay. This is your space. My Luna needs to feel comfortable in her space." He lets me go, slowly, and moves next to me. I can feel his body heat radiating. He's ready to grab me if I try to bolt again.

"A luna hasn't used this office in a long time." My stomach drops as she looks around. "We need to do something about that."

"Mom!!"

Damn. That was harsh, but accurate I guess.

“What? Kennedy clearly doesn’t like it. Do you, child? She doesn’t actually use it.”

“Umm. It’s fine. It’s just not mine. I needed a place to study, that’s all. This is where Robin put me.” I shrug. It’s the only explanation I have. I don’t think anything else will make sense to them.

“Of course it’s yours. Your meathead of a mate failed to explain that correctly. He’s a lot like his dad in that respect. I’m sorry sweetheart, that’s genetic. Can’t do much about it.”

“MOM! Stop. You’re not helping.”

“What are you talking about? She’s smiling isn’t she? It’s better than your efforts anyway.” I blink and fix my face. I can’t help but smile when Sarah is around. She’s funny without trying. But I really want to be angry at both of them. “Now we should all probably talk before she smacks you again. Although, I would love to have a video. It

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sounded like a good one.” I let out a giggle, I can’t help it. “See. You needed the help.”

“F*ck my life.” he presses his fingers into the bridge of his nose. “Kennedy, you are the luna. This is your **office** to do with as you wish. If you want to burn all my mother’s clutter, by all means I will help you.”

“Not all of it is clutter.” Why does my voice sound so small next to him?

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“See, my decorations are perfect.”

“I didn’t say that.” I tilt my head at her. Now that I know this was her office, I don’t feel as bad criticizing it. “There is so much stuff in here. I got claustrophobic the first day. I had to put a few things away.” I point to a few lower cabinets that I stuffed with sh*t from the shelves. I don’t even know how she fit it all.

She winks at me. “We can talk about renovations tomorrow. How about we get you both fed? Hmm.” She moves to leave.

“No, Sarah. I’m really not hungry. I’m just tired. Now that the pain is gone I want to try to sleep.” The sun has barely gone down behind the trees, but I’m not used to being around Ryker for this long and it’s getting overwhelming.

“Nonsense, you need to eat something. Cindy can bring your dinner here. I know you don’t like the dining room.” She looks to my left and I roll my eyes.

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Chapter 120

“What’s wrong with the dining room?” I can see him looking at me in my peripherals.

“Among many things, certain people are not super pleasant.” I side eye him, not wanting to go into details about Amy being a b*tch. I move to the couch again, knowing she’s not lettin g me out of here without eating. “If you are going to force me, I want something small. A sandwich and chips is fine.”

“Of course.” She flutters out like none of this is weird and awkward.

“Humpf.” I can’t help the sound that leaves me when I flop down. I’m done talking. I have so many questions and so much to say and yet my mind is blank. I can’t think of a single thing I want to say to Ryker right now. Instead, I lay on the arm of the couch and curl up. I do finally feel better physically and my body wants to rest.

Why am I so warm? I take a deep breath and let it out slowly. My body heat kicked in and I am sweating all of a sudden. What the hell? I might still be asleep, everything is dark, but my eyelids are heavy. I want to move. It all feels like slow motion.

I gasp as something wet touches my face. “Wha...the?” I mumble feeling the wetness on my face again. I can’t move my arms to wipe my cheek and my heart starts to race with the trapped feeling.. “Mmm.” I need my eyes to open, why won’t they open. Then a blast of moist heat hits my face as I hear a huff and my eyes slam open. I am looking at one ruby red eye inches from my face. “SH*T! Alpha! What the hell?” I screech.

I wiggle some more, looking around and figure out I am not in my office anymore. I’m wrapped in a blanket, on my bed with a massive wolf holding down the edges so I can’t get out. It is dark outside, the only light is the partial moon in the cloudless sky glowing just enough for me to make out Alpha’s silhouette and some of the silver highlights in his hair.

“How did I get up here?” I know he can’t answer me, but I stupidly ask anyway.

Alpha jumps down and heads towards my bathroom. Strange. Maybe he’s housetrained. I sit up adjusting so I can cool down. Before I can have any more moronic thoughts, Ryker walks back into my room with shorts on. Ah, they came prepared.

“You know he likes that you named him.” Ugh, his sleepy voice is sexy. He should not be allowed to look and sound like that when I just need to be angry with him.

“What do you mean?” I have to stay on track, figure out why they are here and get back to sleep.

“You called me ‘alpha’ twice and have referred to him as ‘Alpha’ since we brought you here. He likes that you distinguish each of us differently.”

“Does he have a name? I never really thought to ask.” I snuggle into my pillow since Ryker seems content to lean against the wall by the bathroom door across the room. “Some of the guys back home gave their wolves names. Or their wolves told us what they wanted to be called.”

“No. Even if he did, he would change it to ‘Alpha’ just for you.” He smiles my favorite little half smile again. 1

“Why was he in my bed?”

“You fell asleep almost as soon as you sat down, so I brought you up here. When I went to leave you told me to stay.” The intensity on his eyes is almost too much. “We both know that you prefer his presence when you are sleeping. So...” He shrugs, like it’s that simple.

“Are you going to leave?”

“I don’t want to, but I will if you ask.”

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“I don’t think I want you to go. But I’m still mad at you and I’m afraid.”

“Me too. I mean being afraid, not being mad.” Why does he have to be adorable and shy like this?

“Will you stay? In your human form, I mean.” I know I can be by Alpha and not have a problem. It’s no different than being next to Jeremiah or Bennet. But Ryker is who I am drawn to physically. Can I just be next to him with nothing else happening? Will my dreams or nightmares or whatever be better or worse with him in his human form? I don’t want to need him and I really am not ready to forgive him, but I have no problem exploiting the fact that I feel better with him around. He owes me that much.

I am practically shaking in anticipation of his answer. I might break if he says no. He said he’s been with other women while I’ve been here and that is the part that hurts the most. Does he even want me? I know we had our flirtation the last time I was here, but I thought I would never see him again so it didn’t matter. He never did tell me when he knew about me being his mate.

“I will do whatever you want me to.”