

# Letters Sent To Eternity

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Chapter 121

66 – Ryker

She shifts slightly and pats the empty spot beside her. The moment she does, a surge of panic rushes through me. Can I really do this—sit this close to her and keep my hands to myself? My wolf is restless, demanding more than just proximity. We have to take this slowly, for both our sakes. What if I'm too rough and end up hurting her? What if I mess this up so badly that she rejects me again? But then, maybe what we share now is better—safer. I'm used to fighting packs of wolves, tearing out throats, spilling blood without hesitation to protect my own. Yet here I am, standing at the edge of her bed, about to lie next to my mate, and I feel like I might throw up. My breath catches. I rub my palms on my shorts, hoping she doesn't notice my trembling.

"Is this okay?" I ask, reaching for the blanket, trying to sound steady and confident.

She nods softly. "I think so. Does this work for you? I just thought, if I can sleep well with my Alpha close, then it shouldn't be any different for you. But if you don't want to..." Her voice trails off as she looks down at her lap, uncertainty flickering in her eyes.

"Stop right there." I close my eyes and take a slow, deep breath. At this rate, I'm going to hyperventilate. That sounded harsher than I intended, but I need her to understand—I'm not distracted, not thinking of anyone else. I inhale again, steadying myself. Time to be honest. "I want to, really. It's just... I don't know how to do this."

She arches an eyebrow, clearly unimpressed by my cluelessness. "Go to... sleep?" Her tone is dripping with amusement, like I'm an idiot.

"No, no. I mean this." I gesture between us, standing awkwardly by her bed. "I've never done this before. I have no idea what I'm supposed to do."

She smirks. "Well, you have to get in the bed first." She tosses the blanket aside, and I nearly choke, coughing as my throat tightens.

How could I forget? Earlier, when I helped her to bed, I took off her jeans so she'd be comfortable. That was the only thought on my mind, but now, faced with her bare legs stretched out invitingly, I'm torn between regret and desire. Her skin looks so soft, so tempting. I want to trace every curve, memorize every inch with my hands.

"Okay... maybe this is a mistake." She starts pulling the covers back over herself. I have no idea how long I've been standing there, frozen and staring, trying to regain control, and now she thinks I don't want this. I've hurt her again. Damn it! Why can't I ever get this right?

“Wait! Just give me a second.” After a few more coughs, I manage to speak without sounding like a wreck. “I wasn’t ready for that. Sorry. You always catch me off guard. I just... I need to take it slow. Is that okay? Can we go really, really slowly?”

She nods, and I flex my hands a few times, willing myself to calm down. I can do this.

I sit on the edge of the bed, my heart pounding. “Can you tell me why you need slow?” Her voice is soft, almost tender. I’ve never heard her speak to me like this before, and I want to listen forever.

“I told you, I’ve never done this before.” She exhales deeply and leans back against the headboard, stretching her legs out in front of her.

“You do realize that means absolutely nothing to me, right?” I say, trying to lighten the mood.

“It’s hard to explain. And right now, I’m trying really hard not to touch you. Can we just sit like this for a while?”

“You want to lie next to me and not touch me? That’s not comforting at all.” She looks at me, eyes searching. “You know that, right? Is there somewhere else you’d rather be? Someone you don’t want smelling my scent on you?”

My head jerks toward her, surprised by the sudden intensity in her gaze. “Fuck no.”

“Then what’s your problem? Why is it so difficult for you to be close to me? Why won’t you touch me? Why are you being so cryptic?”

I rub my face with my hands, overwhelmed by the conflicting feelings her scent stirs inside me. It calms me and ignites me at the same time, leaving my mind in chaos. “If I touch you, I don’t know if I’ll be able to stop myself.”

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“What if I don’t want you to?” Her voice is so soft, barely audible, that I almost miss the words altogether.

“What?” I ask, leaning in slightly, trying to catch every syllable.

“You heard me,” she says, sliding down beside me and turning onto her side, her eyes locked onto mine with a mixture of vulnerability and resolve.

“I want to take things slow,” she begins, her tone gentle but steady. “I want to be sure about what I’m doing. I want to be careful with you. You deserve that—slow, thoughtful, and tender. You should be cherished. Honestly, I have no idea how to do that. I’ve never been with a woman before.” I close my eyes, bracing myself for a laugh or some kind of mockery, but none comes.

“Wait, what?” I hear the bed shift as she moves closer. “What exactly do you mean? Because I’ve seen the bruises before—you know, the ones that show you’ve been with other women.” She lifts her shirt slightly, pointing to the marks on her abdomen. In that moment, my gaze can’t help but catch the delicate black lace of her panties resting low on her hips, and I let out a soft groan.

“I’m sorry,” she murmurs, her confidence wavering as quickly as it had appeared. “I know I’m not in the same shape as the women you usually prefer.” Her voice shifts from tender reassurance to fragile insecurity in an instant.

She fumbles with her shirt, pushing it down with one hand while nervously reaching for the blanket with the other.

“Please don’t do that,” I say softly.

“Do what?” she replies, a hint of confusion in her voice.

“Compare yourself to anyone else. Do you have any idea how stunning you are? Please don’t cover up.”

“I just know I’m not your type. That’s all,” she whispers, looking away.

“You don’t know anything about me,” I say firmly.

“I know your reputation,” she counters, “and I’ve heard the rumors—those whispers floating around from the few times I’ve left the packhouse.”

“Well, rumors have been my way of keeping people in line for a long time,” I admit. “I let most of them slide as long as they don’t cause direct harm. And until now, the gossip about my love life has kept the vultures away.”

“You only like brunettes,” she says, almost accusingly.

“I’ve only ever been seen with brunettes,” I clarify.

“You have women ready to— and I quote—‘service you’ whenever you want, spread across every corner of your massive pack,” she says, her voice dropping a little. “Past tense. And just to be clear, ‘service’ means blowjob. Nothing more has ever happened, and I have never returned the favor.”

“But... how is that even possible? Girls talk,” I say, surprised.

“Not when they’ve been commanded,” she replies coolly. “And you can’t judge me for seeing other women when you had a trail of guys following you around, including my delta for a few days. How many of them have you actually been with? I know you were sleeping with Ben—it was written all over his face whenever he looked at you. Actually, I don’t even want to know about Danny. He’s one of my best friends, and I don’t want my wolf tearing him apart.”

I feel my wolf growl deep inside my chest, and for once, I don't silence it. It's irrational, but I'm irritated that she's been with other men.

"So you knew about us being mates that night on the balcony," I say quietly. "Why didn't you say anything then? Were you and Ben serious?"

"I'm going to keep ignoring your questions if you keep ignoring mine," she warns.

"Fine," I relent. "I was suspicious right up until we danced. When I touched you, I knew—you were ours."

"And I'll ask again," I press. "Why didn't you say anything? We could have talked a long time ago."

"You're human, Kennedy," she says softly. "And before you get all defensive, it's not an insult—it's just a fact. You don't heal as quickly as we do. Although, I know I can help you now. I wasn't sure if it would work because you don't have a wolf. I wasn't even sure if you could feel the mate bond the way we do. I just needed time to process everything, and no one made that easy for me. Now, answer me—were you and Ben serious?"

"No," I say, my voice steady. "And before you ask, yes, we slept together. I wanted it to be with someone I trusted before I left the pack for college. I never even thought I could be mates with someone—that was never on my mind."

"What about his mate?" she asks quietly. "You took that away from her first."

"Maybe. Maybe not," I reply honestly. "He made the choice. It wasn't forced on him. We both decided it would be better to get the awkward moments out of the way and figure out what we like and don't like. Why are you so hung up on this? You've already said you've been with other women."

"Not like that," she says softly.

"Huh?" I ask, confused.

I bury my face in my hands. "Kennedy... I'm a virgin."

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## Chapter 123

Wait a minute. "How can that be true?" I push myself up onto my knees, my hand instinctively rubbing my stomach again. This has to be a lie. There's no way the sensations I experienced were just in my head or some kind of trick.

He growls lowly, his voice rough. "Kennedy..."

"What? You can't just ignore me for weeks and then expect me not to be curious when you finally decide to speak," I snap, frustration bubbling beneath the surface.

He closes his eyes, taking a deep breath as if trying to steady himself. “Can we just go back to sleep and talk about this tomorrow?”

“No chance. Tell me how it’s possible you’re a virgin. I know exactly what I felt, what happened to me.”

“I’m not afraid to answer questions,” he says quietly, “though some answers might not be what you want to hear. But please...”

“Then what the hell is wrong with you?” I almost yell again, unable to understand. “Why won’t you even look at me?” I inch closer, aching to reach out and touch his cheek despite the anger simmering inside me. The need for connection is overpowering, yet I hold back, waiting.

“Do you have any idea what I’ve wanted to do to you since that night on the balcony?” His voice is low, tense. “And now you’re here, beside me, half-naked... wanting to talk. No, I can’t look at you. If I do, I won’t be able to control myself. I love seeing you kneeling next to me, but if I look, I’ll touch—and if I touch, I won’t stop myself from doing something I’m not ready for.”

It’s all about him and his feelings—typical. Well, two can play that game. I know he’s painfully aware of me right now. The evidence is clear, tenting his shorts. He can smell me, feel every tiny movement, but I want to give him a taste of his own medicine.

Slowly, I shift, straddling his legs just behind the undeniable bulge. I’m close enough that I can feel his pulse throbbing against me. He sucks in a sharp breath but doesn’t let it out. I lean forward, placing my hands on the headboard beside his head and whisper into his ear.

“You really ought to learn to control your urges. They always seem to get you into trouble.” I tilt my hips just a little, and he whimpers softly. “Don’t you dare move a muscle. You’re going to sit here and take everything I give you, like a good boy. Aren’t you?” Another tilt, another whimper in response.

There’s something intoxicating about this control, this power I hold over him. It feels so good that I grind my swollen nub against him, letting out a small moan as waves of pleasure ripple through me.

“Kennedy, please...” he breathes.

“Aren’t you?” I ask again, my lips brushing against the hard length as I speak. I watch goosebumps rise along his neck. This time, he nods.

“I’m in charge of this game now.” I rock my hips against him once more, letting my nose trail down his throat and across one collarbone. He shivers. At least he reacts to me the same way I do to him. Maybe I could get off just by dry-humping him right here. Maybe I will—and then leave him wanting more.

“I’m so close. You always have me so worked up,” he pants, his voice ragged.

My body is taking over now, and my mind is slipping into a haze of delicious stupidity. I can't let him come. Tonight, I'm going to edge him like never before. He deserves to know what it feels like to be so sexually frustrated.

"Will you come for me, Kennedy?" he rasps between heavy breaths.

"Maybe." I grind harder, my whole body trembling. I don't have much time left. I trail my tongue up the side of his neck, planting a soft kiss on the sweet spot just behind his ear, drawing a deep groan from him.

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"Such a damn tease," Ryker growled, his voice thick with desire. "I want to see just how wet you are for me."

I smirked, my breath hitching as I shifted slightly. "You should take a look down," I teased back. "These lace panties? Ruined because of you." I pressed my hands firmly against the mattress. "Keep your hands there, good boy." My voice dropped to a sultry whisper. "Oh, FUCK! YES! Ahhh!"

I ground myself into him with such force that the delicate lace bit into my skin where it had shifted out of place. I didn't stop until the wave of pleasure finally crested and crashed through me. My pussy walls still trembled and throbbed with aftershocks, but eventually, I eased myself off Ryker's body.

"Wait! Where are you going?" he demanded, moving as if to stop me.

"I'm a complete mess, thanks to you," I admitted, my cheeks flushed. "I need a shower—I want to be clean before I go to sleep."

"Can I watch?" His voice was rough with want.

I paused, pretending to consider. Did I want him watching me? Hell yes. Was I still in the mood to toy with him? Absolutely. I nodded once, then started to walk away. "But you're not allowed to touch yourself at all," I called over my shoulder.

He smirked. "Can I watch you touch yourself, then? I know there's another orgasm inside you. That night on the balcony—I couldn't see you come, and that's my only regret."

The memory of him pressing me against the glass sent a fresh wave of heat through me. I peeled off my t-shirt, leaving the rest of my lingerie on, and stepped into the spacious shower stall. The rustic stonework matched the cabin's natural aesthetic perfectly, the smooth river stones beneath my feet cool and soothing as I turned on the brushed nickel faucet.

"Stand at the door. Hands on the top frame. Don't move," I instructed, still facing away from him.

“I think I like this bossy version of you, Kennedy,” he murmured low and thick with lust. His words sounded like a private confession, more to himself than to me.

Steam began to curl around us, thickening the air. I hesitated, unsure if I wanted to turn around. His presence was magnetic, but his eyes—when they met mine—had held a flicker of something else since I woke up. A shadow of doubt or disappointment that I wasn’t ready to face. His words and actions often didn’t line up, and I wasn’t sure which to trust.

To buy myself some time, I let my fingers untangle the messy ponytail holding my hair back. My dark blonde locks fell freely, brushing just below my bra strap. I felt his breath hitch as he inhaled sharply.

“Fuck me,” he whispered, raw and desperate.

“Not yet, Alpha,” I replied, a knowing smile tugging at my lips. I’d only called him “Alpha” since I arrived, but I distinctly remembered using that title on the balcony that night—and the way he’d responded had been something fierce and satisfying. Maybe I’d save that name for moments like this. I hoped we’d have many more.

I stood beneath the warm cascade of water, letting it soak through my hair and lingerie. His lust hung thick in the air, almost tangible. I could probably just focus on that sensation and come again right here, but where’s the fun in that? Instead, I turned slowly and leaned back against the rough stone wall, fixing my gaze on him.

He obeyed my command, gripping the metal doorframe tightly. Judging by the pale color of his knuckles, his grip was nearly crushing it. His basketball shorts strained at the seams, the outline of his massive erection unmistakable.

I simply stood there, watching him drink me in. His eyes traveled slowly, torturously, starting at my feet and inching upward. By the time his gaze locked with mine, my breath was ragged, my chest heaving with anticipation.

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“Can I...” I began hesitantly, my voice trailing off before I could finish the sentence.

“No demands. No requests,” Ryker interrupted firmly, his tone sharp. “I’m still mad at you.” I felt a flicker of frustration but didn’t argue. Instead, I let my fingers glide slowly over the outside of my thighs, tracing a path upward along my stomach. A soft, painful groan escaped him, but he stayed silent, biting back whatever else he wanted to say. Encouraged, I allowed my touch to travel higher, reaching the delicate black lace of my bra—the final piece of my lingerie set. It wasn’t the most supportive, but it was undeniably soft, alluring, and left very little to the imagination.

My fingers moved deliberately over the fabric, teasing the fully erect buds beneath. The sensitivity was overwhelming; a small gasp slipped from my lips, and Ryker groaned again, a sound I found utterly intoxicating. His noises spurred me on, feeding the playful teasing

between us. Though he still wasn't allowed to touch me, I decided to show him exactly what I liked. After all, this was part of the intimate journey Ben and I had been exploring together.

I tilted my head back and closed my eyes, pinching my nipples gently through the lace, wincing slightly at the sharp sting. Then, switching tactics, I massaged both breasts softly, soothing the tender spots. Foreplay was my favorite—being touched and teased with just the right hint of roughness was an exquisite kind of pleasure.

“Kennedy...” His voice cracked as he swallowed hard.

Before he could say more, I unclasped the bra, letting it drop to the cold stone floor with a soft rustle. Now free of fabric, I repeated the gentle ministrations, my skin fully exposed. I didn't look at him, focusing instead on the sensations coursing through me. I could feel the heat of his desire mixing with mine, and the sound of our ragged breaths filled the room. One hand stayed pressed to my breast, while the other slid down beneath my panties. The pleasure was mounting too quickly—I wasn't sure how much longer I could hold out.

My fingers circled the swollen bundle of nerves, but the tension was building fast. To give myself a little more freedom, I slid my panties down just enough over my hips—enough to allow my hand better access, but not enough for Ryker to have an unobstructed view. I resumed rubbing my clitoris, then slowly eased two fingers inside my already drenched pussy. The tightness took my breath away, and I could feel my walls beginning to contract in anticipation of release. I moved my fingers in and out gently, a moan escaping my lips with each motion.

“Oh, shit! You're so fucking amazing,” I breathed, glancing up to find Ryker gripping the shower frame, his hips subtly matching my rhythm. If this was the intensity of being aroused with him simply in the room, I shuddered to think how explosive actual sex would be.

Turning around, I placed one hand flat against the wall as I bent over, giving him a clear view of my hand sliding in and out of me. I spread my legs as far as my panties allowed, picking up the pace. Each stroke pressed my palm harder against my clitoris, heightening the sensation. Just like on the balcony earlier, his presence made everything feel more intense, more charged.

“Oh, fuck! Ryker, I'm coming. I'm coming. Yes, oh yes, yes, yes,” I chanted with every thrust, my walls tightening fiercely around my fingers.

“Kennedy, I can't hold it,” he grunted, his voice strained.

“Don't you fucking touch yourself!” I warned, still riding my hand as waves of pleasure crashed over me.

“I don't need to. Oh shit! Ken...ne...dy,” he gasped, his pants and groans punctuated by the sudden snap of metal.

The screeching noise startled me, and I spun around, pressing myself against the wall as Ryker stumbled forward into the stream of the shower. He clutched the top frame of the

shower door, which suddenly gave way with a loud thunk as the glass door crashed down onto the bathroom rug.

Ryker looked up at me, wild-eyed and holding a piece of broken metal, his breath coming fast. “What the hell did you do to me?” he demanded, a mixture of frustration and awe in his voice.

I shrugged casually, trying to appear unfazed. “Apparently, sexual acts with your mate are better than with anyone else,” I said with a sly smile. Without waiting for a response, I stepped past him, exiting the shower, carefully navigating around the fallen door, and making my way into my bedroom.

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Chapter 126

68 – Ryker

What the hell just happened? I came in my shorts without even touching myself. Kennedy is unbelievably sexy, and she knows exactly how to move her body. She clearly doesn't need me at all. Yet, she let me watch, and it was incredible. More than that—she said my name. Not the nickname she uses for my wolf, not some teasing sarcasm—just my name. Like she needs me as much as I need her. But then she walked away. She didn't stumble or falter; she just left. I shattered the shower with the intensity of my orgasm, but did it affect her the same way? Do I mean so little to her?

“You really did abandon her, isolate her like some cursed Rapunzel. You're damn lucky she let us get this close. Don't screw this up any further,” my wolf growled in my mind.

“I know, thanks for the reminder. So, what now?” I asked, feeling the weight of my own failure.

“First, get out of those soaked shorts and go lie down next to her, dumbass.”

“What if she throws me out?”

“Then so be it. You have to try. Right now, action is your best shot. Words aren't cutting it.”

“You're a real asshole, you know that?”

“That's why the Goddess gave me to you. Now go, see if she'll let you stay.”

I peeled off my shorts, freeballing it since I knew just hearing her breathe made me hard again. Not exactly the smartest move, but there wasn't much I could do. After finally steadying myself and pushing down the panic clawing at my chest, I stepped out of the bathroom. There she was, already in bed, curled on her side, fast asleep.

When she's awake, she's fierce and sharp—like a wild animal. But now, looking at her peaceful face, her hair splayed like a halo around her pillow, she looked like an angel. My angel.

"I thought you said she was a lamb," my wolf teased in my head.

"She is. She always will be. Innocent, precious, easy to hurt. But she's an angel. Look at her now."

"I've been looking, idiot. Just waiting for you to catch on. Now get in bed before she realizes she still doesn't like you."

I couldn't help but chuckle softly. He wasn't wrong. I climbed in beside her, turning to face her. I wanted to memorize every curve, every detail, just in case. I was exhausted and knew I wouldn't last long, but I was determined to stay awake as long as possible.

"No, please, no," I heard a soft whimper, and my eyes snapped open. Kennedy was in trouble—I could feel her anxiety radiating off her. I didn't move, taking in my surroundings carefully. "Please..." A tingling tension wrapped around my ribs, and I looked down. She was lying across my chest, wrapped tightly in my arms. I had no idea when she'd moved there, but I knew one thing for sure: she'd come to me. I was still in the exact position I'd fallen asleep in.

I pulled her closer, tucking her head beneath my chin. I wanted her to feel safe, protected—even in her sleep.

"Kennedy, wake up. You're having a nightmare." Her grip tightened, but she no longer cried out. "Wake up, little lamb, before the wolf gets you." I smiled softly into her hair. I didn't know if she could hear me, but I liked our little joke.

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"Ryker, Alpha, help, please," she whimpered against my chest. I didn't know what to do. She was still unconscious, but calling for me—calling for us. I'd never felt so helpless before.

"Kennedy, angel, wake up. It's just a dream. You're safe. Wake up for me." I pulled her closer until she was pressed against my side and kissed the top of her head. She gasped, struggling against me. Against every instinct, I let her go as she pulled away. The loss of her warmth hit me immediately.

"What? When did you get here?" She wrapped the blanket tightly around herself, and only then did it hit me—she'd been sleeping naked next to me all night. How had I missed that?

"I never left. You didn't ask me to leave when I got in bed," I shrugged. It sounded better in my head, but my wolf was right—when it came to Kennedy, words just didn't come out right.

"I didn't think you'd stay," she murmured, eyes cast down at her lap.

“I thought I made it clear yesterday. I can’t fight this bond anymore. I still don’t know if I can mark or mate with you without hurting you, but staying away isn’t working. It’s hurting more than just me. You, my team, the pack—they all feel the distance. It’s too early for breakfast, but I’m awake. I can leave if you want me to.”

She looked up slowly, searching my face. I held my breath, waiting for whatever she’d say next.

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Chapter 127

“No, you’re fine. But I really should get dressed,” she said softly, shifting on the bed.

“Why?!” I asked, surprised by her sudden urgency.

“Because I just should. Last night, I didn’t have the energy to get up from the bed, let alone do anything else,” she admitted, a faint smile tugging at her lips.

“So, you enjoyed yourself then?” I couldn’t help but grin, the thought making my chest warm.

“Absolutely. Torturing you has become my favorite kind of foreplay,” she teased, a playful glint in her eyes.

“Well, you sure fooled me. You walked out completely calm, while I was barely able to keep myself standing. I still don’t understand what you did to me without actually doing anything. I even broke your shower, for God’s sake,” I said, shaking my head in disbelief.

“That you did,” she replied with a smirk. “Speaking of which, I need to take a proper shower this morning. Last night doesn’t count.” She fidgeted slightly at the memory, and I noticed how the thought seemed to excite her.

“You can use mine,” I offered casually, trying to sound nonchalant even though I desperately wanted to keep her close.

She nodded and started to get off the bed, gathering the comforter with her. Instinctively, I grabbed it away from her.

“Hey!” she exclaimed, standing completely exposed before me. She didn’t even try to cover herself, and I couldn’t help but love the annoyed scrunch on her face. Her toned curves revealed the hard work she put into her body, yet there was a softness beneath it all. My fingers itched to trace the curve of her round ass, but I forced myself to hold back. I reminded myself to take things slow, to build trust, and to let her lead when it came to intimacy. She both frustrated and fascinated me, and yesterday had opened a new door between us.

“You were pressed up against me just ten minutes ago. That view is mine now. You might as well get used to it,” I said, a teasing edge in my voice. “Go get what you need, and then we can head next door.”

She rolled her eyes but complied without protest.

“Bennet, are you guarding Ken’s room?” she asked suddenly.

“So it’s ‘Ken’ now?” I teased back.

“Shut up. Are you or aren’t you?”

“Of course, bossman,” I replied with a grin.

“Can you make yourself scarce for a bit?”

“Excuse me? You’ve been telling me for almost two months to stick to her like my life depends on it. What changed?”

“I’m with her, and she’s talking to me—kind of. But she’ll use you as a distraction, and I’m not ready for that.”

“Of course you’re not. I missed you going over there. When did she even let you in?”

“I stayed last night.”

“Damn, you work fast. Clearly, she hasn’t forgiven you yet if she’s going to bolt and blame me,” I said, laughing this time.

“Just go. We’ll meet you guys downstairs for breakfast.”

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She emerged from her closet wearing a loose t-shirt and shorts, balancing a pile of clothes and whatever else she’d brought from the bathroom.

“Here, let me help. Are you moving in already?” I teased, reaching out to take a few bottles from her hands.

“No! Of course not. I just have a routine and like my stuff. I don’t even know what you use,” she said with a shudder.

“To be honest, neither do I. Soap is soap to me,” I laughed. We stepped into my room, and she hesitated in the doorway. I could feel her unease—last time she was here, I hadn’t been kind. I knew it was fear of losing her, but still, she had left in tears.

“Come on, I’ll show you where you can put your things,” I said softly, sliding my hand around her back to gently guide her inside.

Once we were both showered and dressed, we headed out together. We hadn't even reached the bottom step of the entryway when Danny scooped her up in a hug and kissed her cheek. I couldn't help but hate my delta right then—he was clearly trying to get under my skin.

“Get over it, bossman. You've kept our Luna away for too long. We need to get to know her too,” he said with a grin.

He set her down in front of Bennet. I watched their interaction closely, feeling a pang of jealousy. They clicked almost instantly. Bennet was able to keep her calm and safe in a way I hadn't. I was still afraid she might have feelings for him. She leaned her forehead against his chest, and he wrapped his arms around her slowly, offering comfort.

“Thank you, bossman,” he mindlinked to me.

In that moment, the atmosphere in the room shifted. A calmness settled over me—a peacefulness I hadn't felt since my father was alpha. She was truly special.

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Chapter 128

69 – Kennedy

“Are you joining us for breakfast today, Luna?” Danny called out, not allowing me to linger any longer with Bennet.

“I suppose so,” I replied with a slight shrug. I remembered Ryker mentioning last night that he wanted me to sit with him during meals, but I wasn't sure if it was a gentle request, a firm command, or simply a way to get me to engage in conversation.

“Great!” Danny exclaimed, looping his arm around mine. I couldn't help but giggle as we began walking away. Naturally, Ryker growled in protest, but Danny paid no mind.

I was certain they were exchanging words through the mindlink, but for once, it didn't bother me. I knew Danny was teasing Ryker about me, and honestly, I didn't mind. What intrigued me most was observing how Ryker behaved around his pack members when I was present. The man had seemed hesitant and unsure last night, but that was unlike the Alpha I knew—strong, confident, and commanding in front of his pack. So far, he had made it clear that I wasn't significant to him, mostly ignoring me and leaving me alone. Only a handful of females shot me dirty looks, but none had taken any further action.

I felt a sudden tension as we stepped into the breakfast room. Amy sat at the table nearest the entrance, clearly waiting to pounce on Ryker. Her half-standing stance was oddly comical, but her expression was pure venom. My worries lasted only a moment before strong, warm hands wrapped around my waist from behind, and Danny's arm slid away from my shoulder. Ryker pulled me back against his chest, and a wave of relief washed over me. Danny stayed to my right; Bennet took the left.

“You okay?” Ryker whispered softly in my ear.

I nodded, though he wasn’t satisfied.

“I need to hear it, mate,” he insisted, his voice low and urgent. A shiver ran through me, and I leaned closer into him.

“Yes, I’m fine,” I murmured. Without hesitation, Ryker slipped between Danny and me, guiding us toward his table, completely ignoring Amy’s futile attempts to speak. I smiled at the side he chose. What he didn’t realize was that the more jealous he acted, the more Danny would tease him—and I was more than willing to encourage that.

As we moved through the room, my gaze drifted to the window, and I gasped. Without thinking, I made my way toward the door that led to the back patio. Stepping outside, a cool blast of air hit my face, forcing me to squint as my eyes adjusted to the dazzling sunlight reflecting off the untouched snow.

“Oh wow,” I breathed. “It looks like millions of diamonds are scattered across the branches and the ground. Given how Silver Crescent is arranged, with the packhouse at the center, it’s rare to see fresh snow this pristine.” The scene was breathtaking.

“Please tell me you’ve seen snow before,” Ryker rumbled, his voice deep and teasing—even when he was mocking me, it sounded incredibly sexy.

“Yes, I’ve seen snow, Ryker,” I replied, amused.

“I think I’m beginning to understand why my wolf is so captivated by the way you say his name. Your voice is beautiful—he could listen to you talk for hours. Are you a fan of winter, mate?”

“I enjoy all the seasons,” I said thoughtfully. “It’s just uncommon to see snow like this—so pure, clean, and untouched. Does it stay this way long around here? It never did back home.”

“That depends on...” Ryker began, but before he could finish—

“AHHHHHHHHH! You’re going down!” a sudden shout cut through the air.

“Umpf!” Ryker yanked me to his side just as a blur zipped past us. A cloud of snow exploded into the air as Bennet and Danny collided in a playful skirmish.

“That,” Ryker chuckled behind me, “is what I’m talking about.” I couldn’t help but laugh too. You’d think these grown men would have outgrown snowball fights and wrestling in the snow, but clearly, I was mistaken.

Josh strolled up beside me, shaking his head with a mock scowl. “Fucking children,” he muttered, though the amusement in his eyes betrayed his words.

“Too good for a snowball fight, Beta?” I teased, ducking as a rogue snowball whizzed past us.

“Never, Luna,” he replied with a grin. “But like any fight, there’s got to be some strategy.”

“Isn’t the strategy just to have the most snowballs and get hit the least? There’s not much more to it than that.”

“Did I catch a challenge in your voice?”

“Maybe,” I admitted, “but I’m smart enough not to challenge you before I see what you’re capable of. You’re a sneaky fighter—I bet your throw is wicked, and your aim deadly.” It was cold out here, and I wasn’t dressed for snow play—my jeans and sweater wouldn’t hold up for long. But standing here on the deck next to Ryker, I felt perfectly comfortable.

“Luna... Incoming!” Danny shouted.

Instinctively, I grabbed Ryker’s shirt and spun us around just as I heard the soft thuds of snow hitting his back, and tiny flecks of snow dusted my face from over his shoulder.

“I see how it is,” Ryker laughed, looking down at me.

“You still owe me. It’s only fair,” I said with a shrug and a smile.

He tightened his arms around me. “As long as you keep looking at me like that, they can keep throwing snowballs at me all day.”

Thump, thump, thump. He pulled me closer, his shoulders curling protectively as the snowballs continued to fly.

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Chapter 129

“Quit hogging Kennedy! Don’t you remember she’s still mad at you?” Danny called out loudly, breaking the snowy silence.

“You’re not doing yourself any favors either. She’s only sticking close to me to get away from you, you fool,” I shot back, feeling a mix of amusement and irritation.

“Whatever. She’s on my side now. She even dared Josh to a snowball fight,” Danny bragged.

“I did not!” I peeked cautiously around Ryker’s broad frame, only to be hit by two snowballs flying straight at us. I let out a startled squeak and ducked behind him again, heart racing.

Ryker chuckled, shaking his head. “I think I’m going to take your Luna inside for some food. We can’t have her freezing out here—gotta keep some meat on those bones.” He gave my

side a playful pinch, making me squeal once more. “Besides, she’s starting to shiver. Unlike you two hotheads, she needs an extra layer.”

“Hothead? You’re the king of hotheads!” Danny protested, stepping back onto the deck with snow clinging to his hair and a wide, boyish grin lighting up his face.

“I’m not a hothead. I just have a low tolerance for nonsense,” I said, laughing now.

“Come on, let’s eat. I’m starving!” Danny wrapped his arm around my neck and tugged me forward, pulling me out of Ryker’s protective hold. “Then we need to figure out our plan for the day.”

Breakfast passed quietly, though I made sure to sit with my back to Amy. Her glare of pure hatred didn’t waver for a second. I wasn’t scared of her, but the intensity of her stare was definitely distracting. Just as we were leaving, Amy tried to catch Ryker’s attention, claiming there was an urgent matter that couldn’t wait.

I swear Robin must have some kind of sixth sense for drama in the packhouse. She appeared out of nowhere, ready to take the appointment and get the details, allowing us to slip away without any hassle.

As Ryker led me down the long, quiet office hallway, I turned to ask him a question and realized we were alone again. I had no idea when Danny and the others had fallen behind. Before I could speak, Ryker opened a door I hadn’t even noticed before.

“I noticed you don’t really use the Luna’s office much, so I thought you might prefer this room,” he said softly.

I gave him a sharp look. “It’s not that I don’t like the office... I just never felt it was really mine. I didn’t want to mess anything up.”

“You can mess up anything you want here. This is your home,” he replied, stepping closer. “But I thought you might like this better.” He gently grabbed my shoulders and turned me around, and I was left speechless.

The room was lined with floor-to-ceiling bookshelves made of dark wood—the same rich wood I associated with the bedrooms throughout the Dark Moon packhouse. Almost every wall was covered except for the one with large windows that looked out onto the snowy forest. The view was breathtaking, the winter landscape stretching endlessly beyond.

“What is this place?” I asked, stepping inside and running my fingers along the crowded shelves. There were so many books, I wasn’t sure where to begin.

“It’s a kind of library,” Ryker explained. “My dad and some of the elders started collecting information and history about our pack, tracing it back to its origins. Then they began adding details from the other packs we’ve brought into the fold. I’ve spent a lot of time here, trying to figure out what to do with our current situation. I thought you’d appreciate a change of scenery, and maybe you’d find something I missed.”

“This is incredible,” I breathed, pulling a worn leather-bound book from the shelf. “What’s this one?” I asked, flipping through the yellowed pages.

Ryker stepped up behind me and peered over my shoulder. “That’s our family history. I think it goes back about ten generations.”

The weight of that knowledge made the book feel even more precious. I traced my fingers over the unfamiliar names, knowing I’d learn their stories soon enough. I had so little left from my own parents; both were only children, and their parents had passed away before I was born.

“Have you read through all these books?” I asked, glancing around at the hundreds of volumes packed tightly onto the shelves.

“Not all of them. I started with the ones I thought would have the most relevant information. There have been human mates in our lineage, but none were mated to an alpha or future alpha, which I found interesting. I never really looked that closely before,” he said thoughtfully.

“Really? Do any of the elders from the packs we’ve acquired know anything about that?” I pressed.

“Still nothing concrete to confirm or deny what Jeremiah’s elders claimed. But we’ll get to that later.” He took the book from my hands and carefully placed it back on the shelf. “So, what do you think of this room?”

“It’s amazing! I love the books and the wood. It feels so inviting and cozy,” I admitted.

“What if I told you it’s yours now?” Ryker asked quietly.

I blinked, surprised. “What?”

“It’s right next to mine, so you won’t be far. But you seem more comfortable here than in the office my mother designed. If you’re going to work with me, I want you to have a place where you feel at home. And you’re not wrong—the Luna is very important and should be involved. I also heard you were planning on business school before I turned your life upside down. If you still want to pursue that, I’ll make sure it happens.”

“Ryker, that’s too much,” I said, overwhelmed.

“It’s not enough. But I’m working on it,” he replied with a smile.

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Chapter 130

70 – Kennedy

It's official—I've landed myself in what can only be described as the twilight zone. Just yesterday, I was holed up in the packhouse, desperately avoiding everyone. I wasn't sure who was allowed to speak to me and who might face consequences just for looking my way. Boredom crept in so deeply that I seriously considered getting a portable electric fence to create a bubble of personal space around myself.

Danny and Bennet have been so glued to me lately that I'm beginning to think we might actually merge into one being. My world has shrunk to nothing more than the short walk between the library and the bathroom. We've even shared lunch right here, in this cramped space. Bennet kindly sparked a small fire in the fireplace, and though I'm not exactly freezing, the gentle warmth feels comforting. The crackling of the fire provides a soothing background hum that fills the room.

I glance over my shoulder toward the black leather couch nestled in the corner of the library. "Don't you have an actual job to do?" I ask Danny, who's lazily flipping through a magazine, humming a tune through his nose that sounds suspiciously like a kazoo. "I thought, as the 'lead warrior,' you'd be leading something."

He shrugs, not looking up. "Not when I need to get to know my Luna. I have to understand your habits, your wants, and your needs so we can figure out a better protection plan for when you start visiting other territories in the pack."

I cock an eyebrow at him. "Isn't that Bennet's job? And even if I'm in another part of the pack, I won't just be holed up in a room reading. The whole point is to actually meet and interact with the pack members, right?" My gaze shifts to Bennet, who's buried nose-deep in a book, completely absorbed.

Danny snorts. "He's been stalking you since you arrived, but he can't give me the kind of intel I need. So, it's up to me to do the hard work, no matter what activities you choose."

"Hard labor, my ass," Bennet mutters, tossing a book at Danny. Danny catches it with lightning-fast reflexes and then winks at me, raising his eyebrows in a cheeky challenge. I have to bite back a smile.

"Research isn't really my thing," Danny admits, setting the book down on the coffee table in front of him. "You're the sexy nerd in this scenario."

"Did you just call me sexy?" Bennet shakes his head with a smirk. "The sooner we find the answers the alpha needs, the sooner Kennedy can be marked and officially inducted into the pack. Personally, I want to know if she'll be able to mindlink with us once she's marked. Do you realize how much it'll drive the boss crazy if you can talk to her without even opening your mouth? And once she's a full Luna, maybe our mates will finally show up."

Danny bursts out laughing. "I never thought of that!" He snatches the book and starts skimming through the pages.

I look up from the large, red canvas-bound book resting on my lap. "Why would it matter if I'm a full Luna or not?"

“There’s a pattern we’ve noticed across the various packs we’ve acquired,” Bennet explains. “When the alpha finds and marks his Luna, there’s a surge in matings—especially within the alpha’s core team—even if he hasn’t taken full control yet.”

“Huh. That sounds crazy, but I guess it makes sense. When the leaders thrive, the whole pack prospers.” I return to my book, feeling a renewed urgency to uncover some kind of answer.

“It works both ways, though,” Bennet adds. “We’ve seen alphas without mates go feral. Sometimes it’s because they lost their mate, which hurts both the human and wolf parts of them deeply. Other times, it’s because they never found one, and that longing can drive the wolf crazy. They crave that companionship, that bond, and they want to continue their genetic line.”

Our serious moment is abruptly broken by Danny’s voice, chanting nonsense as he reads aloud. “I will know all the dirt... can’t wait... going to be so sweet.”

“What is he babbling about? Do you understand him?” I shift to get comfortable and make sure I can see Danny clearly with both eyes. He’s a prankster through and through and doesn’t discriminate. The wild gleam in his eyes tells me he’s plotting something, and I probably won’t enjoy being involved.

“I try to ignore the crazy parts of him,” Bennet says with a sigh. “But remember, you’ll be able to use your Luna Aura to shut him up. You could tell him he’s not allowed to speak for an entire day! Oh Goddess, please let us find something useful soon.” I giggle softly as Bennet dives into his research just as fervently as Danny.

A sharp knock interrupts us.

“Come on in, Robin. You know you don’t have to knock, right?”

The large mahogany door slides open silently. Robin steps inside, shivering just a little. “Until I can mindlink, I’ll keep knocking,” she replies quietly. Now I’m curious—who scared her so badly?

“The alpha wants to see you in his office, Luna,” she says.

“You could always just text me,” I tease, waving my phone at her. “Do you know what he needs? I really want to get through a few more questions today.” I lift the heavy book again, determined to find the answers we all need.