

Letters Sent To Eternity

chapter 2

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The sharp screech of tires tearing through the night air shattered the silence. A sudden, heavy impact followed, accompanied by the shattering of glass exploding outward. I was hurled forward by an unseen force, my arms flailing helplessly as I grasped at nothing but empty air. Then, my body collided with something solid, and the jolt sent a sharp pain through me. I gasped, blinking rapidly as my eyes adjusted. I was back in my room—always my room. Yet, despite the familiar surroundings, the acrid scent of burnt rubber and gasoline still lingered, stinging my nostrils. This nightmare clung to me relentlessly, replaying the same harrowing scene every single night for two long years. I inhaled deeply, hoping to dispel both the lingering smell and the haunting images that pressed behind my eyelids.

Suddenly, my door flew open, and my best friend burst inside like a whirlwind. At this point, I half-joked that maybe we should just share a room, given how much time he spent here with me. Without uttering a word, he slipped under the soft, downy blanket and wrapped his arms around me, gently pressing my head against his chest. The steady thump of his heartbeat and his familiar scent were enough to lull me back into a peaceful, dreamless sleep.

Since the crash, the same nightmare haunted me every night. I was lost, unsure of what I was supposed to do next. Aunt Beth had sent me to countless doctors, specialists, and therapists, but nothing seemed to ease the torment—except being near Jeremiah. Still, this constant fear was wreaking havoc on my already chaotic life. I certainly didn't need any more complications, and I knew it wasn't exactly easy for him either.

"Aww, sweetheart, you look exhausted. Another rough night?" Aunt Beth's voice floated through the house, as if she could hear my silent screams from across the hall.

I couldn't bring myself to snap at her. After all, she and Uncle James had done so much for me over the past few years. They hadn't been obligated to take me in, but when no other family member stepped forward to claim guardianship of a fifteen-year-old orphan, my mom's best friend and her husband welcomed me without hesitation. Aunt Beth was the one who stayed by my side in the hospital as I recovered, the one who held me when the doctors delivered the devastating news that my parents hadn't survived. She made sure I saw the best doctors and specialists to help me navigate the overwhelming grief.

"Yeah, they seem to be getting worse, but I honestly don't know why," I muttered, sinking down onto a stool at her enormous kitchen island. She placed a plate piled high with all my favorite breakfast foods in front of me, and I smiled gratefully before digging in.

“Ready yet?” came the familiar teasing drawl from somewhere in the house about ten minutes later. I couldn’t imagine life without him.

“Almost. Aunt Beth’s trying to stuff me full of food, and I can’t be rude by leaving anything behind,” I replied, shoveling a forkful into my mouth.

“Mom, you know she doesn’t need to eat as much as I do, right? I’m going to have to roll her to school,” he called out, striding toward the fridge as if he wasn’t about to grab a plate just as loaded as mine.

“Did you just call me fat?!” I swung at him playfully from my seat, but he was too quick, and I missed. “Let me remind you, sir, I train just as hard as you do. My body just isn’t built to be chiseled like a Greek god.”

“So, what you’re saying is that I’m hot, and we should go out sometime?” He leaned casually against the kitchen doorframe, slinging his backpack over one shoulder while stuffing food into his mouth. I couldn’t deny that Jeremiah was undeniably attractive—one of the best-looking guys I’d ever seen, and there were plenty of handsome men around here. It must be a genetic perk of being werewolves. His chocolate-brown hair was tousled perfectly, as if he’d run his fingers through it but didn’t bother to fix it afterward. His light caramel eyes were captivating, almost distracting you from his full lips. Towering over six feet tall, his presence screamed either “I’ll protect you” or “Don’t mess with me,” depending on who was on the receiving end. But I’d never say any of that aloud—his ego didn’t need the boost. Besides, I’d never felt that kind of attraction toward him. He was like a brother to me, and that was enough.

“Are you serious? One of your Luna wannabes would slit my throat in my sleep. And now that you’re eighteen, they’re even worse,” I grimaced, pretending to gag.

“Still getting grief from those girls?” Aunt Beth asked gently.

“It’s fine, Aunt Beth. They’d give me a hard time even if we were destined mates,” I said, rolling my eyes. “They don’t like me because I’m human and ‘beneath’ them, but somehow I’ve caught the attention of their fearless future Alpha. At least no one’s tried to hit me with anything lately. It’s just a bunch of stupid girls with stupid insults.” I pushed Jeremiah’s bulky frame out the door so we could head to our first day of senior year.

What I didn’t tell her was that the insults had grown worse recently. Apparently, being an orphan and a human in a werewolf pack wasn’t enough. Now, I was labeled a slut who slept around with all of Jeremiah’s friends behind his back—even though we’d never dated and never would. We’d known each other since birth—literally born on the same day in the same hospital. Our moms had been best friends since college, graduating together and opening a studio that taught yoga and women’s self-defense. When Aunt Beth met Uncle James and became the Luna of the pack—a role demanding endless time and dedication—my mom took over the studio. Aunt Beth kept it running for me, and I worked there a few days a week, helping train and learning the business side from the manager so I could someday take over. It was the one thing my mom left me that I felt truly connected to—a legacy I was determined to preserve, no matter what path I chose.

“You still planning on leaving for college next year?” Jeremiah asked from the driver’s seat of his sleek matte black muscle car, the engine growling beneath us.

We’d had this conversation countless times over the past year, and I was running out of new things to say.

“Yes, Jer. I have to go. You’re about to start serious Alpha training, and I’m human—no mate in sight. It wasn’t you, and I don’t know who else could ever compare,” I said dramatically, placing the back of my hand on my forehead. “Right now, I don’t have any other useful role in the pack.”

“You know how weird that was, right? Everyone waiting to see if we were mates. Don’t get me wrong—you’re amazing and beautiful—but you’re my twin sister,” he said, shuddering theatrically. I just laughed.

“You’re such a weirdo. But are you ready for this year? There’s a lot of pressure now. Everything’s starting to feel real.”

“Ready as I’ll ever be, I guess,” he shrugged. “We’ve already got trips planned to visit other pack Alphas so I can start building alliances. At least I’m not the only new Alpha—there are two more in our alliance. That way, I’m not the odd one out, treated like a dumb kid all alone.” I laughed, but I understood. Visiting Alphas could be patronizing to younger wolves. It was a hierarchy thing, but some of them—and some pack members—acted like their species, rank, and status automatically made them better, allowing them to say and do whatever they pleased without consequence.

We pulled into the school parking lot, Jer sliding into his usual spot, where, of course, the usual group of girls awaited him.

“Ooooh! Your fan club’s here to make sure you don’t break a nail on your way to class,” I teased in a singsong voice.

“Shut up,” he growled, taking a deep breath before stepping out.

These girls were relentless in their pursuit of him. Many were eighteen like us and knew for a fact he wasn’t their mate, but that didn’t stop them from chasing after him like he was available. He wasn’t a saint by any means—none of his crew were. They were, in fact, notorious womanizers. According to Tommy, it was practice for being good mates someday.

But since our birthday, when Jer came of age and could sense his mate, I hadn’t seen him with another girl. I didn’t think his wolf would allow it. They were all in for their mate and only their mate. Too bad none of the girls in the “bitch brigade” got that memo.

His disinterest only fueled more rumors about him “slumming” with me, but I shut those down quickly by reminding them that if that were true, it meant he chose me, not them. They changed tactics fast after that.

We both stepped out of the car, and I had to push through the crowd of girls surrounding him just to get by. But he never left me hanging, no matter how vicious some of these girls

could be. I appreciated that he didn't coddle me or fight my battles for me. He knew that would only make things worse. I was capable of standing up for myself, and I had the attitude to match. He just made sure no one blocked my way or held me back from class.

"Kennedy, let's go, girl. The guys are waiting," he said, wrapping his arm around my neck and leading me away. "What am I going to do without you here to cockblock for me? See, you can't leave for college. I need you here."

"First, that's your mate's job, so chop chop—find her already so I can pass the torch. Second, you know why I want to go. I can't be a burden anymore. I want to honor my parents and Aunt Beth and Uncle James. I need to support myself. I can't rely on you guys forever."

"That's a lie, and you know it. You better rely on me forever. I fully plan to rely on you, Warrior," he said, trying to look serious, but his handsome face betrayed the effort. "And you know Mom's never letting you go. She's plotting just as hard as I am to keep you here."

Before I could answer, the rest of the guys arrived, looking like a Magic Mike runway show before the clothes came off. Not gonna lie, I might have drooled a little, but what do you expect when all your friends are ridiculously hot? Too bad none of them were my type, and I wasn't their mate. I'd tested the waters with all of them—except Jeremiah. It was an unspoken rule that none of us ever brought it up.

Ben was our dark-haired, tattooed, brooding Beta. Tommy was the fun-loving Delta, and Jason was our blonde surfer boy Gamma. All tall and broad like Jer, with muscles that seemed crammed into shirts a size too small. I always wondered if that was intentional or just laziness.

They greeted each other with bro hugs as we met up, each one giving me a hug and a kiss on the head or cheek. It was all very public and very deliberate, especially after last year.