

# Letters Sent To Eternity

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### Chapter 261

“I don’t have to do this often, girl, but when the chance comes, it’s kind of fun. Let’s give him a hand.”

I rise from my seat, peeling off the shirt and shorts I had hastily thrown on earlier. Carefully, I shuffle a few small pieces of furniture aside, making sure nothing gets damaged when the shift happens. My wolf stirs within me, taking over with a sudden urgency—as if signaling that stalling is no longer an option. Without hesitation, she leaps onto the bed, but this time, there’s a softness in her movements I’ve never witnessed before. She approaches Finn cautiously, her eyes scanning his back and sides, assessing which wounds are the deepest and most painful. Then, she begins her work.

The saliva of our wolves carries remarkable healing properties. In emergencies—or situations like Finn’s—we can mend each other’s injuries. The healing effect intensifies when the mate is the one administering it.

Still, it’s hard to wrap my head around the fact that Finn is supposed to be my mate. The thought had blindsided me completely. As my wolf carefully tends to his wounds with slow, deliberate precision, my mind drifts back to six months ago.

Ryker had taken Kennedy home once everything settled down. That girl never ceases to amaze me—taking down an enemy wolf while still in her human form, relying solely on human abilities, is nothing short of incredible. Meanwhile, Danny and I have been rounding up the rogues who fought alongside us, tallying up the casualties to report back to Ryker. Josh approached Danny, pulling him aside, leaving Finn to fill me in on the loyalists among his rogues.

The moment Finn stepped just a foot away, the air between us crackled with an almost tangible electricity. It felt like a current pulsing with raw energy. Then he murmured, almost choking on the word, “Mate?”—a question laced with confusion, as if his wolf was forcing the admission out.

All I could manage was a flat, “No,” before I fled like a coward.

Since then, he’s tried twice to bring up the subject, but after those attempts, silence. Even the mate pull lingers, but it’s faint—muted and muffled, as if someone turned down the volume on it. I do my best to keep my distance, and the only times I touch him are during training sessions, when contact is unavoidable. For six months, he’s been relentlessly irritating, almost as if determined to keep my disdain firmly rooted.

“He’s starting to heal better now, but he needs you close,” my wolf insists.

“Why me? Why can’t you just stay near him, and I can rest in the back of your mind?” I ask, frustration creeping into my voice.

“Because his human form needs his human mate.”

I groan. “Ugh!”

“Stop being difficult! The Goddess granted you time to heal and recover. You know what this boy has endured. He deserves the same chance to heal—body and soul.”

I hate it when she’s right. The last thing I want is to develop that physical bond. I don’t want a mate, and the longer we spend together, the stronger my instincts ache for him. But she’s right—he deserves the same opportunity Ryker gave me. Still, I wish it didn’t feel like it’s coming at the expense of my sanity.

We shift back into our human forms, and I begin reaching for my clothes.

“Not those,” she snaps. “As little as possible. He needs as much skin contact as you can manage.”

“No way am I lying naked in bed with him! You’ve officially lost it!” I protest.

“I’m not going to force you to cross that line. Even I have boundaries. But he needs as much contact as you can give.”

Well, at least she still has some sense of decency. I grab my shorts and find a tank top, then, for the first time in what feels like forever, I climb into bed beside a man.

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Chapter 262

17 – Finn

I draw in a shaky breath, my ribs aching painfully, yet somehow I can still breathe. My limbs respond faintly—I can feel my legs and arms, though weak. The toxin must have been spreading through me before the overwhelming agony knocked me out. I know I have some resistance to Claude’s poison, but the wounds inflicted by Janelle and Justin’s men were brutal. By all logic, I shouldn’t be conscious—or even alive. Scanning my body, I notice no fresh pain beyond the dull soreness. I’m lying on something soft and warm, but my muscles refuse to obey my commands to move.

For some reason, my eyelids remain firmly shut. Perhaps my body is still battling the toxin’s effects. Taking another slow, deep breath, a delicate, sweet scent drifts to me, coaxing me back toward the void. Maybe I’m already dead or slipping away, and the Goddess is easing my passage. I let the comforting aroma envelop me, surrendering to the gentle darkness.

“Should we wake them?” a low voice murmurs nearby.

“Nah. But make sure she knows we caught her cuddling. That’s something she’ll never live down,” another voice replies with a teasing tone.

I recognize these voices, though my mind feels clouded and sluggish. I can’t quite place them.

“Shut up, you idiots. The last two days have been hell,” Greta snaps sharply. My heart skips a beat. Her voice is so close, right beside my ear. Why is she standing this near?

“He’s still healing. Whatever they did nearly killed him. Then I had to drag his heavy, lifeless body all the way back while he bled everywhere—on me and all over half the forest,” she hisses. Bleeding? What the hell is happening?

Though I can’t move a muscle, my mind seems intact. I breathe in again, catching the sweet scent more clearly now—cherries, like the warm, sticky sweetness of fresh-baked pie that clings to your lungs and comforts your soul. Then I feel it: a gentle pressure against my back, warm breath grazing my neck, weight resting on my arm. She’s behind me, holding me. My second chance mate is cradling me as I recover. She’s hated me for six months, barely speaking unless forced. What changed?

“Mmmm,” I murmur, barely a sound.

“Hey, Sleeping Beauty. Time to get your ass up and check in with the alpha,” Sammy teases, nudging my leg. Even when I probably look as awful as I feel, my oldest friend still knows how to be a jerk.

“Yeah,” I rasp, my voice rough and dry as sandpaper. “If I could move, that’s exactly what I’d do.” I clear my throat, hoping to coax some strength into my vocal cords.

“Alright, Warrior Princess, do you think he’s stable enough to move?” Sammy’s tone shifts, unusually serious, though there’s still a hint of humor. This is different—more urgent. “Grant has the truck ready to take you both back, and the healers are standing by to check you out.”

“Ugh. Yeah, he’s been stable all day. Let me shower first. Watch him,” Greta says, pulling away. Suddenly, an icy wave crashes over me. My lungs seize, and my whole body trembles uncontrollably. I have no control over my muscles. What the hell is going on?

I try to form words, but only grunts and groans escape. My body might be in pain, but it all feels numb—I can only sense the movement itself. Then a weight slams into my back, forcing the air from my lungs. “See? Something’s still seriously wrong with him,” Greta says sharply. Her arm slides beneath my head, the other wraps around my shoulder, and instantly I relax. She cradles my head against her chest, fingers soothing through my hair. The world feels right again.

“How long has this been happening?” I manage to whisper, grateful for her closeness, which helps clear my foggy thoughts.

“Two days, asshole. Do you even know what’s going on?” she asks, squeezing me tightly. Fear lurks beneath her tough exterior—she won’t admit it, but she hates being in control, hates not knowing what’s coming next. And this is terrifying her.

“It’s a neurotoxin,” I say, lungs tightening as I cough. “Something Claude gave us. We used to coat our claws with it, like nail polish...” My skin suddenly itches fiercely. “There’s no real cure, but...” I grunt, trying to sit up. My arm buckles, and I slump back. Greta’s arms tighten protectively around me, and I can’t describe the flood of warmth her care brings. “A few of us built up a tolerance.” I glance at Sammy. He, I, and a couple others suspected Claude was shady and might betray us someday. “We wanted to know what we were dealing with.”

“What do you mean, ‘built a tolerance’? How do you build tolerance to a neurotoxin?” Sammy asks, his voice a mixture of curiosity and disbelief.

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### Chapter 263

“Hey, Warrior Princess,” Sammy’s voice broke the tense silence, his tone gentle but firm. “If that’s how things stand, he’s going to need more time. We’ll radio down to keep them updated, but Grant is here for you, and he’ll wait as long as it takes. We’re going to run a quick patrol just to make sure no one followed you here. Sound good?” He cleared his throat, glancing between me and Greta.

I couldn’t decipher Greta’s silent message, but her body language was unmistakable—she wanted Sammy and Jensen gone. Without another word, the two men dropped their bags and headed out the door, their footsteps fading down the hall.

“What do you mean by ‘build a tolerance’?” Greta’s low growl was directed at me alone, her eyes narrowing.

I shifted slightly in her arms, trying to ease the tension. “Well,” I began, “we never trusted him. So, we took turns applying the neurotoxin to ourselves and inflicting wounds—just to see what it actually does and how people react.” Her fingers dug into my skin, but she remained silent, listening. “We couldn’t rely on his word. Just give me a few more hours, and then we can leave. I’m talking now, and I can move most of my body. I just want to be able to move on my own, in case something else happens. We were lucky nothing happened to you while you brought me here.”

Greta’s eyes softened a little. “Well, we both know how to fight. I think the survivors ran scared.”

I looked up at her, surprised. “I’m honestly amazed you brought me here. You could have just left me behind—I was barely alive.”

“There’s no way I would ever leave you,” she said firmly. “I don’t leave men behind. Ever. Especially not...”

“Especially not what?” I interrupted, my voice barely above a whisper. “The mate you don’t want? We all know you don’t want me. Even I know your alpha sent me here with you so you could reject me without the whole pack watching.” The words hit me hard, and I felt my stomach twist painfully. Another rejection would shatter me, but I wasn’t going to follow her around like a lost puppy as I did with Amy. I wasn’t wanted. I wasn’t good enough—even though the Goddess had options lined up for me. No one wanted to claim me when I was six. Nan took all of us in, like lost boys in Peter Pan. She was our last hope.

I tried to pull away slightly, but the moment her hands left me, my body betrayed me. The poison still coursing through my veins made me convulse violently. I collapsed, and she caught me, pulling me back against her chest.

“If I didn’t want you here—alive or whatever—I wouldn’t have dragged your big ass for hours to get you to a safe place. And I wouldn’t be lying here with you now, making sure you don’t seize,” she said softly, her voice filled with a fierce protectiveness.

“I honestly don’t understand why you’re here,” I admitted, my voice shaky. “You don’t like me—that’s no secret. You don’t want me as a mate—not a secret either. Only Kennedy and Ryker know you’re my second chance mate. No one else trusts me because of my connection to Amy. No one wants me, Greta, not since my pack was attacked. You don’t have to stay and pretend. You kept me alive long enough to heal and stabilize. Go. Your alpha needs you now that you have more information about what Janelle is working with.”

She shook her head stubbornly. “I’m not leaving when you start shaking like a leaf the moment I get off the bed.”

“I’m fine,” I said, trying to sound more confident than I felt. “My muscle control is coming back. I even have enough brain power to argue with you.” I chuckled, and she responded by digging her nails deeper into my skin.

“Then you’ve got enough stubbornness to walk back to Rory’s. Get up—we need to get you cleaned up. It’s been a while, and I think you’re the one scaring off the rogues.”

“Hey!” I sat up a little more, feeling more like myself with every passing minute. I couldn’t resist pushing her buttons. “You’re still here, so it can’t be that bad.”

She giggled softly, a sound I hadn’t heard from her before. “Umm... I think that’s a mate thing. The guys couldn’t get out of here fast enough.”

“I didn’t know you were capable of giggling. Is that some kind of new upgrade?” I teased.

“F\*ck off, Rookie. I did not giggle,” she shot back, sliding out from behind me and letting me flop back onto the bed.

“You kind of did, though,” I said with a smirk, rolling over and pushing myself off my side of the bed. My legs wobbled, but I managed to stand. I moved toward the bathroom, and she looked like she might follow. I wasn’t sure I was ready for that—after so long without being with a woman, now was definitely not the time to get reacquainted. Holding up my hand, I walked past her and closed the door behind me, leaning against it to catch my breath.

When I emerged, feeling almost like a new person, I noticed she had packed all our things, ready to leave. The walk wasn't far, but after everything that had happened over the last few days, it felt like it was going to be a long one.

"Let's go. Rory and his guys are expecting us," she called from the doorway.

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Chapter 264

18 – Greta

I found myself glancing at Finn repeatedly, unable to tear my eyes away. The past two days had been nothing short of terrifying, and yet, somehow, fear no longer gripped me as it once did. My wolf had been right all along—Finn needed me to heal him, to help cleanse the poison coursing through his body. Patiently, my wolf took her time, tending to every single wound, no matter how small or large. There were more than a hundred cuts and scrapes, each one demanding care. We had to shift positions every twelve hours so she could lick them clean. Her saliva would temporarily staunch the bleeding, but inevitably, the wounds would start leaking again, slowly and persistently. Once we finally managed to close the wounds completely, I realized something else—Finn would have seizures if I ever stepped away from him. I was so afraid to leave his side, even for a moment to use the bathroom. Neither of us had much appetite, and I found myself carefully dripping water into his mouth, desperate to keep him hydrated.

"Just ask, Princess. Stop staring at me like that," he said, his voice steady despite the weariness in his movements. Though his walk appeared firm, I had been close enough to him long enough to notice the subtle struggles beneath the surface.

"You said no one wants or trusts you except Kennedy. Why do you believe that? Everyone who came with you, those still in Dark Moon, they look up to you. They come to you when they need help." I couldn't believe he didn't see himself the way others did.

He let out a short, bitter laugh. "They come to me out of habit. Most of them were born rogues; they don't fully understand pack hierarchy or what requires permission and what doesn't. Before Amy and Claude, people came and went as they pleased, no questions asked. Everyone was responsible for themselves, and we could pack up and move at a moment's notice. We didn't always know where the borders began or ended—there's more unclaimed land out there than you might guess." He took a deep breath, his gaze distant. "I haven't held a rank or had a place to belong in a long time. I barely remember my pack. I know I have family somewhere out there, but I couldn't tell you who or where. After the attack, I stayed as close to my pack as I could, but no one came looking for me. No one ever does. When Nan found me wandering in the woods, she took me in, made sure I was fed alongside the other kids. She didn't coddle us or try to replace the parents we lost. We were always free to leave, but she also made sure we were educated, knew how to fight, and could survive on our own if that's what we wanted. She never took our choice away."

“That still doesn’t explain why you think you’re not wanted or that you’re not a leader,” I pressed gently.

“We were always free to leave, and some did. When people left and never came back, we stopped talking about them. It was as if they never existed—an unspoken rule. Knowing you’re easily forgotten or replaced, and seeing proof of it every day, it changes you.” His eyes stared blankly into the forest, unfocused. I recognized that look—the protective wall people raise to shield their broken souls from further pain.

“You’re still a leader,” I insisted. I wasn’t sure why I felt the need to convince him. He didn’t seem interested in a title, but there was something in the way his eyes lit up when he spoke about the rogues he cared for. I knew he cared deeply; otherwise, he wouldn’t have endured the years of abuse under Amy and Claude. He had probably suffered far more than anyone realized.

“They were told to follow me. We were young, bound by a mate bond I didn’t understand—easy for Claude to manipulate. Sammy and I were among the few who didn’t try to deceive people, but Claude knew exactly what to say to motivate us to act in ways that made others follow our commands more readily than those from new outsiders. We just wanted to keep everyone fed and safe. I’m only seen as a leader now because they don’t know any different.” He shrugged and stepped further ahead, clearly signaling he wanted to end the conversation.

“What makes you think you’re not wanted?” I jogged to catch up beside him.

“Ha! Are you kidding me?!” He stopped abruptly, and I bumped into his shoulder. “You, of all people, don’t get to ask me that.”

He was so close I could see the shifting shades of blue in his eyes. His intensity made my words catch in my throat. “I never said I didn’t want you,” I finally managed to say, coughing slightly.

He tilted his head, expression unreadable. Then he sighed, rolled his eyes, and turned away.

“Finn!” I called after him, panic rising in my chest. “Finn, wait.” I grabbed his shoulder, but he shrugged me off and kept walking. We were nearly at Rory’s place. For some reason, I didn’t want to end this conversation with Finn angry at me. I’d never cared this much before. What the hell was happening to me? “Finn! I didn’t say I didn’t want you.”

“No. You did more than say it. You made sure I knew it every single day. You show me you don’t want me, at least you don’t bother hiding it.” He laughed bitterly.

“Greta! Good to see you both,” Liam called out.

“The welcome committee looks a little light,” Finn joked.

“Stop,” I said, glaring at him, shocked by his rudeness.

“He’s just glad to see you, not ‘us.’ You’re important, ma’am. I’m just a rogue who took on some other rogues.” He looked away and walked toward the car where Grant was standing.

“Trouble in paradise?” Liam teased.

“Liam, I swear, I’ll punch you so hard it’ll take a forensic scientist to find you,” I shot back.

“So that’s a ‘yes,’ then,” he laughed. “Didn’t he do it for you the way you expected?” He raised his eyebrows playfully.

“I’m definitely mixing novocaine into your lube,” I warned, laughing at his shocked face. “Should I warn a boyfriend so he’s not thrown off by your lack of reaction?” I eyed him skeptically.

“Not currently, but noted,” he smiled. “The alpha wants to talk to you before you leave. We figure you both scared the rogues off, so we don’t expect any more trouble, but he’d like to get an idea of who and what we’re dealing with before you go.”

I gave a brief overview of what we had discovered and what we expected now that Finn knew the rogues and Dark Moon might be targeted again. Once I finished, I went to find Finn and Grant, who were talking and laughing about something. I couldn’t help but smile, feeling the flutter of butterflies in my stomach at the sight of Finn’s expression. But I had to stop the thought. I couldn’t let myself see him as cute, laughing with one of our warriors. I didn’t want a mate—not after everything I’d been through before Ryker found me.

“Hey, Princess, you coming or what?”

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Chapter 265

19 – Greta

Finn slid into the backseat, leaned his head against the headrest, and shut his eyes almost immediately. Well, it looks like the ride home will be a quiet one.

“Greta, you should get some rest too. It’s been a tough week for you, and the drive—”

“Don’t you dare finish that sentence,” I interrupted, shooting a sharp glance at Grant. “If you jinx us, I swear I’ll make your life miserable.”

Grant just rolled his eyes. “Yes, ma’am.”

“Seriously? You too?” I exclaimed.

“What?” He grinned, unable to hide his amusement.

“You’re not allowed to call me that, so cut it out.” I turned to look out the window, trying to hide the smirk tugging at my lips. I didn’t hate the title—it was just that Finn said it like it was some kind of insult.

“You let Finn call you that,” Grant pointed out, and I quickly glanced over my left shoulder to make sure Finn was still asleep.

“Shh! I don’t. He just doesn’t listen, and honestly, it’s not worth the argument.”

“Uh-huh, sure. That’s the story you’re sticking with,” he teased.

I gave his chest a playful smack. “Since when did you get so chatty? Don’t you usually just sit there, all stoic and silent, playing chauffeur?”

“I prefer to call it defensive driving, ma’am. And for your information, I do speak up plenty when the situation calls for it.”

“Get lost, Jeeves.”

“Only the Luna gets to call me that.”

“Fair enough, Jeeves.”

“Now shut up and get some sleep, ma’am. You’ve got a meeting with the alpha as soon as we get back.”

“We need to get Finn to the healers first. I want them to draw some blood, see if that poison—or whatever that crap was—is still in his system. He’s not back to one hundred percent, so I’m hoping there’s still some trace left.”

“Hoping? You’re hoping he’s still being poisoned? No wonder he’s irritated with you.”

“No! That’s not what I meant. Wait, when did he say he was mad at me?”

“I didn’t say mad, just irritated. And anyone who saw you two coming off the trail could tell he’s upset about something. The look on your face says you know why. Care to share? After all, he is the Luna’s favorite warrior now.”

“Take that back! I’m her favorite.” This time, I punched him lightly. At this rate, another one of Kennedy’s favorites was going to come back covered in bruises.

“Debatable,” he shrugged. “And she won’t be thrilled if you bring back a grumpy Finn.”

“Shut up. She’ll be fine. Did anything happen while we were out here?”

“Nothing related to the warriors. Training’s been going well. We’ve ramped up the intensity for the newcomers. Some of the rogues are surprisingly quick learners when it comes to our techniques.”

“That’s something I need to discuss with Ryker and the others. Janelle’s part of this new group, so we need to come up with an alternative strategy.”

“They’ve already started working on it after your SOS link. Border patrols have been adjusted. They’re focusing from the outside in, collaborating with Don, Nathan, and Rory. Josh said he’d fill you in when you get back.” I nodded and sent a quick link to Ryker.

“Hey, Boss. Got a minute?”

“For you? Always.”

“I didn’t want to interrupt, since you seem hell-bent on knocking up Kennedy,” I joked. Both my wolf and I laughed along with him.

“I’m not denying it. What’s up?”

“I want to take Finn to the healers and have some blood drawn. He’s still off, and I think that poison might still be in his system. If it is…”

“You want them to figure it out.”

“Exactly. That stuff is serious. I can’t even count the times Finn was hit, and he said he and Sammy have spent time building up a tolerance. But he was having seizures, and his whole body would lock up. He was unresponsive for two and a half days, Ryker. If that’s what a tolerance looks like, I don’t want to imagine what it could do to someone who’s never been exposed.”

“Could witches be involved?”

“Possibly. Claude wasn’t above using every tool he had to take you down.”

“Hmm. You two are close, huh? Rest up. Grant says you’re crabby and that you and your mate are having a spat.”

“Does he know?!” I gasped. “You weren’t supposed to say anything until we figured this out.”

“Calm down. We didn’t say anything outright, but clearly something’s going on if Grant notices tension between you two. Have you made a decision?”

“No. And now it’s even harder.”

“How come?”

“Ryker, he was dying. You should have seen him.” My voice cracked, and I had to fight back tears. “I couldn’t move away without him reacting. Going to the bathroom felt like an F1 pit stop.” I smiled weakly at the memory. “I had to stay close to him until this morning. My wolf wouldn’t let me leave his side.”

“She’s attached, then?”

“Yes, especially now. I was so good at keeping my distance before. What am I going to do? I can’t have a mate. You know that.”

“But clearly, you were meant to have one.”

“I’m not meant for that. We both know it.”

“Clearly, the Moon Goddess thinks otherwise.”

“No! I won’t trap him. It wouldn’t be fair.”

“Why don’t you just talk to your mate and let him decide? He’s a smart guy.”

“You’re only saying that because your mate practically adopted him on sight.”

“Has she ever been wrong, in all the time you’ve known her?”

“No,” I grumbled.

“We’ll meet you at the hospital. Kennedy’s losing her mind over you both. She didn’t want to bother you after the fight, so she’s refusing to mindlink you.”

“Tell her she’s ridiculous, and we’ll see her soon.” I laughed. Kennedy treated mindlinking like some formal business call. She was so serious about it. I could have used the distraction while lying around for two days. I couldn’t wait to hug her though. She had this calming effect, just by being near.

“See you soon, Greta. And don’t hurt your mate before you get here.”

“F\*ck you. I haven’t done anything.”

“Yet.”

“Again, f\*ck you.”

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Chapter 266

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Finn slid into the back seat with a tired sigh, leaning his head back and closing his eyes almost immediately. Well, that settles it—we’re not going to have much conversation on the ride home.

“Greta, you should get some rest too. It’s been a tough week for you, and the drive—well, it’s going to be long,” Grant began.

“Don’t you dare finish that sentence,” I warned, shooting him a sharp side-eye. “If you jinx us, I swear I’ll come after you.”

Grant just rolled his eyes in response. “Yes, ma’am.”

“Seriously? You too?” I exclaimed.

“What?” he asked, barely hiding a laugh.

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“Sure, that’s the excuse you’re going with,” he teased again.

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“Fair enough, Jeeves.”

“Now shut up and get some sleep, ma’am. You’ve got a meeting with the alpha as soon as we get back.”

“We need to get Finn to the hospital first,” I said, my voice tightening. “I want the healers to take some blood samples, see if that poison or toxin or whatever it was is still in his system. He’s definitely not back to one hundred percent, so I’m hoping there are still traces.”

“Hoping? You’re hoping he’s still being poisoned? No wonder he’s irritated with you.”

“No! That’s not what I meant.” I paused, suddenly curious. “Wait—when did he tell you he was mad at me?”

“I didn’t say mad, I said irritated. And anyone who saw the two of you coming off the trail could tell he’s worked up about something. The look on your face tells me you know exactly why. Care to share? After all, he is the Luna’s favorite warrior now.”

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“Yes. Especially now. I was so good at keeping my distance before. What am I supposed to do? I can’t have a mate. You know that.”

“But clearly, you were meant to have one.”

“I’m not meant for that. We both know it.”

“Clearly, the Moon Goddess thinks otherwise.”

“No! I won’t trap him. It wouldn’t be fair.”

“Why don’t you actually talk to your mate and let him decide? He’s obviously a smart guy.”

“You’re only saying that because your mate basically adopted him the moment he saw him.”

“Has she ever been wrong, in all the time you’ve known her?”

“No,” I grumbled.

“We’ll meet you at the hospital. Kennedy is losing her mind over both of you. She didn’t want to bother you after the fight, so she refuses to mindlink you.”

“Tell her she’s ridiculous, and we’ll see her soon.” I laughed. Kennedy treated mindlinking like a business call—so formal. I could’ve used the distraction while I was stuck lying around for two days. Next time I’m forced to rest like that, I’ll have to reach out to her. I can’t wait to hug her. She has this way of making me relax just by being near.

“See you soon, Greta. Don’t hurt your mate before you get here.”

“F\*ck you. I haven’t done anything.”

“Yet.”

“Again, f\*ck you.”

## Continue Regular Chapter Reading Below

Chapter 267

20 – Finn

Hearing Greta teasing Grant in the front seat should stir some jealousy in me. That was always how it went with Amy—I despised every guy she smiled at or even exchanged a word with. I never trusted her intentions and was constantly on edge, watching her for any sign of betrayal. She seemed to enjoy testing me, gauging my reactions like it was some twisted game. Eventually, I stopped showing anything on the outside, but inside, my wolf and I were quietly breaking apart.

With Greta and Grant, though? It's different. They're just friends and colleagues, sharing jokes about the nicknames they've given each other. I've heard Kennedy call him Jeeves before, and he just grins and lets it slide. There's no hidden agenda behind their banter, no tension waiting to explode. It's not like when I call Greta "ma'am" and watch her stiffen, waiting for my reaction.

She's been unusually quiet for a while now, but the occasional snort and soft huff tells me she's probably briefing Ryker on everything that happened. She seems more at ease, thinking I'm asleep, and her voice drifts around me like a gentle breeze, lacking the usual sharp edge she directs my way.

"Bossman said to meet him at the hospital. Kennedy's losing it over what happened to you, Finn, and she wants a sample of your blood taken," Greta says softly.

My eyes snap open. "Wait, what? You want a what?"

"I figured you might be listening," she replies with a smirk.

"Don't dodge the question, ma'am. Why exactly do you want my blood?" I try to sit up, but my body feels heavy and sluggish, as if I'm moving through molasses. Not being in control of my own limbs is infuriating.

"Because of this." She points over her shoulder at me, using the visor mirror to catch my gaze. "You said you built a tolerance, right?"

I nod slowly.

"Well, based on how you're acting and the fact it took you two days to regain consciousness, there's still poison in your system. If there's even a trace left, I want to see if our healers can study it—maybe develop an antidote or find a way to protect ourselves. Unless Claude conveniently filled you in on all this already."

I can't help but laugh—a short, sharp bark. I actually enjoy this side of her, the sassy, no-nonsense attitude. "No, he didn't share any of that info with me, at least not that I know of."

“Well then, your tolerance to hundreds of poisoned cuts might be the key to saving our pack from these maniacs. We got up close and personal, cleaned your wounds, and honestly, that kind of damage would have killed even Ryker, with all his alpha enhancements. We need to understand what this poison is and how to stop it. Janelle’s no better than Amy—she’ll target our pups and probably Kennedy too, for revenge.”

“Yeah, that makes sense.” I rub my hands over my face, frustrated by the fog clouding my mind and the general feeling of crap that won’t lift. Somehow, she’s included me in “her pack” now. “Tell Ryker I’m on board with whatever he thinks is necessary to get ahead of this.”

I lean my head back again, closing my eyes.

She chuckles quietly but doesn’t say a word.

“Care to share your thoughts with the class, ma’am?” I ask, still with my eyes shut.

“Nope. Nothing to report... yet.”

I groan. “That’s not ominous at all.”

“Well, we’re here now. Let’s find out just how ominous this really is, Rookie.”

“GRETA! FINN!” Suddenly, I’m swallowed by a rush of blonde hair and a tight squeeze as the air is knocked out of my lungs. Kennedy wraps us both in a fierce hug.

“We’re okay, Luna. Be gentle with your new favorite warrior—he’s still struggling. We need to get him to the healers fast. He’s not back to full strength and the poison’s still showing.”

Kennedy steps back, holding me at arm’s length, eyes scanning for the worst wounds. “Come on. We have a room ready just for you.”

Both women hook their arms through mine and practically march me into the hospital, straight to my room. No one questions the Luna’s authority or her actions; it’s clear she’s already been here, preparing everything in advance.

## **Continue Regular Chapter Reading Below**

### Chapter 268

“Why does it feel like you’re trying to move me in here?” I ask, glancing around the room at all the small, thoughtful details she’s added. There are plants carefully placed on the side table, a soft rug laid out beside the bed, and even the curtains aren’t the usual plain white. My eyes drift to the corner near the bathroom door, where my duffle bag sits, looking stuffed to the brim. I shift my gaze between the two women and clear my throat, catching the sharp look in Ryker’s eyes before I add, “Please, explain.”

Kennedy looks a little sheepish but makes no attempt to soften the blow. “You’re needed for a lot of testing, and since you’ve missed every check-up scheduled over the last six months, the healers want you to stay a few days.”

I shake my head, trying to keep my tone polite but firm. “With all due respect, Luna, no thank you. They can take as much blood as they want to figure out what this toxin is, but I’m not staying here.”

“Finn, you have to be healthy. Why won’t you let us help you?” Kennedy’s voice is pleading, her eyes searching mine for some sign of agreement. I just shake my head again and walk over to the healer who’s been lurking quietly in the corner. She seemed ready to let Kennedy beg me endlessly. “Greta, stay with him. Keep him company,” Luna instructs.

I groan, turning back around. “I’m fine, thank you, Luna. Greta, go home and get some sleep. You’ve been up for over forty-eight hours, and you weren’t even in the same fight I was.”

The healer looks over my shoulder and asks quietly, “Greta, did you get hit with the toxin too?”

“Not that I know of. They targeted Finn mostly,” Greta replies.

Another healer passes by, giving her some instructions, and I think I catch the sound of an eye roll. The tension in the room thickens.

“So, are we extending your sleepover?” Greta nudges me with her elbow as she walks past. I glance over my shoulder and smile brightly. “I’ll take that as a yes,” I say, following her.

I have no clue where we’re headed, but I might as well stick close to my temporary entertainment for the next day or so. It’s clear Kennedy will get her way, and I’ll be the lab rat as long as she wants me here.

“Do we have to go downstairs? I didn’t even know there were rooms down there,” Greta’s voice trembles slightly, and I can feel her fear from where I stand. That’s odd—she’s usually fearless.

“I’m sorry, Miss Greta, but since we don’t know what you might have been exposed to, we need you and Finn to be isolated. It’s just a precaution,” Luna explains gently.

I step closer, surprised at how quickly they’re moving. “You okay?” I ask, slipping in right behind Greta, trying to get as close as she’ll allow while we’re still in public.

“No. Not really. I don’t do basements,” she says, shivering dramatically. “I need a room with at least one window.”

“Come on, it’ll be fine. We can go together and get this over with quickly,” I offer.

“Finn! I said I’m not going! Drop it!” Greta turns to face me fully, her anger barely masking the fear I can still sense radiating from her.

“No.”

“What do you mean no? I’m not going down there. You can kiss my—”

I suddenly reach out, grabbing her face gently with both hands and pulling her close until our noses almost touch. “What exactly can I kiss, Greta?” I whisper. Her eyes widen, and she freezes in my arms. I take a step forward, and as expected, she steps back. I keep advancing slowly, inch by inch, until her back hits the wall. I hear a quiet whisper from the healer nearby: “Nice work.”

Greta jumps as the elevator begins its slow descent.

## **Continue Regular Chapter Reading Below**

Chapter 269

21 – Finn

“No, I can’t. Please.” Her voice is barely audible as she tries to wriggle free from my grasp, desperation clear in her trembling words.

“Stop.” I gently but firmly pull her face back toward mine. “Look at me.”

Reluctantly, her eyelids flutter open, and her gaze immediately begins darting around, searching. We’re still inside the elevator, but something down here is clearly triggering fear she doesn’t want to confront.

“Stop scanning for an escape. Just look at me.” I slide my hands up beside her face, like blinders narrowing her focus.

“I can’t, Finn. Please...” Her voice trails off, but finally she meets my eyes. “Please.” She barely ever says my name, and never pleads like this.

“Talk to me. You stayed with me for two days straight. You made sure I got out of that fight alive. Let me help you through this. Talk. To. Me.” I feel her chest rising and falling rapidly against mine.

“I can’t be down here. Not again. I don’t do underground.” Her words come out shaky, filled with dread.

“Why?” I ask softly, trying to coax her out of the elevator, but she tightens her grip on my wrists and plants her heels firmly.

“No!” Her body trembles with fear, but her eyes blaze with determination. Something happened here—something her instincts are screaming at her to avoid. I can’t imagine Ryker harming her or letting anyone else do so, but I haven’t been here long enough to know everything.

I have to push through this. Something inside me refuses to let it go. She hasn't tried to kill me yet, and she stayed by my side when she could have left me for dead—things my first mate never even considered. She won't tell anyone she's my mate, and she won't talk about it openly, but she hasn't rejected me outright either. I'm clinging to that hope. Maybe I can convince her that having a rogue as a mate isn't the worst thing in the world.

Leaning in, I press her gently against the wall, brushing my lips close to her ear. "Hold on." She gasps as I lift her up effortlessly. Her slender legs curl around my waist, and my hands find the curve of her hips. Before she can react, I'm moving.

Glancing over her shoulder for the healer, I carry her into the nearest room. The healer quickly shuts the door behind us, wary of Greta trying to run again.

"Finn! What the hell? I said no—I don't want to be down here!" She struggles fiercely now, forcing me to set her down, though I remain between her and the door.

"And I said if I'm stuck down here for a few days, then so are you. Let's just get this over with. Having company might make it bearable."

"Fuck you. You selfish bastard. I'm not staying down here with you."

"Yeah, that's me—the selfish rogue you want nothing to do with. If you didn't want me, you should've left me to die in the forest."

"I'm giving you two a minute." A voice calls from behind me just as the door clicks shut.

"Sure, make this all about you—like every other guy on this planet. I won't be guilted into anything. You don't know what I've been through or what I want."

"Then talk to me. Help me understand. Why are you so afraid of the basement?" I step closer, softening my tone.

She starts pacing like a trapped animal. "No, I just need to get out... Now!"

She tries to slip past me, but I catch her around the waist and shove her back. She stumbles into a wall lined with medical supplies, knocking several tubes loose. Her growl shifts from fear to fury. I'm in for a fight.

She lunges again, this time aiming for my face. I'm slow to block, and her fist connects with my nose, sending blood spraying everywhere. Arms flail as I do my best to shield myself from her furious blows. She pulls back to strike again; I duck under her swing and drive my shoulder into her hips, forcing her back onto a nearby bed.

She pounds on my back, but my size gives me the advantage. Her wolf holds her back from truly hurting me, so I press my hips to pin her lower body. I twist one arm behind her head, then secure the other above it. Panic floods her eyes, her breathing quickens—but it's different from before, less aggressive.

"No! No... please, no. I'll stop. Just let me go." Her voice cracks with desperation.

I release her hands, but they fly up to my chest, pushing weakly. I hold firm, staring into her terrified face, and a cold shiver runs through me. I know this look all too well—and I hate it.

“Greta, stop. Just stop. I won’t hurt you. You’re safe here.” I repeat the words slowly until the haze in her eyes begins to fade. “You’re safe, I promise. I won’t touch you—not like that—without your permission. I will never hurt you.”

“Then get the fuck off me and let me leave.”

“I can’t. We need to know. My wolf and I need to find out what they did to you, who ‘they’ are, so we can tear them apart.” She exhales a bitter laugh.

“You can’t do anything. Please, just let me up.”

“No. Tell me now. My wolf is talking to yours. I will find out, no matter how stubborn you are.”

“Finn,” she whimpers, tears spilling down her cheeks. “Please let me go. I’m broken. I have too many demons to be a good mate. Just let me walk away. Find someone else.”

“You want to talk broken and demons? You did meet my first mate, right?” A faint smile slips onto her lips before she masks it again. “I know I’m just a rogue. I bring nothing to this relationship, but I’m here. I chose you—crazy as you are. Now talk to me. When? Who? How bad did it get? I’m not moving until you give me some answers.”

## **Continue Regular Chapter Reading Below**

Chapter 270

22 – Greta

Long ago, I made a solemn promise to myself: never again would I endure those dark days. Even Ryker doesn’t know the full extent of what happened. And now, here I am, caught in a bind with this towering man who’s using the mate bond as a weapon against me. My wolf is practically begging to spill every secret to this charming guy and his equally persistent wolf, just because they’re so stubbornly sweet.

“They can help us. They already are. This human isn’t like those rogues who destroyed your pack,” she said gently.

“I get it, I do. But that doesn’t make it any easier. I haven’t spoken about this in ages. I don’t want those nightmares creeping back. I’ve only just started to sleep peacefully again.”

“You know you’ve been sleeping better since you’ve been around him, right? The past two days have been like heaven.”

I fought the growl rising in my throat at her words. She wasn’t wrong, but admitting it felt like surrender. Even in the cave, he managed to pull me out of a nightmare—something no one

else, not even Ryker, has ever done. Usually, those memories cling to me for hours, and shadows haunt my vision for days afterward.

“He’s too sweet and innocent for me…” I muttered.

“You say that, but he’s spent most of his life in a rogue pack and was even mated to Amy! What makes you think he’s innocent and sweet? I only see that side of him when he’s with you.”

“You don’t. He acts the same way around Kennedy…” I protested weakly.

“She was the first to give him a chance, no questions asked. She believed in him before he even believed in himself. Even you felt how his loyalty to her connected him to this pack.”

“He’s like that with the pups too.” I wasn’t sure why I kept arguing. I was clutching at straws, and we both knew it. Change has always been my enemy. It’s never ended well. Even coming to Ryker’s pack was far from easy.

“Because he understands them. Deep down, there’s a little boy who just wants to belong to a pack.”

Suddenly, I realized I was making noises arguing with my wolf. I blinked and found Finn hovering just above my face.

I summoned every ounce of sass I had. “Do you know you can get off me now?”

I pressed my elbows into the bed and shifted my hips. Immediately, I felt his erection still beneath me but stop moving.

“Hmm.” He smiled, playful and teasing. “Nah, I think I like it right here.”

He slowly moved his hips against mine. Flames sparked through my entire body at the thought of his arousal. At the same time, every muscle in me tensed. I didn’t know what he planned next, and this was not a position I enjoyed being in.

“Is that panting I hear?” he teased.

“N-n-no! Get off, Finn… now.” I pushed against his chest again. There was a slight shift, but I lacked the leverage to move him. He held my gaze for so long I could see every shade of blue in his eyes. Without warning, he nodded and then pulled me forward. I blinked, surprised to find myself straddling his lap.

“Now you’re on top. Is this better?” His tone held no teasing this time. “Can you stop overthinking and just be here?”

I opened my mouth to respond just as the door creaked open.

“I’m sorry to interrupt, but we really should get Finn’s samples as soon as possible,” the healer said.

I tried to slide to the side, but Finn locked his arms around my back.

“You don’t need to move for her to get what she needs. We’re not done talking,” he said, his voice low and steady.

I whipped my head toward the healer, silently begging for a reason to escape his lap. I needed space—my body was buzzing like I’d had too much coffee.

“If you’re comfortable right there, Miss Greta, I can work around you. Being close to your mate actually helps with the healing,” she explained.

“Who told you we’re mates?!” The accusation slipped out sharper than I intended. Finn flinched, and I caught it.

“No one, Miss. It’s just pretty easy to recognize new mates if you know what signs to look for.”

“Please keep that information to yourself.” Finn took a deep breath and exhaled slowly, his arms relaxing and resting beside my knees. The healer simply nodded. Suddenly, I felt hollow inside.

“Let’s get this over with. I need to sleep, and I think Kennedy still has more poking and prodding for you to do once this crap is out of my system.”

“Yes, sir.”

“Please call me Finn. I’m not a ‘sir’ to you,” he said kindly but with a flat tone.

“Okay... Finn.” The healer chuckled sheepishly, but her eyes widened as she glanced at me. Yep, she got caught flirting with my mate, and something about my expression made her rethink her life choices.

“Your jealousy is showing,” my wolf teased.

“I’m not jealous.”

“Bullsh\*t! That girl nearly wet herself just now. Finn’s wolf thinks it’s hilarious, by the way.”

“Shut up! Stop talking to him, traitor.”

“Not a chance! Do you know how long I’ve waited for him?!”

I had no comeback. I knew exactly how long. Since I was eighteen, she’d hoped that finding my mate would heal some of my deepest scars. Like Ryker, I had long given up hope. Pain—both physical and emotional—becomes something you simply tolerate after a while. I didn’t know how to stop being distant. I needed to figure out how to try—for my wolf and his. I wasn’t the only one who mattered. Why did everything have to be so damn complicated?

“You can get off now,” his deep, gravelly voice pulled me back to reality.

“Hmm?” I blinked. Finn wasn’t looking at me anymore.

“She’s done and gone. You can go.” When I didn’t move, he lifted me from his lap and set me aside before heading into the bathroom. When he locked the door behind him, I knew he wouldn’t come out until I was gone.