

Letters Sent To Eternity

chapter 3

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3 – Kennedy

“So, the cat’s away. What are the mice going to do now?” Tommy teased with a sly grin.

“This particular mouse has homework to finish, and the Beta gave me something to test over the weekend, so it looks like we’re playing hide and seek,” I replied, watching their faces shift from amusement to surprise. Their shocked expressions made it clear I’d have to fight hard for my freedom.

“Not a smart move, Ken. You heard Jeremiah—he’ll lose it if he finds out we let you roam the woods alone,” Ben quickly interjected, trying to shut down the idea before it even took root.

“Hey, it was your dad’s idea! Come on, Ben, please?” I pleaded.

“No way,” he said firmly.

“Jason, back me up here. It was an assignment from the Beta—you can ask him yourself,” I said, hoping for an ally.

Jason shook his head with a wry smile. “I can guarantee the Beta wouldn’t assign you something during the same weekend the Alpha, Luna, Gamma, Delta, and Jeremiah are all away. Even he knows what Jeremiah would do if any of us let that happen. Plus, he’ll be too busy running the pack for two days to supervise. No chance. I love you, Ken, but I like my balls intact.” He chuckled.

“Ugh, Tommy? What about you?” I asked.

“If they’re out, I’m out. You’re a handful when you’re in your testing mode, and honestly, it kind of makes my brain hurt,” he groaned.

“Really? Traitors all of you,” I muttered under my breath. I expected as much, but it was worth the shot. “I’m going to go change. Can we still do movie night? Or is that off limits too since Jeremiah won’t be here?” I turned to leave before anyone could answer. It wasn’t their fault, but I hated feeling like a prisoner. Clearly, I hadn’t done enough to prove myself yet. I’d just have to double down on training.

“We’re definitely watching a movie. Are you going to wear that sexy thing I got you for Christmas?” Tommy called after me from down the hall.

I turned, shooting him a mock glare, but broke into a smile when he playfully wiggled his eyebrows.

“No chance, traitor,” I said with a grin. “For your failure to grow a spine and help me out, I’m going to wear a bunch of frumpy layers.” I started to walk away when I heard him mutter.

“Layers are more fun. It’s like unwrapping a present,” he said with a cheeky grin. Such a hornball.

The weekend passed with barely a thing accomplished. I hardly left my room, let alone the packhouse. It was just easier than enduring the third degree for trying to sneak out. I kept my distance from the guys. The longer Jeremiah was gone, the more frustrated I became with feeling trapped—and they didn’t deserve to bear the brunt of my anger.

On Sunday, Aunt Beth called me, while the rest of the guys received a mindlink from Uncle James. I couldn’t mindlink since I wasn’t an official pack member. The elders had found information suggesting humans couldn’t handle the pack connection, and attempting it might kill me. So naturally, Aunt Beth shut down any conversation about it immediately.

Something had come up, and the elders had to stay an extra day. Aunt Beth was unusually vague, which wasn’t like her, but maybe there were people around, and the details weren’t for common knowledge. I missed Jeremiah terribly, and the nightmares were growing worse. Everyone knew about them, but it was one of those things we never talked about.

Ben stayed with me that night after we got the call. He didn’t wait for me to have a nightmare; he simply followed me into my room, wordless, climbed into bed behind me, and held me as I clung to Jer’s shirt, inhaling the faint scent that had been fading over the last two days. The nightmares hit harder when I didn’t expect Jer to be gone. None of us fully understand the connection between us—it’s like we’re twins at times, able to feel each other’s emotions and communicate without words or mindlink. It’s just an innate bond.

The worst part was that I hadn’t heard from Jeremiah at all in two days. I don’t think we’d ever gone more than 24 hours without talking or texting. Nothing felt overtly wrong, but something had definitely shifted; the change was tangible in the air, and it was unsettling.

Monday at school was brutal. Even with Ben’s quiet support, the nightmare replayed endlessly in my mind, and I couldn’t shake it. We were both exhausted—he just hid it better. I borrowed his composure and silently made it through our morning workout and my first class.

Lost in thought at my locker, switching books for second period, I barely noticed Janelle’s voice.

“Were you too busy entertaining last night? You look a little rough, but maybe that’s how you like it. Is that how you keep all those guys entertained? Hope they pay you well for the services, human.”

“So witty, Janelle. Glad to see the education system hasn’t gone to waste on you,” I shot back without even looking her way as I walked off. It would take her a moment to realize I’d just called her stupid—plenty of time for me to get to class.

“Are they still on that kick?” Jason asked from the seat behind me, making me jump. Damn ninja.

“Yeah, it’s an oldie but a goodie. She only brings out that crap when Jer’s gone and she has nothing better to talk about. Apparently, you guys aren’t scary enough to keep her away just by being here. You might want to work on that,” I said with a half-hearted smile.

“Well, at least your humor’s still intact. Oh... we gotta go. Now.”

“Wait, what? We just got here and class is about to start.” I protested, but he ignored me, standing and grabbing both our backpacks. What the hell?

“Mr. Jones, sorry to interrupt. Alpha needs us. It’s urgent.” Jason nodded toward me, not breaking eye contact with the teacher.

“I’ll need confirmation of that by the end of the day,” the teacher replied.

“Yes, sir.” Jason’s only response as he practically dragged me out of the school.

“What the hell, Jason? Where’s the fire?” I asked, panic rising.

“Alpha said come to the packhouse now—and bring you. The rest of the guys are already there.”

We sped off in his car toward the packhouse. Jason wasn’t usually the panicky type, so this was serious.

“Jason, what’s going on? Is everyone okay?” My mind raced, imagining the worst—something happening to Aunt Beth, Jeremiah, or Uncle James. “Jason, please, talk to me. I’m freaking out here.” He finally looked at me.

“What happened?” I was on the verge of tears, not knowing what to expect.

“Oh shit. Sorry, Ken, I didn’t think. No, everyone’s okay, I guess. I wasn’t told anyone was hurt, and he usually leads with that. Alpha James said they have news and we need to get there quickly. That’s it, I swear.”

I stared out the window, trying to hold back tears until I knew what was going on. The ten-minute drive felt endless, my heart pounding wildly. I kept telling myself, I just have to see them, then everything will be okay. As we pulled up, I spotted all the familiar cars in the driveway—and an unfamiliar sleek white SUV.

I jumped out of Jason’s car before it even stopped and rushed through the front door, not bothering to close it behind me. I was worked up and needed to see my brother before

losing my mind. I pushed through the house, heading straight toward the voices in the common room. Then I saw him, and my eyes locked on no one else.

“Jer,” I whispered, and he turned toward me with the biggest smile, looking genuinely happy to see me. Without thinking, I ran to him and leapt into his arms, wrapping my legs around his waist. I buried my face in his neck, inhaling deeply, feeling an immediate calm wash over me.

Suddenly, a low, menacing growl rippled through the room, sending a chill over everyone. Jeremiah dropped me without a word, turning away. I landed hard on my butt, stunned—he’d never dropped me before, not outside training.

“Who the fuck is that?!” snarled a female voice I didn’t recognize. I couldn’t see her behind Jeremiah’s broad frame; everyone else had moved to stand beside him.

“What’s going on?” I asked, addressing the backs turned to me. Summoning enough strength, I got to my feet, but everyone ignored me. My heart rate spiked again—something was seriously wrong.

“I will not ask again, Jeremiah.” Her voice was sharp and commanding. I could feel her power radiating from where she stood. She was using her aura, meaning she held a high rank.

“It’s nothing, really. This is my best friend, Kennedy. Kennedy, this is my mate, Rayna.” Jeremiah finally faced me, but his gaze seemed distant, flicking between her and me. I could tell he was already smitten—completely infatuated with her—and my heart sank.

His smile wasn’t for me; it was for her. Rayna’s emerald green eyes shot daggers at me. She was flawless—literally perfect. Her face was angular and symmetrical, almost fairy-like. Tall and lean with generous curves in all the right places, her raven-black hair cascaded in loose waves down to her mid-back. Her olive skin glowed beneath the soft pink tracksuit she wore, which made her look athletic rather than lazy or casual. She was stunning, and looked incredible standing beside my best friend.

I chose to ignore the insult of being dropped and ignored, focusing instead on my friend’s excitement.

“Your mate? No way! Jer, that’s amazing!” I exclaimed, reaching out to hug him again. Rayna growled at me once more, and it took every ounce of willpower not to pull back my hands and embrace him. Instead, I clenched my fists at my sides and looked around awkwardly. The room had fallen silent, all eyes on us. I wanted to be happy for my friend, but this was not at all what I’d expected. I didn’t know what I thought would happen, but it certainly wasn’t this.

Tommy broke the tension with a polite introduction. “Hello, Rayna. Nice to meet you. I’ll be your Delta. This is Jason, your future Gamma, and Ben, your future Beta. Kennedy is one of our warriors too.” He pointed me out, and I wished he hadn’t. Rayna had been calming down, but the tension snapped back the moment he said my name.

“I’m just gonna go. Rayna, it was nice to meet you,” I said quickly, turning to leave despite their protests. I had no idea where I was going, but I couldn’t stay. I lived here, and she was going to stay here—eventually live here—and she clearly didn’t like that I was friends with Jeremiah. Did she even know about me? Or was he trying to hide me? Was he ashamed of his human friend now that he had his mate? I had never felt so unwelcome in the packhouse before. The foreign feeling settled uneasily in my stomach, making me feel sick.

I didn’t know what this would mean for us. I’d never once considered what would happen if his mate didn’t want me around. I’d assumed she’d fit into our group, not replace me. It felt like my heart was breaking—just like when I lost my parents—and I needed to catch my breath and then hit something hard.

I wandered aimlessly for a moment, but now I had a purpose. I needed to get to the training grounds and work out my frustration and confusion on some weights and a punching bag. I could feel Ben and Jason following me, which meant Tommy wasn’t far behind. They were here to babysit me, to make sure I didn’t do anything that would upset Jeremiah. That thought made me angrier. I knew he was the future Alpha, but why was it always about what he wanted and needed from me? Why couldn’t anyone consider what I needed?

I changed into some spare clothes from my locker and wrapped my hands before hitting the bags, letting every insecure thought fuel my fire. The three guys waited outside the changing room. Tommy opened his mouth to say something, but I raised my hand and shook my head. I didn’t want to hear it—not now. No excuses, no soothing words. I wasn’t ready for anything rational. I just needed to beat the hell out of something.