

Letters Sent To Eternity

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6 – Kennedy

My eyes suddenly widened in surprise. “First what?” I asked, still trying to dodge the question. I was certain everyone chatted about these things in private, but it was never a topic we openly shared as a group.

“Yes! I knew it! So, who was your first kiss?” she pressed eagerly.

“Huh?!” I blinked, caught off guard.

“Don’t pretend you don’t know. Any red-blooded, unattached woman would be foolish not to accept whatever attention came her way. And you’re beautiful—everyone’s noticed. So, tell me. Who. Was. Your. First. Kiss?”

I hesitated, then whispered, “Jason.” I covered my face, feeling a blush creeping up. I wasn’t sure why I felt embarrassed to admit it. It was a sweet memory, and everyone was around when it happened. “But just that one time, during a game of spin the bottle. It’s not really something we talk about.”

She raised an eyebrow. “What about Tommy? He doesn’t seem like the kind to stop at just kissing. But somehow, I don’t think you slept with him.” I shook my head in denial. She grinned mischievously, like a Cheshire Cat. “Yes! So, how far did it go?”

“Are you some kind of mind reader?” I asked, sitting back as she simply stared at me, waiting expectantly. That alpha confidence was unmistakable—she was used to getting her way. I sighed and finally gave in. “Far enough. Look, the guys and I don’t really discuss this stuff. I don’t know how much Jer’s been told, and I don’t want things to get weird between us if he finds out by accident. Or worse, a fight—he’s fiercely protective, if you haven’t noticed.” I glanced at her again, and she just lifted an eyebrow, silently urging me to continue. Her patience was maddening. “Fine. It was during a game of seven minutes in heaven, and honestly, it didn’t mean anything...” I looked down at my lap, twisting my fingers nervously.

“Oh, but it did! Just look at your face! How many times did he make you come? He strikes me as the kind of guy who’d go for more than once. Was that your first time ever?” she teased.

“This is seriously weird,” I muttered, rubbing my hands over my face. She nudged me playfully, nearly making me fall off the bed.

“How many times?” Her grin was infectious. I could see why Jeremiah adored her, even without the mate bond.

“Twice...” I admitted softly.

“In seven minutes? With what?!” she asked, eyes wide.

“Just his hand,” I shrugged, surrendering to her curiosity. She was clearly going to pry until I spilled everything, and honestly, it was nice to have someone to talk to. “It was also my first time with someone other than myself. And yes, I did have sex with Ben. I didn’t want to give my ‘V’ card to just anyone—I wanted to understand how it all worked. He was gentle and patient. He’s not a small guy, either. And again, I don’t know if Jer knows. He probably does, but it’s not something I discuss.”

“That’s so hot!” She rubbed her hands together excitedly.

“Not nearly as hot as what I walked into downstairs a little while ago. Did he forget other people live here? Or is that a mate bond thing, where suddenly you get horny and have to have sex right where you are?”

I was half-joking, but she blushed fiercely.

“Maybe a bit of both. I didn’t know you lived here, and his parents are still at the meeting—they won’t be back until morning, so I didn’t see a problem. Plus, it’s hard to keep my hands to myself around him. You’ve seen him, right? Do you really talk to him every day?” She was blushing but sounded skeptical.

“Yeah, we have for as long as I can remember. Always checking in before school and before bed—well, even before that. Now we go to the same school and I train with them, so I’m with almost all the guys every day.”

Suddenly, there was a knock on my door. “Knock, knock! Is it safe? I’d like to be able to have kids someday, Ken.” My best friend stood in the doorway, waiting for my permission to enter.

“We’re fine, Jer. We just had to fill in some gaps you missed because you’re a moron and let your dick take over your brain,” I teased. He chuckled and stepped inside, carrying two mugs. He set them down on the side table and climbed onto my bed behind Rayna.

“I brought tea. Thought it might help. We have an early start tomorrow, so we all need to get some rest.”

He couldn’t keep his hands off her either, and it was adorable watching him wrap her up in a protective embrace. Her dark hair framed her heart-shaped face, contrasting beautifully with his light blonde locks. She leaned back into him, completely relaxed.

“What’s happening tomorrow?” I asked, confused, reaching for the tea. It was a special blend our healer had made after I told her I was still haunted by nightmares and nothing else was working.

“We’re traveling to my pack so Jeremiah can meet my brother. He’s the Alpha, but he had to deal with another urgent matter, so my dad and I went to the meeting instead.”

“I’m glad you did,” he murmured, nuzzling her neck. I could hear the soft purr of his wolf.

“Okay, please don’t have sex in my room. You have your own space for extracurricular activities. Jer,” I smacked his leg, “thanks for the tea. I should be good. Did the guys leave already? I didn’t even get a chance to say goodbye.” I was trying to hurry them out. As cute as it was, I’d heard that new mates escalate quickly from light touches to full-on sex, and I didn’t want to witness that, no matter how adorable my best friend and his new mate were.

“Nah, they’re all in the media room. We figured it’d be easier if everyone left from here in the morning.”

“Why does everyone have to go?” I asked, still trying to grasp the finer points of pack politics. The thought of them all being gone made my chest tighten.

“We’re all going, including you. When an Alpha travels for more than a couple of days, usually his team goes too, as long as someone is here to run the pack. Beta Daniel is still here, and my parents will be back tomorrow.”

“What does any of that have to do with me?”

“I’m sure Rayna would like another female along. Traveling with all males all the time can’t be much fun. Besides, you’re one of my warriors and my best friend—I want you there when I meet Rayna’s brother.”

“Is that code for you’re afraid of my brother?!” Rayna laughed.

“Umm, yes, Luna!” he growled playfully in her ear. “No sass from you. She’s always the buffer when there’s too much testosterone in the room. Kennedy’s actually been to several meetings with me. She’s great at small talk and remembers everything. Very handy. Plus, she’s beautiful and usually draws attention fast. Your brother has the biggest pack territory and is one of the most notoriously dangerous Alphas. Not to mention, I’m about to take his sister away. I need all the help I can get.”

I ignored his sly jab and asked, “Wait, what pack are you from?”

“Dark Moon.” My eyebrows shot up. Even I had heard of them. I couldn’t recall the Alpha’s name, but the stories painted him as ruthless—he took over weak packs and eliminated Alphas like I turn in school assignments. “Relax, he’s not that scary.”

“Maybe not to you—he loves you. But to the rest of the world, he’s intimidating. If the situation was reversed and someone told me they were Kennedy’s mate and she was packing up to leave today, I’d probably try to beat the crap out of them. Mate bond or not.”

I laughed with Rayna, then stopped and stared at Jeremiah. A thought struck me. “Is that why no one here tries to date me? Because you told them you’d beat the crap out of them?”

“Uh... no... not exactly.”

“But pretty close?”

"We may have hinted that you can handle yourself and we'd take care of whatever's left."

"Good to know there's a 'we' to yell at," I said, glancing at Rayna. "How far is the drive to your pack? I need to make sure I have enough material to yell at them for during the whole trip." She giggled again, and Jeremiah paled, knowing I wasn't joking. He only relaxed when she turned and kissed him on the cheek. "Okay, go on. You two are making me nauseous. I'll see you in the morning."

They both stood and headed for the door, but Jer paused and turned back. "Do you need a shirt? I can grab one for you."

"I still have the one you gave me a couple days ago. I should be good. I have to start weaning sometime." And just like that, we were back to being awkward. Even with some history, I wasn't sure how Rayna felt about him giving me clothes that smelled like him.

"Let me know if you need me, alright?" he said softly.

I just nodded. There was no way I was calling for him with his mate here.

That night, I fell asleep faster than I had in the past three nights. But I wasn't sure if it was because he was back at the packhouse or simply because I was so exhausted I had no choice.

However, that peaceful night ended abruptly. Screeching tires tore through my ears, the acrid smell of burning rubber stung my nostrils, and blood slicked the ground everywhere. Screams echoed all around me. But this time, it wasn't my parents with me. It was Jeremiah, Ben, Tommy, and Jason. I was screaming their names, but no one answered. Their eyes were wide open, but they weren't really seeing me. Then I was screaming, overwhelmed with panic—I'd lost them. They shouldn't even have been there. They weren't supposed to be in the car. Why were they there?

"Kennedy!! Wake up! Ken!! Come on, girl, come back to me! KENNEDY!!"

My eyes flew open, and I blinked slowly to focus. It felt like I was moving through thick wet sand; my body was limp, and I couldn't control my muscles.

"Kennedy, we're here. You're safe now. Stop fighting," a calm voice soothed me. The familiar scent of sandalwood drifted in—Jeremiah. I inhaled deeply again, and this time a sweet floral note mingled with the sandalwood, deepening the calm. Wait—that wasn't familiar. Who else was with me? No one else could see me like this. It was bad enough Ben had been subjected to it. Part of my mind tried to stay logical, but everything felt foggy and slow.

"Mmmokay!" I slurred. "Be okay. Go bed."

"Why does she sound drunk this time? She's never sounded like that before," I heard Ben say.

“Just tired, Ben. Back to sleep,” I mumbled, unable to move but feeling myself collapse backward. I thought I felt arms trying to hold me.

“Kennedy, wake up for us, please. Just for a few minutes, then you can sleep.” That soft voice again. Someone brushed hair from my face. The floral scent was really nice. The hands were gentle, like my mom’s.

“Nice hands,” I mumbled. My brain was working, but everything felt disjointed and confusing.

I tried to blink, and I felt something moving. There was a tightness around my arms, but it didn’t hurt. I breathed in again—it seemed the only thing I could control. A squeeze on my hands, and finally, my eyes opened wide.