

Chapter Three

A/N - so can people please not call Ruth a 'cry baby' or 'over emotional' especially during this chapter. Yes, she does cry a lot - but she has clinical depression and it's a serious condition!

Chapter Three

Ruth Eden Glass

"Alright, Eden, there are some things you need to know about Memphis and the deep south" Shelley began, pushing her black hair over her shoulder. "One, we are a city that gives birth to legends; Elvis, B.B King, Johnny Cash...the list goes on. Two, we throw the best damn parties in the country. And number three, the most important thing, we do the best damn barbeque in the south".

She bit into her rib and moaned. I smirked at her as I bit into my burger, watching as my newest friend devoured her food like a true southerner. Shelley was in the Pack with me and she was also worked at the college, so we'd both quickly become fast friends. Well, friends were pushing it. She was kind, sweet and kind of goofy - but I struggled with the concept of letting people close to me, but I liked her well enough.

"You're an idiot" I laughed.

"Hey, no one does ribs like Memphis. Texas ain't got shit on these bad boys" she smirked, licking the sticky sauce from her fingers gleefully. I couldn't help but laugh at her again. "So, tell me, you got your eyes on anyone in the Pack?" she asked me.

I frowned in confusion, "my eye on anyone? What do you mean?"

"Oh come on, Eden. You're beautiful, young and single. The men have not been able to talk about anything other than you since you arrived. They're like horny chihuahuas who haven't been snipped yet, trying to hump your legs at every turn".

I laughed warmly at her analogy. "A lovely image you paint there".

"I have a way with words" Shelley grinned, BBQ sauce covering her front teeth. I shook my head at her, taking another bite of my burger, before she spoke again. "Come on, Eden. Surely one person has caught your eye".

"I'm not looking, Shelley. Really, I'm not. My mate fucked me up so much that the idea of growing old alone sounds like pure heaven".

"Girl, I think that is the sadist shit I did ever have the displeasure of hearing" she teased, putting on a stupid accent and wagging her finger at me. It was crazy that this woman was thirty, she was like a twelve-year-old kid constantly hyped up on sugar.

"Yeah, yeah. Well what about you? You've not mentioned a mate to me before" I stated.

"Oh yeah, got one of those. He's great, bit of a lazy bastard, but I love him" she shrugged, and I laughed again. But the conversation made my heart ache - ache for the times I would say that about Drew. 'Oh Drew? Yeah, he's made some stupid mistakes, what man hasn't? But, he loves me really'. That was what I used to say about him. Complete lies. But you make up lies for the person you love, because usually you believe those lies yourself.

But, the difference between Shelley and I was that I could see that Shelley was actually joking; the love for her mate was obvious. Just like most other Werewolves in the world, she was made for her mate and they were happy and in love. That happened to Drew and I as well, near the beginning anyway, a er that it was just...poison.

Shelley quickly changed the subject away from mates, no doubt she could see the effect thinking of Drew had on me. It wasn't anything I could hide. No matter how many years had passed, no matter how much I had changed, I still could never hide my true feelings towards Drew. And, perhaps, that would never change.

Shelley and I finished lunch before parting ways. She went back to the office she worked in, as I took a slow walk through the campus. I was wearing a flowing light sundress, but sweat still ran down my spine as I ducked under the shade of a large tree. I took a seat on the bench in the shade and pulled some papers from my bag. I was flicking through the paperwork for the criteria of the team's sectional routine, but it was hard to focus on the writing.

My mood had dipped since the mention of mates by Shelley. I tried to shake the awakening depression that was brought on by the mention of Drew. The thoughts of him; of what he'd done, of who he was and how he'd ruined the person I used to be.

My mood didn't lift the rest of the afternoon and I let the captain, Ashley, run the practice - claiming I needed to work on sectional paperwork. But, really, I sat in my office falling deeper into the black hole of my depression. I'd been good for a while, yet with the anniversary of Abel's death coming up and the conversation about Drew, everything had come flooding back like tsunami.

I stayed in my office until the practice was over and all the cheerleaders had left, yet I had achieved nothing but feeling worse about everything. But, I finally forced myself to lock up the gym and head to my car. I was almost on autopilot as I drove back to the Pack.

After parking up, I was gathering up my workout bag from the car; completely in my own thoughts that I didn't notice that someone had snuck up on me. I turned and almost ran straight into the woman. I gave a yelp in shock, dropping my gym bag as I jumped.

"Oh, sorry" she gasped, taking a step back. "I did call out but you were in a world of your own". She gave me a bright smile as I picked up my bag.

"It's fine" I muttered, slinging the bag over my shoulder. The woman looked familiar, I knew she was quite high-ranking in the Pack as I'd seen her hugging Quinn before. She was a tall woman, with a short blonde bob cut, and a sharp chin.

"I'm Diana" she grinned, holding her hand out for me to shake. I glanced at her hand before shaking it.

"Eden" I replied tightly, I wasn't in the mood for small talk. I just wanted to climb into bed and sleep for a while.

"Yes, I know who you are" Diana giggled, "we've not had a new Pack member in three years, I'm pretty sure everyone knows who you are".

"Okay" I sighed. Diana's smile wavered as she seemed to realise I wasn't very thrilled with the conversation.

"Anyway" she continued, "I came to invite you for dinner".

I blinked in shock, "dinner?"

"Yeah. It's so warm that my husband, Ken, is doing a BBQ. A proper Memphis BBQ and we're having lots of friends and family around. He's setting it up now so you can swing by as soon as you can" she grinned.

"Oh, well that's nice but I have a lot of work to do" I excused.

Diana's smile wavered again. Whatever she had expected of me, I obviously wasn't living up to her expectations. "Quinn will be there" she threw in.

I studied her for a moment, "is the Alpha ordering me to come?" I was pretty sure Quinn wasn't like that, but her comment made me wary.

Diana's face changed into one of horror, "oh god no. That wasn't what I meant. Quinn isn't like that".

"Then, like I said, it's a nice offer but I am busy". I offered her a polite smile, before locking up my car. "Bye Diana" I nodded, before walking around her and to my cottage. I could feel her glance on me as I went inside. I shut the door without glancing back to her.

Some part of me wanted to go to the BBQ and meet friends. A few years ago, I would have jumped at the opportunity. I used to be a complete people's person, always active and involved with anything I could. But when Drew fucked me up, he also ruined my trust in other people. So, it always felt easier to just keep my distance. I couldn't take any more hurt, I truly couldn't. I was one more heartbreak away from my soul breaking too.

Inside, I quickly showered and pulled on my fluffiest and homeliest pyjamas - just needing comfort in the most basic of things. I then threw together a quick meal of mac and cheese, before watching some generic TV and eating it.

Just as I was washing the dishes, a knock came on my front door. I considered ignoring it, and pretending not to be home, but whoever it was would have been able to hear my TV. I sighed heavily as I dropped my plate into the water. "Just a minute" I shouted, as I quickly dried my hands off and headed to the front door.

I opened the door to see the Beta of the Pack. Ken, I was pretty sure Diana had said his first name was. "Beta" I nodded respectfully, my wariness and worry obvious.

"Eden" he smiled, "how are you?"

"Fine, Beta. Is there a problem?" I asked.

"No problem" he grinned. He had a boyish charm to him, something I didn't expect from someone with such a serious job. "I was just wondering if wanted to join our party. My wife mentioned that she saw you earlier and she was worried she might have scared you off from coming to the BBQ".

"No scaring. I'm just busy" I replied. My reply short and to the point. It was the way I kept my distance from people, not giving too much information and not giving them the idea that I wanted to get close to them.

"Yes, your bunny pyjamas tell me you've really got your hands full here" he teased me.

I frowned deeply, feeling mocked and humiliated. "Are you ordering me to come to your party?" I demanded, crossing my arms over my chest.

Ken faltered at the question, just like his wife. "N-No, of course not. I was just--".

"Then why does everyone feel the need to pressure me to come?" I snapped. I was upset about other things, but this was something I could take my emotions out on.

"I don't want you to feel pressured, Eden".

"Then please just leave me alone" I growled, my eyes blurring with tears. I was so upset about everything, but this was what was pushing me over the edge. Ken saw the tears and looked like I had slapped him - he was very confused.

"Please don't cry, I was just playing around. Being stupid, I--".

"I'd like to be alone now" I whispered, cutting him off. I wiped away a tear that I had let fall. "Unless you need anything else from me, Beta?"

"No, I..." he looked at loss for words. "No, Eden" he finally sighed, running his hands through his shaggy hair. "I'm sorry, I never meant to make you upset. I'll take my leave now". He turned and walked into the darkening evening. I quickly retreated back into my house as the flood of tears began.