

Two Years Gone

You Are Nothing

“Jerk,” I whispered as I made my way back to the kitchen. My eyes were puffy, and my face was flushed. My mom looked at me with horror as I continued with my work.

“Ella?” Sophie spoke quietly as she opened my bedroom door. I pretended to sleep, hoping my mother wouldn’t push it. But she did. Mom sat beside me on the bed, stroking my hair.

“I know you’re awake, Ella Bells.”

I smiled a bit at the sound of my nickname. I sat up and let my mom hold me. “He rejected me,” I finally said.

My mom snapped up and looked at me. “Who? Who rejected you?” She grabbed my shoulders and shook them lightly. “You found a mate?”

I nodded. “It was Zane. We felt it at school. He doesn’t want me.” I could feel myself crying again.

My mom shook her head in disbelief and then spoke quietly, petting my hair.

“Maybe it’s for the best. You’ve always put on a brave face, but I know things aren’t easy for you. You’ll find another mate and things will be better.”

I laughed bitterly. “I never want a mate again.”

When I woke the next morning, my mother was asleep next to me in the bed. She had spent the night holding me and comforting me.

Even though I knew I was nothing to him, the rejection still stung. I had always thought that my mate would love and accept me, the kind of love I had seen my parents have.

I knew school was going to be torture. I would be a hot mess if I ran into Zane. The mate bond didn’t just go away overnight. It took time to fade, and it was still strong inside me.

Last night, I was woken up by feelings of Zane. I could feel him having sex with Mariah and sense the intense pleasure and emotions.

My mate was with someone else, and it hurt so much that I almost screamed.

“So what’s it like being rejected?” Mariah spat out as I entered the school.

I lowered my head and kept on walking, hoping she would drop it. She didn’t.

“Omega, I’m talking to you!” Mariah yelled, making the whole hallway pause to see the commotion.

I let out a breath before turning to Mariah. “Eh,” I replied, shrugging my shoulders. “I’m not a big fan of sloppy seconds. You can keep him.”

There were audible gasps from the onlookers, and fury flashed through Mariah’s eyes. “Who do you think you’re talking to like that, *Omega*?”

I realized what I had just done and lowered my head. “I’m sorry. I am nothing. That’s why I was rejected.” I turned and walked to class, angry that I wasn’t even allowed to stand up for myself.

I turned the corner, fighting back tears when I crashed into someone. Cinnamon and pine.

I knew exactly who it was without even having to look up. “Excuse me...,” I whispered.

He towered over me for a moment before stepping aside and letting me pass.

“Jerk...,” I whispered in my own little act of defiance as I quickly walked away.

When I returned home from school, I collapsed on my bed, mentally exhausted from the horrible day.

The entire day was spent keeping my head down and hoping nobody spoke to me. Nobody did, but it didn’t keep me from hearing the whispers.

“Rough day?” My mom walked in and sat on the bed, rubbing my back.

“Literally the worst,” I managed to choke out.

“Well, hun, why don’t you stay home? We have dinner covered. You sit and eat junk food and feel a little bad for yourself. Then tomorrow we’ll start fresh.”

My mom pushed some stray hairs from my face before giving me a warm smile.

“Okay...,” I mumbled.

Mom left for the pack house, and I changed into my comest PJs. I sat on the bed watching chick flicks and gorging myself on chocolate and ice cream and hot Cheetos.

I looked like a hot mess, but I didn’t even care. I only had one more week of school. Then most of these people will have gone to college, training, or new packs with their mates.

I cried at that thought, knowing that they’d all be moving on, and I would still be here, rejected and working in the kitchen for the rest of my life.