
Chapter 1

EMILY

“Tell me about it?” I lean on my elbow propped on the bed next to Theo.

“About what?” He rolls onto his side, his eyes meeting mine.

“About being a wolf, what’s it like?” I approach the question cautiously, not even sure how to ask it at all.

“Freeing, but also like being caged. I spent nearly three hundred years as a wolf living with the vampires, Alaric, and Blake. It felt like being in a cage. I was trapped in that form, but after a hundred years or so, I got used to it. Got used to being a wolf, more wolf than man.” His voice is even, his tone low, he closes his eyes as he rolls on his back and I know he is remembering it, that time in his life. It was not so long ago. Less than a month since they escaped the coven.

“Do you miss it? Living as a wolf, I mean?” Theo sighs at my question.

“Some days, but most days, no. I like the freedom of

being able to decide when I want to take on that form and when I don't. Being forced into it for so many years wore on me." He rolls toward me again and kisses me on the cheek.

I smile over at this man, this werewolf. I can't fathom that I am actually here with him. Waiting for my sister to give birth to his niece who is not only part werewolf, but also part vampire. Theo's brother, Alaric is a werewolf who was bitten by a vampire over three hundred years ago.

Sasha fell in love with the man who saved her from a coven of vampires who were after her to breed her and bring on a new line of day walking vampires. Or so they have all told me since I arrived here, and they started filling me in on all the details. I don't know how much of it I believe and how much I think that maybe they're all having mental breakdowns of some sort.

"Theo?" I look into his eyes, mine moving back and forth as I look over his face.

"Hmm?" He smiles a grin at me that if I let it could break my heart.

"Will you show me, again?" I ask him this out of curiosity. I saw him shift once, we were in the park, Sasha and me. A wolf approached us and then shifted into the man lying in the bed next to me. I fainted.

I believe what they tell me to an extent, but to another, I still don't believe my own mind and what I saw that day. I still need proof. I need to see it again with my own eyes. I need to confirm that I'm not crazy, that this is all really happening, and these men are who they say they are.

"Emily, if you're ready, then I will gladly show you who I am, all of me." Theo smiles at me and it warms my insides.

Theo stands from the bed and crosses to the middle of the room, I squeeze my eyes closed, not sure if I'm ready for what he is about to show me.

“You’re going to have to open your eyes, Em,” he tells me and I open one slowly, looking in his direction.

When he shifts then, he takes on the form of the beautiful wolf I saw in the park that day with Sasha. Landing on all fours in front of me on the floor he stalks toward me slowly.

“Theo?” I tilt my head to the side examining the beast in front of me. His eyes are the same.

This wolf standing before me is the man who was just lying in bed next to me. It is really him. He is truly a werewolf. As Theo closes the final gap between us, he rests his head on the edge of the bed and looks up at me, his eyes filled with sadness and doubt at what I can only assume, is my failure to accept him for what he is.

Reaching out slowly I rest my hand on top of his head, his fur is soft, thick, and smooth under my fingertips. I lace my fingers through it and scratch behind his ear. He tilts his head, and the moment feels incredibly intimate for some reason.

I cannot accept him in his human form as a man I am willing to drop my walls for and let into my heart like he has asked me to do. But here, now, with him as his wolf I am more than willing to coax him into bed with me, curl up with my head on his side and fall asleep holding him.

It isn’t fair. I know it isn’t. But I pat the bed anyway. Theo climbs up next to me and I curl up next to him, resting my head on his side. Softly, I begin to tell him about myself, about my past, losing our parents, everything. It pours out of me, and I feel comfortable with him in this moment, baring myself to him, my life, my emotions.

After a long while I grow quiet and sit in the silence, just enjoying my time with him.

“Theo?” I ask him, and he shifts beneath me, lifting his head and looking back in my direction.

“I don’t know. I simply don’t know if I can do this.” My honesty cuts through him like a knife and I feel his entire body tense under me.

Theo presses his nose to my hand, then buries it under my palm and lifts my hand on top of his head, nuzzling me.

I know he is telling me it is all right. That he will give me the time and the space I need to make this decision. He will allow me to hold him at arms-length, pulling him in closer to me as I push him away again and again as I have the weeks I have been here.

I close my eyes and slowly drift off, toying with the fur on top of his head as I do.

Theo

Emily falls asleep with her head on my side, and I lay awake for hours, just enjoying the sensation of the weight of her head on me. The feeling of having her so close to me. I gave her exactly what she wanted, what she asked for, but I fear it has only driven the wedge between us further into the gap she has placed there.

Slowly I move on the bed, slipping out from under Emily, when I climb down from it I look back over my shoulder at her. Shifting back into my human form, I undress and cross the room toward her again.

It takes everything I have not to wake her, not to slip my hands over her body and worship her the way I so badly want to. Instead, I gently lift her, shifting her on the bed and laying her gently back on the pillows, then climb in beside her and pull her against my body.

“Theo,” she whispers my name softly in her sleep. I smile

down at this woman who has so captured me. Has completely taken me, heart, and soul, and then pushed me away.

Kissing her gently on the forehead I pull her to me and wrap her in my arms. I will find a way to make her mine. Find a way to break down the walls she has put up between us. I know it has only been a short time, but I knew the moment I saw her in the park with Sasha that she was my mate.

Knew then that I was meant to make her mine and claim her. I will do just that, no matter what it takes, no matter what the cost. I will wait for her for as long as I have to, but Emily will be mine in the end. I have waited too long, hundreds of years to find her. I refuse to let her slip through my grasp now.

Emily

When I wake Theo is lying next to me, stretched out with his arm over my stomach, in his human form again. The soft light of the sun is filtering in through the windows and I look over at him, at this man who is asking me for so much but expecting so little in return.

I make the decision then, I cannot stay. I cannot let him in and risk losing everything to someone who could so completely destroy me. I will have to tell him, have to explain that I am leaving as soon as Sasha's baby is born. I need to go home, back to my life, back to the existence that I am so familiar with, where it is safe for me and my heart.