

## Chapter One • Grace

15°F

I remember lying in the snow, a small red spot of warm going cold, surrounded by wolves. They were licking me, biting me, worrying at my body, pressing in. Their huddled bodies blocked what little heat the sun offered. Ice glistened on their ruffs and their breath made opaque shapes that hung in the air around us. The musky smell of their coats made me think of wet dog and burning leaves, pleasant and terrifying. Their tongues melted my skin; their careless teeth ripped at my sleeves and snagged through my hair, pushed against my collarbone, the pulse at my neck.

I could have screamed, but I didn't. I could have fought, but I didn't. I just lay there and let it happen, watching the winter-white sky go gray above me.

One wolf prodded his nose into my hand and against my cheek, casting a shadow across my face. His yellow eyes looked into mine while the other wolves jerked me this way and that.

I held on to those eyes for as long as I could. Yellow. And, up close, flecked brilliantly with every shade of gold and hazel. I didn't want him to look away, and he didn't. I wanted to reach out and grab a hold of his ruff, but my hands stayed curled on my chest, my arms frozen to my body.

I couldn't remember what it felt like to be warm.

Then he was gone, and without him, the other wolves closed in, too close, suffocating. Something seemed to flutter in my chest.

There was no sun; there was no light. I was dying. I couldn't remember what the sky looked like.

But I didn't die. I was lost to a sea of cold, and then I was reborn into a world of warmth.

I remember this: his yellow eyes.

I thought I'd never see them again.

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