

Bullied Mate Of The Lycan Kings – Chapter 61

Aiden's POV

Maybe I was becoming delusional but I could not deny the feeling of glee that only burned harder as I grabbed Lily's hand and twisted the knife further inside my stomach after she widened her eyes in shock at my action.

It was more than hot to know that for the first time she was ready to stand up to me no matter what. Being dubbed the sole surviving heir of the strongest pack in all of Shadow Cove, I had free reign over this school and all in it. Besides the other royals, nobody else really calls me out on my bullshit.

Or maybe it wasn't the act of standing up to me that was making me excited, maybe it was the person doing it. It was so funny and amusing to watch because how exactly was she going to prove to me that she had won this round? She was a nobody, an omega, an outcast at that without a single penny to her name. Just thinking about it, about how either of us planned to keep each other in line made my d**k as hard a rock.

I was calling her bluff but I was also looking forward to it.

Instead, I settled for just letting her know that this was the beginning of a very very toxic relationship. One that I won't let her come out of with her sanity intact.

I let her go, Nyx getting off on the fear and darkness in her eyes.

I frowned as Ren struggled out of the tight grip the boys had on him, swooping in to save the day as usual and talking gently and holding her to his chest like she was a fragile little egg that will crack and break any minute.

That's what he doesn't understand. Lily can handle this, she can give in to the rage and darkness swirling deep in her soul. The way he treats her like a f*****g breakable doll grates on my skin because I know just how much she can take, I know how rough she likes it. She's just too scared to ever admit it to herself.

Ren may say I forced myself on her, she may even fill her own head with those delusions, but she had wanted it. And she hated herself for it.

I swallowed the dark possessive feeling that bubbled in my chest when Ren tucked her under his arm and led her out of the lounge. For the first time in my life, I felt the immense urge, the searing need to go after them and forcefully tear his hand from her body. I wanted to rip his arm off of his body and beat him with it.

I did neither, opting instead for removing the knife slowly out of my stomach with a wince, tossing the bloodied instrument on the table inside the ice container. It was a ceremonial dagger, gifted to every alpha male in my pack. My father had his, before he died, and this was mine. It was nothing but a decorative piece, incapable of doing much damage to someone like me.

I reached for a bottle of bourbon. Pulling up my shirt, I winced as I poured the drink right over the stab wound, swallowing down the urge to growl in pain. I was no stranger to pain after all and I suffered a lot more than this on a daily basis, so a stab wound was nothing to me. It would heal in no time.

“Let me see. I’ll stitch it for you.” Zac said, walking over to where I was cleaning up the stab wound that only seemed to be getting worse with a wet napkin.

“You can’t even stitch your own clothes properly.” I frowned at him.

“I’ve never had to.”

“And you expect me to trust you with my body.”

“Jackass, I’m trying to help.”

“I don’t need it. I’ve had worse.”

He growled and snatched the napkin from me, pouring a thousand dollar worth of liquor all over the rag and pressed it to my wound.

I grabbed the liquor and drank straight from the bottle to dull my pain.

“What was that about even?” Zac asked, and I realized that I was not the only one that didn’t know what had just happened and why it had.

I shrugged. Don’t know. Don’t give a f u c k either. I got to see both Lily and Ren today, albeit we were on opposite sides, that’s all that mattered.

“Uh... I don't think I'm doing this right,” Zac called my attention to the wound that was starting to take on an ugly purple color.

“Shit.” He cursed, holding up the napkin that was now soaked with blood. “On second thought, stay here. I'll get a healer.”

“NO HEALER.” I growled.

“Sheesh. Fine, I'll get a first aid box and you'll just have to suck it up and live with my amateur as f**k stitches.”

He didn't wait for me to give him a response and was already out the door in an instant.

I frowned and looked down at the wound that showed no signs of healing anytime soon.

For a moment, intense fear consumed me but I shook it off and pushed myself up from the stool, heading to the refrigerator to get a pack of ice to place on the wound.

Bending to reach for one pack, I winced again and looked down, surprised that the wound that I was certain should have started healing by now was still bleeding profusely.

Panic hit me as I wondered why I was not healing as I usually do. My uncle has left me in worse states than this with broken bones and ruptured organs and while those take longer hours to heal, at least surface wounds I have received from him close back up within seconds.

As alpha of not just any pack but a superior race of Lycans that worked hand in hand with black magic and witchery, my parents went through every means to make sure I was practically invincible, tested and trusted my uncle who continually tried to test that theory. There was nothing I shouldn't be able to heal from. No one could harm me... Unless...

Howling and loud laughter brought my chaotic thoughts to a screeching halt. My eyes moved away from inside the fridge towards where I saw Sebastian and Hanz laughing about something on their phone.

I glared at them in annoyance.

What was going on? And why were they laughing? I was being paranoid to think that they were laughing about the injury but for some reason, that laugh of wicked glee made me curious about what could be on their phone that made them whisper to each other like kids and I closed the fridge and prowled over to where they were sitting.

Sebastian paled when I arrived in front of him and was about to hide his phone but I snatched it from his grip and when I looked at what he had been watching, I froze, my eyes widening in shock at what I was seeing.

It was a video of Lily giving me a blow job.

How was that possible? I had not made a video of that, had I? And then I remembered that Sebastian had been in the room that day and when he had shown me the video that he had made without my consent or permission, I had deleted it and told him to never speak of that day to anyone.

“Give me your phone.” I growled to Hanz who looked at me sheepishly before handing over the phone and I looked at it and confirmed that it was the same video, which could mean only one thing. The video had gone around the school and that was why Lily had barged in here and been enraged enough to stab me in the stomach, a wound that wasn’t even showing signs of healing anytime soon.

“What part of speak no word of this did you not understand?!”

“Aiden, I can explain” Sebastian started but before he could finish speaking, I grabbed him by the collar, lifted him up and flung him across the room, watching in satisfaction as he crashed on the pool table, the table breaking to pieces from the force of his weight.

Audible gasps and stilted silence ensued throughout the lounge as if everybody was worried about even breathing wrongly and attracting my attention.

Walking over to him where he was still dazed, I grabbed him by the collar and lifted him up, slamming him against the wall.

“Talk!” I growled. “Where the f**k did you get this? Why do you still have this video? Answer me!” I yelled in anger, my eyes glowing in a way that I knew was terrified but it didn’t matter.

“I didn’t know you’d be mad! I thought this was what you wanted!”

“What I wanted?!” I growled in a raging voice that was no longer mine but Nyx’s.

Darkness exploded out of me and I heard glasses shatter and voices screaming as the entire room got enveloped in thick black night.

Of course Nyx would come out to play at a time like this. My control was slipping, common sense taking a hike on me as I squeezed his neck, throttling him and grinning in satisfaction as I watched him fight for his miserable life.

He croaked out what could have been an apology or an explanation for his damn actions but it didn’t matter, his voice only coming out as a bunch of nonsense as my hand tightened around his throat, cutting off the blood supply to his head and watching his face go an interestingly dark shade of purple.

I could not imagine the horror when Lily had seen that video and thought it was me, especially after giving her my word that I would delete the video I had of her and Zac in the restroom. She’d think that I pulled a reverse uno on her. All because of this despicable mutt.

I was supposed to be happy right? I was supposed to feel completely happy that she was in pain and humiliated just like she deserved so why did I feel nothing but mad, chaotic, burning rage?

People had gathered around us and I vaguely heard Zac pushing through the crowd of boys to where I stood throttling the s**t out of Sebastian who already had tears running down his cheeks.

“Aiden! Snap out of it!”

“I’ll snap out of it when he’s dead!”

“f**k it, man! What did he do?” He asked and I tossed Sebastian’s phone over to him, watching for his reaction.

My usually nonchalant friend had his eyes bulging out of his face as he looked at the video and then looked at me but the last thing that I expected was being shoved off Sebastian by Zac. I stumbled back, catching myself as his hands pushed me against the wall, face filled with molten rage.

“How could you do that to her? She’s f*****g crying in this video! What the f**k is wrong with you?” He yelled, hitting me against the wall hard and I was lost in surprise for a few minutes before I shoved him off and he released me, punching me hard in my stomach, right where the stab wound was.

I inhaled, the pain almost rendering me unconscious but I staggered to my feet and frowned at him

“You are one to talk. How is what I did any different from what you did to her?”

His irises glowed red. He looked ready to hit me again but his hands dropped at my words and he shook his head and stormed out of the basement lounge.

Nothing but stifling silence greeted me.

I looked back to where I had left Sebastian but he wasn’t even there again. That pathetic swine must have crawled away the moment he had the chance.

“What are you all looking at?” I snapped at the boys that had been watching us.

I winced, rising to my feet and stormed out of the room, heading towards my car.

Even though home was the last place I wanted to be, I needed to get out of this place as soon as possible before I do something I probably won’t regret.

Like tracking down Sebastian and severing his limbs from his body.

I shook my head to get rid of the wicked thoughts. No use killing the son of an esteemed noble in Shadow Cove. I had to hit them where it hurts, get rid of the evidence and make sure something like this never happens again.

I started the engine, tyres screeching out of the driveway. But as I drove home, I remembered why I almost never went home. It was where my worst demon lived.

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Lily’s POV

“You know that you do not have to do this, right? You can leave if you want.” Rhea whispered as I washed my hands in the bathroom sink and just as I was about to reply, two girls came into the bathroom and gave me odd looks, their eyes going to Rhea nervously in a way that said that if she was not there, they would have told me a piece of their minds.

Not that I cared anymore anyways. Everyone had seen that video and there was no hiding. If I was going to stay in the academy, then I needed to develop a backbone.

“Yes I do.” I answered, watching as the blood from my hands disappeared down the drain. Aiden’s blood. That boy was a psychopath.

That was the only explanation for what he had done after I stabbed him and I could not forget the almost crazed look in his eyes, the darkness that swirled in it as he smirked at me like he had liked it.

Stepping out of the bathroom, Chelsea was leaning against the wall while Ren was on a call. He didn’t even skip a beat, slipping his arm around my waist like it was a natural thing between us and slipped into an easy stride with me.

As we all started heading towards the cafeteria, I could not help but note that people were staring at us. No, not at us, at me.

Specifically at Ren’s arm around me.

I froze, recalling the half-assed request I had made to him when I had been drunk on desire and dizzy with infatuation.

I had insinuated that he breaks up with his girlfriend.

Guilt squeezed my lungs, making it difficult to breathe.

“Hey,” Ren squeezed my waist. On a normal day, that would have sent butterflies fluttering like crazy in my stomach, but right now, I fought the urge to throw up. Disgusted at myself.

He can’t afford to be seen with me, not when Mauve walks these halls. Not when she had a spotless reputation and mine has been dragged through filth. It’s obvious who Ren should be with at this point, who the goddess has set aside for him.

With any luck, he hadn't done it yet and I can still make this right.

"About what we talked about last night," I started, trying to make things right before this whole s**t blows over.

Something like dread flashed in his golden brown eyes, "later," he said, "you've had enough to deal with today."

"No, I don't--"

He squeezed his eyes shut, stopping in his tracks, "Don't call this off when we haven't even started, Lily." His hands were squeezing my shoulders, a desperate eagerness in his eyes, begging me to understand. "You have enough on your plate already. I'll fix this. I promise."

"What if I don't want you to fix it? What if I want out? My reputation is already in tatters. It's only going to get worse if people find out you rejected your own mate to be with me."

He dropped his head. "Lily--"

"You two!" Chelsea hollered, stopping our moment. "After all this drama, I REALLY do not want to give up what's left of my lunch break. C'mon!"

Just then, Ren's phone started ringing again and he sighed.

"I have to take this. We'll talk. Later," Ren said, taking my hand in his and squeezing. "Okay?"

I worried my lip. "Okay."

I caught up with Rhea and Chelsea who were talking in hush tones.

"I know that Rhea has probably said it, but let me say it this time. You don't have to continue to stay here if this place is too much for you to handle. Did I just say if? This place is a lot of bad vibes and cruelty." Chelsea said as we entered the cafeteria and I shook my head.

"No, I'm not going anywhere." I was done running and besides, it would be disastrous to try transferring to another school right now especially when my academics were already lagging behind. I could not handle skipping any more classes so I would just have to suck it up and wait until the whole thing blew over and a new rumour came along to entertain the entire school.

As we entered the cafeteria, I noticed that the three of them were heading towards the main space where the ordinary students sat and I could not help but feel bad that it was because of me that they were no longer going to eat at the popular table.

Rhea and Chelsea still looked very livid about the whole situation as we picked a space to sit. Ren joined us later after taking the phone call. He was very quiet, his eyes studying me curiously as he sat across from me.

Besides the whole Mauve situation, he seemed to be more curious about how I was taking this whole thing.

It made me wonder if he was using his ability on me and if I was doing a good job of hiding how hurt and scared I was despite my attempt to remain strong.

For all of my bravado, I was terrified of what Aiden would do to me after stabbing and threatening him. I was terrified that if this was just the beginning, then I might not be able to survive his worst. However, the last thing I was going to do was take their nonsense lying down and moping. I was going to make sure that I faced them head on.

“I can’t believe that they would do this. I grew up with them.” Rhea said and her face was turned down in a frown as she shook her head.

“It’s not your fault, Ri.” Chelsea beat me to it before I could say the exact same thing but she just shook her head again.

“Why are they doing such horrible things to you? When did they change into this? Have they always been this horrible or have I just been very blind?”

“It’s fine, Rhea. You don’t have to feel responsible for their actions.” I answered letting her take my hand and happy that she was at least on my side.

“Let’s get back at them. We can, can’t we?” Chelsea suggested and Rhea gave her a skeptical look.

“What could we possibly do that will hurt the two of the most powerful princes of Shadow cove?”

The two of us looked at Chelsea expectantly, waiting for an answer and then she opened her eyes brightly like she had just gotten an idea.

“Oh, how about we shatter their kneecaps when they are sleeping? Or you know, we could s***h their tyres?”

The smile on her face dimmed when she saw the looks on my face and Rhea’s and she nodded.

“Okay, point taken. Those are lame and they’ll just heal or have the tyres replaced, won’t they?”

I was about to respond when I noticed that Rhea seemed uncomfortable with the crowd, especially when someone hit our chair unintentionally as they tried to pass to the table besides ours.

She wasn’t used to this. She was here. They were all here because of me.

“I’m sorry for making you guys leave your spaces to come and join me here.”

Rhea shook her head immediately, her lips moving up in a pretty delicate smile.

“Nonsense, sweetheart, we have always wanted a reason to leave that suffocating table and now we have one.”

I nodded, noticing that Ren had been typing away on his phone for a while and when he looked up as if he could feel eyes on him, I fought the urge to look away in embarrassment and guilt at being caught staring.

However his smile was gentle and closely resembled his sister’s.

“Chase is working on taking down the videos and pictures from everyone’s phones. He’ll be coming soon. I asked him to join us for lunch.”

My eyes widened in shock and when I looked at Chelsea, she shrugged. “Why didn’t I think of that. He has always been good with tech stuff.” She grumbled under her breath, “it’s not enough that he’s goodlooking and athletic, he had to be Einstein too.”

Rhea merely nodded too, though her face had gone stiff at the mention of Chase’s name.

Speaking of the devil, I saw Ren give a casual wave to someone and when I turned around, I saw that it was Chase, heading towards our table and holding up a laptop.

His hair was damp and he was wearing the black and silver sleeveless school jersey and track pants, sans the jacket.

He probably just finished practice and came straight from the locker room.

Taking a seat beside me which placed me between him and Rhea, he greeted everyone on the table before looking at me.

“I’m sorry about the guys. Ren has filled me in and trust that I’m going to help you get everything down.”

“Thank you.” I said, blinking back tears and we all watched in awe as he made a couple of clicks and then asked us to check our phones.

Everything was gone. How it was possible, I had no idea, but the first tear finally dropped from my eye as I hugged him.

“Thank you so much.” I whispered before pulling back.

He grinned and ruffled my hair, a reminder of how large he was to my small size.

“It’s nothing really. I’m always glad to help any friend of my kid sister.”

“Oh come on, it’s five minutes between us, a*****e.” Chelsea groaned

“Which makes you my little sister, does it not?”

I watched as Chase’s eyes landed on Rhea and she suddenly sat straighter, her entire body becoming stiff as she locked eyes with him.

“How are you?” He asked her and she stood up immediately, refusing to look at him.

“Fine. What do you guys want to eat, I’m going to get my food now.”

Watching how Chase’s face dim at her curt response, I stood and decided to go with her as she took our orders because I knew she would need help bringing the things back.

“I’ll go with you guys too.” Chelsea said and stood up.

“You guys can stay. I’ll go with Rhea.” Chase offered but Rhea frowned at him immediately.

“Don’t bother. I have all the help that I need.”

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Lily’s POV

“So are we going to talk about the elephant in the room?” I asked the two girls as we joined the queue for food.

Chelsea raised her eyebrows in confusion at my question but Rhea knew what I was asking for because her eyes went back to our table, landed on Chase who was talking about something with Ren and laughing and her face hardened all over again.

“What elephant in the room?” Chelsea asked and I looked at her with brows raised before looking at Rhea and then over to the table at her brother.

“Oh, I see now. You mean that.”

“Yes. That.” I answered and when Chelsea just shrugged, I rolled my eyes.

“Alright, so you want me to have to say it, don’t you?”

“Say what?” Rhea finally answered and I folded my arms.

“What’s the deal between you and Chase? I’ve been trying not to ask because I’ve been worried that it might not be my business but you’re my friend and everytime he is in the environment, you freeze up like an ice statue.”

“Not a statue, more like a gargoyle.” Chelsea interjected and when Rhea growled at her, she raised her hands in mock surrender.

“Okay, okay. Carry on, Lily.”

“He looks like a nice guy.”

“He is not a nice guy.” Chelsea said, emphasizing on the ‘not’ and I raised my eyebrows at her.

“Do you mean that or are you saying that because he’s your brother and you’d rather eat grass than compliment him?”

“The latter obviously, carry on.” She pushed a blue tinted strand of hair out of her face and waved her hand in a ‘go on’ motion

I sighed and looked at Rhea. “So what’s the deal, Rhea? Did he hurt you?”

“No, he didn’t.” Rhea answered and then looked at Chelsea to explain.

Flexing her arms dramatically, Chelsea finally spoke

“So the thing is, my brother has been in love with Rhea since we were kids.”

“Love is a strong word.” Rhea countered even though she was blushing hard.

“Okay, obsessed. Let’s use obsessed. My brother has been obsessed since we moved here when we were little kids. He didn’t act on it cos we were... you know, kids. And Rhea was so out of his league.”

Rhea blushed even harder but hid it with a scoff.

“So what changed?”

Chelsea sighed, dropping her shoulders. “Chase has been trying to get Rhea to go out with him since her mate rejected her.”

Rhea’s face hardened immediately and even though Chelsea took her hand as a way to steady her, I saw the effect that those words had on her and my mouth fell slightly open in shock because how could someone even reject Rhea.

Rhea Hawthorne was the entire definition of a beauty. She was sweet, kind, gorgeous, intelligent and was even a princess. I would think that anyone mated to her would be crawling at her feet with gratitude and she would have been the one doing the rejecting but this?

How was that even possible?

“Oh, I know that look on your face. How could anyone reject Rhea, right? Yeah, exactly, that was how all of us looked when it happened.” Chelsea answered and I reached out to squeeze Rhea’s hand tight.

Young. She must have been so young when that happened.

Werewolves of a higher pedigree usually find their mates at 14, their instincts, the goddess and the universe make their worlds clash in a way that should be equivalent to fireworks, rainbows and sunshine. Omegas like me usually don't get the chance to ever even find our mates if we pass the eighteen year milestone. We can be staring right at them and never know they're ours because our wolves are practically inexistent.

"Can I know who it is? Do I know the person?"

Chelsea looked at Rhea for permission and when she nodded, she answered my question, her answer shocking me even more.

"Sebastian. He rejected her two years ago because he took one look at Mauve when she enrolled into the academy and developed a crush on her. You know it's harder on the rejected, right? Rhea had almost not survived it. I was so scared for my best friend."

I could only imagine the terror that she must have felt finding out that her mate did not want her. The denial, the frustration, fear and crippling loneliness. It's like a part of your soul has been ripped out of your body.

I had been a complete colossal mess when I found out that Cade had been using me and he was not even my mate at the time.

With Cade, I had been inconsolable and cried for days when everything went sideways, unable to eat, sleep and even get myself out of bed into the bathroom.

I could not imagine how it would have felt to Rhea to have her mate reject her.

I noticed that Rhea winced and absentmindedly placed a hand over her heart, as if she still felt the effect of the rejection and I hated Sebastian even more.

That was when it finally registered on my mind who Chelsea had mentioned that Sebastian had left Rhea for.

Mauve...

"But Mauve is Ren's mate." I responded, my brows raised in confusion.

It was Rhea that answered this time and I was glad that her voice was at least stable.

“That’s the most frustrating part. Something so useless could cause me so much pain. The mating bond in this generation is not what it used to be in the past generations. It’s a lot weaker and usually counts for nothing and Mauve and Ren are living examples of this fact. It’s getting harder for werewolves to discover their fated mates, and when we do, it’s even harder to preserve the bond. I never even liked Sebastian anyway,” she scoffed, “but it was terrible to be rejected. Horrible. To think that I suffered so much for a guy I didn’t even have a strong connection with. It’s pathetic.”

When Ren had said Mauve was what stood between us that night at my house, it finally dawned on me that the only way that we could ever even have a chance to be together was if Ren rejected Mauve.

Would she even survive it? And would I be happy to even know that I was the cause of something so heart wrenching on another person?

I sighed and shook my head, pushing my own thoughts back to focus on Rhea.

“Do you like Chase?” I asked and her face turned red so fast, I got my answer but she moved forward on the line and repeated our food order rather than answer me.

“She likes Chase, doesn’t she?” I asked Chelsea and when she nodded, I turned back to Rhea.

“If he likes you and you like him, why don’t you give him a chance? How could it hurt? You guys can be chosen mates!”

A chosen bond works just like a fated bond does. With werewolves, while it doesn’t come frequently, it’s possible to unconsciously form a bond with somebody you choose for yourself. It acts just like a mating bond where their pain becomes your pain and their joy becomes your joy. You feel a strong sense of possessiveness and the urge to protect them.

It’s only complete when your chosen mate wholly accepts you. Bonds like this usually stand the test of time because it was your choice, and not just fate.

If Rhea can just let go and be with Chase, I saw no reason why this couldn't work out.

"I don't want a pity date and I get that he's Chelsea's brother and he cares for me but I'm not going to allow it. I can't."

Chelsea rolled her eyes and pinched Rhea's cheeks.

"Be for real, Ri. Chase tore the entire house apart when he found out that you were mated to Sebastian and it has nothing to do with me. He's been in love with you longer than we have been friends and that's very long, sweetie. And annoying since he has been whining to me about it since f*****g forever and doesn't want to stop."

The last thing I expected from Rhea was for her to hold back tears after hearing that but she blinked back tears and shook her head and steeled her gaze. This was the first time that I truly saw all the emotions that she tried to hide whenever Chase was around on her face.

There was no doubt that she liked him back.

We took the trays laden with our lunch and walked over to the dessert section because Chelsea insisted she couldn't go without something decadent.

"Someday, he's going to find his mate and what's going to happen to me then? I can't take losing someone else. I've tried to stay away from Chase now because even though we are not mates, seeing him with someone else is going to hurt. I can't know what it's like to have him and then lose him. Losing Sebastian was bad enough and I didn't even like the guy."

I nodded in understanding, heaving a sigh as we walked forward to get our food.

"Sebastian is a prick anyways so good riddance. We should chop off his d**k for being an a*****e one of these days and yes, I'm sure that's a good idea. Who's with me?" Chelsea said and we laughed, heading back to the table.

However, the smile on my face disappeared when we arrived at the table because someone else that had not been there before had joined us.

It was Mauve and she was sitting beside Ren.

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Lily's POV

The smile I was wearing while I was with Rhea and Chelsea dropped from my face when we arrived at the table because someone else that had not been there before had joined.

It was Mauve and she was sitting beside Ren. They looked to have been in the middle of something. An argument actually.

Ren had a pensive ridge in his brows and Mauve looked... devastated.

Food. She had brought him food. There was no tray in front of her, so it was clear that she had probably used the money she had left to get him some food.

Like I had done.

The tray of food I had gotten for Ren quivered in my hands and I fought to keep the expression on my face as neutral as possible, plastering on a calm smile.

Chase was no longer there so it was just the two of them and I could feel the smile that I quickly plastered on my face to hide my disappointment, try to slip away.

Rhea and Chelsea however, did not seem to care about trying to be nice and they dropped the plates on the table and sat beside each other, creating space for me when I would have grudgingly gone to sit on the other side of the table with Ren and Mauve.

I sighed and slid in with them and even though I didn't exactly tell him it was his, Ren pushed the tray, the one that Mauve had got for him, aside and took the one I got for him instead

My heart fluttered for a second but stopped in my chest when I noticed Mauve staring at the interaction, a hurt but pensive scowl on her pretty face.

"Who invited this witch?" Chelsea fired immediately, catching Mauve by surprise.

Chelsea's glare was hard and cold, her electric blue eyes practically skewering Mauve in her eyeballs.

However, when I looked at Mauve, expecting her to glower back, I saw something that I had not realized was there before.

On a normal day, Mauve looked like she could care less what people thought of her and walked around with a chip on her shoulder, a crown on her head and a smirk on her face but right now, she looked completely docile, her face pale and gaunt like she had been crying. Worse, she shrunk back at Chelsea's question, looking down at her nails instead of answering the question.

"Mauve, why are you here?" Rhea asked and even though her question seemed less attacking, her tone was cold and curt as she folded her arms and stared between her brother and Mauve.

I, on the other hand, fixed my gaze on Mauve, refusing to lock eyes with Ren because how could I? His girlfriend was sitting right beside him and even though it would kill me to admit, they looked like an actual couple in a way that I doubted it would ever be with me.

"I know that you might not believe me but I'm going to answer anyway." Mauve said, her voice sounding hesitant and surprisingly polite. I was used to her speaking like she was commanding an army so this was a surprise.

"I'm no longer comfortable sitting at the popular table anymore because I know it sounds completely stupid to say, but I don't have any friends. Well, the friends that I thought I had are all fake and don't really care about me."

"Oh wow, what a shocker. Rhea, can you believe that? She has had fake friends all along." Chelsea said, her voice dripping with sarcasm.

"I know right? How dare her minions turn their backs on her?"

My lungs squeezed around my heart painfully and I was about to tell them to be nicer but Mauve continued before I could interject, her eyes suddenly moving to me.

"Besides, it would be crazy to still want to remain at that table after what Zac and Aiden did to Lily. I know you don't believe this but my loyalty has always been with Lily from day one and I'm sorry that I could not do much to help. All

of you on this table except Lily know what my life was like before I met Ren so I understand how it feels to be bullied and I would not wish that kind of thing on someone else. For what it's worth, I am sorry that this is happening to you."

I didn't know how the others felt about her answer but I felt intimidated by the genuineness that I saw in her gaze as she looked at me. She was the first person, besides the others on this table and Chase, to not look at me weirdly since the video dropped and now that she was saying this, I could not help but feel small and jealous of her, especially after what I had tried to do last night.

I looked away immediately, feeling very bad and guilty for implying to Ren that I wanted him to end things with Mauve and looking at her now, how she seemed to gravitate towards her mate and what I had just learned about the mating bond, I felt a hundred times worse.

I made a choice before I could even give it a second thought.

Without a doubt I was certain of how I felt about Ren and for the first time since Cade, I knew that if I was going to take a chance with anybody, it would be with him, but I didn't want him at the expense of another girl's heart and probably her life if she didn't survive the rejection. How would I be able to live knowing that I was responsible for another person's sorrows?

"Thank you for saying that, Mauve. It means a lot that you think that way." I responded gently and when she smiled a little bit, I could see a glimpse of the Mauve that I had met for the first time, confident and sassy.

"I hate to ruin the moment but please, Mauve, cut it out. You may be able to fool Lily because she doesn't know you like we do. But we know you and witches don't change overnight. So what's going on now? Why exactly are you here at this table? What do you want?" Chelsea asked and I watched as Mauve's eyes widened at the sharp disapproval in her tone.

She dropped her eyes to the table and reached out to hold Ren's hand, probably seeking his support subconsciously. But Ren slid his hand away, discomfort and annoyance clear on his face.

Guilt wrangled my guts.

My fault. This was all my fault. I had put this idea in his head, caused a rift between them. How could I fix this?

Rhea looked at Mauve and then at her brother.

“While I want to believe that Mauve has suddenly turned a new leaf, I have a question for you brother. Why have you not broken up with her yet?”

“I did,” Ren started but Mauve shook her head and briefly touched his hand before she answered.

“He tried to break up with me today, actually.”

My lips parted in shock and I saw that Rhea and Chelsea were equally surprised and when I looked at Ren and held his gaze, I could feel him trying to say something to me. My face heated up and I looked away again, wondering if he had truly been ready to leave Mauve for me.

“Now, this is what I want to hear. What happened?” Chelsea asked, her eyebrows raised and if I was not so stunned by the news that Ren had tried to break up with Mauve, I would have pinched her to try to be nicer.

“The relationship had hit rock bottom and even though I tried to ignore it, I didn’t realize how bad it had gotten until he tried to break up with me this morning. I know that you guys hate me because you think I don’t treat Ren the way he is supposed to be treated.”

“We think?” Rhea growled ferociously, slamming her hand down on the table.

Mauve flinched and shook her head, cowering slightly.

“I’m sorry. Wrong choice of words. I have not been treating Ren kindly. Not as kindly as he has been treating me since the start of this relationship and I am so sorry for that. I am sorry to you his sister and to his friends, but most of all to him.”

She turned sideways to look at Ren.

“I know that I don’t deserve it but I want this to work. I want us to work and I am ready to do whatever it takes to make sure that we work. Please give me a second chance to do things the right way”

And then she looked back at Rhea.

“Please give me another chance to prove myself. Not just to your brother but to the Hawthornes, your family, your pack.”

If there was a moment where I wished I could enter the ground, it was right now.

Rhea merely stared back at Mauve, face unyielding while Chelsea scoffed and dug into her food.

“Only time will tell if what you say is true, Mauve and your actions will speak better than those promises of yours.” Rhea finally answered.

I shakily grabbed my fork and began forking my pasta. This was good news, right? Ren could finally be happy with the one meant for him. This is what I wanted.

But why did it feel like there was a gaping hole in my chest? Like there was a large boulder in my throat?

Bullied Mate Of The Lycan Kings – Chapter 65

Lily's POV

The entire lunch time was quiet and tense after Mauve's confession and plea to be given a second chance while there was entire ruckus and confusion going on in my head.

My heart was pounding faster than a herd of water buffalos throwing a tantrum, my head was throbbing with pain and a feeling of impending doom and crippling sadness had taken a hold of me. I knew what to do but even though I knew that it was the right thing, it didn't stop my hands from trembling so hard, I dropped my fork a few times.

Even though I tried my hardest to remain unaffected, I could not help but glance at her and Ren throughout, especially when Ren, being a gentleman had gone to get Mauve's lunch and had not bothered to ask what she wanted.

I had later realized that it was her favourite and saw the smile of hope on her face that he remembered something like that.

He was good. He was kind. I had no right to come between them. I'll find the one meant for me, and even if I don't, I will be genuinely happy for Ren as his friend.

Watching them hurt like a fist to the chest and even though Ren was not doing anything that hinted that he was ready to give her a second chance, I could not help the bite of jealousy that threatened to swallow me whole as I watched them sitting side by side the entire break time.

They looked good together, like they complimented each other. That was how it was supposed to be, was it not?

I didn't know why but I suddenly thought of my horrible first relationship.

Cade and I had never looked good together no matter how hard I tried. If he was a beloved golden retriever, I was a despised black alleycat. He was the golden boy, I was the plain jane that everyone considered lucky to even be associated with him, but at the time, it had not mattered. Nothing had mattered because I was sure that Cade loved me.

How foolish I was. Appearances did matter and I was foolish to have believed that Ren would actually leave someone like Mauve for someone like me, especially when she was here, promising to be someone he could be proud of.

When the bell rang for the end of lunch, I heaved a sigh of relief. Good, I had one more class before I was home free for the rest of the day.

I was the first person to rise to my feet.

"I'll see you guys around." I quickly said and rushed towards the door not waiting for a response.

I was almost at the door however when someone held my hand and spun me around gently. My heart skidded to a halt as Ren guided me close to the wall beside the exit doors and stood in front of me

No, he didn't just stand in front of me, he caged me in, his hands on either sides of my head, his tall form, towering over me.

I have never seen him look so serious.

"You've been avoiding me. Stop it." He said without preamble in that voice. You know, THAT voice that made me want to keel over and submit to every word he says.

“I’ve not,” I said, gulping nervously and looking around because s**t s**t s**t! What was he thinking? What if Mauve comes and sees us? What if anyone comes and sees us.

Oh gods.

I vaguely registered the people trooping out of the cafeteria, including Rhea and Chelsea who shot me worried glances that I replied with a nod before they left the hall.

“Ren, there’re people here,” I said tensely.

He froze, losing that predatory shine in his eyes. Releasing me and looking around, he cleared his throat.

“I’ve been trying to get you to look at me throughout but it did not work.”

“Mauve was right there.”

“I had no idea that she was going to do this.” He started and before he could continue speaking, I raised my hand, halting him mid speech before slowly lowering it and giving him a smile that was as sad as how I felt because right now, smiling was the last thing I wanted to do.

“You don’t have to explain anything to me, Ren. Perhaps it is even better this way. I was not in my right mind last night, after the whole thing with Aiden and Zac, and I said a whole bunch of nonsense that I wish I could take back but since it’s too late for that, I would like to ask you to forget everything that happened last night.” I managed to finish with a straight face even though my eyes were burning with unshed tears and I wanted to run away from here.

I turned to leave but was surprised when Ren grabbed my arm and stopped me, closing the distance between us even though I was certain that Mauve and whoever was left in the cafeteria was watching me.

“What are you talking about right now?” he asked, light brown eyes wide with something akin to desperate need. “I don’t think you understand what is happening here. Mauve said all of those things, yes but it changes nothing, Lily. I don’t want to be with Mauve. I want to be with you and I need you to understand that. What will it take to make you mine? What do I have to do to prove to you that it’s you I want?”

My heart squeezed, my resolve crumbled, a lump stuck in my throat. A tear slipped from my eyes and I looked away, not wanting him to see me, to see how much he affected me.

He took my face gently in his hands, making me stare right into his eyes, thumbs circling my cheekbones.

“I can’t-” I whispered.

“All you have to do right now is say that you want to be with me too, sweetheart. Nothing else matters but the two of us and if you say yes, then I’m ready to do everything in my power to make you mine. Nothing will change my mind. Not Mauve, not Aiden and not even my parents. I’ll reject the mating bond if I have to, Lily, so please just tell me that this means as much to you as it does to me.”

His words were not hurried and when I looked at him, I knew that he was not joking either. This was the moment that I had been waiting for, wasn’t it? It was the answer to all of my dreams.

My resolve faltered.

And yet as I glanced at Mauve still sitting at the table watching us from afar with a heartbroken expression on her face, I knew that even though I wanted to say yes to him so badly, I could not do that to Mauve.

I can’t. I need to fix things. Make them right again. I need to know my place and stay in line. I can’t take anyone’s place in his life. It’s just cruel and unfair especially for someone that has never gone out of her way to hurt me.

I owed her nothing but she was an omega like me and now that I knew that she used to bullied like me before she met Ren , the last thing I wanted to do was take away the shield that protected her for my selfish interests, especially now that I knew no one else cared about her. She would not survive it.

So even though it ripped my heart to pieces, even though my eyes swelled with tears, I knew what I had to do.

“I’m so sorry Ren. I believe that I am responsible for this mess and I would like to correct any misunderstanding. I have misled you into thinking something else when all I wanted was to have a friend. Nothing more.”

Ren held my hand and shook his head, his eyes filled with dread and disbelief.

“You know that you can’t hide the truth from me, Lily. Please tell me the truth. f**k everybody else and focus on you for one damn second!”

His reply made me remember that Ren could read minds when he wanted to, but the doubt on his face meant that I was doing a good job of confusing him about what the truth really was.

That meant that I could push harder and get away with my lie, so I hardened my heart and dealt the final blow that would wreck the two of us, looking at him directly in the eyes as I broke his heart and mine.

“I don’t want you. Not in the way you think I do. You were the first friend I ever had and I might have overstepped my boundaries with you but please don’t misunderstand me. I have nothing but platonic love for you.”

The horror in Ren’s golden brown eyes were like nothing I had ever seen before and he looked so distraught and confused and hurt, his hand dropping mine like he had been slapped hard.

Before I could do something stupid like give in to my true desires and beg him to not listen to my lies, Mauve walked over to where we stood and hung on to his hand.

“Can you walk me to my next class?”

I didn’t wait to hear his answer, giving them one ready smile before rushing out of the cafeteria to see Rhea and Chelsea waiting for me, their faces worried when they took in my state of distress, but thankfully, they didn’t say anything, only choosing to walk beside me in silence and I was grateful because right now, speaking was the last thing I wanted to do as we walked to my locker.

The last thing I expected to see was Zac staring at my vandalized locker in horror and confusion.

Bullied Mate Of The Lycan Kings – Chapter 66

Ren’s POV

Again. It's happening again.

That feeling I've tried to run away from all my life.

As I walked Mauve to her next class, no idea where the hell that was anyways since I was just following her lead, I heard her talking to me about something but I didn't care.

No, it was not that I did not care, it was that I could not care. Not when it felt like my heart was being ripped out of my chest. Not when it felt like the ground was shaking under my feet. Not when it felt like whenever Mauve spoke, I could hear Lily repeating words that would scar me forever.

I don't want you.

All my bones were breaking to pieces in my body.

Don't misunderstand me. I have nothing but platonic love for you.

Oh god.

"Ren, are you okay?" Mauve looked at me with a worried expression and that was when I realized that I was breathing hard and my eyes were stinging over and over again.

"No, I need to sit down." I managed to say. "I'm going to the lounge."

"I'll take you," she said immediately.

"There's no need," I was already saying but she wouldn't budge.

I didn't know how I reached the basement lounge, only that I was supported by Mauve like I had sustained an injury. Perhaps that was what had happened. I had been injured severely in the heart. Taken an arrow to my heart in the most brutal way possible. In a way that even my so called powers could not question.

"I don't want you. I have never wanted you."

Lily's words, or a warped, crueller version of it, replayed over and over in my head as Mauve helped me sit down on the couch, her eyes wide with panic.

"Do you need a medic or something?"

“No. I’ll be fine. Go to class. I want to be alone.”

I saw her face flicker with doubt and knew that I could be harsh on her, given that I knew that Lily had rejected me for her. For some twisted, f****d up reason, she believed that I’d be happier with Mauve.

I knew she was only doing this because she wanted me to be happy... or did I? She had said she did not want me and when I had used my powers to check, her heart had not wavered even once. So it could just be that it was not Mauve’s fault. I was just unlovable. Even Mauve did not love me, no matter what she said. I was just a tool for her survival and she did not want to lose me.

“Just go, Mauve. Please.” I begged, let her see the sorrow in my eyes and even though she looked like she wanted to stay, she stood up and walked out of the lounge, shutting the door behind her and that was when I finally crashed to the ground, holding my head and resting on my knees as Lily’s words played over and over again.

My mother had said those words to me before. Over and over and over again until I had no choice but to actually believe it and she had made sure to prove just how much she never wanted me. She made me starve until I was within an inch of my life. She didn’t care if the different men that she brought to the house assaulted me physically and sexually, which they did without fail, blaming it on the fact that I was a pretty child.

“Do it right and maybe I won’t hit you so hard, this time.”

“I heard he’s Irwin’s son. Which means he has some faerie blood. No wonder he’s so pretty. If only he was female. I can still find use for him, if you reconsider my offer, Kirsten.”

“Kirsten, you hit the jackpot with this one. I can’t wait until he’s older-“

Men, women, relatives, guests... I thought I was over this. Over these memories.

But they found their way pushing through the gated memories.

My mother was a social butterfly with lousy friends and sketchy guests.

I loved her but she hated me. To her, I was nothing but a bargaining chip on a good day, and a responsibility she detested on a bad day.

She showed it in everything she did. The parties she'd throw where I had to lock myself in my room and hide under the covers, terrified that someone would break in again. She'd leave for days with nothing but dried cereal and crusty bread in the fridge. My clothes were always in tatters, my hair unkempt.

Her words were double edged swords.

"I never wanted a kid." She'd tell me occasionally even before I could understand words. "I even had an abortion but you pesky little thing refused to die."

"You ruined my body, boy. It's your fault Irwin no longer comes to see me."

And then as if her actions were not enough, she always reminded me of how I was nothing more than a means to an end. Of how she wanted nothing to do with me and how I was a mistake that never should have happened. She reminded me that I only had one purpose; to serve as a link to the Alpha who was the s***m donor that created me.

I hated how words from Lily forced me to relive memories that I had thought were permanently suppressed.

I hated how when I closed my eyes, I saw my mother's face. And before I knew it, I was swallowed up, before I knew it, I was slipping back into that awful time of my life when I had nothing and no one.

My mother was probably one of the most beautiful women that I had ever seen in my life, with strawberry blond hair and golden brown eyes that I had inherited and she wielded her beauty like a blade, using every weapon in her arsenal for one purpose only; to subdue men to do her bidding. My father had been one of those men and she'd hated the fact that she only noticed that the abortion was unsuccessful too late and had to carry the pregnancy to term.

I was a c***k in her armour, she always said. A liability because she believed that being a mother reduced her beauty in ways that I didn't even fathom. Then again, it was my fault for still calling her 'Mother' when she had not once bothered to call me her son.

Kirsten, like she preferred to be called had refused to name me at birth. I was nothing to her. Nameless, brainless, like an insect.

“Boy, where is the glass of juice that I asked for?” She yelled at my seven year old self and I rushed to her with the glass, foolishly excited because it was her birthday.

“Your stupid father seems to have forgotten that today is my birthday, can you imagine that?” She huffed, rolling her eyes at me and pausing for a moment to stare at me in a way that sometimes made me wonder if perhaps she had a soft spot for me.

“Stop looking at me. Look at the ground when I’m speaking to you.” She snapped and I remembered that it was not love. It was hatred, because everytime she looked at my eyes, she saw her own eyes.

“As I was saying, your deadbeat of a father has not sent a dime for my birthday. Not even a message or a call, not that I need either, but his gift is supposed to be the biggest of all my men, isn’t it? He has a f*****g child with me for crying out loud!”

“Yes. Yes, you’re right.” I answered meekly, still looking at the ground.

I swallowed, wondering how I could make her feel better.

“What would you like to eat so that you will feel better?” I added quietly and waited a breath to see if she would punish me for being too forward.

Instead she surprised me by cupping my face with both hands and lifting it up gently until I was staring into her eyes. The same eyes that were the template from which mine was cast.

“Really, boy? You would do anything to make me feel better , won’t you?”

A bright smile appeared on my face. “Yes mama. Anything!” I replied with elation, ready to do whatever it took to make my mother happy.

Her smile widened before turning to a menacing smirk as she grabbed my left arm and twisted it hard, snapping it into two and pushing me to the ground as I screamed in sheer agony. I watched her with eyes filled with horror as she simply looked down at me and patted my head gently before she spoke again.

“You said, you wanted to make me happy, didn’t you?”

I could not get any words out as I tried to stop myself from weeping, holding onto my broken arm and shifting away slowly from her.

I didn’t know why I expected to see some form of guilt on her face for what she had just done to me, but that was the day I truly realized what I was to my mother; a means to an end, no matter whether the end for me would be a long painful one.

“You grew inside me without permission, so you might as well actually be of use to me for once in your life.”

Bullied Mate Of The Lycan Kings – Chapter 67

Ren’s POV

Still curled up like a ball trying to ignore the glee that I had seen on my own mother’s face as she broke my arm, I watched, my eyes threatening to close in agony from the pain that radiated round my small body as she walked away from me, back to her seat, picking up her phone and dialing my father.

If she had not just shown me how ruthless she was, I would not have believed that it was possible for her to start shedding tears the minute the call was picked on the other end.

“Oh, Irwin, the worst has happened to our little boy!” she cried, her entire body shaking from the force of her sobs and that was what hurt the most. Knowing that all of this was fake. That she was willing to do anything to get what she wanted, pull any stunt and discard me like garbage as long as her needs were met.

I vaguely heard Irwin ask what had happened, feeling chills over my body even though I was burning up like a volcano about to erupt.

I heard her fabricate a lie about how I had fallen down the stairs when she was not looking and subsequently broken my arms. When Irwin asked if he needed to come over , she had quickly stopped him , asking that he send money to take me to the hospital instead. Without any doubt, that had been the whole reason for this circus that she had been acting for the past twenty minutes. Money.

That was the only thing that really mattered to her and the fact that she needed to resort to these methods to get money did not matter to her and I knew that she would only do worse if she got away with this.

The call ended and after some minutes, I saw a huge smile on her face break out.

“Well, what do you know? The Alpha cares about you, little brat. This money is enough to sponsor a weekend vacation and I’ll still have change left. You are useful after all.” Kicking me out of her way, she rushed upstairs and came back with a suitcase and as she headed out of the house, I heard her calling a friend to also pack her bags that they were going on a trip.

“Mum?” I whispered through heart wrenching sobs, even as pain flared in my arm when I tried to stand up.

The last thing I remembered before giving in to the hands of unconsciousness that pulled me in was that I was going to die on this cold floor and nobody was going to know. Nobody was even going to care.

Perhaps someone would find my body after a couple of days but it would be too late by then and my mother would be very far away, living her best life.

The next time I opened my eyes, I was in heaven. The sky was so pretty with clouds and paintings of angels dancing on clear blue skies.

“He’s awake!” I heard a little voice squeal excitedly and I had to reevaluate whether I was truly in heaven or not.

Feeling the softness of the bed beneath me, the sheets silky and smooth, I realized that I was not in heaven and the clouds I had been staring at was painted into the ceiling. The angles and skies were also painted into the ceiling, my hand itched to draw this and show it to someone.

I had just turned to look around the bedroom when a face appeared in front of me to my left. It was a girl and she looked to be about my age. Her hair was white blond but her eyes were a light shade of teal mixed with blue.

She gave me a bright toothless smile that showed her missing front teeth.

“Hi, my name is Rhea.” She said brightly, her entire body bubbling with excitement as she turned around and beckoned on two people who I just realized had been in the room standing by the door.

“Come and say hi to him.”

“We’re not supposed to be here.” One of them complained.

“Don’t worry, we won’t get in trouble. I told Ashley to distract mum.” The little girl said before turning back to look at me. “These are my friends. Aiden and Zac.” She gestured to the two boys who also looked to be about my age. “I’ll introduce Ashley to you later. She’s Aiden’s sister. Do you have a sister?”

“N- no?”

Her eyes brightened. “Really? I can be your sister! We look almost alike!”

“It doesn’t work that way, Rhea,” the one she called Aiden was scowling as he ran his hands through his thick midnight black hair and watched me with cold silver grey eyes. “You better stop her before she gets used to the idea.”

The second boy, who I presumed was Zac had charcoal black hair with pitch black eyes that was currently staring at him with unabashed curiosity. He was standing close to Aiden, an arm around his shoulders as he took in my bed ridden form.

Rhea’s voice drew my attention back to her.

“You were asleep for so long , I was beginning to think that you might be a ghost.”

“He smells like a werewolf.” Zac added, leaning close to sniff my hair and I shrunk back at having my privacy invaded.

Aiden nodded in agreement. “A weretae, isn’t it. Not just any werewolf. I thought weretaes didn’t fall sick. How did you? Who broke your arm? What happened to you?”

And just like that, I felt myself being dragged back to that living room where my own mother had hurt me and left me for dead.

Was she here now? Was she going to take me away?

I don't want to go back. I don-

Rhea's hand quickly covered mine and I realized that I had started to hyperventilate and panic.

"Don't interrogate him, Aiden." Rhea chided, before her kind eyes and cherubic face smiled back at me. "You are safe here, okay? No harm is going to come to you here. What is your name?"

Name?

"Boy?" I said and she rolled her eyes and shook her head.

"Duh, I know you're a boy even though you look pretty enough to pass off for a girl, but what's your actual name."

I stared at her blankly.

She pressed a hand to her chest. "My name is Rhea and I'm a girl. You are a boy but you're supposed to have a name that's just for you too."

I looked at her in confusion and her brows furrowed before her eyes widened in surprise.

"You don't have a name, do you?"

"It's boy."

"That's not a real name, but don't worry." Her smile brightened. I didn't even think it was possible to get any brighter. "I'll give you one. How about Ren? Rhea, Ren! They match!"

Aiden nudged her and rolled his eyes. "You can't just name him like he's your dog."

"Why not?" Rhea groaned and Aiden looked like he was about to respond when the door opened.

I could not see her from where I was on the bed, but I heard the woman's voice, soft and serene. "What are you all doing here? I'm sure you've disturbed the boy after I told you not to, Rhea."

“We didn’t, mummy. I promise.” She said and gave me one last smile before pulling the two boys to take some steps backwards, giving room for the woman to get to me.

“Werefae or not, get well soon so that we can play together,” Aiden said, before stepping back for the woman.

My heart squeezed and I smiled at brightly at him. “Okay.”

When the owner of the voice finally arrived in my line of sight, my first thought was that she looked like an angel.

She had soft white blonde hair and kind blue eyes just like the little girl and her touch was gentle as she placed a hand on my forehead to check for a fever and I relaxed into her caress when she smiled at me.

“Your fever is down,” she smiled in relief. You are a strong little boy for surviving all you did for so long, dear child.”

Rhea grinned as she looked at me. “My mama really cried when you didn’t wake up. She thought you were going to die.”

The beautiful woman rolled her eyes playfully and turned to look at Rhea and the two boys.

“Off you go. Go to the playroom with Ashley and the boys.”

“But mum!”

“Aiden and Zac, take her with you please.”

“Yes ma’am.” The duo answered and took Rhea’s hands, leading her out as she grumbled.

When the door closed, she turned back to look at me and placed a wet cloth on my forehead in a way that I had always seen mothers on television do and that was when a tear finally trickled down my cheek.

Whoever this woman was, she was definitely not like my mother.

Bullied Mate Of The Lycan Kings – Chapter 68

Ren's POV

"You look like you have something to say." Rhea's mother said as she dabbed at my forehead gently with the wet cloth and my face turned red with embarrassment at how easy it was for her to have seen what I was thinking.

Reminding myself that she was not my mother and it was okay to ask questions, I finally spoke. "Wh- who are you?"

She frowned. "I'm sorry that I have not introduced myself. My name is Ariel and I overheard my husband's conversation with your mother asking for money to take you to the hospital and because I suspected something was amiss, I decided to pay her a visit to see you for myself. The last thing I expected to find instead of your mother was you lying on the cold ground unconscious with your hand twisted in such a..."

She trailed off but I could feel her rage and knowing that it was not directed at me but at my mother for harming me made my little heart feel whole.

"I'm just glad that you are okay. Tell me, what is your name?" She asked, her face a lot calmer now and when I tried to sit up, she helped me and I saw Rhea's head peeking into the room from the slightly ajar door. Her white blond hair was askew and her toothless grin was wide as she mouthed the word 'Ren' at me.

"You do remember your name, right?" Ariel asked and I hesitated, looking back at Rhea who kept mouthing 'Ren' over and over again with a thumbs up.

Ren. It was a simple name. I liked it even more because it was Rhea who gave it to me.

With a smile, I finally answered.

"Ren. My name is Ren."

Ariel smiled brightly.

"That's a wonderful name. Ren, would you like to stay here with us?"

My eyes widened in surprise and I took her hand with my free one, the other still held in a cast.

“Really? I don’t want to go back home to my mother. I promise that you won’t regret letting me stay here. I won’t be a bother. I can make my own food and my bed and clean the house. I don’t take up too much space and I’ll work really hard to earn my keep around the house too.”

The last thing I expected was for tears to trickle down her cheeks as she pulled me in for a hug.

“Oh, my sweet boy. You won’t have to do a single thing here. As from today, you are now my child and will be treated like a prince. I promise to love you completely and care for you for as long as you want me to. All you have to do is recover now. Okay?”

Her response was all it took for me to hug her tighter and break down in tears.

“I know you asked me to leave but I was worried.”

Snapping out of my reverie, I looked up to see Mauve looking down at me with worried eyes and when I looked around, I realized that I was still sitting on the ground in the basement lounge, my school tie loose and some of my buttons open.

“You have been out of it for the five minutes that I stood watching you. What’s wrong?”

Maybe it was the way she asked that question or the fact that it was not her I wanted to ask that question but she was the only one here right now seeing me at my worst but it broke me.

I fell apart and held my head in my hands, struggling as I cried for the first time in a long time.

Mauve quietly helped me up into a chair and perched herself on my lap, holding me to her as I shook silently. I didn’t even want to look at her because I had never been this vulnerable before in front of her.

A part of me expected her to be very happy to witness this moment and rub it in my face but all she did was hold me tighter and clean my cheeks, tilting my chin up to look into my eyes.

“I know you’re in love with Lily and I know things are bad between the two of you because of me. I’m so sorry.”

My heart clenched at the sound of her name; the reason why I had fallen deep into the clutches of my childhood memories, sparked by her words of rejection and I shook my head.

“I don’t want to hear her name.”

Mauve smiled, biting her bottom lip and tracing my chin.

“Do you want to forget about her? Let me help you do that, Ren. It’s the least I can do for you.”

Perhaps it was because I was angry at Lily or at myself but I didn’t push Mauve away as she covered my lips with hers, kissing me hungrily while she slipped her hand into my shirt.

My mind however could not get Lily’s face out of my head and how it had felt when our lips brushed against each other, something so light and almost as if it had not happened and yet I had been turned on like I had never felt in my life but kissing Mauve now, I felt absolutely nothing.

Instead of stopping, I kissed Mauve harder, trying to forget about Lily. Trying to ignore the ache in my chest.

Mauve’s hand went between my legs to slowly unbuckle my belt and when I tensed, she pulled away to smile at me.

“You just need to relax, baby. Let me make you feel good. You don’t have to do anything.”

She was unzipping my pants when Lily’s face appeared in my thoughts again, her crying face flashing in my head and I knew that nothing would make me feel good right now. No one but Lily would.

Shaking my head, I lifted Mauve from my thighs and placed her on the chair beside me, rising to my feet and buckling my pants.

“Thanks for the offer but I’m not in the mood, Mauve. We should get to class.” I answered, my voice laced with steel expecting Mauve to certainly throw a tantrum but she smiled and stood, walking up to me and fixing my tie. When she was done, she cleaned my lips and showed me the lipstick smear she just removed.

“Alright then. How about we go on a date tonight? Bills on you of course.”

It didn't even take long for the real Mauve to appear after all.

I sighed and palmed my face, too exhausted to even look through her thoughts and find out what she really thought she was going to achieve with this idea of hers and what she really thought of me. Maybe she believed that I was pathetic and weak like she had always thought before.

A big part of me encouraged me to not bother looking, because it didn't matter anymore. What Mauve thought did not matter. Nothing mattered anymore and ignorance was truly bliss.

But as I walked out of the classroom, I knew that getting Lily out of my head and heart was going to be nearly impossible and that it would be my undoing.

Bullied Mate Of The Lycan Kings – Chapter 69

Lily's POV

He was a vision in the black and silver of the academy uniform, his curtain of charcoal dark hair falling over his avenging angel-esque profile. He was leaning into my locker, with those gloved hands of his carefully pressed on the printed pictures. His eyes shut, his nose close to the pictures as he sniffed, searching for a scent.

A bloodhound on the hunt.

Rhea and Chelsea were in their own little world and I was the first person to see him, to see the range of emotions that crossed his face. Horror, confusion, rage and finally the cold hard need for vengeance.

It could have all been a lie actually.

Zac wore deceptive masks as easily as he wore those avant garde necklaces around his neck. The first few seconds I met him, he was charming, suave, smooth, ready to sweep me off my feet. The second he met my eyes, however, all of his charm fell off like molten wax.

Since then, I couldn't separate Zac's real face from those he has carefully thought out to fit a situation.

Ren told me that because he was part strigoi, he couldn't feel the way we do. He's apathetic, immoral, has no sense of emotional or mental pain like sadness, guilt or fear. He's only loyal to those he loved before he got turned, everyone else could go to blazes. Every emotion he tried to portray to make himself appear more human was simply an illusion.

Yet... something told me the horrified and vengeful look on his face was not one of his masks. I didn't understand it, this gut feeling. I'm not exactly a good judge of character, but I chose to trust it. Just this once. Maybe because I was desperate to believe him. To believe that he was on my side. Maybe because even though he was the one that was part bloodthirsty monster, he terrified me a lot less than Aiden. And I could do with one less mad man out to get me.

The posters had obviously been hung back up again because I remembered Rhea and Chelsea trying to take them down after I saw it and had a panic attack over it. Perhaps they were not successful with the mob standing there and trying to make videos of my reaction.

And then as if he could feel the prickling sensation that he was being watched, he turned to the left, eyes of pitch black that reminded me of what an abyss might feel like looking back at me and immense fear suddenly coursed through my body as I took an involuntary step back. The action finally caused Rhea and Chelsea to notice him.

The moment Rhea and Chelsea noticed Zac, they did not waste time walking to stand in front of me, trying to shield me from him and when Zac took a step forward with a menacing growl, Rhea snarled at him in a way that I had never heard before, a way that reminded me that while she was a princess, she was also a werewolf, with a raging beast living under her skin.

"What do you think I'm going to do, knife her?" Zac asked, shoving his hands in his pants pockets and tilting his head, and from where I stood, I knew for sure that Chelsea was rolling her eyes at that question but it was Rhea that answered first.

"Look back at that locker, Zac. Look and tell me that we are overreacting." She said in a tone so cold, even Zac's eyes narrowed in surprise at the tone because I was certain that no one has ever heard Rhea, sweet Rhea sound like that.

Chelsea folded her arms in a threatening manner and took one step forward.

“You have a lot of nerve acting like you don’t know what is going on here right now, Zac. There is so much evidence that points to the fact that you are behind this whole thing and there you are, having the audacity to look shocked and confused.”

“That’s because I am shocked and confused.” He snapped at Chelsea and when Chelsea growled, Rhea held her hand, gently pulling her back from closing the distance between herself and Zac and causing drama.

“You’re just putting on an act right now because it’s easier than facing the reality that you are a despicable person . The evidence of your work is staring right at us.” Chelsea answered, her voice dripping with venom.

“Oh for f**k sake.” Zac growled and closed the distance between himself and the three of us until he was standing in front of us. In front of me.

I avoided his gaze.

Close... he was so close, I could practically taste his scent of blood orange and amberketal. I felt like a tiny insect under a microscopic lens. My cheeks felt hot and splotchy, my stomach was twisting with summersaults. I didn’t know why my body was having this reaction to him just standing so close to me.

I didn’t like it.

“Look at me, duchess. See if I’m lying or not.”

I looked up at him, hardening my gaze, already knowing his next words before they were out of his mouth.

His gaze wouldn’t leave mine, deep, dark, yawning, like an abyss, a black hole. There’s no coming back out after you fall in.

“As unbelievable as it may sound, I didn’t do this. Why would I? What do I stand to gain from jeopardizing my own life just to f**k with yours?” He said, looking directly at me and if I was not still sure that believing someone like Zac was like jumping into a sea of snakes, I would have believed him because he was truly sounding like he was telling the truth.

It seemed Rhea also thought he was not lying this time because she furrowed her eyebrows.

“You’re sure?” She asked, her voice dropping a little.

Ignoring the way my heart skipped when his eyes left mine and softened with almost brotherly affection as he looked at her, I finally spoke. “Then, explain to yourself, Zachary.”

His gaze snapped back to me. “I have no idea how these got here, who took these pictures and who set them up.”

“And I should believe you, why?”

His voice dropped to an intimate purr, “now why will I want to wreck my life just to f**k with yours, duchess?”

I took a step back, my hands suddenly clammy, my nerves suddenly jumpy. The deep look in his eyes, the calm bass of his voice, that damn nickname. He knew what he was doing.

“You tell me,” I said, trying to gather my wits.

“I am already living on borrowed time in Shadow cove thanks to the fact that my parents are high council members. Nobody is supposed to know what I am or the fact that someone like me could be living in Shadow cove.”

Someone like him. A vampire.

When we didn’t say anything, he continued, his voice dropping until it was almost inaudible and I knew then that he was really serious about the fact that no one was supposed to know what he was.

He had asked me not to tell anyone about what had happened so that was why it had made no sense to me that he was now turning around to do this.

“The rule is I can’t feed on anyone here, at least anyone that could end up running their mouths to someone else. I’m careful, always have been, because I know the stakes. As long as I’m within the borders of Shadow cove, I can’t be caught dead feeding on any of the locals, outcast or not.”

His gaze met mine again, a faux calmness in then that hid the cold madness swirling beneath the surface. He oozed frigid intensity without even trying.

“The only people that know what I am, what I became after that incident are the council members. An incredibly small circle since there would be chaos if

it was revealed that the son of one of the founding families is a..." He trailed off and let the word hang in the air, tilting his head a little so that most of his charcoal black hair flopped against the left side of his face.

I was sure we all got the point he was trying to make and what he didn't dare say.

"So, with what you have said now, you are not behind this and it's not in your best interest to do something like this because the council will be mad if they find out," Chelsea said and when Zac nodded, she cursed, "well isn't this f*****g fantastic?"

Rhea sighed and ran a hand through her hair. "Your heart didn't waver once. Which means you're either a very good liar or you're telling us the truth. For old times sake, I'm going to believe the second." Rhea answered and Zac nodded, eyes on me.

This time, I didn't look away, welcoming that dark, deceptively warm gaze on my body even though I could feel goosebumps sprout on my skin.

"Whoever is f*****g with Lily is probably out to get me too. They're messing with a Talaverra and now I'm making it f*****g personal."

My heart seized in fear as I thought about what this could mean. If it was not the work of the boys, then it meant that there was someone else out there that was trying to harm me, and while that was a no-brainer being the resident outcast, I was scared that it was somebody I probably didn't even know.

An unknown enemy, hiding in the shadows, documenting my every move. My mind flashed back to my vandalized room. None of the boys had stepped forward to take credit for it, which was very unlike Aiden who liked to rub his achievements in the face of others and if Zac was telling the truth, it was also not him.

Infact besides a few mean words, Zac feeding on me at that party and the blackmail blowjob with Aiden, they had pretty much left me alone. I had been certain that they were going to be my biggest problems in this school and if they're not... that there was a bigger threat out there to get me.

The fear must have been written in capital letters on my face because Zac's eyes softened as he stared at me.

“I already have people coming to clean up this mess so you don’t have to worry. I’ll look into it.”

“Thank you, Lily’s hero.” Chelsea said dryly and Rhea nudged her.

He chuckled darkly. “Not a hero, Chels. I’m a villain, through and through. And when I find who did this, they’re going to wish I was some cape wearing vigilante because mercy and morals are going to be the last things on my mind.”

The glint in his eyes. The blood thirst practically dripping from his tongue. He liked this, the dark excitement, the chase, a reason to spill blood.

Something in me purred at the realization. I should be terrified, telling him not to hurt anyone on my account. That’s Lily, that’s me, so who is this person that wanted the blood of her enemies poured out to her in a silver goblet?

“Sit tight, duchess, and don’t worry your pretty little mind over this. I haven’t had a proper chase in months, so this is going to be fun.”

“You don’t have to-“

“To what? Wipe the bastard trying to expose me off the face of the earth?” He scoffed. “Regardless of what you think, I’m not doing this for you. So you can sleep easy at night. I’m only getting involved because I got roped into this without my f*****g consent.”

Of course.

To Rhea, he said, “take her to class, make sure she’s not alone and do not let her out of your sight. I’ve got a weasel to flay.”

With that, he turned, his school coat billowing behind him like a cape of darkness.

Bullied Mate Of The Lycan Kings – Chapter 70

Lily’s POV

“As much as I hate to admit it, I think tall, dark and handsome is not lying to us about not being involved,” Chelsea said as we watched him walk away and I nodded.

“I think so too.”

Rhea took my hand and gave me a gentle smile.

“I hope you’re not so scared. We are here for you and we are going to protect you at all costs, okay?”

I had just nodded when the bell rang, signalling that it was time for the next class. My next class was in a building on the other side of the compound.

Chelsea brought out her phone and she looked up at us after scrolling.

“It’s Ren that is taking this class with you. Rhea, where is he?”

The mention of Ren’s name made my heart skip before I realized that I could not allow that to happen anymore. Not when he had offered me everything and I had thrown it in his face and rejected him.

He must hate me now.

Fear and dread seized my heart at that. The thought that he might hate me now. But Ren isn’t like that... he won’t resent me for not accepting him... right?

“I don’t know,” Rhea answered, a worried look on her face as she tapped away on her phone while they started walking me to my next class.

“I’ve been trying to reach him for the past ten minutes but he’s not been responding. He knows that he’s supposed to be here whenever we are not. What could have happened?”

I happened, I wanted to say but didn’t. It would not be surprising if Ren decided that he did not want to be around me anymore, especially after what happened between us in the cafeteria. It made my chest tighten in hurt knowing that I was responsible for it and even though I tried to remind myself that I had done what was best for all of us and that it was not right to want another person’s mate, to force him to be with me, I felt like I was drowning in a sea of regret.

I wanted desperately to take my words back.

But I can’t anymore. It’s best to pay the price for everyone’s peace and just back the f**k. Even if it’s at the expense of my happiness.

“I’ll be alright by myself if he does not show up.” I told them with a smile that was fake as hell but the two of them merely raised their eyebrows, giving me an unconvinced look before Rhea continued tapping away on her phone.

We had just reached the building where I was taking the class when the frown on Rhea’s face melted away and she sighed audibly, relief relaxing her features.

“He has replied. He said he is on his way. You sure you can go in and wait for him? Or do you want us to wait with you out here until he comes?”

I shook my head, leaning forward to hug them.

“I’ll just go in and secure a seat for myself. Since he will be here soon, there is no need for you guys to be late to your own class.”

Nodding, Rhea kissed my cheek while Chelsea hugged me again and I waved at them, knowing that they would not leave until I entered the classroom and when I did, I felt a sudden wave of loneliness as I headed to take one of the empty seats beside the wall.

I was just about contemplating whether it was not too forward to keep a seat for Ren when the teacher entered the class and everybody settled in their seats.

Five minutes into the class, Ren strolled in and I could not help it. My eyes moved away from the board to look at him.

His long white hair was messier than usual and covered most of his face, shielding his eyes so that I couldn’t really see his facial expression. But there was a metaphoric dark cloud hovering over his head, an exhausted drop in his nonchalant shoulders. I wanted so desperately to talk to him, ask how he was doing. To beg him for forgiveness. To ask him to understand that I was not trying to hurt him.

He didn’t glance once in my direction but he must have known where I was because he walked right to where I was seated. A simple look from him and the person seated beside me was scurrying out of the seat and he crumpled down on it, taking out his books from his bag.

I took in his disheveled state, the way he kept running his hands through his hair and how he looked all over the place. He's never anything but calm and put together.

I noticed that some of his buttons were undone, his tie was loose and hair a mess like someone had run their hands through it and that was when my eyes zeroed in on the side of his exposed neck where there was a faint outline of lipstick which was all the evidence I needed to be sure that he had been making out with Mauve.

When his eyes met mine, I looked away, briefly shutting my eyes and fighting back the tears that threatened to spill.

I tried my best to calm myself. This is what I want. Everything will go back to normal now. By some luck, we could still remain friends.

But my positive affirmations didn't stop my heart from aching and I forced myself to open my eyes and stare at the board, reminding myself that I had no right to feel this way.

As much as the knowledge that he was with Mauve threatened to tear me apart, there was nothing that I could do but accept that I did not want to be a homewrecker and it was for the best that I allowed two mates to try to sort out their issues instead of stealing him from her. But telling myself all of that didn't numb the pain. It didn't provide me with the solace that I sought.

The bell rang for the end of classes and my eyes widened in surprise when I walked out to see Ren waiting for me outside the building.

He looked less disheveled now which meant that he must have probably gone to the bathroom at some point, I wouldn't know, I zoned out for the rest of the class after seeing him, unable to concentrate on anything else.

"Hey." He whispered, walking up to me and I fought the attraction that sizzled between us.

"Hey." My heart was racing, galloping like a herd of wild horses on an open field.

"I'll give you a ride home," He said, his voice, soft as it was but firm enough that it brokered no argument.

I couldn't believe it. "Y- you want to give me a ride home."

My heart. This was more mercy than I expected.

He chuckled easily, his shoulders shaking lightly. I thought I had misheard but when he nodded again to my confused look, biting back an amused smile, I realized that he was indeed asking if he could take me home.

"You rejected me and while it was painful, there doesn't have to be any bad blood between us. We can still be friends that carpool to school and back together can we not?"

I wrapped my arms around my midsection and laughed, relief flooding my veins.

"Is that a yes?" He asked hopefully. "If you're in the mood, we could head to Olga's before I take you home."

I looked around worriedly. "But what about Mauve?" Will she be okay with this? I don't want to encroach on her territory. And it'd be awkward if all three of us rode together.

His smile dropped. His voice became tense. "She'll catch a ride with one of her friends."

Uh... did he forget that she's currently friendless?

"I'll just take the bus."

I hated myself for being responsible for the hope in his eyes deflating and I was about to explain that I wanted the ride but it would be awkward for us when Mauve suddenly appeared, latching on to him and kissed his cheek.

"Hi Lily!" She exclaimed, her eyes bright, before turning back to Ren. "So I found a restaurant for our date tonight and the best part? I have a new dress that I cannot wait for you to see. I promise to make tonight worth the wait."

I took a step back, feeling like someone was carving a hole in my chest.

"Mauve," Ren said, after peeling her from him. He looked at me and tried to shake his head in explanation but it did not matter, did it? This was what I wanted, wasn't it? For them to get back together and actually be a couple for

once so why did I feel like collapsing as Mauve linked her fingers through Ren's?

Why did it hurt so much to see them together?

We're not even mates and it hurts so bad. I thought I could handle this. I thought it'd be easier on me since we didn't even share a mating bond.

"Oh, pardon my manners, Lily. I tend to get really excited when I see Ren. Were you guys talking about something?"

"Yes" Ren said at the same time that I said "No."

"Nothing important." I said hastily, smiling what I hoped was the semblance of a genuine smile. "In Fact, I should really be heading home now before it gets late." I said with my best attempt at a smile even though my hands were trembling and my eyes were stinging. I was about to leave when a large arm rested on my shoulder and pulled me in, tucking me into the side of a rigid body that smelled like blood orange and amberketal.

"There you are, duchess. I've been looking everywhere for you."