

Bullied Mate Of The Lycan Kings – Chapter 71

Lily's POV

"I've been looking everywhere for you."

That voice.

I had only heard it a handful of times but I knew who it was.

Turning to the side to look up at Zac's face as he pulled me in for a side hug, I wondered where he had come from and why he was even here. I thought I had seen the last of him for some reason.

That curiosity quickly subsided when I looked at Ren who was watching the two of us with a frown on his face while Zac smirked at him.

With Ren's white blond hair and light brown eyes like broken glass, and Zac's coal black hair and chasm black eyes that opened into an abyss, they looked like exact opposites. Two different sides of the same moon.

Mauve looked between the two of us with suspicion but it was nothing as tense as the stare off that was currently happening between Zac and Ren.

"No, you haven't," I frowned, trying to shrug his hand off of me, but he only held on tighter.

"Don't be like that," he teased. "I'll be giving you a ride back home today."

Ren made a sound like he was dying, causing me to look at him again.

"You are?" Ren asked, his voice brittle as he looked at me with a pained expression on his face that was so difficult to see, it made me look away.

It was Zac that answered again.

"Yes. I'm taking her home. You got a problem with that, Ren?"

"Are you letting this happen, Lily?"

I looked at him. "It's just a ride. It's either him or I take the bus."

"I just offered-"

“Think of it, genius, the girl you like and the girl fated for you in the same car. Did you even think about how that would affect Lily, or are you just thinking of yourself?”

“Zac.” Ren warned dangerously, but even I could see the annoyance and defeat etched so deeply on his face. He knew Zac was telling the truth.

Ren looked at me again and when I didn’t say anything, I saw the annoyance on his face turn to jealousy and then to hurt. “It’s Zac. You hate Zac.”

He looked genuinely confused and hurt and I couldn’t bear to look at his face again.

“We’ve settled our differences. Haven’t we, duchess?” Zac was gleaming. Enjoying this way more than he should.

“Don’t speak for her.” Ren snapped, his voice growing so cold, the hairs on the back of my neck rose.

“He’s not lying,” I said, trying to keep my voice calm and leveled to dissuade the situation, “he apologized and I forgave him.”

“He what?!” He choked, incredulous disbelief in his eyes.

“I know I know, the concept of Zac apologizing to anyone is too difficult to grasp but that’s what happened. I promise.”

“Lily…”

“It’s just a car ride. I’ll be fine. I’ll still… I’ll still hang out with you at school, right?”

That won’t change, right?

I could practically feel the helplessness that was radiating from him as he watched me and I could not help but feel miserable at the entire situation.

I could have sworn that when I rejected Ren, I was doing the right thing, what was best for everyone but now everything just felt like one big mistake. It felt like I had never been so wrong in my life. It felt like I was tasting ashes on my tongue.

He let out a dry chuckle that twisted my insides. Still looking at me, he ordered, “wait in the car, Mauve.”

“What?” Mauve screeched, about to start a tirade but a glare from Ren immediately silenced her.

She did as she was asked.

Grabbing my hand, he walked a distance away from Zac, who to his credit, maintained the distance.

“I’m trying my hardest to make this work but you won’t even take my hand.”

“|-“

“I know you like me, I know you care. The connection we have, it’s not something that can be faked. But you’re too scared to take what you want. Is it that hard? Am I so unlovable that you don’t even want to risk it? Am I not worth the risk?”

“Ren, no! That’s not what I meant.”

“I’m done. It’s fine. Mauve and I will never work out, I just wanted to let you know, so stop bending over backwards for her. I wasn’t just breaking up with her because you asked me to, I was breaking up with her because being with her f*****g hurts and you gave me the courage I needed to do what I should have done a long time ago.”

Tears were sliding down my cheeks now. My heart was breaking into a million tiny pieces.

“That’s enough,” Zac said, suddenly appearing and taking my hand.

Ren’s eyes zeroed in on our interlocked hands, hurt flashing in those caramel brown eyes as he gritted his teeth.

So much more was left unsaid between us.

“Come on, let’s go, sweetheart.” Zac said, steering me in the opposite direction.

I followed him like a brain dead zombie.

As Zac led me away, he linked his fingers through mine, tugging me firmly to his side. He had ditched his gloves and his skin was even colder than the rings decorating his long fingers. I ignored the way his body felt cool to the touch unlike the way it was for hot blooded werewolves, a reminder that he was a vampire.

I still had the bite marks on my neck to prove it even though they were fading and everytime that my eyes saw the fang marks in the mirror, I remembered that night. I remembered how much I had liked the feeling of the bite even though it was supposed to be the most repulsive thing to me. If he bites me now, would it stop the ache in my chest that was threatening to tear me to pieces? He could make himself useful, right?

Why was he even here right now? I thought he was going to track down the person that had done this... unless he was really a blood hound and had found the defacer in a few short hours. It still didn't explain why he was even offering to give me a ride home. My home was hours away from school on the outskirts of Gold Crest. Surely he had better things to do with his time.

I did not understand why he was here, walking beside me, leading me away from Ren but I was grateful because it would have been embarrassing to do alone. I wondered what Ren would be thinking right now as he watched us walking away. Was he even still there watching us?

Was he thinking there was something between Zac and I now?

I froze.

Was he?

No. No, he couldn't be farther from the truth.

I tried to look back at Ren one last time but Zac tightened his hold on my hand, stopping me. When I looked up at him in confusion, he shook his head and kept walking.

"Don't look back sweetheart. Just keep walking."

"But ..."

“Keep your eyes in front of you. He’s with his mate. Fighting with his best friend over another girl while his girlfriend is standing right there is really not a good look on either of you. And you care about his image, don’t you?”

Yes, I wanted to scream. But I also wanted to take it back. Take it all back. I wanted him to be the one holding my hand right now even though I realized that I did not hate being held by Zac which was odd, considering that I saw him as public enemy number two.

Of course Aiden was number one.

But Zac was right, wasn’t he? I had done all of this for a reason, regardless of what Ren thinks, I’m not just doing this for Mauve, I’m trying to do what’s best for all of us.

Would it not be selfish to throw all of my efforts away right now? Plus the last thing I wanted was a physical altercation between Zac and Ren and I knew that if I even for a second gave Ren the idea that I was not willingly going with Zac, he would spring into action and try to defend me, thinking I was in danger.

Swallowing hard, I nodded in response to Zac’s question and continued walking. We made a turn and when I looked up at Zac, he was chuckling to himself, with a very amused grin on his face, fanged canines peeking out, and I just wanted to slap it away.

Removing my hand from his, I frowned at him.

“You seem to be having a whole lot of fun right now with all of this, don’t you?”

“The most fun I’ve had in ages. And I have you to thank for that, sweetheart.”

“Stop calling me that.”

“What? Sweetheart?”

“Yes! I am not your sweetheart.”

“But you are Ren’s sweetheart, aren’t you? You should have seen the look on his face when I took you away. This is the first time that I have ever seen Ren like that in his entire life. He is usually the epitome of calm and unbothered. He wouldn’t even care if you ran him over with a truck. But he’s crazy about

you. It's written all over his face. I bet he doesn't even know that we can all see how down bad he is for you. I never thought I'd see the day. Congratulations on being a little heartbreaker."

My heart constricted at Zac's words, crushing guilt squeezing my lungs.

It was as if Zac's words were designed to hit me like whiplash.

"I'm not a heartbreaker," I murmured. At least, I don't try to be.

His smile widened and I snapped angrily. "What? I'm not."

"If you say so." He was enjoying this way too much.

"Ren is your best friend. How could you take pleasure in his pain? Do you think I want to do this to him? Do you think I want to hurt him? Do you think I derive any pleasure from doing this?"

"Then why are you doing this?" Zac asked quietly, folding his arms and I stopped and turned to look at him.

"I'm trying to do what is best for his relationship. I'm trying to save his reputation. His future would be a lot better and more respectable with his mate by his side. And what will people think of me if they hear that he broke his mating bond because of me? What will they think of him? I don't want to put that mental strain on him because I've been on the receiving end of harsh rumors and public castigations."

I was panting by the time I was done speaking and I saw that the expression on Zac's face turned serious as he closed the distance between us and leaned in to look down at me, his dark hair flopping over his forehead and falling over his eyes.

"Do you even care about what Ren wants? Did it ever occur to you that all of that doesn't matter as long as he has what he wants the most by his side. It's always what people will think and how people will react when it's really not about them. Are you doing this for him or for them?"

Whatever reply I had died and I faltered, at a loss for words.

Zac watched me for a few moments waiting for a response and when he realized that I was not going to give him one, that I didn't have an answer to that question, his chuckle was light and he shook his head.

“Well, think about that for a while, you can't please everybody. Just f**k it and do what makes you happy and let the rest of the world kiss your a*s if they're mad about it. But I should let you know this since it seems that you can't even see it. You say you're doing this for Ren but the only person benefiting from this tragedy... from this self sacrificing martyrdom of yours, is Mauve.

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Lily's POV

“Well, think about that for a while, but I should let you know this since it seems that you can't see it. The only person benefiting from this tragedy, from this self sacrificing decision of yours, from is Mauve.”

Again, whiplash. Because even though there was a smile dancing on his lips, his words were anything but playful.

And as much as I hated to admit it, Zac was right. I saw the way Ren looked at me. I saw how miserable he had been since I rejected him in the cafeteria. I tried to lie to myself that the decision I made was for the greater good and that at the end of the day, Ren was going to thank me for it but right now, Mauve was the only person who seemed to be enjoying what was going on.

Infact, it looked like she didn't even care about Ren's happiness as long as they were together. She could have left him knowing that he was not happy with her but she did not and she did not look like she was ever going to consider doing that.

How delusional can you be, Lily?

I didn't realize that I had tilted backwards when Zac leaned forward to whisper in my ear and when I tried to stand straight, I nearly stumbled backwards and gasped when Zac pulled me up, strong arms around my waist and my head hit his chest.

He smelt sweet and tangy like citrus, the fabric of his shirt smooth against my cheek. His heart... his heart was beating abnormally fast, it wasn't even possible to describe it.

“Easy there, tiger.” He whispered, dragging a hand through my hair before he steadied me on the ground and when I looked around, I realized that people were staring at us, watching us with sneers on their faces.

I could only imagine what they were saying right now and how compromising this position looked to them. I could already imagine the rumours that would start flying around about Zac and I very soon and it would only hurt Ren more if he heard something like this.

Maybe I deserved their scorn and hateful words, I thought as I took a step back from Zac. Maybe it was my punishment for hurting the only person that had been nice to me since the very first day I set my foot on the academy grounds.

Zac must have noticed my drastic change in mood because he tilted my chin up, in a way that gave even me butterflies when I knew that I should be actively hating him. I felt the effect of those pair of dark abysses longer than I should.

“Don’t listen to them, okay?” He whispered, “you first, remember? f**k the rest.”

Ren had said something like that to me earlier, regardless of how different they looked, they thought alike, and all I could do was nod and allow him to lead me away from the school area into the parking lot.

“Did you find what you were looking for?” I asked.

He knew what I was talking about immediately. The person responsible for the fiasco today.

He quirked an eyebrow at me. “I told you not to worry your pretty little mind about that, didn’t i?”

“You did.” At first I had thought that it was Aiden responsible but more and more, it was looking like I had gone and threatened him for no reason. “I just want to know if you’ll be handing them over to the school authorities. This is a serious crime after a- Why’re you laughing?” I narrowed my eyes as he laughed even harder. “W- what will you do to them?”

“You sure you want to know that?” He said in a voice so low, dark and threatening, a seed of fear germinated in my stomach, taking root in my soul.

No. No, I don't want to know.

Needing something to distract myself, I decided to wonder about why Zac was helping me. I know he said that it wasn't about me, but he was putting a little too much work into ensuring I was safe.

Of all the three best friends, he was the one that confused me the most.

Aiden didn't hide the fact that he was a colossal jerk or that he seemed to derive pleasure in doing a lot of horrible things. My entire body still had goosebumps thinking about the darkness in his eyes when he held my hand and twisted the knife into himself.

Ren was the best of the three, at least to me. It was easy to talk to him, to be with him. Perhaps it was because of my feelings for him, but I was certain that even if I was not in love with him, my perception of him would not change. He was gentle and kind. He thought of others before himself. He didn't play games.

But Zac? Zac felt like an onion. The first day I had met him, before he decided that I was someone that he wanted to hate because I looked like the girl that tricked him and hurt him, he gave off a very playful down to earth personality, kind of like how he was acting now. There were times when I saw that he was withdrawn and could pass for a loner, when I had stumbled on him in the club, as if he was unhappy and sad. And then there were times where he was even as intense as Aiden. As wicked and blood thirsty.

He was dangerous. I could see myself doing something stupid like trusting him. If I was wise, I would not be allowing him to lead me to where we were going right now.

We were already at his car before I realized that he was not kidding about driving me home. A sleek black Mercedes Benz.

"You were not joking, were you?" I asked when he brought out his car keys and he stopped and turned to look at me with raised eyebrows.

"About what?"

"About driving me home."

Turning around to lean against the car, he folded his arms and crossed his legs.

“I may not look like it, sweetheart but I am a man of my word.”

I looked at his relaxed form, his easy confidence. “Well, you don’t have to.”

“I know that.”

“Then why are you helping me? What do you stand to gain from doing this?”

He sighed and unfolded himself, coming to stand before me. He was so close, I could taste his citrus scent on my tongue. I didn’t expect it when he took my hair in his hand, curling his finger around my dark locks. “What if I don’t want to gain anything? What if I just like being there for you? What then?”

I took a step back, snatching my hair from his grasp and breaking that intense look in his eyes. “Why? What changed?”

He was about to answer when he paused for a few seconds, listening quietly and then, he shook his head with a smirk.

“I know you guys are there.” He called out to no one in particular and I was about to ask who he was talking to when two hefty guys came out of another car parked directly opposite Zac’s and walked towards us.

“Hello Savio, Lucas.” Zac said with a smirk and stood to his full height as the two men stopped in front of us.

“Lily, this is Savio and that is Lucas. They are my bodyguards, sworn to shadow my every move and be a royal pain in my a*s. Savio, Lucas, this is Lily, otherwise known as sweetheart.”

I rolled my eyes at Zac while the two men chuckled and shook their heads.

“I am not his sweetheart. It’s nice to meet you.”

“Nice to meet you too, Lily.” Savio said.

Lucas smirked at Zac as he shook my hand.

“We know you’re not his sweetheart, dear girl. The boy’s a flirt. He calls everyone babe, even us when he wants something.”

“Okay, that’s it. Fun’s over. Come on, let’s get you home.” Zac said, opening the door to the passenger seat for me and sticking out a tongue at his bodyguard like a ten year old.

“Bye Lily.” Savio waved when Zac closed the door and I watched as he joked around with his bodyguards in a way that told me he was comfortable with them.

It surprised me because I could have sworn that he didn’t say more than a few words per day. Just another thing that made Zac Talaverra a confusing individual.

He entered the driver’s side of the car and was about to start the ignition when Lucas tapped against his window, making him wind down.

“Are you sure about this?”

“About what? I have a driver’s license, you know.”

“Not that. You just asked us to not follow you. Or drive you. Are you sure you’re fine being alone with her?”

I would have been offended, but I realized that for some reason, that statement did not sound like he was worried about me harming Zac. It sounded like the other way around in fact.

Zac merely shrugged and gave Lucas a lazy smirk.

“You know how fussy I can get when I’m being hounded, don’t you, Lucas? I don’t react well to being followed.” His tone was easy but I could sense the underlying threat in his voice.

And that was the end of the argument.

Lucas nodded and stepped away from the car and Zac looked at me with a cheery smile.

“Let’s get you home, sweetheart.”

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Zac’s POV

I hadn't even started the engine before I realized that this was a big mistake.

"Hey," She said suddenly, leaning forward and peering at the audio system like it was a shiny new toy. "Does this work?"

That small action, her leaning forward to fiddle with the buttons on the speaker, combined with a gust of wind from the action blew her sweet scent like nectar into my nostrils.

I choked, pressing a hand to my nose.

My mouth watered. Sweet. She smelled so sweet, I just wanted to taste her ag-

NO! I slammed down hard on that thought with a two hundred pound sledgehammer and pressed the button to open the windows to drive out her scent.

"You're in a Mercedes-Benz AMG GT, and you're asking if the speakers work." My voice should have come out croaky and dry, but I've been faking my charm since I was a kid in diapers.

"Sorry, can you repeat that in English? I don't speak rich and elitist," she rolled her eyes, taking out a battered piece of junk and tapping on the cracked screen.

"What, is that an iPhone 6?"

"Haha." She laughed dryly. "It's my phone. I'm not sure what brand though."

"That's definitely an iPhone 6. It's a relic from the past. That belongs in a museum, duchess."

"No, it doesn't. It still works. See?" She flashed me her screen.

My eyes narrowed at the brief flash of light.

Ren.

She was trying to text Ren.

Something cold, dark and heavy settled in the pit of my stomach.

I can't... I can't be jealous of Ren. I just can't. He deserves her after all the s**t Mauve has put him through. I should be happy for him, proud that he's finally putting himself first.

But the dark, disgusting feeling wouldn't stop festering in my gut.

I feigned a chuckle even though my insides were twisting, "yes. It works."

"Well, where do I plug it in?"

"You don't need to. Just turn on your Bluetooth."

She did as I instructed, and soon, Lionel Richie filled the entire car.

Oh, an RnB type of girl.

"Put your address in the gps," I said, pretending like I didn't already know her address as I reversed the car. She'd know I've been stalking her.

Her hair curtained over her face as she inputted her details and when she sat back up, she shook her hair back and this time, I held my breath, my hands closing so hard on the steering wheel that my knuckles turned bone white.

Yup, this was most definitely a mistake.

I really shouldn't have gotten upset when Lucas and Savio hinted that they needed to protect Lily from me. Even though I had known that they had nothing but good intentions in their worry and even as Lily sat beside me, staring out the window in childlike wonder and bobbing her head to Lionel Richie, I wondered if she knew just how hard it was to be sitting next to her right now even though i had given her a conceited a*s smile and pretended that everything was fine, I was having a hard time concentrating on the road.

If Azrael doesn't f**k things up, my whack a*s driving just might kill us.

I didn't know if I could take even thirty seconds of this.

I was using every bit of strength to restrain myself and my wolf from feeding on Lily. I had asked my guards to stay behind and not follow us because I wanted to prove, not just to Lucas and Savio, but to myself, that I could control myself around Lily. That plan however, was already backfiring slowly and successfully.

As if that wasn't enough, thanks to my heightened senses as a hybrid of sorts, I noticed everything, f**k, everything about her in clear detail. High definition.

From the gold flecks in her eyes, to the rose pink shade of her plump lips that turned even pinker when she occasionally bit into it, it was getting harder and harder to take my eyes off of her when she continuously pushed back strands of her voluminous raven black hair behind her ears, absentmindedly being the most innocent and beautiful girl that I have ever seen in a long time.

Duchess. My duchess. That nickname that had once belonged to Callista. The goddess had probably sent her to make up for her mistake of mating me with a bloodsucker. Who am I to reject a gift from the heavens?

It didn't matter if she didn't like me, if she couldn't love me, if there was someone else she'd rather be with, if her f*****g mate was still out there. None of that matters to me as long as she doesn't stop me from being close to her. From being there for her. She's mine, my gift to protect and that's that. I'll protect her until the day I leave this miserable earth.

Case in point, the assholes tied up in the trunk of my car that thought they could get away with f*****g with her. There was something off about this entire thing, how easy it was for them to get their hands on intimate videos of not just Lily and I, but Aiden too. Something wasn't adding up and there was so much left to be discovered, but they'd serve as an example to anyone that upsets her. I'll paint the entire school red with their blood to send a message to the others if I have to.

She suddenly leaned forward and tapped her fingers to the tune of the music. I glanced at them, they were thin, long and perfect and I bet they'd looked perfect wrapped around my c**k too-

That very thought sent my blood spiking through the roof.

No. No, f**k! Think of nasty stuff. Dirty wet gr a*s, day old blood, smelly feet, babies crying for their mothers... babies crying... Lily swelling with a child of mine-

Jesus!

I ran a frantic hand through my hair, messing it up even more. My tie felt like a noose tightening around my neck. I was hot, uncomfortable, f*****g losing my s**t.

I glanced at her again, trying to control my breathing, trying to keep my hands on the steering wheel. At this point, I was certain that I could count every pore on her skin from staring at her so hard and the fact that she did not even seem to notice that I was watching her deeply spoke to how relaxed she was in my presence.

I smirked sardonically. I had half a heart to warn her that she was making a huge mistake lowering her guard in the same space with a monster like me, not that I could even bring myself to take advantage of her innocence now.

Trying to distract myself, I decided to try and focus on other things that did not involve how clueless she was about her beauty and realized hints that she was clearly from a home that was struggling financially. Her uniform was impeccable and neatly ironed but her shoes were old with worn soles. She was wearing a tarnished necklace that used to be gold, and that junk she called a phone was so battered and broken, I was amazed to see that it was still working.

Would it be too forward if I got her a brand new phone? I'm sure that's what friends do for friends. Aiden had gifted me my first car on my fifteenth birthday and Ren has rented an entire estate to celebrate my sixteenth. Surely a phone is nothing compared to a car and a house, right?

When her body suddenly stiffened, I froze and quickly looked ahead, afraid that she had finally caught me gawking at her like a creep but she merely glanced at me briefly before she started searching her beat up bag, pulling out a packet of chocolate that was nothing but cheap chemical and artificial sugar that was probably bad for her health. She tore off the wrapper and started chomping down on it, clearly enjoying her slow poison.

Chocolates. She likes chocolates.

Phone, chocolates... flowers? I know! Lilies. Hopefully, she'd catch the joke.

"Would you like some?" She asked and when she turned to face me and our eyes collided, the answer died in my throat and I suddenly felt like speaking was difficult so I simply shook my head and she smiled, chocolate staining her incisors.

My hand itched. I wanted to reach for her, cradle her face in my hands, press my lips to hers and wipe it off with my tongue. Hopefully, she'll moan too and I won't be able to resist. She'd let me take things a step further and-

F u c k f u c k f u c k

She's here to torment me. She's here to send me spiralling into madness.

"Well, thank the moon that you don't want any, because this is my favorite so it means more for me! No offense, though, okay?" She wiped away the chocolate stain with her tongue and I forced myself to look ahead and not think about how hot that looked.

"None taken," I answered, feeling a smile creep up my face and I wondered if it was her happiness that was infectious or if I was just going mad.

Since I got turned, there are only two things that evoke a human emotion in me without having to fake it: what amuses me, and what I would kill for.

To my horror and utter confusion, it seemed that somehow, Lily was slowly starting to become both of those things. And I hated that I could not help myself and that with each day, I was no longer even bothered about seeking help. I had never experienced something like this before with my other blood donors. With Ren and Aiden, I have always cared for them and my feelings of love and loyalty only heightened after I got turned. But for my other donors whose names and faces I don't even remember, nothing had ever changed for me.

It seemed like drinking her blood had only made me more in tune with her and her emotions and I was starting to realize that seeing her hurt makes me very uncomfortable.

As if that was not enough realization to deal with, her scent was driving me feral with desire. With others, blood was just a means to an end. I didn't have to try hard to ignore their scent. But when it comes to Lily, all of my restraint seems to fly out the window. I want her. I want her so badly, it hurts. It was like I was a man starved and I was staring at my dinner. It was a constant battle between Azrael and I to not let my control slip because right now, I had no idea what my defected wolf would do if I made the mistake of yielding to him.

I looked over at Lily as she excitedly belted out the lyrics "Say yes to heaven," by Lana del Rey that was currently playing through the speaker, her shyness melting away even more and it was a sight to behold. Even though she was off key and her pitch was all wrong, I ignored the perfectionist artiste in me that wanted to correct her and instead basked in her glow. Watching her and

knowing that she felt free enough to do that around me made my chest feel incredibly tight.

I felt desire shoot straight to my groin, my d**k turning to f*****g stone.

It seemed i was going to be in severe torture for the entirety of this ride.

Making a right turn I saw that we were already in Gold Crest territory and as i drove to her home which was just on the outskirts, I kept telling myself to suck it up and pull through. I would drop her off and be free soon enough, even though a huge part of me wanted to keep driving around for as long as possible just to have her in my presence.

We hit a red light and I turned to poke fun at her off-key tune, but I felt my heart stop and pound a bit faster when I saw the carefree smile on her face, her cheeks flush with excitement and her eyes closed, belting out lyrics as she lost herself to the music and I quickly admitted to myself that Lucas and Savio were wrong.

She was not the one in danger.

I was.

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Zac's POV

On the outside, I was humming softly to Make You Wait by Dean Jawson, enjoying the way her music preferences were practically the same as mine, on the inside, I was holding Azrael in a headlock because every passing second seemed to intensify his need to be close to her in more ways than one.

We were already in Gold Crest territory right now and Azrael was raging at having to drop her off.

Me and you both, buddy.

She was currently in la la land, singing off key to one of her favourite RnB playlist and I turned to poke fun at her off-key tune.

At that moment, a gust of wind blew in from her open window, sending her scent of jasmine and lavender, a mix that went straight to my brain and filled my lungs.

Wait, why did I open that window again?

In that moment, I knew that i was losing the battle with my desire and my control had slipped. It was becoming harder and harder to hold myself back but I couldn't f**k this up. Not with her. Not again.

I slowed the car to a stop and she looked at me, all hazel green eyes and flushed pink cheeks, right at the moment that I was about to reach out and pull her from where she was sitting to sit on my laps so that I could tilt her neck back and feast on her.

"Are you okay?" I heard her ask but I could not answer. Not with the way I was bent over the steering wheel, breathing so hard and fighting for control, struggling not to allow her scent overwhelm me for the second time because I knew very well that i would not be able to stop myself again if anything happened. That she would not be able to stop me either.

She tried to place a hand on my shoulder and I growled, "don't. Don't touch me."

Or I won't be held responsible for what I do to you.

I should have prepared for this, drank my fill before deciding to stay in an enclosed space with her.

I needed to get out of here. This was a mistake.

I parked the car at the next available stop in front of a convenience store and exited the car.

"I'll be right back." I managed to get out before slamming the door shut, not caring if she saw that I was flustered and disorganized. Right now, I need to be as far away from her as physically possible.

Cold mist descended on my burning skin.

Even though the weather was cool, it felt like my entire body was on fire and I quickly removed my jacket and ripped off my tie, tossing them in the backseat

and rolled up my sleeves. My hands were practically trembling as I reached into my pocket and brought out my e-cigarette.

I raised the vape to my lips, shaky anticipation dancing in my veins, hoping that a few drags would give me the nicotine high that I needed to calm down and regain my senses and control. If I was not so out of it, it would have been comical to watch someone else in this position. Shaking because of a girl.

My therapist will kill me if she finds out that I still take drugs to momentarily alleviate my anxiety.

“That’s a false study!” She’d titter, an annoyed vein popping in her forehead, “in the long run, it will make your anxiety a lot worse.”

She’d freak if she finds out nicotine was the least of the party favours I took part in.

I took a deep inhale, a gentle wisp of vapor escaping my lips and momentarily fogging up the view in front of me.

I could have laughed, although nothing about this was amusing.

If I’m going to be there for my gift, I better learn how to stay in the same space with her without trying to jump on her five times in ten seconds.

It would have even been better if it was just her blood that I was thirsty for. But it was not just thirst. It was not just the aching of my fangs to taste her. My entire body ached for her. I was riddled by lust so hot in all its painful glory, desire filling my veins, my groin, my brain and clouding my judgement and there she was completely oblivious of my internal struggle, her face f*****g innocent and beautiful and messing with my mind and body by just existing.

I dragged a shaky hand through my already messy hair. If I had known it would be like this, I wouldn’t have tasted her in the first place.

But would I be able to live with myself if I had gone on hating her for a crime she didn’t commit? It’s a miracle she even lets her guard down with me after the s**t I put her through.

After a couple of drags, I was starting to calm down even though I was sure it was mostly the distance that I had put between us and not the drugs swimming in my veins but at least i was no longer shaking like a leaf.

I heard the door to my car close gently and I did not need to turn, because her scent already told me who it was.

When she walked around to stand in front of me, I realized how small she was, tiny and breakable. She was about five foot six inches, and I towered over her and could already picture how her a*s would feel in my arms if I lifted her up and helped her wrap her legs around my waist.

“Are you okay? The way you rushed out of the car, I thought you were having a panic attack or something.” She said with a concerned look in her eyes and even though I plastered a playful smirk on my lips, I wondered if I would be able to pull off this act without her seeing through my facade.

“Yeah, of course. Whatever gave you the idea that something was wrong?”

I mentally facepalmed myself.

Way to go, Zac. Reeeal smooth.

She folded her arms and tilted her head to the side. “Zachary,” she prodded, definitely not buying my act.

“Come on, Lily, no one has ever stopped to smoke in front of you before? You have nothing to worry about, okay? I just needed this high.”

She sighed and took a step forward towards me.

I quickly took a step back before I did something very foolish like grab her a*s and kiss the hell out of her. Not that I was sure that she would respond. I hated to admit it but at this moment, I wanted her to have feelings for me and not Ren. At least it would help me excuse all of the filthy thoughts that I had right now about what I wanted to do to her.

“You’re weird.”

“I’m what?”

“Weird. You.” She repeated, drilling her finger into my chest.”

Because I’m seconds away from losing my s**t and taking you in the backseat of my car? Yeah, it’s best she doesn’t hear that. Can’t have her running for the hills now, can I?

“There has to be a reason you suddenly stopped on the road and started smoking.” There is, just not what you’d like to know. “I don’t know what is bothering you and while I am not going to push you to open up to me if you don’t want to, I want you to know that you don’t have to pretend to be strong in front of me either. If there is something bothering you, you can talk to me.” Oh, I want to do a lot more than talking to you, duchess. “I won’t tell anyone about it,” because I’ll kill anyone that you find special enough to share my troubles with. “So yeah, that’s all.” She spoke very fast and when she was done speaking, I saw her face turn red and realized that she felt very shy offering to listen to me despite her stern look and firm words.

Gods, I just wanted to bite her cheeks.

If I wasn’t such a piece of s**t, I would have told her that I thought she was absolutely adorable and that I would not mind confiding in her about what was bothering me if I was sure that she would not run the other way after hearing what I was thinking about doing to her.

I was about to give her a playful remark when the door to the convenience store opened and the moment broke.

Lily froze as soon as her eyes moved away from me to look at whoever had come out of the door.

Curious about what had made the colour drain from her face, I turned around and looked too.

It was nothing unusual, just a group of kids who were dressed in the Gold crest high school uniform of gold and blue walking out of the convenience store.

I turned back to ask what had made her freeze and saw that she looked terrified as she stared at the crowd that was not even looking our way.

According to Aiden, Lily had no previous high school records and had been homeschooled and gate-kept all her life by her mother but she looked at these guys like she knew them, perhaps from the neighborhood, I thought, trying to remain calm and not read any meaning into an ordinary stare.

But when I turned sideways to ask her about it, my words died in my throat because she was standing even closer to me now, her eyes still on them but

her hands were shaking as she clutched my arm desperately, her entire presence looking like she was going to fall apart.

What could make her find comfort in me of all people?

If I wasn't so bothered by what could be making her scared i would have relished in the fact that this was the first time that she has ever touched me willingly.

I looked back at the gang, they were now laughing and bickering amongst each other. They were five in number, three girls and two guys.

One of the guys glanced at us and she pressed her body deep into my side, hiding behind me.

Immediately, I was hit with the urge to protect her and kill anybody that posed a threat to her but before I could do something reckless, I caught myself immediately.

She is not your mate, Azrael, I reminded my wolf for evoking those thoughts in me. Know your place.

Still, I wrapped my arm around her, relishing her closeness. I tilted her chin up, frowning at her chattering teeth. I could feel her fear filling up the entire space as her eyes remained on the back of those kids who were laughing absentmindedly by a car that I assumed belonged to one of them.

"I want to get something from the convenience store. Will you wait in the car or come with me?" I managed to say, my words failing me again thanks to Lily's fingers on my skin. I didn't really need anything from the store but I wanted to give myself some space between us to regain my composure.

Face still as pale as paper, she shook her head in response.

"I'll come with you, I want to use the bathroom."

Not arguing, I led her into the store wondering what could be making her so upset and my wolf who seemed to be obsessed with her was not faring any better, agitated about the unseen threat and feeling overly possessive.

I would have probably listened to him but Azrael, my wolf has never had good judgment when it comes to women.

First he was fixated on Callista, a vampire that proceeded to ruin my life, and now he was fixated on a Lily in more ways than finding her blood delicious, somebody that wanted nothing to do with me.

Shaking off my wolf's restlessness, I waved at her when we entered the store and watched as she made a beeline for the bathroom.

Realizing that I had no plan or reason why I had entered the store in the first place I decided to get random things and keep myself busy and just as I made a turn to the left, I stumbled on the aisle that had the cheap chocolate Lily had been munching on earlier and impulsively picked up two packs. I had just handed the cashier my card when a boy from the group from earlier walked in and immediately started heading to the bathroom... where Lily was.

As much as I wanted this to be a coincidence and that the boy did not know Lily, I could not help but roll my shoulders, trying to relieve some tension in my neck as I watched him go while I waited for the cashier to swipe my card and make the payment.

It took an eternity before I finally had my card back, Azrael screaming at me to go find Lily.

I did as he asked, my gut telling me something was wrong with the guy.

At first, a part of me was excited about the thought that I was right and the boy was up to no good because it meant that I had an excuse to beat someone up and quell Azrael's bloodlust.

But that excitement quickly faded and turned to panic when I reached the bathroom door and found out it was locked.

My heart stopped for a full second when I heard Lily screaming my name.

It took one swift, hard kick to knock the door off its hinges. I froze when I saw the guy pushing Lily's face against the wall his front, pressed against her back.

He was touching her. My precious gift.

Rage is a beautiful thing when it's let loose and red happens to be my favorite color.

This time my wolf and I were in agreement that this person needed to die and I grabbed him, pulling the bastard away from her and flung him to the other side of the room into a full length mirror that shattered into pieces and before he could recover, I picked him up by the throat and slammed him hard against the wall.

“You dared to touch her?” I whispered, letting Azrael loose as my hand burned prints into his neck. “Are you f*****g kidding me?”

Bullied Mate Of The Lycan Kings – Chapter 75

Lily's pov

They were right there, the banes of my existence. The five terrible friends that had terrorized me since middle school.

“I want to get something from the convenience store. Will you wait in the car?” Zac asked, coal black eyes like magnets brought my gaze back to him momentarily stopping my panic attack.

Something was wrong with him. I wanted to argue with him and stand my ground that I knew something was going on with him but I realized that for some reason, even though he looked like he wanted to actually tell me what was wrong, he had somehow stopped himself which made me suspect that perhaps it had something to do with me.

I immediately deflated at the idea. Of course, I looked like the girl that had ruined his life. Having me in his space must be hard on him. But still, I didn't want to sit in the car alone knowing that Gold crest students were around the store.

I decided on a better option.

“I'm going in with you. I want to use the bathroom anyway.”

At least until he was ready to go, I was going to be safe in the bathroom. I was not even certain if any of them had noticed me, but I would rather not wait for them to see me in Zac's car.

As I walked into the convenience store and headed straight for the bathroom, I couldn't help but look over my shoulder for signs of them, remembering the horror that I had experienced right after Cade broke up with me.

A part of me still re-lived all of the terrible things that had been done to me and as i stared at my reflection in the mirror, i could swear that my heart started racing again as those memories tried to engulf me and pull me under and I bent low into the sink, splashing water on my face and trying to take a deep breath.

I'm fine. I'm safe. I've moved on from them.

My hands wouldn't stop trembling as the memories... memories that I thought I had kept under lock and key and buried, started sprouting up again.

I held my head in my hand, shaking my head.

I'm doing better. I've been doing so much better. It's been two years since I left Gold Crest and I'm over everything. I'm happier than ever with my scholarship in Shadow Cove. I have friends. Real friends. I'm happy, I'm happy, I'm happy-

Why am I crying? Why won't I stop crying?

I stared at my broken reflection in the mirror, tears streaming down my cheeks, my hair sticking to my damp face.

I'm such a mess.

My phone suddenly pinged a text and I immediately fished it out, wiping my tears desperately, thinking it was Ren.

It wasn't. It was a telemarketer, advertising a new product.

I've been trying to explain things to him that the thing going on with me and Zac is not what he thinks but he has been radio silent since I left him at school. He wasn't even reading it.

If I didn't know better, I'd assume he had blocked me... but he couldn't have. He's not like that. He's not petty or vindictive and I just have to give it time.

Yes, time. That's what he needs. What we both need. W- we'll go back to being friends again and Rhea won't hate me for hurting him... and Chelsea won't be mad at me because Rhea hates me.

I heard the door to the bathroom open without even knocking and I immediately splashed more water on my face, assuming it was Zac. I didn't

want him to see me so distraught, especially because he was more perceptive than I had originally given him credit for.

It wasn't far-fetched to think it was him because he had barged in in a similar fashion, first at that party and then when he placed a bandage on my neck.

I glared at him through the mirror, ready to give him a piece of my mind about respecting my privacy even though a part of me was thrilled that he had come to look for me but the anticipation died in my throat when my eyes met the newcomer and saw that it was not Zac that had entered the bathroom with me.

No.

"Why, hello, Lily," that wicked grin. "Missed me?"

No.

Tate Reeves.

He proceeded to swiftly lock the door after him, not taking his leering eyes off of me.

"Such a pleasure to see you here and in that perky new uniform by the way, so pretty," he drawled and fear enveloped my entire body at the smirk on his lips. "You disappeared on us. Dropped right off the universe. We miss you very much, Lil."

No.

Back when I was still attending Gold crest, Tate was in the same clique as Lana, Kyrie, Violet and Rhodes. The terrible five as I liked to call them.

They were the terrible people that had spearheaded and facilitated all the hurt that I had gone through in Gold Crest, almost like they had a personal vendetta against me. Tate Reeves was at the front and center of the entire movement.

While others in the academy knew where to draw the line, they had never been afraid to do me the most harm, especially physically and usually brought me to times when I wished I was dead and motivated me to go as far as attempting to take my life.

They were the reason I had cut my wrists in the girl's bathroom. Tate had given me the blade himself and put those words into my head.

Nobody wants you, Lily.

Did you hear the prophecy about you? I heard it's becoming a big deal with the council. They're probably going to try and take you out before you turn eighteen. Executed, just like your father.

You're nothing but bad luck. Why wait until then before you're killed off like a f*****g animal? Just do us all a favour and die already.

That had been two years ago. I had done it. I had tried to end my life... but Cade... Cade had found me, taken care of me, nursed me back to health. Only to break my heart all over again.

I didn't know what I was expecting but he looked pretty much the same with bronze colored hair and brown eyes, only bigger than I remember. He was still built very strong and muscular thanks to being on both the football and wrestling team. He was wearing the letterman jacket that the football team usually wore and I hated how that jacket reminded me of Cade and how I used to wear his jacket all the time when I was dating him.

"What do you want, Tate?" I managed to get out even though I was shaking like a leaf and he clucked his tongue and pouted.

"What? It's been a long time and you don't even want to know how I'm doing? Or how Cade is doing? Surely if you didn't care about me, you should care about your ex boyfriend, right?" He said the ex-boyfriend like it was an inside joke and I guess for them that was what it was since it had all been a game to Cade even though it had been real to me.

When I didn't answer, he pulled out his phone and pointed it at me. I froze, my eyes watering as I looked at the risque pictures of myself that I had stupidly sent to Cade. One of my fake girlfriends at that time had suggested I try it. That it was one of the ways to spice up my relationship and since Cade was definitely a big shot, I had to do what I can to keep him.

She had orchestrated everything, buying me swimsuits, lingerie and doing my hair and makeup. She had even shown me how to pose correctly, how to pout my lips and arch my back to create more of an effect. I had foolishly gone

along with it, thinking nothing of it since other girls seemed to do it all the time. How foolish and naive I was.

“Don’t you want to know where I got it? You know, let me just spill since you seem to have lost your sense of speech. It was so hard getting it, I tell you, almost hell in-fact, because Cade guards it with his life but I happen to know people that will break their own necks to see you suffer, so here we are.”

I hated that out of everything he said, it was the part about Cade not being the one to give him the pictures that caught my attention and I hated myself for the tiny kernel of hope that lit up my heart. I immediately clamped down on it because clearly, I’m yet to learn my lesson that nobody gave a rat’s a*s about me.

I was also so worried about the last part of his statement because just how many people had I wronged in my life by just existing?

He took a step forward and I realized that I was getting lost in what was no longer relevant. I need to leave now!

I tried to push past him and that was when I finally caught a glimpse of the monster that had made my life a living hell back at Gold crest.

Grabbing my wrist, he shoved me against the wall and when I screamed, he grabbed my hair in a vice clamp and banged my head against the wall so hard, I could feel blood start dripping from the cut that the impact had made.

He covered my mouth with his large hand, muffling my screams and bent me over, flipping my skirt up.

“I had forgotten what a b***h you are. Thanks for refreshing my memory.” He groped me hard, causing me to cry out in pain. “You always did have such a nice looking a*s. Too bad Cade claimed you before I got to have a taste.”

Maybe i should have struggled harder against him as he palmed my a*s and I felt his hard d**k rubbing against me from his pants but all i could think about, all my mind could go to was when Aiden had made me give him a blow job and how I had not been able to fight back, even back then. How I had liked it and how I felt so sick for liking it. Something must be broken in my head.

But this. This felt different. Somehow, this similar occurrence felt a hundred times worse. I liked nothing about this and I felt like flaying my own skin to burn his prints off my body.

Mental fists were punching me in the gut, trapping me in a cage.

I hated Aiden. I hated Tate. But most of all, I hated myself.

Self loathing, dark, disgusting and heavy settled in my heart, pumping into my veins.

I hated myself for being so weak. I wanted to throw up. To scrub myself raw until I can no longer feel his handprints on my skin.

I let tears trickle down my cheeks and shut my eyes tight, taking a deep breath and letting out a toe curling scream, one name on my tongue.

Zac.

I wasn't sure if he'd hear me. If he'd care. He was my last resort, my only resort actually and just as I was ready to resign to my fate, the door flew open and Tate was torn away from me.

Zac...

My shaky legs gave way and I fell to the floor, trembling and holding my head that was throbbing from where i had been slammed against the wall and all i could do was watch as Zac picked Tate up like he weighed nothing and flung him across the room.

I could not help the sickening satisfaction that I got from seeing Tate look horrified as he crawled to his knees just as Zac walked up to him and grabbed him by the throat slamming him against the wall and yelling in his face.

"You dare to put your hands on her?" He whispered, his voice so dark and deadly, like jagged pieces of ice, it evoked fear and dread in me. "Are you f u c k i n g kidding me?"

For once, it was wonderful to see one of my biggest bullies finally at the mercy of another person and paying for what he did to me.

He flung him against the wall again and I heard Tate's bones crack as he fell to the floor with a thud. Zac stepped on his throat, pressing his full weight down on him, enjoying the way Tate struggled and fought for his life.

He looked like an avenging angel, the look of death and cold hard vengeance in his eyes. "Surely you can take responsibility for this disrespect with your life, right?"

He won't... he won't kill him... would he?

Um... would he?!

He picked him up again, wrapping his hand around his throat and squeezing so hard, Tate's face turned purple in seconds, his eyes bulging out. It was almost comical, I could have laughed.

I promised myself that I would stop Zac from going too far since I didn't want him to be in any scandal where I was concerned or worse, become a murderer.

I realized something was wrong when Tate suddenly moved from whimpering to screaming at the top of his lungs and I didn't care whether he was in pain, my heart was cold to his screams because he deserved it, until I saw something strange start to happen.

Where Zac's hand was throttling Tate, it looked like the flesh around Tate's neck started to burn, steam rising from the mere contact like he was being singed by something very hot but when I looked closer, it was just Zac's hand which meant that Zac's touch was somehow doing something to him.

Zac's touch was burning him.

Wait, did that mean Zac had abilities too, like Ren? Of course! That made sense!

The minute Zac's other hand met with Tate's skull, pushing his head deeper into the wall and the same scorching scream left Tate's mouth, the smell of burning flesh hit my nose and I realized that I was right.

Zac's touch was lethal. Literally melting the skin off of Tate.

Deciding that that was enough torture for Tate, I tried to reach out to Zac but reared back when he turned to growl at me.

“Not a step closer, duchess.” His eyes were glowing red and there was a ferocious sneer on his face, a wild look in his eyes that made me want to run away with my tail between my legs but if I didn’t stop him now, something worse would happen and Zac would be in serious trouble.

“Zac, listen to me, put him down. His parents are nobles too and you could get into serious trouble. He’s not worth it. Please.”

To my surprise, he listened. He huffed and tossed Tate on the ground, snarling at him in a way that made me flinch even though it was not directed at me.

Tate looked like he was about to break into tears, red hot scorch marks on his face, head and neck.

“Now listen to me very carefully,” Zac said in a deathly still voice, “if you touch her again, if you even look in her direction, I will peel the skin off your bones and I’m going to enjoy it while doing so. Relay this message to your friends, because if anyone with Gold Crest’s logo even hurts a single hair on her head, it’s your head on the chopping block. Nod if you understand.”

Tate nodded like a good little dog, shaking and sobbing, refusing to look at me.

It was nice to see him subservient and being punished but looking at his bloody face and the scorched bruises on his neck and head, his entire body shaking with terror as he stared up at Zac, I was frightened by Zac’s abilities. One thing was certain. They were nowhere as soothing as Ren’s.

He turned to me and his entire features did a total one eighty.

His shoulders slumped, his eyebrows creased, his face a mixture of relief and concern.

“God, Lily,” he sighed, pulling me into his arms. His heart was racing a mile a minute. His arms were trembling around me. He pressed my head against his chest, stroking my hair. “You’re bad for my health, you know that? I nearly had a f*****g heart attack.”

I snorted out a weak laugh, too drained to give him a snarky comeback and nuzzled my nose in his shirt, his scent of blood orange and spicy, sweet citrus enveloping my nostrils.

I should be terrified of him, especially after witnessing his lethal strength and obscene powers, but something in me mewled in satisfaction, feeling safe in his arms.

“What are you still doing here?” He snapped with a growl reverberating deep in his chest. My face was buried in his chest but I knew he was talking to Tate. “Get out.”

At that moment, Savio and Lucas ran into the bathroom, their eyes wide with fear as they took one look at the situation.

They tackled Zac immediately, tearing him away from me.

Bullied Mate Of The Lycan Kings – Chapter 76

Lily’s POV

When Savio And Lucas rushed into the bathroom, their eyes wide with fear, I thought for a second that they were worried that something had happened to Zac, the precious prince that they were supposed to protect.

But when they took one look at him, his arms around me, fanged canines peeking out of his lopsided grin, eyes still swimming with echoes of wrath he had spent on Tate, and at Tate with his bleeding wounds and scorch marks, Savio pulled a Glock out of nowhere and pointed it at him.

I froze.

“Step away from her, Zac” Savio said slowly, “I don’t want to use this.”

“But I-” my words cut short as Zac pushed me away just as Savio and Lucas tackled him, holding him in a deadlock.

W- what’s going on?

“I thought I told you guys to get lost?” Zac complained, not even struggling.

“We have clear instructions from the madam. We are not to let you out of our sights. And for good reason,” Savio growled, glancing at Tate, then at me. “What were you thinking, Zac?! She’s just an omega. She can’t protect herself! You said you could handle this!”

I suddenly realized why Lucas had been worried about me riding alone with Zac.

It had nothing to do with the fact that they did not trust me with their ward.

Zac didn’t need protecting from anybody. Not with those powers he had. It was other people, people like Tate who was bleeding down his face and had burns and bruises all over his body that needed protecting. It was people like me that needed protecting.

It was everyone who came in contact with Zac that needed protecting. From him.

“Ugh, you guys are overreacting.” Zac drawled but Savio only held on tighter.

“Get out of here, kid!” Savio yelled at Tate and the boy didn’t need to be told twice because immediately he heard that, he staggered out of the bathroom, still shaken and terrified.

With Tate gone, the weight of everything that just happened fell hard on my shoulders.

I dropped to the ground, my legs giving way as the knowledge of what I had just experienced hit me as well as terrible exhaustion and horror at what I would have allowed to happen to me if Zac had not come to my rescue.

Tate would have...No, I could not let myself even think about what he would have done and gotten away with. He had never gone that far before. Not when I was in Gold Crest. Not even those few days I remained in school after Cade dumped me.

I touched the nasty bump on my head that was starting to make my head throb painfully. Goosebumps sprouted on my skin as I thought of Tate’s handprints on my body.

I barely registered that Savio had left Zac and was kneeling by my side until he gently looked over my body and when I wondered what he was doing, he

shook his head and quickly removed his jacket, draping them over my shoulders.

“Are you okay, Lily?” He asked and all I could do was nod slowly, still feeling like words were too heavy to spill.

When he handed me a handkerchief, I touched my cheeks and realized that I had been crying without even knowing, my hands trembling and entire body shaking like I had caught a cold.

“Thanks,” I said, dabbing at my tears. His gaze hardened as he took in the bump on my head and the bruises around my arm. And when he glanced at Zac, I finally understood why he had been looking all over my body.

Searching for signs that Zac had hurt me.

“Don’t be scared anymore. We have Zac under control. He isn’t going to hurt you. Thank God we got here in time before he did something unforgivable.” Savio assured me.

He had been looking for any sign of injuries. He had been searching to see if Zac had hurt me and now he must have thought that the reason I was crying had something to do with Zac.

“Zac didn’t hurt me,” I scowled, offended for no reason. “He was only trying to help me out. He did not do anything.” I tried to explain to Savio as he helped me to my feet but in response, his eyes went to the bloodied floor and back at me and I realized that nothing I was going to say would make them believe that Zac was not the bad guy here and I got how it looked even though I did not want to.

Even I had been terrified when I saw Zac’s touch turn lethal before my very eyes and I was certain that if I had not stopped him, he might very well have decided to kill Tate.

“You just saw him burn the skin off the skull of your friend and you’re still defending him.”

“Did you even wonder what my ‘friend’ was doing that made Zac attack him?”

“Listen to me, Lily. Nobody in this entire community deserves to be hurt by Zac. No one. His abilities are not normal and you don’t have to put him in a

good light just because you are worried or scared he'd hurt you. We know what he is capable of and you don't."

"Are you sure about that? You've been shadowing Zac all these years and you still think he'd hurt someone that doesn't deserve it."

"It's funny how you're so comfortable saying this, when you've been hurt by the very person you're trying to defend."

I froze. Of course I should have suspected that he was talking about today's incident and the misleading bump on my head but something about the way he said it made me go back to that night at the club when Zac had hurt me. Had hurt Bia...

Something cold washed over me at the memory I was already starting to forget.

Cold cruel eyes, wicked smiles, lips stained with blood, hurtful mean words.

Do I even know Zac? Do I know his motive for suddenly being on my side?

When Savio did not say anything else, merely leading me out of the store, I decided to give up and accept that I would have to settle for getting answers another time.

"This is not the car that I came with." I said, looking in the direction of where Zac parked his car and Savio nodded.

"This is my ride. You need to get home and we want to make sure that you are safe on your journey back."

I took a step back, suddenly feeling restless and uncomfortable.

"And what about Zac?" I asked Savio who was about to answer when Zac placed a cold hand on the small of my back.

"I'm right here, duchess." He answered smoothly, pressing me to his side.

Something in me settled immediately, losing its restless, anxious energy.

"Sorry, Savio, I'll be taking it from here."

"I can't allow that, Zac. Not after-

Zac took a step forward, forcing Savio to inch backwards. “Are you trying to pick a fight with me?” He asked in a voice that induced frost bites and hailstorms, even though his posture was deceptively relaxed, a charming smile on his face. “Because I’m not about to leave her without a fight.”

“I- I’m only trying to do my job.”

“You can’t do your job if you’re dead now, can you?”

Savio choked. I saw his hand reach unconsciously to his gun as he took a step back. There was so much raw fear in his eyes, it was obvious he took Zac’s threat seriously.

Zac needs to stop threatening people with death so easily. I’m going to start thinking it’s not a threat after all but a promise... something he can actually do... And I don’t think I’m ready for that revelation.

“Now, Zac-” Lucas said, placing a hand on his shoulder but Zac glared at him until he removed his hand.

The standoff between all of them was so thick, even a hack saw could not cut through all of that tension so I decided to clear my throat and take one step away from them.

“Thank you Savio, I’ll just go with him.” I told Savio with a small smile that he did don’t return.

Savio frowned but could only eye us warily as Zac took my hand, his own shaking with what I realized was agitation as he led me to the car, away from his bodyguards who I was sure would not let him out of their sight.

Releasing myself from his hold and hating how my body responded to his touch, I stopped and when he spun around to look at me, I decided that whatever I wanted to say was probably not that important. Not when there was an intensity in the way he looked at me.

He looked like he was about to say something but there was a sudden dark look in his gaze as he stared at me and it took me a moment that was he was frowning at Savio’s coat on my back..

“Are you cold?”

I hugged myself tighter. “Kind of. It’s more of fright, really-“

I gasped as he tore the coat off my shoulders and dumped it on the ground. He reached into the backseat for his school blazer and placed it on my shoulder. “There.”

Before I could even think too much about it he pulled me close, wrapping his arms tightly around my body and nuzzling his face in my hair.

Eyes wide as I relaxed into the hug, which surprised me to no end, I could feel his racing heart in his chest, his entire body trembling and if I was being honest, I did not mind that he was practically crushing me to his chest.

“Z- Zac?”

Pulling me back, he cupped my cheek in a way that made my heart skip as I stared into his charcoal black eyes and saw that he was truly worried about me.

“I don’t even want to think about what might have happened if I had not gotten there in time... If I was not here to help you. You’re so small and breakable,” he frowned at the bump on my head, “Why did the goddess make you so small and breakable?” It felt like he wasn’t even talking to me anymore. “If you’re going to be my gift, I definitely have my work cut out for me.”

“You’re not making any sense.”

Before I could let his words make my stomach flip upside down, he buried his nose in the crook of my neck and sniffed hard, his nose resting on my racing pulse for a moment before he proceeded to rub his face on my pulse, my cheeks, exhaling heavily into my hair.

My eyes nearly fell from their sockets and I pushed him away, forcing myself away from him. I stared at him, my heart thundering hard in my ribcage. “What the f**k, Zac?” I wheezed, suddenly feeling short of breath. “What was that for?”

He huffed, “you smell like him. My wolf doesn’t like it.”

H... he had been trying to rub his scent on me.

I rolled my eyes even though my heart was pounding erratically in my chest.

I started for the car, my hands trembling. “Just... just take me home, Zac.”

My wolf doesn't like it.

No.

His sudden protectiveness...

It can't be...

The way I feel safe with him...

Could he be-

I slammed down hard on those thoughts with a two hundred pound sledgehammer. No. This doesn't mean anything, Lily. Don't be stupid.

Bullied Mate Of The Lycan Kings – Chapter 77

Lily's POV

If Zac could feel my hand trembling in his grasp, he played it off well. He had an easy gaze on the road ahead of him, a lazy hand on the steering wheel, humming softly to the sound of music crooning from his speaker.

While I was a cold mess with scattered thoughts.

Zac can't be my mate, it's probably just my nerves acting up. I want it to be Ren, and even if it's not Ren, I'm still going to choose him... if I haven't f****d things up in that aspect.

He still wasn't replying to my messages. What if he wanted nothing to do with me anymore?

And even if he still likes me, what are the chances that Zac would let us be together if we were mates?

Why choose? A sinister voice that reeked of femme fatale slithered into my thoughts. When you can have both.

I shivered, pressing a hand to my head.

Great. I've been hearing things all day.

The entire ride to my house was filled with tense silence... The tenseness was more from me because from the look of things, Zac seemed to be in lala land.

It's not like I had anything to say because I was still trying to process what was actually going on with me. With ZAC! Hugging me, sniffing me and rubbing his scent all over me in a way that I have only seen couples do with one another.

I would have thought that I was reading too much into it and overthinking as well as reaching but the fact was that I wasn't. Not with Zac's right hand interlocked with mine while he used the other to drive.

It had been like that the minute he moved the car onto the road and I had been too shocked to ask him why he was holding my hand, still trying to reconcile the fact that those same hands had nearly killed someone from just touching them.

I didn't feel an ounce of pity for Tate after he tried to rape me and all the months of brutality back when I was a student at Gold crest... but I didn't understand why Zac was holding my hand now.

Was it because he was worried that if he didn't, I was going to somehow jump out of the car in fear? Fear of what I had seen him do perhaps?

That could not be it, could it?

He was probably holding me because he did not have any other choice... yes, that's it. He thought I was scared, I just have to show him that I'm not. I tried to pull away from him but all he did was tighten his fingers around me.

Okay, that's not going to work.

What was worse was that for some reason, I was not interested in calling him out or asking why he was holding me tight like that. I hated to admit it but I liked how it felt with my hand in his right now, especially after how I had felt when Tate tried to molest me. Being alone after that would have made me crumble and it was not like holding hands had to mean anything, right?

Right.

Content with having sorted out that issue in my head, I did not realize that we had arrived at my house until I felt that the car was no longer moving and

when I looked in Zac's direction, I saw that he was staring at something ahead.

Looking forward, I realized that he was looking at the place that I called home.

My house was a small white house that has seen better days. Those days were when my father was alive and not a traitor of course, but the white right now looked like it could not even classify as that colour. It was more yellow and brown than white. My father had a beautiful garden surrounding the house where he liked to plant his own spices and special plants he used to perfect his art, but right now, with neither me nor my mother taking care of it, the garden was dead and the white picket fence was broken.

Looking back at Zac, I saw that he was staring with an unreadable expression and that was when it hit me that he had probably never seen a slum like this in his entire life thanks to being born a Talaverra.

Immediately, I withdrew my hand, surprised that he released his grip and sat on top of my hands, suddenly feeling very insecure about my quaint little home. Zac's scrutiny affected me in a way Ren didn't.

Speaking of Ren, my heart caved in when his name flashed through my thoughts again and my frown became even deeper. I suddenly remembered that Mauve had said that they were going on a date together... maybe that's why he's ignoring me... because he's busy with her.

My heart cracked in two.

Where could they have gone?

Had he taken her to that diner where we ate and the owner said she liked me and not Mauve? Jealousy constricted my lungs, heating up my blood.

Quickly, I shook my head because I was giving myself false hope when I knew that only heartbreak awaited me from wondering about their date. I looked up, finally realizing that Zac had already gotten down from the car and was now at the passenger side, opening the door for me.

"Thank you." I said when he helped me down, ignoring the tension between us as I walked away from him. I could not read his expression upon finding out where I lived so the last thing on my mind was to invite him in.

“I’ll see you tomorrow.” I said quietly and started heading for the door to my house. Hearing footsteps behind me, I turned to see that Zac was walking after me and he merely shrugged.

“Just want to make sure that you’re inside the house and safe.”

“Okay.” I answered feebly, heading towards the front door, with my keys in my hand and I was almost at the front door when I realized that something was not right.

The door was slightly open which meant that either my mother had come or people had broken in again.

Filled with horror, I rushed into the house, my legs nearly giving out as I took in the destroyed state of my home. Everything had either been trashed, wrecked or looted and right in the middle of their living room was her mother on her knees, crying and sporting not only a nasty gash on her forehead but also a busted lip.

My heart ached as she lifted her eyes and saw me and I rushed towards where my mother knelt, pulling her into my arms for a hug and allowing myself to cry for yet another tragedy befalling this family.

“What happened mum?” I asked and she merely shook her head, rubbing both her arms like she was cold.

“I tried to stop them, Lily. I swear I tried.” And then her voice changed from devastation to one of accusation as she frowned at me.

“What did you do, Lily? Who did you offend that has decided to punish me as well?” She gripped my blazer hard, her eyes wild. “Who hired those big scary men to come here and trash the place?”

“I...” my voice got lost mid explanation because I did hurt somebody didn’t I?

In a fit of rage, I had not only raised my voice at Aiden, I had stabbed him with a knife and twisted it into him. When Aiden had warned me that he was interested in playing games, why had I been so stupid to think that whatever he did was only going to affect me? I was probably the one that was going to be least hurt by him because he was going to deal with me where it would truly hurt, by coming for my loved ones and everything that was precious to me.

Suddenly, a cold shiver ran down my spine as I imagined what could have happened to my bedroom.

It would definitely be worse than the mess downstairs and even though I hoped that I was just being paranoid, a part of me knew what I was going to see would break me. I had not even realized that Zac had not left until I was climbing up the stairs and he was right behind me.

When I opened the door, there was blood splattered on the walls and I followed the trail to the bathroom to see my cat, Fiona, nailed to the wall with... oh my god... that dagger! The very dagger I had stabbed Aiden with.

I clamped a hand to my mouth but that didn't stop the toe curling scream from escaping my lips as I stumbled back, crashing into a wall of muscle that enclosed its arms around me.

Zac...

I turned around and buried my face in his chest, holding fistfuls of his shirt as I exploded into tears, my chest racking with sobs. He held me together, tightly to his chest as I broke into a million tiny pieces, rubbing my back and murmuring soothing words.

It's deja vu all over again, but this time, I knew who did it. Who was out to get me after all.

Aiden f*****g Vanderbilt.

Bullied Mate Of The Lycan Kings – Chapter 78

Ren's POV

"And then one of the girls at the salon was like she wanted to dye her hair in the same shade as my own. It's obvious she was just trying to copy me. She didn't even know I was a natural redhead..."

As Mauve kept talking about whatever she thought I was paying attention to, I could not help but wonder how I had once again found myself in this mess that I was certain was done and dusted merely hours ago. How had I moved from being certain that I was never going to see Mauve again to being on a damned date with her?

I ran my hand through my hair for the nth time tonight, messing it up even more.

I knew I could not reject her. It didn't matter that it was probably the easiest and fastest way for me to get rid of her since I was not the one that would get hurt in the end... but I could not.

Not after watching what had happened to Rhea when she was rejected by that fool I would rather not think about. She had not even been obsessed with him and it had taken a toll on her.

There was the fact that even though a part of me wanted to find Lily and scream at her for giving up on us, she was right. Mauve was an omega and she would not want to have it on her conscience if rejecting Mauve did irreparable damage to her or worse, killed her.

I didn't want that baggage on her conscience. I didn't want to hurt her any more than the blows life had dealt her. I wanted her to be happy and at peace, without being ridden with guilt.

Aiden and Zac would probably call me foolish for even considering Mauve in all of this but right now I was sure that she was the one that needed to do the rejecting because that was the only way that we could both walk away from this without being hurt since I felt nothing for her, not even the slightest bit of attachment. All I was right now was fed up with the whole situation.

I had done everything in my power to piss her off tonight to try to get her to do that, to push her over the edge and finally reject me the way she has always threatened to when I do even the slightest thing wrong.

I had done everything wrong tonight. I didn't pick her up from her place but told her to use a cab instead, I showed up an hour late, I didn't compliment her, I was barely even paying attention to anything that she was saying. All these were things that would have sent her flying into a rage with me but now, she'd just smile tightly and roll it off her shoulders.

It was not even hard to pretend that I did not want to be here because that was how far this relationship had fallen, if I could even call what we had a relationship. It was more of a business transaction where she had been the only one gaining and I had been keeping up appearances, hoping that we would fix our issues and come to respect each other even though there was no love between us.

I could not even believe that once upon a time, I had been desperate for her affection, her approval, and now I wondered why I had ever even put myself through all that. Why had I even put up with so much s**t from her when she wasn't even worth it? I should go back in time and hit myself in the head for all the pain I took, all the times I suffered at her hands.

Ren's POV

"And then one of the girls at the salon was like she wanted to dye her hair in the same shade as my own. It's obvious she was just trying to copy me. She didn't even know I was a natural redhead..."

Her nervous laugh brought my attention back to her and I didn't even realize I had been looking at her until she smiled.

"Is there something on my face? You have been staring." This time I took a good moment to finally look at her, to really look and see if I could find why I had been with her in the first place. Her lips were matte red, full and pouty, matching her flaming red hair and nails, her make-up was dark and designed to lure. Her little red dress had a slit all the way to her hips that exposed her long legs and a deep plunge in the neckline so that the valley of her full breasts were on display.

Yeah, she was hot enough to pull anyone in the room but at the end of the day, all I wanted was to be back in Lily's home, sitting on the floor with her dressed in comfy pyjamas and watching a movie while cuddled up close.

My heart tightened in my chest as I imagined what she could probably be doing right now. Was she still with Zac? Were they having a good time? I didn't even realize that she and Zac had been that close until today when he had put his arm around her shoulder like they were pals and she had allowed him to lead her away like they were besties.

Jealousy was like a hot knife plunged deep in my gut as I relived that particular moment, wondering when exactly things had changed between them because to the best of my knowledge, they were enemies. She hated him and he hated her. He hurt her and she wanted nothing to do with him... so why? Why? Why? Why?

I gripped my hair, shaking my head.

And what was with that darned nickname that he called her? Why did he call her duchess? Was it an inside joke between the two of them?

No. I remembered where I had heard that nickname before. It was what he used to call Calista, the girl that had ruined his life after he fell in love with her. Did Zac see Lily as her replacement? Had he somehow stopped disliking her for resembling his dead ex and started falling in love with her like the way I was?

I could not lie and say that it was hard to fall for someone like Lily. Her energy was the purest I've ever seen. She was beautiful, honest, resilient and kind. She has a smart mouth once you get to know her. She lets what she loves consume her and she has a heart big enough to fit the entire country.

In fact it was too easy to fall in love with someone like her and dread coiled in my stomach as I wondered if Zac was already in my shoes. If he had already fallen for her.

No. He can't.

If it were Zac... if it were between the both of us, I didn't stand a chance against him. Zac was cooler, stronger, more popular and terrifying. He flirts easily and he has so much confidence and an ego the size of the moon. He knew how to talk to people in a way that left them captivated. He wasn't inexperienced when it comes to women and s*x, whereas the only experience I had in that aspect was with Mauve.

Would Lily even still like me if she had Zac's attention? Could that have been part of the reason she left me? The more questions I had, the more agitated I became, my hands trembling as I checked my phone and Zac's socials for the millionth time.

Lily hadn't tried to text me and I couldn't even see her highlights anymore.

A cold feeling suddenly washed over me. What if she was going to cut me off? Would I let that happen? Could I let that happen? I'd give her anything she wanted but not that.

I was hyperventilating. I tugged hard on my tie. Adjusted it.

Why is it so hot in here?

Mauve suddenly huffed in frustration and when I looked away from my phone to her, she frowned and sighed.

“Please, Ren. I am trying really hard to make this work and it takes two to tango. Help me out here”

Her words might have as well be water washing against rocks because I couldn't care less what she wanted anymore.

I was about to tell her that when my phone suddenly started ringing and when I looked , it was from Zac. Skeptical that he was only calling to rub what had happened back at school where Lily had left with him in my face, I cut the call and when he kept calling, I decided that I was going to turn off my phone. I had hit the home button when I saw a message from him drop that made me freeze.

Zac: Come over now. Someone broke into Lily's home and trashed the whole place. She's a mess right now and she needs you.

I didn't have to think twice. The next second, I was out of my seat, only one thought on my mind.

Lily... I have to get to Lily.

“What? Where are you going?” Mauve asked, confused and terrified.

I was taking off my tie and dashing out of the restaurant.

“Ren f*****g Hawthorne! Answer me, goddamnit!”

I headed towards my car, ignoring Mauve who was screaming after me.

“For f**k sake, Ren. If you leave now you will have to work a lot harder to earn me back.”

I paused right as I was about to close the door and laughed bitterly at how deluded she was and the role I had played in making her believe she was that important in my life.

“The only reason I am still going along with this sham, Mauve is because you threatened to kill yourself. To me, there is no relationship. Tell the waiter to add the bill to my tab and get a cab home. Goodnight.”

Bullied Mate Of The Lycan Kings – Chapter 79

Lily's POV

Zac was still on my front porch by the time I was done packing.

I clenched my hands around the little bag I had packed my things in to head to Bia's place. She was the only person I knew that would accept me crashing with her at such short notice. I was grateful that I had her in my life, that out of all this madness, at least I had one friend I could turn to.

I was shaking like a leaf dropped in water by the time I opened the front door and saw Zac still standing there. My life was falling to pieces and he was the only one here to see me like this.

"Duchess," he sighed, his shoulders dropping as he took in my broken form.

"I'll take the bus to my best friend's place. She's human and she doesn't stay in Shadow Cove so it's going to be a long ride for you if you decide to give me a ride. Of course, I don't expect anything more from you after you've already done so much. I can understand—"

He crushed me into his chest. "Shh, stop talking now. Just breathe for a moment."

I did as he asked, taking in large gulps of air as he settled us onto the porch steps

I tried to fight out of his hold. "But I really have to get go—"

"Breathe, Lily." He insisted as I burrowed into his side, feeling safe under the protectiveness of his steady form.

I did as he instructed, inhaling slowly through my nostrils and exhaling through my mouth. I looked up at the stars, letting the cool air sink into my skin.

My pulse slowed down, my heart stopped trying to race out of my chest. I was less jittery.

"Better?" He asked after a while.

I nodded and he stood up promptly when his phone started ringing. I watched him leave to make the phone call.

I stared at him, his dark, dark hair wafting in the cold wind and wondered what I'd have done if he wasn't here with me.

He was the last person I expected to be sharing this dreadful moment with. He had dragged me out of my bedroom when I was still reeling from the shock and horror.

My pet had been pinned to the wall with a knife. The same knife that I had used to stab Aiden in the gut.

Zac had not only tried his best to make me better but since I could barely think or move or even function, he had made sure my mother had been taken by an ambulance to the hospital. She was only left with a minor concussion and the paramedics had assured us that she would live and that the blow to her head was not serious. I would have gone to the hospital with them but I was too shaken to move. To even think.

I could not help but note that all of this had happened because of me. Because I had told Aiden that I had had enough and threatened him to try me. What if that knife had been found in my mother and not in my cat? But even the knowledge that my cat had been injured made me want to vomit. This was all my fault. Everything was my fault. The trashed house. My injured mother. My nearly dead cat.

I felt Zac sit beside me on the steps again and even though I didn't raise my head up, I knew that he was looking at me.

Lily's POV

Zac was still on my front porch by the time I was done packing.

His hand that was around me tightened and shook and I knew without a doubt that it was not because of the cold weather outside. He had been there when I stabbed Aiden. Without a doubt, he knew what I knew. That somehow Aiden was responsible for this. I was scared that he was going to confront Aiden because of me and give him even more reasons to hate me and hurt me and my loved ones.

Forcing my head up, I turned to look at him and tried to keep my face as stoic and as unaffected as I could. The last thing I needed from him was to go and fight with Aiden on my behalf because it would only make things worse and I was already at the end of my rope. The fact that he kept tapping his leg

anxiously and looking at his wristwatch solidified my resolve that he needed to leave now. I was tired of being a burden.

“Thank you so much for everything, Zac but you know that you don’t have to stay right? You can leave if you want to. I’ll just call my friend to let her know that I’m coming over.”

His hand fell away from my shoulder in an instant and he stared at me like he could not believe what I had just said but before he could speak, a bright light from a fast approaching vehicle interrupted us and I looked away from him to see who it could be.

My home was on the outskirts of Gold Crest and nobody ever stumbled out here by mistake unless they really wanted to.

My eyes squinted at the light, my heart stopping when the familiar vehicle parked in my driveway.

A very familiar silver white Porsche.

I looked at Zac, my heart bursting at the seams and he only nodded, tilting his head, a proud smirk on his lips.

He had done this. He had let Ren know what had happened when I was still a mess on the inside.

He just kept stacking up reasons I should be grateful for him today.

Ren stepped out of the car and I felt my heart accelerate. I inhaled at how handsome he was in the white tux that he was wearing, his white blonde hair, a sophisticated stylish mess like always. He looked even more regal than usual and I wondered what the occasion was for.

My elation to see him quickly dimmed when I remembered why he was wearing a tux. His date with Mauve.

Slowly I rose to my feet but before I could even feel sorry for myself for looking like a mess with my swollen eyes and messed up hair while he looked like a dashing prince that just walked out of a fairytale, he ran towards me and pulled me in for a hug, pressing me to his chest.

I inhaled his sweet scent of oud and bergamot.

It was too much. The feel of his arms around me, his familiar scent, his lips on the side of my head. I burst into tears again and all I could think about as he rubbed my back and whispered soothing words to me was how relieved I was that he was here right now and not on that date, because it meant that he didn't hate me.

I could not even believe that he was standing here, that he was real. I had hurt him, said all those words to him and ended up hurting the two of us and here he was, still taking care of me, still being a good friend to me. He still came here to be with me despite everything I had done to separate us.

"It's okay, Lily. I promise that I understand."

Realizing that he had heard my thoughts made me bawl harder and hug him tighter as he kept speaking.

"I didn't mean to hurt you. I swear, I was just—"

"Shh... I know... I know and I'm sorry myself that I didn't respond well to you back at school. I should never have let you leave on that note. I understand now. I understand why you did it. You're a good person with a kind heart and you had my best interest at heart. I could never fault you for trying to do the right thing, Lily. That takes guts. I was wrong and foolish. I wish I could take it all back."

Pulling back to look up at him, I shook my head immediately.

"No no. I'm sorry. I know that I said things that made you get the wrong idea but I swear that I had no ill will against you. I never wanted to hurt you."

Nodding with that gentle smile that I had missed so much, he wiped my tears and was about to say something when Zac cleared his throat.

"As much as I hate to do this, I'll have to cut this sappy reunion short."

Blushing hard, I moved away from Ren and turned to see Zac walking towards us, holding the knife.

My heart clenched again as I remembered how Zac and I had removed the dagger and tried to stop the bleeding. I didn't even know if Fiona was still alive right now. If she was, then she was one little fighter. Zac had dragged me out so that I wouldn't be there if she didn't make it.

“Tell me.” Ren said to Zac and I marveled at the authority in his voice, even more surprised when Zac immediately broke down everything that happened without question.

I watched Ren’s face harden to stone when Zac finally broke the news about the owner of the knife.

“I still don’t believe he’d do this. You’re sure it belongs to him?” Ren said and I watched as he struggled to come to terms with what his friend had done, just another example of how empathetic he was.

“I don’t want to cast stones yet, but it looks like the same one that Lily stabbed him with.”

Ren nodded and they had a conversation with their eyes to which Zac nodded.

“Take care of her. Come and see us when you’re done.”

By us, I was certain he was talking about Aiden.

“Thanks, Zac.” I whispered. He didn’t have to, but he had called Ren here.

Zac stared at me with an intense gaze and I saw his hand tighten into a fist by his side like he was stopping himself from doing something.

“My pleasure,” he nodded. “See you later, Lily.” He said curtly and I watched as he entered his car, knife still in hand and drove off.

Bullied Mate Of The Lycan Kings – Chapter 80

Lily’s POV

Immediately Zac drove off, I wasted no time pulling Ren into the house and up the stairs to where Fiona was laying on my bed, still fighting for her life.

I didn’t miss the anger that engulfed him as he took in the state of disarray as we moved through the house and I shifted my worry about what was going to happen after this to the more pressing issue. My dying pet.

Sitting on the bed, I fought back tears as I touched her fur that was already so cold to the touch and looked at Ren with tear filled eyes.

“Is she dead?”

Ren closed his eyes and exhaled slowly as he placed both hands on Fiona and immediately he opened them, they glowed in a way that would have had me dumbstruck if I wasn't panicking about my cat.

“No, but if I don't do something now, she will be.”

Quickly taking off his jacket, he rolled the sleeves of his shirt up and then propped a pillow under Fiona's head. He placed both of his hands on her again.

Taking a deep breath, he closed his eyes and I watched in awe as Fiona's blood started to clot immediately and new skin started to knit over the wound.

He was so breathtaking to watch as he practically gave life to my cat again and all I could think about as I looked at him was how stupid I was to not have even bothered to fight for him. How could I have let him go? It was a mistake that I would forever regret.

“I'm trying my hardest to make this work but you won't even take my hand.”

“Mauve and I will never work out, I just wanted to let you know, so stop bending over backwards for her.”

“I wasn't just breaking up with her because you asked me to, I was breaking up with her because being with her f*****g hurts and you gave me the courage I needed to do what I should have done a long time ago.”

I had always suspected his relationship with Mauve wasn't all roses and sunshine but I didn't expect that he was so miserable in the relationship that he wanted to leave her.

He had been right when he called me out that day for going out of my way to please Mauve who had been nothing but sketchy towards me because I cared about what others thought of me more than what I wanted.

It was something that I had not been able to shake off since my father was accused of treason and killed, my need to please, to fold myself into a box and over compensate for everything I'm not.

A pathological people pleaser.

Even when I was dating Cade, I had tried my best to be small, subservient, so that people would like me, regardless of whether or not I even liked them. I had tried so hard to please the likes of Tate and Lana, knowing that what they were doing to me was not fair but I was more scared of what they would say if I stood up to them. Too scared of what they'd do.

I don't want you. I had lied through my teeth. Please don't misunderstand me. When I had been dying to walk into his arms.

He was right. I was a coward. A big one that pushed away the one good thing I wanted.

A meow dragged me out of my chaotic thoughts and when I looked at Fiona and touched her, her body was warm to the touch.

Looking at Ren in awe as he led my hand towards her pulse, I could only look on in shock when Fiona opened her eyes and Ren lifted her from the bed gently, cradling her to his chest like a newborn.

"Can you help me get her some water?" He asked and I nodded, still dumbfounded as I rushed downstairs to bring a bottle of water and back up, finding her bowl under some scattered books and pouring water into it.

"Hold her. Feel her for yourself." Ren whispered, handing her to me and when Fiona purred as I carried her and scratched under her chin, tears trickled down my cheeks, a sob escaping my lips.

Lily's POV

Immediately Zac drove off, I wasted no time pulling Ren into the house and up the stairs to where Fiona was laying on my bed, still fighting for her life.

She was breathing like nothing had even happened. It was a miracle.

Gently, I lowered her to the floor and watched as she lapped at the water like she had never even been injured and when I looked back at Ren, he was smiling.

"She's okay, Lily. She'll just need some rest. She's still a little shaken up but she'll be fine." He whispered, reaching out to wipe my tears and when I moved closer to him, he pulled me in for a hug, stroking my hair gently.

I didn't know where I found the courage but when he pulled back to gaze at me, I placed a tentative hand on his face... let it stay there.

His eyes widened, his breathing stuttered as he gazed at me with a hesitant expression on his face as if he was waiting with bated breath to see what I'd do. I couldn't believe what I was doing! I was touching him. Him! Ren!

Oh gods.

My thumb stroked his cheekbone softly, marveling at the smoothness of his skin, the delicateness of his bone structure. It's something I didn't even know I had wanted to do for a long time, but now that I was doing it, it felt so right.

He hadn't shoved me away yet, so I took it as a good sign and leaned in closer until I was only a breath from him.

"Please," I whispered, my eyes fluttering close as I tilted my face. "Please, don't push me away for this."

And I pressed my lips to his.

I tasted heaven for a brief second, but to my horror, he gripped my shoulders, pushing me back and he moved away, faster than lightning, breathing hard as he leveled me with an unbelievable stare.

What had I been expecting? For him to kiss me back after rejecting him? He had been on a date right before coming over here. That should have told me everything that I needed to know about him moving on.

My heart felt like it was splitting in two and I bit my lip hard. It was all I could do to stop myself from crying again.

"I'm sorry. I don't know why I did that." The words rushed out, incoherent and jumbled up. My heart was breaking to pieces.

I turned away, about to run out of the room when his arm grabbed me and crushed me to his chest. He grabbed my chin, his eyes alight with a certain wild look I have never seen from him.

"You started this, Lily. Take responsibility for what you've done and finish it."

He smashed his lips on mine, kissing me senseless. My stomach flipped. I melted into his arms, wrapping my arms around his neck, tugging hard on his

hair. He groaned, his breath hot and heavy, his hold on me was tight enough to bruise.

He dipped his tongue into my mouth, moaning when our tongues connected and going absolutely feral as he kissed and sucked and tugged and nibbled on my lips. He was kissing me like he was starving, like he was running out of air and I was oxygen. He gripped my thighs tight, practically leaving bruises on my body as he lifted me up and into his arms, walking towards the bed.

But it didn't matter. Nothing else mattered right now but how my entire body felt. I have been lit on fire and dipped in gasoline. Stars were exploding beneath my eyelids. My toes curled, my heart beating faster as Ren pushed me to lay back on the bed and wedged a knee between my legs, his kisses hot and heavy and hard.

It was everything that I had imagined it to be and more. I didn't ever want him to stop and could not imagine why I had even rejected him in the first place.

My mind was foggy, a distant part of me trying to remind myself that I was forgetting something important, that there was a reason why I should not be doing this in the first place but it didn't matter. All I wanted was his skin against mine, his tongue in my mouth, our souls intertwining.

He stopped and looked at me as if he couldn't believe his eyes. As if he couldn't believe that this was really happening.

"Lily. Are you... is this real?"

He was heaving, his hair a tousled mess, his pale skin flushed, his eyes wild.

"Yes. I'm here. It's real," I whispered and he took my lips in his again, kissing me even harder.

I grabbed his collar, lifting my body up to his, wanting to crawl into his skin. And as he pulled off my blazer, I started undoing the buttons of his vest, my entire body hot as his hand squeezed my thigh, my hips, my sides, massaging my entire body.

It wasn't until his hips dropped to mine that I realized how turned on he was. For me. And no one else.

I let out a helpless moan I'd probably be embarrassed about later.

It was exhilarating to feel all that hardness in his crotch against me and he caressed my thighs and wrapped both legs around his hips. A second heartbeat started pulsing between my legs and just as I thrust my hips up into his and grinded into him, needing to feel that hardness against the most intimate part of me, he froze.

One minute he was on top of me, the next he was all the way on the other side of the room, breathing hard.

Wondering if I had done something wrong, I sat up and turned to look at him, only to realize that his eyes were glowing a bright amber, a feral look on his face as he tried to keep his wolf at bay.

“Oh, I’m sorry for being so forward.” I whispered, my heart beating faster than the wings of a hummingbird.

He shook his head immediately, panting.

“No. I should be the one apologizing. I’m sorry for taking advantage of this situation. Your emotions must be heightened due to everything happening and here I am, preying on that for my own selfish gain.”

“What- what do you mean?” I asked, confused by what he was saying.

“I know that you kissed me because you were feeling vulnerable and needed to be comforted.” He whispered through gritted teeth and when I saw the pain in his eyes as he looked down at the floor, my heart broke.

I had done that. Made him doubt how much I felt for him.

I don’t want you. Please don’t misunderstand me.

He had believed me.

I didn’t allow any of my intrusive thoughts stop me as I rose from the bed and walked over to where he was, cupping his face in my hands and staring into his eyes.

“I’m going to open my mind to you so that you will feel everything that I am about to say right now, okay? Because I mean every word.”

He nodded, his breathing still laboured.

“I... I know I said some things to send you away, but the truth is that I lied. Before I met you, I was drowning in darkness. I was so sad and didn't even think I could see another day and then I met you and you were a bright beacon of light, filling me up in the sweetest way possible. You made me look forward to my next days, you made me excited to come here despite the horrors of the school. You treated me like a human being and tried your best to help me out. How could anyone not love you?” I laughed sadly.

“I didn't kiss you because I was feeling emotional or grateful. I kissed you because that's what I've been wanting to do for the longest time. I kissed you, Ren, because I have fallen for you too and because I want to be with you.”