

Chapter 11 - Dr.Luna |

"I see. I am yours. Just not YOUR date tomorrow night, right? Cedric asked me to be his date tomorrow since you were taking Jessica as yours." Lilly looked at him with her eyes raised and arms folded.

Tyler growled at her shirt raising exposing her lower half even further. He grabbed her good arm and led her into the house. Kade followed behind him and closed the doors.

"Lilly, I'm sorry. It really isn't what it seems." Tyler looked at Lilly with apologetic eyes.

"Oh, so it's not that you feel guilty about canceling the wedding and are allowing her to be inappropriate. And since you already promised to be her date you can't possibly cancel it since you owe her at least that much. It's nothing like that..." Lilly raised her eyes and Kade stifled his laughter.

"Okay. It is exactly how it seems. It doesn't mean anything. I do not want her." Tyler tried to explain and then it clicked that Cedric had asked her to be his date.

"What did you tell Cedric?" Tyler's voice sounded dry and tense as he asked the question.

"I'm not into making enemies so I told him no. I don't need his groupies hating on me." Lilly heard Kade snickering behind Tyler.

"You are right there. He does have quite the following. Usually unmated females can't resist him. You found your mate, but are still unmated... I think it is interesting how you are resisting his charm." Kade eyed Lilly with interest. There was more to her than it seemed.

Lilly shrugged. She did not find herself attracted to him. She could see he was attractive but was not sure why he had the following he did. Kade was just as attractive as he was, and he was way more muscular. "I honestly do not get it. I think you are a better catch than he is, and you don't have that following."

Tyler looked at her in annoyance. Hearing his mate talk that way about Kade made him grip his fists in possessiveness.

"Do I have to go to this thing tomorrow?" Lilly looked up at Tyler hoping he would spare her.

"Yes, you do." Tyler said tersely.

"What am I supposed to do? Sit at a table dutifully? What exactly do you have in mind?" Lilly felt irritated. She did not want to watch Tyler dancing and sitting with Jessica the whole evening. That was going to be torture.

“I’m sorry Lilly I did not think things through...-” Tyler started.

“What didn’t you think through?” Avery bounced up beside Lilly and smiled at her.

“He is taking Jessica as his date tomorrow, but I still have to come like the ornament I am.” Lilly explained to Avery dryly.

“You’re taking that bitch? What the hell?!” Avery punched Tyler in the arm, and he snarled at her angrily.

“And meet the real Avery who isn’t half asleep.” Kade laughed. “Don’t worry she is Tyler’s cousin, so she is safe from his backlash.”

“Avery, I don’t need your attitude.” Tyler was not in the mood to deal with it.

“You don’t deserve Lilly. In fact, I am stealing her for the rest of the evening and into the night. We are going to have girls’ time. Go shower toots. I’ll be up with snacks and we will binge movies and have girl chat.” Avery gave Lilly a gentle push towards the stairs.

Lilly really liked Avery, but she had never had girl time before. She was excited to see that it looked like she was making another friend. It would be the first time she would have a girl as a friend. She didn’t spare Tyler a second glance, she was still hurt over him, as she made her way to her room. She went and took a shower and redressed her wound. The injury was already looking better, it would be gone by morning. She put a camisole on and a pair of her booty shorts, she was going to be comfortable. She walked into her room and, since Avery wasn’t there yet, she ventured out to see if she needed a hand.

Lilly bounced down the stairs and inhaled the delicious smell of popcorn. She reached the bottom and looked towards the kitchen where Avery was busy making popcorn and arranging a tray of snacks and drinks. Tyler and Kade sat at the bar facing Avery, still just in shorts, as Lilly walked up.

“Anything I can help with?” Lilly bit her bottom lip feeling a bit shy all of the sudden.

“Sure thing toots, you can grab the drinks and take them up for us.” Avery nodded over to a tray of assorted beverages.

Before Lilly could grab them though Tyler quickly stood up and took the tray. “Your arm is still hurt; you don’t need to be carrying anything.” He let his eyes trail over her body lustfully. Her camisole revealed her cleavage teasingly and her shorts revealed her lower bottom cheeks. His eyes flickered dark as he greedily looked her body over making her blush from his intense staring.

“Forget it Romeo, you screwed up, so she is mine tonight. You have to let me feel those later. I have boob envy seeing yours.” Avery teased as she poured the popcorn into bowls.

“You better not touch anything that is mine, Ave. I mean it. You can watch movies but keep your hands to yourself.” Tyler curled his lip up in agitation.

“HAHAHA, you see that Lilligirl? He is jealous of me. Damn possessive mates. Gotta love them though... most of the time.” Avery went to grab her tray but Kade leaned over the bar and grabbed it.

“I got it Avey.” Kade said with a grin.

Avery laughed and looked over at Lilly. “Gotta love having the new luna here. Look how sweet these pups are being.” Avery teased the two men who rolled their eyes as they walked up the stairs.

“I’ll get the door.” Lilly ran up the stairs ahead of them so that she could reach her room’s door first.

Tyler let out a soft groan as he watched her bottom as she ran. His self-control was being tested.

“Your luna sure looks tasty. Too bad for you, huh?” Avery whispered to Tyler quietly with a smirk on her lips. She loved to tease her cousin and knew exactly what buttons to push.

Tyler let out a huff of air in irritation. He wanted Lilly bad. He was not sure how long he would be able to wait before the drive took over. It was painful, mentally and physically painful to deny himself of his mate. What was even more painful was that it was his fault that she was avoiding him again.

Avery and Kade walked into Lilly’s room as she held the door open. Tyler walked up to the open door and then turned and stared at Lilly. His eyes were searching hers. Lilly felt her heart speeding up as she looked at him. She was resisting the urge to reach out and touch him. She had been missing his touch ever since this morning. She wished she could curl up in his arms and stay in his protective embrace. From the events in the woods and with Cedric she was feeling a bit vulnerable and was wanting his reassurance. Her breathing picked up as she looked at his chiseled chest in front of her. He was like her own personal drug and she was needing her fix.

As Lilly was beginning to feel her resolve disintegrate Avery’s voice was heard. “Come on Tyler and come in already.”

Tyler sighed and walked in carrying the tray. He could see the longing in Lilly’s eyes that was reflecting the same look he had. She wasn’t going anywhere though. He could wait.

She was his mate, and he would try to give her space if that was what she wanted. Tyler sat the tray down and then turned to walk out with Kade. Before he left though, he walked up to Lilly and pulled her into his arms.

“I’m really sorry Lilly.” Tyler leaned his head down and kissed her forehead. He needed to at least hug her if only briefly. He was craving her touch. He released her from his arms and left the room, shutting the door behind him.

“Good job toots. I am proud of your resolve. Most mates are not strong enough to resist their mate even when they do something wrong. You have to make him suffer a little bit, so he learns from his mistakes. Now let’s watch some movies and have a good time.”

The girls watched one movie after another. They chatted about life and various things and were becoming fast friends. They were well into the third movie when Avery opened her next snack.

Lilly had been focused on the movie when the scent hit her nostrils. Instantly she began to panic. That day came rolling back and she was reliving that moment. She could not stop the tears that began to run down her face.

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“Lilly are you alright? Damn girl you are trembling. What’s wrong?” Avery stopped the movie and looked up at Lilly with concern. “Lilly you are shutting down, you’ve gotta talk to me girl.”

Lilly was having a hard time breathing. She was panicking. “P-p-please g-g-get the l-l-licorice out of here. I can’t ...” This had only happened a couple times back at home. Once Aaron realized that the smell of black licorice was a trigger, he made sure it was never in the house and kept her away from the scent. Aaron had calmed her down when she was upset and during storms. Her two triggers were storms and the scent of licorice. They reminded her of the night her mother was killed.

Avery grabbed the box and launched it out of the room before returning back to Lilly’s side. “Lilly you gotta breath babe. Slow your breathing down and focus. Everything is okay.”

Lilly’s body was trembling, and she was doing her best to shut out the visions in her head. She pulled her knees up to her body and hugged her arms around them protectively.

“What’s the big idea...” Kade waltzed in rubbing his head. He had been hit by a flying box of licorice. He noticed Lilly and rushed over to her side. “What’s wrong? What happened?” Kade turned to Avery who shook her head.

“I don’t know. It had something to do with the licorice.” Avery felt horrible.

Tyler, you better get in here. Something is wrong with Lilly. Kade mind-linked Tyler. If anything could calm her down it would be the scent of her mate.

A split second later the door swung open in a panic. Tyler's eyes were wide with worry and he looked down immediately at Lilly curled up on the floor. He was at her side instantly and he pulled her into his chest, wrapping his arms around her.

I'm sorry Tyler, I don't know what happened. It has something to do with the licorice I was eating. I didn't know. Avery apologized telepathically to Tyler.

"Everything is okay, Lilly. I'm here. You're safe." Tyler cooed into Lilly's ear. He rubbed her back soothingly as he worked on calming her down.

Being in Tyler's arms was like taking a valium she felt her body immediately begin to relax. She had never been able to recover so quickly before. She leaned into his chest and slowed down her breathing. The vivid flashbacks rippled in her mind; the vision was clearer than ever.

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Lilly was eight years old as she walked in the forest with her mother. The evening sun flickered through the trees and she was holding her mother's hand as they walked side by side. The two were giggling and talking. It seemed like they were talking to someone else too, but it was not clear.

Suddenly, Lilly's mother threw a cloak over her daughter and sat her down near a tree. She ordered her to stay still and not to make a sound. She never knew it then, but now she understood that the cloak was shielding her. Somehow the cloak had hidden her.

A group of wolves suddenly made their appearance and snarled angrily towards her mother. Then a large wolf made his way to the front. He was all black with white ticking along his back. He smelled like black licorice. A scent that Lilly would never forget. He was communicating with her mother telepathically. She did not know how, but he was.

"Look how pathetic you have become. I cannot give you what you desire. You will not ever mix with my bloodline. You will never gain entry." Lilly's mother stood unwavering in front of the wolf.

The wolf snarled loudly seemingly disgusted. The thunder cracked loudly as the rain pelted down. As the lightning flashed the pack of wolves pounced on her mother, ripping her apart in front of Lilly's eyes.

As the vision began to blur out, Lilly looked to her side. She was holding someone's hand. She never remembered that before, but she was being held and then holding this child's other hand. She couldn't see the face and the vision faded away.

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Lilly began to stir; she had drifted into unconsciousness. Her body was being cradled gently in Tyler's arms. She could feel that she was being held precious and she felt her heart flutter in response. She opened her eyes and tilted her head up. She saw Kade and Avery sitting in front of her and Tyler was looking down at her.

"Hey hun, are you okay?" Avery asked quietly as she saw Lilly's eyes open.

Lilly felt a bit embarrassed. She felt like a child at times like these. Every thunderstorm she felt like a helpless little kid, though this was the first time she ever went unconscious.

"How long was I out?" Lilly half sat up but stayed leaning back in Tyler's chest. His arms hung around her and she felt safe in his embrace.

"Not long, maybe twenty minutes." Kade answered her his eyes still looking over her with concern.

"Sorry for causing trouble." Lilly frowned. She had ruined their fun evening.

"You're no trouble at all. Don't you even think that." Avery said with a smile.

Lilly reached out and grabbed Tyler's hand in front of her. She began to play with his fingers nervously as she prepared to explain what happened.

"When I was eight years old my mother was ripped apart right in front of me by a pack of wolves. One of the wolves... he smelled of black licorice. Ever since then, I have had panic attacks if I smell it. I only have two triggers for them, and it is storms and licorice. I never thought to mention it because when my brother found out about it, he practically banned it in the pack. He can be a bit overprotective." Lilly giggled at the extremes he went to.

"Doesn't sound extreme to me. I never liked black licorice anyways. Sounds like an easy ban. Make sure it happens." Tyler looked at Kade leaving the task up to him.

"On it." Kade jumped up and out the door before Lilly could say a word.

"You don't have to do that. I just need to desensitize to it. I think I can work on doing that. Especially having you with me." Lilly looked up at Tyler. The way that being with him calmed her down, she felt like she would be able to finally work past her issues.

Tyler smiled and pulled her into him tighter. "We can work on that with storms first. For now, I am getting rid of all the licorice. I don't want you to be uncomfortable. Avery is the only one who really likes that stuff anyways."

“And I will gladly give it up.” Avery smiled at Lilly. “Caleb will be happy about that anyways; he hates it when I eat it.” Avery hopped up to her feet. “Speaking of Caleb, he should be back any minute since it is getting late. I’ll see you in the morning toots.” Avery left Lilly’s room. Giving Lilly and Tyler some time together.

Tyler rested his head on Lilly’s and gently place a kiss on her head. His poor mate had a horrible childhood experience and had been ostracized by her back. He wanted to keep her tucked away and hidden from the world where he could protect her. He began to kiss the side of her head and traced his kisses down to her neck that she willingly extended to him. When he got to the marking spot he paused. He then kissed the spot, that would one day be marked by him, tenderly causing her to purr in response.

“Soon Lilly, not now, but soon. Very soon because I don’t think I can wait much longer.” Tyler whispered into the crook of her neck.

His hot breath sent tingles through Lilly’s body. She wanted him to mark her, but she wanted to tell him about herself first. She did not want to go into that tonight. She was tired and wanted to sleep. But she agreed with him. She wanted it to be soon too.

“If I promise to behave myself, can I stay with you tonight?” Tyler’s voice sounded insecure and vulnerable.

Lilly smiled at how the mighty alpha was suddenly weak sounding as he asked for something he wanted. She respected how he was asking instead of just taking. Besides, she also wanted him to sleep with her tonight. She did not want to be away from his embrace. She did not have to be happy about him taking Jessica tomorrow, but she could still enjoy being comforted in his arms tonight.

Lilly looked up and nodded to him and he shot her a white toothy smile. He was like a child who just got his way and Lilly could not help but feel her heart pang at his adorable reaction. He stood up lifting her body with him and carried her over to the bed. He climbed into the bed while holding her not letting her separate from his contact. He then laid down on his side and settled her body into his side beside him. He kept both of his arms around her. He tucked her head under his chin and rested comfortably into her warmth.

For now, he was happy with this. He needed at least this much from her, his mate. He kissed her temple one last time. “Get some rest Lilly.”

“Mmmhmmm.” Lilly quietly acknowledge him as she inhaled his scent, her own personal drug.

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Lilly knew that the mating bond had fastened tightly together when she almost subconsciously kissed Tyler when she woke up. She was pressed up against his body and had her arms wrapped around his neck.

Tyler looked at her with amusement dancing in his eyes. "Why fight it? I want it and you want it." A smirk rested on his face as he looked at the delicious piece of flesh in his arms.

"I'm not going to deny it. I do want it, but I have never kissed anyone before on the lips, so this is special to me. I want to make sure I am not sharing your lips with anyone else." Lilly was straight forward and went straight to the point.

"You won't be." Tyler's voice was low as he stared at the luscious plump lips in front of him. The burning electric shocks of desire sparked within him as his breath grew heavy in anticipation of his feast.

Lilly held up her hand in front of his lips which he nibbled at in his mouth. "Not so fast. You have yet to prove to me that is the case. Maybe if you can keep your lips to yourself today there is hope for you tomorrow."

Tyler grumbled in frustration as he indulged himself as he kissed the fingers on his lips. "Then tomorrow, I have a date with those lips." His voice was sensual and raspy.

Burning jolts sparked throughout Lilly's body as he stung her fingers with his gentle nibbles and kisses. His hot breath made her shudder and she had to hold on to her self-control desperately. This damn mate pull has me thinking irrationally. Why does he have to be so attractive? I wonder how his lips taste... maybe just a small- Lilly focus... I am focusing, I am focusing on that perfect face in front of me. Remember, Jessica just kissed those lips. Good call self. Way to come through on my self-preservation. And I am officially insane because I am talking and answering myself. It's only in my head... which is why I am insane. Lilly had a silly conversation with herself in her mind and finally managed to shift away a few inches from Tyler.

You know Lilly if you talk to me then you wouldn't be insane. Kira laughed as she listened to the mental dilemma.

No way Kira. I can tell that after meeting his wolf that you are all in. You'd have me naked and marked before breakfast. Lilly snapped at Kira.

Correction, we would be having breakfast. Kira said with a snide context.

"Alright, I'm up." Lilly sat up and Tyler chuckled as he sat up beside her.

"Losing a battle?" Tyler reached up and traced her lips with his fingertips delicately.

“Don’t want to keep you from getting ready for your date.” Lilly sneered in triumph as she successfully managed to regain her composure. He is taking Jessica as his date. He will be dancing and sitting by her tonight. She could understand it, but could also be upset about it.

Lilly scooted off the bed and stretched her arms up to the ceiling, revealing her mid-section. Maybe a bit intentionally. She had never been a tease before, but suddenly she felt like torturing her mate, just a bit. When she heard a growl ripple through his throat she grinned in satisfaction. Mission accomplished, level one. She planned on continuing her teasing levels throughout the day. She had a certain level of power and she planned to milk it while she had it.

Tyler sat on the edge of the bed and he watched her walk over to her dresser. She could feel his eyes burning a hole in her. She leaned down and bent over, searching in the bottom of the dresser. She did not know what she was searching for, but she knew what she was doing. She grabbed a pair of shorts out, a camisole and then reached into her top drawer. She pulled out a lacey black bra and matching thong set, making sure that her choices were visible.

“Just what do you think you are doing?”

Lilly heard Tyler’s low voice echo out near her side. She looked up to see him standing next to her. “Getting my clothes out for the day.” Her innocent act coming into play.

Tyler let out a snuff of air through his nose. “I won’t touch you today but know this. I am going to pay you back for everything very soon.”

“But you promise you won’t do anything today?” Lilly looked at him already plotting evil.

“You get a pass today.” Tyler said as he eyed her undergarments in her hand.

Lilly grinned and then flung her shirt off over her head as she walked to the bathroom. Next her shorts slid off. Why not? He had already seen her naked anyways and she had nothing to be ashamed of. She turned to him and smirked as she saw his eyes grow dark.

“You are playing a dangerous game, luna.” Tyler growled out quietly.

“What game? This is my room, and I am going to take a shower.” Lilly winked at him and walked into the bathroom. Did she skip level two and three there? She definitely skipped a few levels in the teasing game. Serves him right for still allowing someone else to touch his lips. Maybe next time he will think twice about his actions.

When Lilly came out from the shower Tyler was already gone. She smiled to herself as she figured he probably had to go and take a cold shower. She walked downstairs to see several men standing around. It looked like they were the guards who would be

accompanying them to the banquet hall later. Kade was in front of them and finished given out his instructions when he turned to see Lilly.

“Hey Buttercup!”

Lilly walked up to him and smiled at his silliness. “Hey pup.” She walked up to his side and then scanned across the men in front of her.

“We will be leaving in a few hours. These men are the guards coming with us tonight, we call this group the demolition squad.” Kade smiled and Lilly giggled at the name.

Lilly scanned around the room, but did not notice Tyler anywhere. She saw Avery and Caleb off to the side and a few other pack members busy with tasks, but there was no sign of Tyler. Lilly looked out one of the windows and noticed that the sun was shining brightly. She felt like the sun was calling for her to come out and greet it and before she knew it she was making her way to the doors.

“Where ya going?” Kade hopped along side of Lilly as she opened the doors.

“I’m going out to greet the day.” Lilly waltzed outside and into the sun. She closed her eyes as she envisioned herself soaking in its rays.

Kade chuckled as he watched her. She had such an innocence about her that made him feel extra protective of her.

“Kade, I have a question for you.” Lilly opened her eyes and turned to face him. “How did you know about my necklace?”

Kade smiled since he wondered when she would be asking him that. “I was not originally from this pack. I was in a mixed pack before where some wolves had witches as mates. Some of them wore something similar to help them control their powers. You know you’ll have better control over your wolf with that thing off your neck.” Kade looked at the necklace with minor irritation. He did not like her wearing something like that.

“This necklace is linked to me. If I take it off the link will be broke. Without this necklace I am not allowed to return to my pack, not that I ever would.” Lilly reached up and touched her necklace thoughtfully. “The more I have thought about it the more I realize that I really can never return there. I don’t want to be ostracized anymore. I never realized how lonely I was until I came here. It must have been a nice pack you came from that willingly accepted those who were different into their pack.”

“It really isn’t unusual. Most packs do have a mixture of sorts. We can’t help who our mates are. You know Lilly, you will never be alone again. I’ll always be here for you. You are my one and only luna.” Kade grinned at Lilly with the cheesiest smile that made her laugh at him.

“I’m glad that I met you too Kade.”

“So, you going to take that necklace off?” Kade nodded at her with encouragement.

“I will soon. I promise.” Lilly twirled her necklace in her fingers and smiled up at Kade. It was nice to feel accepted. She wanted to feel fully accepted and had to disclose what she knew to Tyler. Once she did, she could finally feel like she was home.

“There’s my princess.” Cedric’s voice called out as he approached Lilly and Kade. “Not to fear my lovely, I will be at the banquet tonight to keep you safe.”

“Though I think you will be too busy enchanting the ladies to be bothered with my safety.” Lilly giggled out in response. She felt the small tug in the back of her mind again as she stared at him.

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“It seems I can enchant all the ladies but you.” Cedric grinned at her and then fell serious. “We will be in another territory, so make sure you do not wander.”

“Looks like everyone is becoming protective of me, so sweet.” Lilly teased at him. “Everyone will be so busy tending to their dates that I think they will forget about protecting me. Good thing I can protect myself.”

“I won’t be too busy. I will have one eye on you at all times.” Cedric smiled and then nodded towards Kade. “As always a pleasure Kade.” Then he walked off and was quickly mobbed by his admirers.

He seemed to be seriously indicating that he would be protecting her tonight. Lilly wondered if it was another one of his lines to try and swoon the ladies. The tugging in the back of her head vanished and her head was calm again.

Kade shook his head as he watched Cedric walk away surrounded by his harem. “I really don’t get it.”

“Like I said Kade, you are the way better catch.” Lilly patted Kade’s back sympathetically. “You don’t want girl like that anyways. Who wants to have insincere groupies?”

Kade laughed. “Isn’t that every single man’s dream? To have beautiful girls fall at your feet.”

“That sounds like a boy’s dream.” Lilly teased and the two laughed together loudly.

“Come on we need to go and get ready to leave. Do you have a dress for this evening?” Kade asked as the two walked back to the pack house together.

“Yes, I do.” Lilly grinned widely.

“Uh oh. I don’t like that smile. That looks like you are up to no good.” Kade looked at her curiously.

“Me? Up to no good? Awww Kade.” Lilly’s voice dripped with innocence.

“Lilly!” Avery ran to her side. “There you are. Come on we need to start getting ready.”

“Why the panic? We still have a couple hours.” Lilly giggled at Avery’s urgency.

“I know! I hope it is enough time.” Avery tugged Lilly up the stairs and she giggled at her enthusiastic friend.

As they were almost at Lilly’s room they heard the sound of evil screech in the air.

“Tyler, they match perfectly.” Jessica’s shrilling voice bounced off the walls echoing inside. She was looking at his tie as she held it up to her dress.

That was where Tyler disappeared to. He went to go get a matching tie with Jessica. Lilly felt like the flirting earlier really did not have an affect on him. He easily went out shopping with Jessica. She knew this evening was going to be rough, but the way her chest was feeling she was not sure how she was going to make it through it.

“Come on Lilly, don’t even give her a second thought.” Avery tugged Lilly into her room.

-Two hours later-

“Come on Avery or I swear I am leaving without you.” Caleb threatening loudly as he yelled up from the first floor. Caleb was waiting near the bottom of the steps while Kade and his date Summer were waiting beside him. Cedric was also waiting inside with his date. He was adamant about leaving when Lilly left. Waiting near the main doors were Tyler and Jessica who was dripping with impatience.

The door to Lilly’s room opened and Avery walked along the outside railing while holding hands with Lilly. When they came to the stairs, they walked down the steps gracefully. Tyler gripped his hand in a ball as he stared at Lilly. She was wearing her hair up revealing her unmarked neck. A gesture that was definitely intentional. Every unmated male would notice an unmarked neck. The neck was just the beginning. She was wearing a short form fitting spaghetti strapped red dress that hugged her curves perfectly. Tyler stared around the males around him who all had their eyes on his luna. He was angry, he did not want all the men tonight lusting after HIS luna.

Cedric looked at Lilly with a sense of pride. Of course, my princess shines the brightest he thought to himself. He was going to protect her. There have been more and more

rogues invading territories lately. He was going to make sure that nothing happened to her. She was precious.

Avery turned and looked at Lilly with a wide smile and then back to Caleb. "Isn't she stunning." Caleb nodded but his eyes remained on Avery. She was the most adorable person in the room to him. While Lilly was beautiful nothing could compare to his mate. Avery liked to get down on herself, but she was a pretty girl herself. She had short auburn hair and dark blue eyes that were entrancing. She was very graceful and self-confident. And she was all Caleb ever wanted. He reached out and scooped her into his side and kissed her lips. "You made me wait long enough."

"You can't rush perfection." She purred back at him. "We ready to go? My tootsie roll here is riding with us. How many drivers do we have?"

"There are two stretch SUV's waiting to depart." Caleb answered her.

"Okay, well let's divide up between them then." Avery made sure she kept Lilly with her. She was not going to force her to ride in the same vehicle as Jessica.

"I'm riding with the princess as well." Cedric said and shot Lilly a wink.

"So, I guess that means I am riding with Tyler." Kade said with no enthusiasm. He hated Jessica and now had to spend two hours in the car with her.

Tyler's eyes were dark as he stood there listening. He was angry and was having a hard time reeling in his emotions. He wanted Lilly to be in his vehicle, but he also understood why she wouldn't want to. He also was not a fan of Cedric and his interest in Lilly. He was not sure what he was up to, but he felt guarded over it.

"Come on Tyler." Jessica hooked her arm around Tyler's as she smiled up at him sweetly.

Lilly followed Avery out trailing behind. She felt a bit dejected. Tyler never complimented her on how she looked. She could hear him earlier complimenting Jessica on how well she looked. She was hoping for some kind of reaction, but instead he looked emotionless and dark. It was like he was unphased by her.

"You look perfect." Cedric walked up beside Lilly and smiled at her. He saw the small frown form on her face, and it broke his heart. He had a feeling it was about Tyler. He was getting very annoyed with his alpha and his lack of attentiveness to someone so precious. He had no idea what he was gifted with.

"Thanks. This is my first time really dressing up like this. I never went to events before. I was the person everyone avoided, not the one everyone wanted to ride with." Lilly giggled but stopped when she saw the hurt in his eyes. "Hey, I'm okay don't look hurt because of me."

"It never should have been like that." Cedric frowned and his date walked up and took his arm, holding it possessively.

"Luna, you should have a date." The girl hissed making her point to Lilly that Cedric was hers.

In a flash he whipped his arm out of her hand and he turned and growled at the girl. The girl paled and her eyes grew wide with fright. "I do not appreciate your tone with her. You will show her the respect she deserves. I will not tolerate your ill attitude and have no problem going to this event without you." Cedric snarled at his date and she nodded her head.

"I'm sorry. You're right I was wrong. I'm sorry Luna."

The scene stopped everyone in their tracks. Cedric was being more protective over how Lilly was being treated than her own mate had been. In many ways, his actions were how a mate should have reacted. Did he respect the new Luna that much, to go that far?

Lilly felt uncomfortable and she tapped Cedric's shoulder. Tug the feeling was felt again but she pushed it down deep. "Hey, it's alright. She didn't wrong me. She just asked a question." Lilly smiled at the girl showing that she had no ill will towards her. "I'm just an ornament tonight." She then turned and climbed into the vehicle.

Her voice pained Cedric because he could hear the hurt in her it. He turned to the side and met eyes with Tyler who had been staring their way.

He was clearly trying to figure out Cedric's intentions. He did not mind having another protector for his Luna. As long as that was all it was. Something was telling him there was something more to it. If he had any intentions of trying to steal her heart, he would rip Cedric's out of his chest. He was the alpha, and no one took what was his.

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Avery chatted endlessly for the entire ride. She had explained to Lilly what to expect at the banquet. The big room would be divided into sections of long tables for each pack. Then there would be a large dancing area and also a string of buffet tables. There was a lot of socializing and most of the unmated wolves would wander around hoping to find their mate. The evening was centered around dancing for the most part. Just a peaceful gathering of a few other packs to keep up relations.

"It is a lot like a school dance or prom." Avery looked at Lilly, who stared at her blankly.

"Like I said before, I did not attend anything with crowds... ever. The last thing was when I shifted, and boy did that end up being a mistake." Lilly chuckled and could feel

the gazes of sympathy again. She did not like people feeling sorry for her. It made her feel bad about herself.

Avery crossed her arms angrily. "So, your first big event out and Tyler isn't even showing you a good time. Man am I getting angry. He can be such a dumbass."

"You said it," Cedric growled out in agreement. The two looked at each other and Avery raised her eyes at him.

"So, what are your intentions with our Luna here?" Avery kept her arms folded and looked at Cedric with accusation in her voice.

Cedric chuckled and met her eyes seriously. "I'm going to do my best to keep her safe."

"Safe from what?" Avery asked curiously.

"Everything that is a threat." Cedric stared at her and Avery sensed his determination and honesty in his voice.

"Fair enough." Avery was satisfied with his answer and turned around and began to chat with Caleb happily.

Lilly's eyes remained focused on Cedric, who redirected his attention to her. She looked at him curiously. She was his Luna, but she felt like his protection stemmed from somewhere else. He had hinted to the fact that she was forgetting something and that she did know him, but what was she forgetting, and how does she know him? She could not remember but felt that she should. As she stared at Cedric, she felt a sadness creep in her heart. She should know him, her body could sense that she knew him, but she kept drawing a blank. Her memories have always been a bit fuzzy at times.

"We are here toots." Avery looked out the window as they pulled up to a large building.

Lilly scooted out of the vehicle and looked at the elegant building in front of her. It was not only huge but very elegant. Most of the packs were already inside, including their own. Lilly watched as Jessica clung to Tyler's arm as they walked into the banquet hall together. Tyler did not look back at Lilly once; she watched to see if he would. Avery and Caleb followed behind Kade. Lilly took in a deep breath. She was about to enter a very crowded area. It was not just her pack in there, which she had a hard-enough time meeting. It was four other packs in there.

Cedric walked up beside Lilly with his date latched onto his arm. He nodded his head towards the building, planning to follow her in.

Lilly was never one to be intimidated and shy. Regardless of the past, she had to embrace what she wanted in the future. She held her head high and walked into the hall with all her confidence. Tyler wanted to ignore her, then she was going to make him

regret what he was ignoring. She felt a fire light inside of her when she thought about Tyler. He did not even check on her or see how she was doing. He did not wait for her to walk inside the building. He did not even pay her the tiniest compliment.

Lilly walked through the double doors and looked at the big open room. The banquet hall had a couple thousand people there at least. The hall was surrounded with wall to floor big open windows and sparkled with crystal lighting. It was a breath-taking sight to behold. Lilly turned and shot Cedric a wide smile showing her excitement at what she was seeing. She walked into the room admiring the view. She could feel that she had eyes burning into her from all around, but it had to have been her imagination. There were so many people there, why would the focus be on her.

“This way princess.” Cedric called to her, snapping her attention towards his direction. He motioned over to the far wall where she recognized her pack members.

Tyler was tending to Jessica and pulling out her chair for her. A few seats down from them were Avery and Caleb. Avery waved for Lilly to join them and she smiled as she walked over.

“What do you think?” Avery asked in excitement.

“It is amazing.” Lilly looked up at the large windows, taking in the scenery once again.

“You are getting so much attention. You are too good looking for your own good.” Avery teased Lilly.

“Huh? What do you mean?” Lilly looked at her confused. What attention was she getting? Lilly listened to the music start-up in the background and saw waves of couples head to the enormous dance floor.

“Come on Tyler, let’s dance.” Jessica held her hand up and Tyler took it gently and escorted her out to dance.

“Let’s shake a leg Ave.” Caleb said.

“I don’t want to leave Lilly here all alone.” Avery looked at Lilly with a frown, feeling guilty.

“Go! I mean it or I’ll be angry.” Lilly pushed Avery into Caleb’s arms and she smiled at her in appreciation. Cedric’s eyes lingered on Lilly as he walked away with his date.

Lilly was now sitting at her table all alone. She stared out at the couples dancing. She caught a glimpse of Tyler and Jessica who was holding her body flush against his. Lilly felt her anger stir, but the sudden crowd growing in the distance caught her eye. She could hear growling and shouting. Curiously, she made her way over and peered

through the crowd. Lilly could see two big muscular men standing toe to toe. Their fists were clenched, and they were shouting angrily at one another.

"This is not going to be good. They are going to end up fighting for sure." Lilly heard one of the people say.

The music stopped as the sounds of roaring and yelling continued.

"Two alphas fighting... this is going to get bad." Another voice whispered.

Everyone on the dance floor had stopped dancing and the whole room had their attention drawn towards the commotion in the middle of the room. No one was moving to stop the fight. Who would get in between a fight of two Alphas? It was not just dangerous, but suicide.

Lilly took a step through the crowd and looked at the two men. She could see the one's arm trembling with anger, and it was clear he was going to strike soon. She could not believe no one was even attempting to stop them. She felt irritated at the men for causing a ruckus on an evening that was supposed to be fun.

Lilly ran over into the open area towards the two men. Just as the one pulled his arm back Lilly grabbed it with her two hands. The two men stopped and turned and stared at her.

"What the hell is wrong with you two?" Lilly jumped up and smacked the back of the head of the man's arm she was holding. A ripple of gasps was heard throughout the room. "Do I always have to play referee?" Lilly snorted angrily.

"Lilly?" The man she hit looked down at her. His eyes returned to his normal blue color.

"In the flesh." Lilly smiled up at the monstrous man.

"You can say that again. Damn Lilly, you have filled out nicely." The other man grinned at her and pulled her away from the other man into his arms, giving her a hug.

"I can see that you two haven't changed... well mentally. You two have really grown." Lilly beamed as she looked up at James. She pulled away and then turned and hugged Tristan. "You two should feel horrible for not contacting me in so long." Lilly pouted.

"Sorry about that, Lill. I was planning to come and see you soon. Honest." Tristan apologized.

"He just had to work on getting that temper of his under control." James snorted, causing Tristan to let out a low growl again.

“Don’t make me lose my temper, Tristan.” Lilly put her hands on her hip and tapped her foot at him in irritation. Tristan was ginormous, easily the tallest man in the room with bulging muscles to boot. James and him were so different. He wasn’t short, but next to Tristan he looked it... hell everyone did.

Tristan chuckled at her and then looked at her seriously. “What are you doing here, Lilly? Your pack is not here.”

“Okay, here is the cliff notes version... I ran into my mate and he forced me to go back with him. Either I come willingly, or he would take me by force. My brother had a fit, but it’s not like my pack would really fight for me anyways. So, I am here because my mate insisted I come. Though I am here mainly as a decoration since he brought a date.” Lilly did not need to hide anything from them. They were friends of hers and she did not have many of those. Though lately, she was getting more.

Tristan growled in irritation as he heard this, and James seemed to look irritated as well.

“What about you boys? I heard James found his mate.” Lilly continued on with the conversation.

“Yeah, I have. Tristan here, though, is still a loner. I’m confused, Lilly. You said you found your mate, but you are unmarked.” James looked over her neck. It was the equivalent of looking for a wedding ring with regular humans.

“I still want to explain to him about myself. I still have yet to take this necklace off too.” They knew about Lilly, more than she even knew about herself really.

“I don’t like the fact that you are here unattended. Things have been dangerous lately.” Tristan stared at Lilly; he was uncomfortable about her being here. “I did not come with a date, so you will stay with me for the rest of the night.”

“Oh good, would you babysit him, Lilly?” James chuckled out pleadingly and Lilly giggled back in response.

“Okay, but I have a pretty steep rate.” Lilly grinned as Tristan snorted in response. “Aww Tristan, you know I love you.” Lilly walked into Tristan’s side and a loud growl was heard from behind her.

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Lilly turned to the sound of the growl to see Tyler standing there with Jessica still wrapped in his side. Kade was also there along with Cedric.

Tristan and James’s demeanor immediately changed when they turned to see the growling alpha near them. Tristan pulled Lilly more behind him and this made Tyler growl again.

“This wouldn’t by chance be your mate, huh Lilly?” James smirked as he turned to her.

Lilly nodded her head. “Yep, it would be.” Lilly acted indifferent and turned her head away from Tyler as she stood standing behind Tristan.

“Well, isn’t that interesting? You are mated to the Alpha of the Diamond pack.” Tristan sized Tyler up in front of him.

“Lilly, your friends with the Ashen double Alpha’s?” Kade asked her curiously. The two men were known for their roughness and explosive tempers. When he saw Lilly march up to them, he panicked. Then, when he saw her slap the back of Tristan’s head, he almost died right there.

“Yes, I am.” Lilly said proudly.

“Dangerous friends you have there.” Jessica’s voice dripped icily.

Lilly looked between the two men and giggled. “These two pups? They’re harmless.”

“What were you thinking walking in between two feuding Alphas?” Tyler growled out as he stared at Lilly.

Pfft. Now he wanted to talk to her. “Still all brawn and no brain I see. Obviously, I was trying to stop the fight from escalating.” Lilly’s voice was venomous. She was not in the mood to play his loving mate.

Cedric snickered in the background. He was loving her sassy attitude. Tristan and Cedric stared at each other with quiet interest. There seemed to be an unspoken knowledge between them.

“It is dangerous to get between wolves when they are angry, especially Alphas. You could have been hurt.” Tyler’s voice was angry, and it made Lilly angry in response.

“Tristan and James would never hurt me. I trust them.” Lilly folded her arms defiantly and snapped her eyes towards Tyler. He was fine ignoring her all night, but then when she runs into friends, he wanted to start acting like he was her mate again.

“Go back and stay in our pack section.” Tyler ordered at Lilly. His voice was a command and even Kade seemed to jump at the tone. Meanwhile, Jessica sneered towards Lilly happy with Tyler’s roughness with her.

“No.” Lilly snapped her head away in defiance. She was not an official member of their pack. He could not order her around and she was not about to obediently listen to him.

Tyler chuckled lowly and threateningly. “That wasn’t a request, but an order from your Alpha.” His eyes narrowed towards her and his pack began to feel uncomfortable

feeling the irritation from their Alpha. The air became thick as the tension began to build around them.

“Tristan asked me to be his date for the night and I accepted. So, my answer is no. And by the way... you are not my Alpha. Technically, I have no pack at this time.” Lilly was not backing down and was volleying right back at him.

“I am your Alpha and your mate.” Tyler growled loudly and Lilly twitched as he gritted his teeth at her.

“Hmm... that’s weird...” Lilly said as she rubbed her unmarked neck with a smirk on her face.

Tyler narrowed his eyes at her. If looks could kill she would have been in a strangle hold and gasping for air.

Tristan was beginning to lose his temper. His eyes grew dark as he stared at Tyler. James could see he was barely holding on by a thread. “Since this banquet is all about having better relations do you not think it appropriate for your Luna to spend time with another pack member?” James tried to reason with Tyler. He wanted to diffuse the situation and keep relations good.

Tyler snarled at the suggestion. He did not want his mate with another male. Then there was the part about how she was ignoring an order from her Alpha. He felt furious as he stared at her. He looked at her and felt betrayed which enraged him further. Still, there was nothing he could do if she would not willingly listen. He knew that if he continued that there would likely be a feud among the packs. The only thing he could do was relent. Even though he was upset with Lilly, he did not want to drag her into a feud.

“She can do what she wants. I can’t be bothered with her, I’m on a date.” Tyler was being petty, and he was trying to wound Lilly.

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Lilly glanced back in shock as Tyler stomped away. She could see the snicker upon Jessica’s face as she turned and left with him. Her chest squeezed tightly and burned her. She refused to cry, even though that was what her body wanted her to do. If Jessica keeps acting all high and snotty, she was going to get a fist right to her face... and that’s if she is lucky! If Kira gets ahold of her, they will be picking up her pieces for her funeral.

“Well, that was interesting... You okay Lilly?” James looked back at her with a frown.

“Mmmhmm. You should go and join your mate. Don’t neglect her.” Lilly smiled at him and he nodded at her in understanding. She was telling him not to mistreat his mate like she was being mistreated. He turned and left, walking back towards his pack and mate.

“I’m proud of you princess. You stuck up for yourself. That’s why you are a true leader.” Cedric walked up and looked at her proudly.

“I’m sorry Lilly. You know he didn’t mean it.” Kade looked at Lilly with remorse.

“Don’t! Don’t make excuses or defend him. I don’t want to hear it.” He was wrong in his actions. It was okay for him to come here with a date and ignore her. She was supposed to sit in the corner and wait to be called upon. It was mean. She had never felt so slighted. At least she knew where she stood in her home pack. She was the unwanted outsider. He was messing with her emotions and hurting her every day. This was not okay.

Kade went to say something but stopped. What could he say? She was right. He could see the hurt in Lilly’s eyes. He turned and walked away. He was angry with Tyler. He let his temper get out of control and he wounded Lilly because of it.

“So how do you two know each other?” Cedric looked over Tristan with interest.

“I met him when I was sixteen. My father sent me to their pack for the summer.” Lilly explained. She looked up at Tristan whose eyes flickered at Cedric. It seemed like the two knew each other.

“I find it surprising that Lilly is this far out with everything that is going on lately. She should be tucked safely deep within pack borders.” Tristan looked at Cedric with almost an accusing warning.

“I’m watching her. I will not let anything happen to her.” Cedric defended himself and Tristan snorted in disbelief. “What about you? Where have you been? Hiding away in another pack? Working on controlling that temper of yours?”

“Do you two know each other?” Lilly looked at the two with a nostalgic feeling. They both looked at Lilly. She could see a trace of sadness reflect in their eyes. She was missing something again.

“It’s not worth mentioning. I’m going to be your date so let’s have a good time.” Tristan beamed at Lilly with a dazzling smile. He knew she was depressed, and he wanted to cheer her up.

“I’ve never been on a date before... have you?” Lilly looked up at Tristan who grinned sheepishly.

“No, but I think we can figure it out.” Tristan and Lilly laughed together at their awkwardness in life.

“I’ll leave her in your hands then.” Cedric gave Tristan a lasting glance before he shot Lilly a bright smile. “Enjoy your evening.” He then walked back over to where his date had been impatiently waiting.

“Okay, so what should we do first?” Lilly asked as she looked up at the towering man. Tristan was about seven feet tall and if his height wasn’t enough his muscles also were monstrous. He had a serious demeanor but also had a fun side that he very seldom showed others.

“Can we get something to eat?” Tristan asked with puppy dog eyes. Lilly grinned and nodded her head. She hooked her arm around his and the two walked over to the large spread of food at the buffet tables.

The two sat together at a secluded table and were soon lost in conversation. The two were laughing and reminiscing on the past and it was like they had never been apart. Lilly felt comfortable with him and was glad to have his company.

“I’m sorry you are being mistreated Lilly.” Tristan frowned as he looked at the beautiful girl in front of him. She deserved nothing but the best.

“It’s complicated. He usually doesn’t mistreat me, but he has been different today. The girl he is with was his ex-fiancé. He was supposed to marry her the week he ended up meeting me. I know things are a bit complicated there, but still, he should not treat me the way he has tonight.” Lilly sighed angrily she could not understand Tyler. One minute she was precious to him and then next she felt like she was the girl on the side. He needed to figure out what he wanted or she would do it for him. The problem was, is that she really liked him. The draw to him was real for her so why wasn’t it for him?

“Hmmm... Any chance he is upset about his mate showing her unmarked neck off to the world? Or maybe the way you look like an entree in the dress you are wearing?” Tristan smirked at her as her eyes looked at him widely. “Mmmhmmm seems to me like you were intentionally provoking him.”

Lilly giggled. “Okay, I am a bit guilty too. I was mad about him taking Jessica tonight.”

Tristan nodded his head and smiled. “I’m going to have a chat with your Alpha. I’m going to be coming to your pack for a while and want him to make the necessary arrangements.”

“That’s awesome! We will get to hang out again. Why are you coming to the area?” Lilly felt happy to know her friend would be nearby.

“I have finally gotten most of my outbursts under control and now must do what I am meant to do.” Tristan explained causally.

“Which is?” Lilly took her hand and rolled it along.

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“Which is privileged information for now.” Tristan smiled as he saw her pouting face. “Come on, let’s go dance. After all, if you are trying to make that mate of yours suffer... this would be the best thing.”

Lilly reached up and took his hand. As he led her to the dance floor, she could see Tyler looking at her from the corner of her eye. He was noticeably angry, but she didn’t care. She was going to dance with her friend. It would be her first outside attempt at real normalcy in her unnormal life. This was going to be her first dance. While she wished it could have been with her mate, since it would have been more special, she was still glad to have this moment.

Tristan led her to the middle of the dance floor and naturally twirled her with the music. She giggled up at him as he was clearly mimicking a scene from what he had watched in movies. They danced to a couple songs before noticing the thinning crowd. Lilly glanced over to noticed that the Diamond pack was all seated in their area. Tyler must have ordered them all off the dance floor because of her.

“Now isn’t that petty.” Tristan growled quietly noticing the situation.

Lilly noticed how none of them were even sparing a glance her way. They must have been instructed to ignore her by Tyler, even Avery was looking away. Something only an order would have made her do. Tyler was proving a nasty point to Lilly. The friends she has are only as deep as what the Alpha allows. It was a disgusting abuse of power. Sadly, it pricked her heart. Were they her friends, really her friends? She scanned over the Diamond pack and noticed that there was one person defying his Alpha, Cedric. Cedric was still keeping an eye on Lilly, ignoring the Alphas orders. Though it looked like it was a struggle for him to do so. Alphas orders are absolute, to refuse them is to not acknowledge the person as your Alpha. This usually ends up with you being cast out from the pack.

Cedric was going to watch over Lilly, despite the Alpha’s orders. Tyler mentally confronted Cedric over his defiance, but let it go when he said he just wanting to make sure she was safe. After that, Tyler left him alone over the issue. He must have figured that having a set of eyes on her was not a terrible thing. Cedric was not happy about what Tyler was doing. She had been shunned by her previous pack and Tyler was now showing her that her acceptance is based fully on him allowing it. It was ill spirited and childish. He wanted to take her away to someplace where she would be treated with the love, and respect, she deserved. Fate had decided for her to be mated to the Alpha of the Diamond pack, for now, he would see how things played out. This wasn’t who Tyler

was, he was not a petty person, though jealousy can make you do childish things. Something changed for him a few years ago... after it happened Tyler was not the same. It was when that happened that he started paying more attention to Jessica. Cedric frowned as he thought about it, it was time for Tyler to let go of the past.

"Let's go get a drink and then find a place where I can sit and take these shoes off." Lilly spun her high heels up and scrunched up her nose.

"It's a good thing you have those heels on or you would be too short for me to see you." Tristan teased leading her off the dance floor.

On cue, the moment her feet left the dance floor the Diamond pack in its entirety reentered the dance floor. A statement was made loudly, and this gesture was noticed by the other packs. It sent the message that he was a cruel Alpha that was not to be messed with. A few werewolves suddenly shifted their interests... to the beautiful girl that seemed unwanted by her pack.

Lilly was hurting, but she buried it down deep. This was not new to her. She had been treated like this her whole life, so why should it bother her now? Maybe because she was finally feeling accepted? There was another reality that hit her then too. Had her father ordered the pack to get along with her they would have. It would have been fake, and she internally debated about that. Would she have preferred to feel accepted and it not be real? Or was it better to know how they honestly felt about her? In the end, she preferred her father's methods of not ordering his pack to accept her and left them to decide on their own free will. This at least showed him their character. It also showed her that real friends were few and far between.

"Have a seat here Lilly and rest your feet. I will bring us back something to drink." Tristan left Lilly sitting on a bench at the far side of the hall as he walked the short distance to the buffet table.

The moment Lilly did not have Tristan near her the wolves descended. Four men from another pack made their move as they walked up to an unaccompanied Lilly.

"We noticed that your pack seems to neglect you." One of the men greedily looked over the body in front of him.

"We wouldn't treat you bad. We would take good care of you." Another voice came from the side.

"Such a pretty neck." The man in front of her licked his lips. "I want to sink my teeth into it." He took a step forward and Lilly narrowed her eyes on him.

"Touch me and I will snap your neck." Her eyes looked upon the man and grew dark. Lilly was snarling and threatening to kill the lecherous men in front of her. Had Lilly been more guarded she could have been prepared for what happened next.

Everything happened so quickly. Another man came from the side and pushed back on Lilly's shoulders holding her in place while the man in the middle came forward. He had his canines drawn out and he was planning to forcibly mark her. Lilly could not move, and she yelped as she felt the heat of his breath coming dangerously close to her neck. Then he was gone, and loud growls filled the air. James and Tristan barreled into the men and ten of the Ashen pack soldiers lined up at their sides. Someone had turned her body into theirs and she looked up to see Cedrick was holding her away from the sight in front of her. She could not see him, but she could hear his thunderous growl, Tyler was also there. And from the sound of it, he was beyond furious there was a murderous intent in his sound.

There was loud shouting and growling. This would not be a simple hand slap; those men were going to die. They were not just trying to force their mark on just anyone, it was the Alpha's mate. This was a death sentence. She heard the sound of another Alpha; he was the Alpha to the men who tried to assault her. She heard him say "Take them outside and deal with them as you must."

The mob in front of her went outside and the room began to liven again with music and people chattering. Outbursts were common among werewolves, so no one gave it more thought and continued on with their evening. For Lilly though, this was not okay. Someone had tried to mark her, and she was not able to react in time to do anything about it. A second later... only a second later and his canines would have pierced her neck.

"Lilly, let me see you." Cedric lifted her chin up and inspected her closely. He let out a sigh in relief when he saw that she was untouched. "Are you okay?"

Lilly's eyes watered and the fountain she had been fighting hard to control let loose. She felt violated, for the first time in her life. No one had ever tried to take advantage of her before, part of the perks that came with being feared and isolated. Fancy that, there was a perk. She could still feel his hot breath on her throat, and it made her shiver with disgust.

Kira was seeing red. She wanted blood and was ready to go on a rampage. She began clawing at Lilly's mental barrier demanding to be set free. Lilly could not risk Kira getting out. Not in the state she was in and not with the little control she had over her right now. She held her head from the pain and her eyes flickered with the internal battle she was having.

Cedric placed his hands on Lilly's shoulders. "Your wolf does not have to come out and protect you. I know she is used to feeling like that because you have been alone. She can relax. You are safe and you have people here to protect you." Cedric was staring through Lilly's eyes and was addressing Kira as much as Lilly.

Lilly felt Kira settle down slightly, enough that her head quit pounding. Lilly's emotions were all over the place. She was angry and felt wronged. She had to witness her mate

with another and was being ignored. Strange men almost forced a mark on her. A storm was brewing inside of her and she was trying her best to suppress it. She kept feeling the heat of that mutt's breath on her skin. He had been so close, his nasty hot humid breath had touched her neck. The small streams silently pooled from her eyes. She needed to get out. To get out of that room. To get away from the noise. The happy chatter and laughing. The fun music. She had to escape it and find silence. She turned and ran out the back door. The sound of Cedric's footsteps echoed closely behind her.

So much for enjoying a normal night.

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The cool night air swirled around Lilly as she left the building. In front of her was an opened outdoor garden that featured a beautiful fountain spitting up water in its center. Solar lights lit up the area and the water sparkled in its light. She walked up to the water fountain, feeling the wet mist as the water flowed back down. She inhaled the cool air, filling her lungs and trying to calm herself down.

What made things worse for Lilly is she was blaming herself. If she had not worn her hair up and revealed her neck so sensually then it probably never would have happened. If she would have picked a more modest outfit she could have blended in more and escaped their attention. If she wasn't trying to provoke Tyler, then this may not have happened. Unconsciously, she began to scratch at her neck, trying to remove the feeling of his breath on her skin. His touch, his breath, his invasion was unwanted.

"Lilly, don't do that." Cedric pulled her hand down from clawing at her neck. "You are okay. There is nothing there. He didn't leave a mark there. It's okay Lilly." Cedric's voice was low and gentle. He was trying to calm her down. He could see she was shaken up. This was all Tyler's fault. He gave them the impression that the pack did not care about her. If he had not acted childish, she would not have experienced such a bad situation. He had openly shunned her and had his pack follow suit. It was because of this that those wolves thought she was free game, and no one would care.

Lilly looked up at Cedric, her green eyes glistened with wet tears. She couldn't find her voice to talk. She realized she hadn't said one word since that moment. She just could not believe it. How someone could be so brazen to invade a stranger like that. Not just invade but try to mark them to take as their own. She closed her eyes and took a few steps away from Cedric. She did not have much experience in seeking comfort with another person. She knew that Tyler's touch would comfort her. She craved it and his comfort as his mate. As a person though, she was angry with him and wanted to be far away from him. It was so confusing having a mate. Damn wolf hormones or whatever it was.

She looked out into the darkness and noticed fireflies dancing in the air. There were so many, and they were beautiful. She walked out towards them and they swirled around her. Her eyes shined as she stared at the small flashing lights in wonder. She had never

seen fireflies like that. It was calming and she smiled as she felt their wings tickle her skin. It was always nice to find a light in the darkness.

So many things had happened to her since she was taken by Tyler. She had always wanted to fit in and be part of a pack. However, she could not refute that ever since that day she had experienced so much pain. Maybe Kira was right. Maybe they should have just gone rogue. What was a joke, suddenly sounded like a blissful idea. The fireflies looked so happy and free as they flew through the air. She had been watching them for quite some time, Cedric was quietly watching her as he leaned against the fountain. He was letting her have time to herself to process everything.

The fireflies began to vanish and fly away from Lilly's side. She watched the lights trickle away as a dark aura approached her from behind. Lilly felt the firm grasp on her shoulder as she was spun around abruptly by Tyler. He held her by her shoulder and cupped her chin with his free hand, using his thumb to tilt her head around. He inspected her neck with menacing eyes. He then leaned his head in, placing his nose at the crook of her neck. He was searching her scent for anything foreign that should not be there. She felt him hesitate when he reached her marking spot. She could feel him contemplating. She knew he was thinking about forcing his mark on her right there.

Tyler was relieved to see that she was untouched. He saw the marks of fingernails on her neck, but upon smelling her neck he knew it was from her own hand. He was enraged that something of his was almost tainted. Her neck was his to mark. She was his mate. He should have marked her the night he brought her back to his pack. He could feel his canines poking through. He mustered all the self-control he had to push her away from him. He glared at her angrily and then reached up and pulled her hair down. He looked over the hair as it covered her neck before he stormed away. He glanced at Kade who had followed him out.

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The car door opened, and Jessica slipped her slimy self in, followed by Tyler and his black aura.

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The vehicle soon was humming along the road. Lilly sat there quietly not looking over at Tyler though his eyes were glaring at her. She could feel him shooting daggers at her. Then the corner of her eye caught Jessica leaning her head on his shoulder. Seemingly an innocent act if not for the smirk on her lips. Tyler did nothing. He allowed her head to rest on him. Not long after that she casually placed her hand on his knee. She knew she was provoking Lilly. Lilly did not make direct eye contact and pretended as if she did not notice, but Kira did. Kira was proclaiming promises of how painful she was going to make Jessica's death and of all the creative ways she could kill her.

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"I had such a good evening dancing, even if it did get cut a bit short. You are such a great dance partner." Jessica's venomous voice rang out. She was doing this to get Lilly to look over at her since she had not gotten a reaction out of her.

Lilly did not look over her way. In fact, she closed her eyes and leaned her head back. She concentrated on the gentle humming of the engine and the lulling movements of the vehicle. She did not fall asleep but was relaxing her body. Her head was hurting. A bit from Kira and a bit from the tugging she kept feeling in her head.

Kade glanced over at Tyler, it was a look of disappointment and frustration. Tyler was so focused on one thing, that he was overlooking what was most important to him. It wasn't the girl sitting beside him, but the one who almost had a horrible thing happen to her. This was the first time he had ever seen Tyler being so jealous. It was clear who he really wanted. He knew that it was guilt and a promise that kept him catering to Jessica. He would have to stop and cut ties with her. If not, he would lose Lilly for good.

Chapter 19 - Dr.Luna |

The cool night air swirled around Lilly as she left the building. In front of her was an opened outdoor garden that featured a beautiful fountain spitting up water in its center. Solar lights lit up the area and the water sparkled in its light. She walked up to the water fountain, feeling the wet mist as the water flowed back down. She inhaled the cool air, filling her lungs and trying to calm herself down.

What made things worse for Lilly is she was blaming herself. If she had not worn her hair up and revealed her neck so sensually then it probably never would have happened. If she would have picked a more modest outfit she could have blended in more and escaped their attention. If she wasn't trying to provoke Tyler, then this may not have happened. Unconsciously, she began to scratch at her neck, trying to remove the feeling of his breath on her skin. His touch, his breath, his invasion was unwanted.

"Lilly, don't do that." Cedric pulled her hand down from clawing at her neck. "You are okay. There is nothing there. He didn't leave a mark there. It's okay Lilly." Cedric's voice was low and gentle. He was trying to calm her down. He could see she was shaken up. This was all Tyler's fault. He gave them the impression that the pack did not care about her. If he had not acted childish, she would not have experienced such a bad situation. He had openly shunned her and had his pack follow suit. It was because of this that those wolves thought she was free game, and no one would care.

Lilly looked up at Cedric, her green eyes glistened with wet tears. She couldn't find her voice to talk. She realized she hadn't said one word since that moment. She just could not believe it. How someone could be so brazen to invade a stranger like that. Not just invade but try to mark them to take as their own. She closed her eyes and took a few steps away from Cedric. She did not have much experience in seeking comfort with another person. She knew that Tyler's touch would comfort her. She craved it and his comfort as his mate. As a person though, she was angry with him and wanted to be far away from him. It was so confusing having a mate. Damn wolf hormones or whatever it was.

She looked out into the darkness and noticed fireflies dancing in the air. There were so many, and they were beautiful. She walked out towards them and they swirled around her. Her eyes shined as she stared at the small flashing lights in wonder. She had never seen fireflies like that. It was calming and she smiled as she felt their wings tickle her skin. It was always nice to find a light in the darkness.

So many things had happened to her since she was taken by Tyler. She had always wanted to fit in and be part of a pack. However, she could not refute that ever since that day she had experienced so much pain. Maybe Kira was right. Maybe they should have just gone rogue. What was a joke, suddenly sounded like a blissful idea. The fireflies looked so happy and free as they flew through the air. She had been watching them for quite some time, Cedric was quietly watching her as he leaned against the fountain. He was letting her have time to herself to process everything.

The fireflies began to vanish and fly away from Lilly's side. She watched the lights trickle away as a dark aura approached her from behind. Lilly felt the firm grasp on her shoulder as she was spun around abruptly by Tyler. He held her by her shoulder and cupped her chin with his free hand, using his thumb to tilt her head around. He inspected her neck with menacing eyes. He then leaned his head in, placing his nose at the crook of her neck. He was searching her scent for anything foreign that should not be there. She felt him hesitate when he reached her marking spot. She could feel him contemplating. She knew he was thinking about forcing his mark on her right there.

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“Get her in the vehicle, NOW! We are leaving. Kade... put her in my vehicle.” Tyler snarled and then stormed back into the building. He had been upset all evening. He was blaming himself mainly. He never acted irrationally but, when it came to her, he did. He let his emotions run raw and unchecked. He knew it was his actions that gave those wolves the idea. Not that it was excusable. They would never make that mistake again... or any mistake again. He claimed the lives of the four wolves. There are no second chances for interfering with a wolf’s mate, not as far as Tyler was concerned.

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Chapter 20 - Dr.Luna |

After what felt like an eternity in torment, they finally pulled up near the pack house. Pack members everywhere were getting out of their vehicles and going to their homes. Tyler got out of the vehicle and extended his hand to help Jessica out. Kade got out on the other end, followed by Cedric who helped Lilly out.

Lilly was soon crashed into by Avery. Apparently, Tyler had lifted his ban on her at some point. "I'm so sorry Toots! My cousin is such an asshole, and I am going to hold a grudge on him forever over this. Are you mad at me?"

Lilly shook her head, telling her she was not mad at her. She walked up to the house following Kade.

"Well, this is where I bid you goodnight," Cedric said with a bow.

Lilly wanted to thank him for being there for her today. It seemed like simply saying thank you was not enough. She walked up to him and gave him a hug. "Thank you for looking out for me today." It was the first words she had spoken since earlier.

Cedric seemed relieved to hear her voice, noticing her lack of speaking. He chuckled and patted her head. "No thanks needed princess. I'll see you tomorrow."

Lilly watched him walk away for a moment before she turned and headed into the house. Lilly walked up the stairs making her way to her room. She needed to get a shower and clean her neck thoroughly. As she walked into her room, she heard Jessica's voice. "Do you want me to stay with you tonight?" She wanted to hear his answer, but she was also afraid to. She grabbed her things and headed to her bathroom. She was going to relax in the water's warmth and scrub her neck with sandpaper if necessary.

When she came back out into her room, she could not help but feel a wave of disappointment to see that it was empty. She did not realize it, but she had been hoping he would be there when she came out. She had not been in his arms since this morning. They have been distant ever since. Not that she would have ran into his arms if he was in there. She planned to read him the riot act. She was not going to play second fiddle, nor would she share Tyler. He had to pick one of them. She had a wave of insecurities wash over her, what if he did take Jessica to bed?

Lilly watched some television in her room for a couple hours before her stomach began to protest for a snack. She had not eaten anything that evening and her body was telling her it was starving. She walked out of her room into the quiet pack house. As she made her way to the stairs she ran into Avery.

"Late night snack?" Avery smiled as she looked at Lilly.

"Yep, you too?" Lilly grinned feeling happy to be talking with her again.

"Yes, I never like the dinners at those places." Avery took Lilly's arm and they walked down into the kitchen. Both girls stopped dead in their tracks at what they saw. Jessica was in her underwear and had her head inside of the refrigerator.

Jessica spun around. "Oh! I didn't wake you, did I?" A treacherous smile spread across her fake innocent lips.

"What the hell are you doing in here Jess?!" Avery barked at her. Avery hated Jessica and if she had her way she would have beat the girl down into submission long ago.

"We got a bit thirsty, so I came down to get us a drink." Jessica looked at Lilly and grinned viscously.

To kill her or not to kill her. Lilly thought to herself. Her heart sunk and she was fighting back the tears that were threatening her face. Thumbs down, Thumbs down, Thumbs DOWN! Kira shouted in her head like she was Caesar deciding Jessica's fate.

"What the hell are you talking about Jessica? There is no way he took you up to his room." Avery wasn't buying it and she narrowed her eyes at her. He had never taken Jessica to his room before, so why would he now?

"Go ask him then." Jessica's lips pulled up over her face as she looked at Lilly in triumph. "I mean what do you expect? We were supposed to be getting married in just a few short days."

Too much had happened to Lilly today. Any other day and she could have handled things differently. Not today though. Lilly walked up to her; each step echoed her confidence. As she approached, Jessica grinned at Lilly smugly. Lilly drew back her fist and slammed it into Jessica's face. She then spun and kicked her down to the ground. Jessica fell back and raised her hand up to the oozing blood that was trickling out of her nose. Her eyes flickered and then she began the sickest sounding fake sob that you have ever heard.

"Why would you do that? Why did you just attack me like that? I have always liked you. I was hoping we could be friends." Jessica wailed mournfully.

Lilly looked at the pile of crazy on the ground and raised an eyebrow over at Avery. This chick was nuts.

"What the hell is going on here?" Tyler was striding down the stairs and he rushed to Jessica's side. "Geez, did you do this Lilly?"

"YePPah." Lilly let the P pop off of her lips as she emphasized the word.

"Why?" Tyler snarled at her as he spun around to face her.

Lilly pondered this question for a second. "Hmmm, why... Because she is fake, because she wears too much perfume, because she is treacherous, because she pisses me off, because I don't like her, or just because I was having a bad day and I felt like it."

“Geez, Lilly, what the hell is wrong with you?” Tyler grabbed a rag and handed it to Jessica. Jessica sniffled and whimpered as she dabbed at her face.

Lilly looked at him taking care of Jessica. This is not a competition; she will not compete. If Jessica is what he wants, then he can have her.

“Now wait a minute Tyler, you have no id-” Avery started, but Lilly held up her hand to stop her.

“Don’t bother Avery. I don’t know why the hell I ever did.” Lilly turned and walked away.

“What the hell does that mean?!” Tyler growled he was not appreciating her tone and comments.

“What it means is if you still wanted Jessica then why did you bring me here? What was the point of all of this? I’m done. You can just have Jessica.” Lilly ran up to her room, ignoring Tyler shouting after her, she needed to escape before her tears could fall. She did not want to show him her tears. She could hear his feet thudding after her. She slammed the door shut and locked it.

BANG! BANG! BANG!

“Lilly, open this door, NOW! We need to talk!” Tyler bellowed. Tyler heard the television volume turn up loudly and he snarled as he banged on the door again.

“How else do you expect her to act? You really are a jerk, and I am disgusted with you.” Avery stomped over to Tyler angrily.

“Now what the hell did I do? Are you still mad about earlier?” Tyler walked into a battle and could not figure out where the shots were coming from.

“How could you do it?! How could you sleep with Jessica? Especially with Lilly here? She is right, if you wanted Jessica then why did you ever bring her here?!” Avery stomped her foot and hot tears trickled down her face for the hurt she was feeling for Lilly.

“What the hell are you talking about Avery?” Tyler looked at her dumbfounded. What was she talking about? Was she mad about Jessica leaning her head on him in the vehicle or how she placed her hand on him? Just because he took her as his date this evening does not mean that he wanted her. He already explained that to her so why was she freaking out now.

“Jessica was down in the fridge, in her underwear, and she eluded that she was spending the night with you. She had just left your room to get you two drinks.” Avery started feeling irritated. Jessica was lying, she had a feeling, but now seeing the look at Tyler’s face she knew it was true.

“Damn, Avery. You know I would never do something like that. Jessica asked if she could sleep on the couch downstairs since she was really tired. She was no where near my room.” Tyler ran his fingers through his hair. “That’s what she is thinking happened?!” Tyler could kill Jessica right now. He would deal with her later... she was lucky she was who she was or he would kill her for interfering with his relationship. Right now, he needed to get things squared away with his mate.

He kept messing everything up. His emotions were out of control and he continued to do stupid things. He knew he was completely out of line earlier when he had the pack ignore her. He wished he could have taken it back. He was so stupid. Even saying he was sorry wouldn’t be enough. He was going to have to make it up to her somehow.

They have had a strained day together and he was not going to have that anymore. She was his mate, and it was about damn time they started acting like it. No more of this tiptoeing around each other. He was a mental mess. He did not want to give another male the chance to mark up his mate. This needs to be taken care of tonight. The misunderstandings needed to get sorted out.

Tyler stormed down the hall to his room and grabbed a key off of his desk. A moment later, he returned. “Get back to bed Avery. We are not to be disturbed.” He watched as Avery quickly walked off and then turned to face the door. He just kept making mistakes. He let his childish temper get out of control and he did stupid things. Could he fix this? Begging for mercy wasn't going to be enough. With a loud sigh, he shoved the key in clumsily and stomped inside, shutting the door behind him. “We need to... Lilly?”