

## Chapter 14

Lily

I sat, still as stone, until my hands started to itch. I rubbed them absently, but the itch persisted. So much so that it was bordering on painful. The feeling spread through my palms and up my arms, my neck, down my chest and soon through my whole body. It felt like a million bees were trapped under my skin, stinging me over and over.

"It's starting Lily." Aya whispered. She was panting in my head. Panic shot through me at her words.

"Aya... What... How do I..."

"You don't have to. I'll do everything, but it's going to suck."

"It already does."

"This is just the start Lily. It gets much worse from here."

As soon as she stopped speaking, I felt my wrist bone snap. I screamed. Loud. More screams followed as the bones in my fingers snapped and started reshaping themselves. The itch had now transformed into a burn, slow and fierce, spreading through my veins and muscles and nerves. It felt like someone had shoved me into a fire. More bones broke, in my feet and ankles this time. Every single inch of my body hurt and I slumped to my side, curling into a ball. My shoes felt much too restraining, but I couldn't find the energy or the will to care about removing them.

The burn moved to my head, splitting my skull into pieces. I scrunched my eyes shut, fighting against the pain.

"Make it stop! Goddess, make it stop!" I pled silently.

"It will... Lily don't fight..."

Ayas words hit a wall; the wall I'd spent years building. It was an automatic instinct now to shield myself mentally through pain. It had been the only thing that got me through all my abuse. Just shut your eyes and go to a happy place. My response was built into me. And compared to this, my former packs torture was nothing. I'd take it again, gladly. Anything but this.

\*SNAP\*

I shrieked so loudly my eardrums popped.

I wish Dimitri were here.

It was both a wish and a thought. I had been beyond foolish to think I could do this without the help of my mate. Any doubts or fears I had of him right now were completely and totally insignificant. Was I even a person anymore? By now I felt as though I should resemble a broken glass, shattered across a floor in a million pieces. How was it possible that I could come out of this whole? Endless tears streamed down my face accompanied by broken, gasping sobs.

I don't know if the Moon Goddess took pity on me, or if Aya was just done struggling against me and called his wolf, but suddenly the pain reduced exponentially. The burn that was eating me from the inside went back to a mild itch. Uncomfortable, but bearable. The pain of my bones breaking and reshaping was also, unbelievably, bearable. It still hurt like a bitch, but I could manage it, focus around it. Through that came his scent. Much stronger now, and calling me. Lifting my head slightly, I looked into Dimitris eyes. I could see anger, possibly at my stupidity. However, the dominant emotion on his face right now was worry.

What was more shocking, probably to the both of us, was my reaction to seeing him here with me. His hand was resting lightly on my waist but I knew I needed more. With every ounce of strength I could gather, I flung

myself up and into his embrace. His arms wrapped around me as I lay my head against his shoulder, right over his marking spot. His scent was so strong there. It helped so much.

"Don't go." I heard myself whispering.

"I won't. I'm here, I'm staying here with you." Dimitri replied.

A loud groan escaped me as my shoulders hunched in on themselves.

"You're doing great Lily. Just great. It'll be over soon."

But it wasn't. Together we sat on the hard ground, my form going from beast to human and back again, over and over. What was happening? I'd never heard of this happening to anyone else before. Dimitri kept talking, but he was growing tense, rigid. I could feel something was wrong and a horrible thought struck me. What if I couldn't shift? That would be some joke; convinced at not having a wolf, only to get one and then not be able to shift.

"Lily." He rubbed my back. "Listen to me. You have to let go. Let your wolf take control."

I whimpered against him, shaking my head.

"Why not?" He asked.

"I... I'm scared... so scared..." I whispered.

Dimitri's hands moved from my back, up my arms and over my shoulders to settle holding my face between his palms. He leaned back far enough to look into my eyes.

"You don't need to be scared. I'm here and you will get through this. We will, together. You just need to let go." He told me.

"He's....right. Stop...stop fighting....it..." Aya panted.

But I couldn't. Every fear, every taunt and jab and insult from my past was flooding my mind, reinforcing my wall.

"What is holding you back Lily?" Dimitri demanded.

A fresh sob broke from my chest. "I can't! I will never... be anything... never...worthy of...my title..." I choked.

"Yes, we are! Let me... let me show you. Special... we're so special Lily." Aya grunted.

I heard her words but I watched Dimitris face. Worry was replaced by sadness and... regret? In the second it took for his face to change, I was pressed back into his shoulder, his lips at my ear.

"Together Lily. I'll shift with you. Together. Okay?"

The desperation in his voice made my decision. Clenching my teeth, I nodded mutely. Fighting against every instinct I had, I finally let my wolf take control. My body shook as it transformed, and when my hands became paws this time, they stayed that way. My back arched painfully, even with my mate there. My face contorted, teeth growing into long sharp canines. I felt fur sprout from my skin and cover myself.

"Lily?"

I heard Dimitris voice, but it sounded far away. All I knew was the pain was getting worse; his touch wasn't bringing as much comfort anymore. And then-

"Oof!"

My pain doubled. Tripled. Exceeded anything I'd ever imagined. My eyes shot open to see my mate lying on the ground some five feet away. Strangely, I was looking down at him. I didn't have much to process it though, because the pain in my body started to gather into one area- My heart. It was like it was sucking all the pain into it and I nearly fainted from the intensity. It felt like hours had gone by, when in reality it was only a few seconds, when the pain suddenly stopped and I crashed to the ground completely and utterly exhausted.

