

Chapter 23

Dimitri

Ben had given me with all the information Lily got. I was impressed that she'd gotten one of our prisoners to talk so easily. Goddess knew, none of them talked to us, not unless there was some sort of pain infliction involved. More impressive was her ambition to go and find answers for herself. I didn't expect it of her, and I never would have asked her to go to that place. The dungeon was specifically designed to be cruel, depressing. A place people were scared to end up in, motivation to not fuck up badly enough to end up there.

And Lily had gotten some valuable information too. Luke was looking into the possibility of witches being involved, consistently holed up in the library these days. If the rogue was right and James had just vanished, it was a safe bet to say we were on the right track. As it was though, there were no signs of James or any accomplice. All of the guard's whereabouts had been accounted for the night of, and none of the warriors reported anyone crossing our borders. It had been three weeks since the little shit disappeared and it was eating away at me more and more every day. I needed answers, and was coming up empty.

A pack wide announcement was made announcing James's escape, and I was doing my best to not let panic spread. At first, it had been hard; of course, people were frightened. In an attempt to ease minds and worries, I tripled all security detail. I'd also given the warriors double pay for the extra shifts. It was only fair, and my efforts seemed to work. Life seemingly returned to normal around the pack. The exception was Lily; Though she wasn't hiding in her room, I caught her looking over her

shoulder a lot. She trained, worked with Thara at the hospital, made time for Greta and Hazel. But she was anxious, nervous.

I'd taken to watching in on her training, not that she knew it. She was getting better, but nowhere near where she could be. I accepted that I needed to know she was able to handle herself. If I had that security, I could sleep easier. So, for the last several days, an idea had taken shape in my mind, one I didn't really think she would go for. But I was going to try nonetheless. That idea is what brought me here, standing off to the side of the training yard, watching her spar with Clint. As I watched them, I had to admit- he was a good fighter. Even I could tell he was taking it easy on Lily, trying not to use his full strength. I'd noticed this a lot, and I also knew that it wasn't helping her.

I cleared my throat loudly, smirking when Clint was distracted and Lily landed a punch to his jaw.

"Oops! I'm sorry!" She exclaimed.

Apologizing? That was another problem.

"Alpha." Clint nodded to me respectfully.

"A word you two?" I asked.

"Sure. What's up?" Lily replied.

She was covered in sweat, little pieces of her hair framing her face. I couldn't help but glance down at her cleavage as she breathed hard from the exertion. My pants were starting to become tight, so I quickly moved my thoughts in a safer direction.

"You two will no longer be training together." I stated.

"What?!"

"Why?"

"You can't stop me from training!" Lily raged.

"You're still going to be training. Just not with him. You'll be training with me from now on."

She blinked at me, her jaw dropping. "Uhm, no."

"Uhm, yes. Starting tomorrow."

"Why? Clint is just as qualified to teach me." She argued.

"He's a good warrior." I turned to him. "I've been watching you two for a while. You go easy on her. You don't give it your best with her, like you do with the men. You're afraid to hurt her. But an enemy isn't. She needs to learn what it's like to fight for her life, and you aren't teaching her that."

"Now wait just a min-"

"No, he's right Lily." Clint interrupted. "I haven't been teaching you properly. I taught you the basics, I got your endurance up. And that's great. But I don't actually want to hurt you. I don't fight you like I do with the other warriors. It's different with you, and I think it's because you're my friend. I don't want to hurt you."

"But Clint-"

"It's fine Lily. We can still do laps and stuff, yeah? But I agree with the Alpha. He has more experience anyways." He glanced sideways at me and I nodded.

"It's settled then. Meet me here tomorrow, same time. See you then."

Lily grabbed my arm, and sparks erupted.

"Clint, can you give us a minute?" She asked.

"Sure. See you." I watched him jog off and then it was just us. She let go of my arm and crossed hers over her chest, effectively pushing her breasts up. She was in a black sports bra and shorts, and the images that ran through my mind looking at her were far from innocent.

"Why does it have to be you? Why can't it be Ben, or Luke?"

"Because I have the most experience."

She scoffed. "I'm sure they have just as much as you."

"Close, yes, but I'm still the best."

"Cocky much?"

I quickly stepped towards her, catching her off guard. In one swift move, I placed my foot behind hers, causing her to lose her balance as she moved. Before she hit the ground, I caught her with one hand around her waist and one wrapped under her neck.

"I'm the fastest. The most lethal. The best. There is a reason I'm the Alpha. So yeah, I have good reason to be cocky." I smirked.

"Not in wolf form." She matched my tone.

I almost smiled. "Maybe not. You have me outmatched there."

"I'll train with you, but on one condition."

I was inches away from her face, and the sparks from our contact were only making me want her more. These were foreign feelings, but if I was going to train with her, I had to learn to control myself.

"What's that?"

"We go for a run tonight."

Ajax whooped in my head. "Deal." I said.

Lily smiled, and my heart throbbed. Did I just make her smile? I gazed at her face, all lit up like I'd just given her the best birthday present. It made me feel... happy? Was that what this was? When was the last time I felt happy?

"Dimitri?"

"Huh?"

"Uh, can you let me go now please?"

Helping her right herself, I took a step back, trying to catch my breath. I wanted to see her smile again.

"So... after dinner? Seven o' clock?"

"Yeah."

She smiled again, and the happiness washed through me.

"See you then."

I watched her walk towards the packhouse, my thoughts in a jumble.

"Thank you. For saying yes." Ajax said to me.

"You miss her, don't you?" I asked.

"Of course I do. Aya is my other half, just like Lily is yours."

"I'll let you get together more."

"Whoa. Wait. You're going to do something nice? Even for me?"

"Shut up."

I didn't want to admit it, but letting our wolves spend time together also allowed us to. And I found I was wanting to spend more time with Lily. As I walked to the packhouse, I tried to bring back the happiness she'd given me a few moments ago. It was unlike me, wanting to feel something, and I hadn't realized until now how much I missed feeling happy. Carefree. I had become so use to being angry at everything. Anger was an emotion I could deal with, live with. I'd found out first hand that the things that made one happy could so easily destroy them. Yet, here I was, thinking of different ways to bring Lilys smile back just so I could feel it again.

"What's got you in such a good mood?"

I looked up to see Luke walking towards me.

"What do you mean?"

"You're smiling like an idiot."

I was? Huh.

"Nothing. Just thinking. What's up?" I asked him. He fell into step beside me.

"I think I found something."

"Go on."

"I was digging through our volumes on different spells, specifically transportation spells, and I have an idea on how James escaped. I just don't know the motivation behind it."

"Show me."

I mind linked Ben to meet in my office. Luke ran to the library to get whatever book he'd found. Once we were all assembled, I led us into my office, sitting on the sofa. Lily liked to sit here, though I didn't know why. I'd bought it mostly for decoration, it wasn't even very comfortable. Maybe I'd look into a different one.

"Hey!" Ben snapped his fingers in front of me.

"Don't do that." I scowled.

"Where are you today?" Luke asked.

"Nowhere. Here." They glanced at each other. "Can we get on with it please?"

"Whatever." Luke muttered. He plopped a thick and very dusty book onto my desk, a cloud erupting from the impact. He flipped to a mark page in the back, running his finger over the script as he read. "This says that there are three different types of transportation spells. They all do the same thing, but I guess they're for different levels of witches?"

"Okay." I leaned forward, focusing.

"So, the first one you need to be close to the person your spelling, and whole bunch of ingredients. That's unlikely, since nobody was seen coming or going from the pack. This next one is less complicated, it can be done from a distance, but you need either hair or blood from the person. Possible, but still unlikely."

"And the last one?" Ben asked before I could.

"The last one doesn't need ingredients and it can be done from anywhere. But it can only be performed by really powerful witches."

"How powerful?" I asked.

"Super powerful. We're talking Clan Elder powerful."

"Shit."

"That's what I thought."

"But what would a Clan Elder want with James? He's a great warrior, but it would make more sense to take one of us, right?" I speculated.

"I thought that too. But then I thought, it would make sense to take someone who held a grudge. I'm thinking whoever this is don't want you Dimitri, but they want you dead. Everyone else in the dungeon is a rogue. James is a pack member. Who better to give them all the information they want?"

"I think he's right." Ben admitted.

Sadly, I thought so too.