

## Chapter Three

Lily POV

Alpha Demitri Varlos strode down the platform, stopping briefly to shake my former Alpha's hand. They exchanged no words, but it felt disrespectful to me, like a "good doing business with you" vibe. I wondered for the first time how much he had offered for me; it couldn't have been very much as I was nothing but a lowly slave for the pack. More than likely, they were probably just glad to be rid of me.

Keeping my eyes down and my feet shuffling forward, I felt bad for whoever they replaced me with in the future.

A deep sigh interrupted my thoughts, and I glanced up to see my mates' annoyed faces.

"Can you move any faster? I'd like to get home sometime today if that's okay with you." He snapped.

"Sorry." I mumbled.

He rolled his eyes. "Your things are packed and already loaded in the car. Let's go."

He reached for my arm, and I instinctively inched back. It wasn't entirely his fault; I'd been beaten since the age of five, fast movements tended to cause me to react like that. Whether he knew of how I was treated here or not though, he stopped reaching for me and dropped his hand to his side.

"Can I... Should I change first?" I asked him.

"Why?"

I blinked at him. "Am I suppose to show up to your pack in a wedding dress?"

"Why does it matter?"

It didn't really. I was stalling, not wanting to be in a close, personal space like a car with him.

"Look, I've come and got what I needed here. Now I'm going home. If you're not in the car in two minutes, you can walk to Blood Moon." With that, he turned and walked away from me.

"Wow. He's a real charmer."

"I know he's a bit rough around the edges. But his wolf is really nice."

"That's supposed to make me feel better?"

"Yes."

My turn to roll my eyes.

Dutifully, I followed my husband out of the packhouse to a waiting black SUV. He was already seated in the driver's seat, tapping his fingers impatiently on the steering wheel.

I climbed in somewhat awkwardly thanks to the skirt of my dress and shut my door. Glancing in the backseat, I saw a single suitcase. That would be my thing, as sad as that was. Clicking my seatbelt into place, I stared out the windshield. We weren't moving. Two minutes passed. Then three. And five minutes later, we still were parked in the drive of the packhouse. I broke the silence.

"Aren't we leaving?" I asked him.

"Yes. As soon as these idiots get the rest of your stuff."

I looked at him quizzically. "What?"

He jabbed a thumb over his shoulder, indicating my suitcase. I actually laughed.

"That is the rest of my stuff."

Now it was his turn to look confused.

"That is all you have?"

"Yeah."

"Where are the rest of your clothes?"

"They're in there. I don't have much." I shrugged.

"Much? You don't have anything." He barked.

I shrugged again. He continued to look at me with an undecipherable expression before his expression hardened again.

"Whatever." He grumbled.

Finally, he started the car and put it in the drive.

Leaning back in my seat, I started out at the houses passing us by, giving way to more and more trees until we left Snow Moon behind completely.

Turning onto the highway, I let out a breath I didn't know I'd been holding.

"I can't believe it..."

"I know. We're actually out of Snow Moon. We don't ever have to go back Lily! We're free!" Aya whooped in my head.

Free. Somehow this didn't feel like freedom. I'd gone from being a slave to a Luna in less than a day to a man who might actually kill me as he'd done so many others. Even as a slave, I'd heard all the stories of Alpha Demitri Varlos. He was feared near and far for his ability to kill. He'd wiped out entire packs. He had no mercy, no heart. He was actually known as The Heartless Alpha. And here I was, sitting in a car with him, accompanying him to his pack as his Luna and wife.

It felt surreal.

Should I speak to him; try to make conversation?

I pondered around in my head, searching for something to ask him that didn't involve his kill streak or how many people he had decapitated.

Hours passed. It was dark outside now, the trees a dark blur as we sped past.

Suddenly, it popped into my head, and out of my mouth before I could stop it.

"Why didn't you kiss me?" I blurted out.

Alpha Varlos glanced at me and then back to the road. Silence.

"Alpha?" I tried again. Nothing.

I'd been so caught up in the shock before, I hadn't even minded that he didn't kiss me. But now, as my reality began to really set in, it seemed important to know why.

Was I that repulsive? Why did this matter so much to me anyway? He was a cold-blooded murderer, I shouldn't even be thinking about kissing him. Stupid mate bond.

However, it seemed my mouth was not connected to my brain as I whispered, "I'm your mate..."

"Enough!" He snapped loudly.

I inched away from him, hurt.

Stupid, stupid mate bond.

I didn't speak a single word for the rest of the trip. My gaze traveled between the window and my shoes, I refused to look at him. An hour ago, he'd told me we'd crossed into his land, I'd simply nodded. Was I being disrespectful? Probably. But he wasn't chatting me up either way, so I didn't care.

"We're here."

He pulled up to a huge ten-foot gate that looked to be made of iron. Two guards were stationed on our side, and two more just beyond. All four men were huge, but nowhere close to their Alpha. The closest guard gave a signal and the gates swung open. Despite my qualms about this situation, I was impressed as we drove further towards the packhouse. Most of the area was covered in trees, but I could spot houses in the dense forestry. Here and there, quaint cottages were dotted around with cute balconies and porch swings, gardens, stone walk paths. I even spotted a few garden gnomes. Not at all what I had been imagining when I learned who my husband-to-be was.

Fifteen minutes later, Alpha Varlos pulled up to what could only be the packhouse.

The driveway was a big semi-circle of stone bricks, with a water fountain stationed in the middle. Cars were parked in a line along the edge, Jeeps and SUVs. Taking a minute to admire the house itself, I was honestly awestruck. The packhouse was ginormous; at least five stories tall and just as wide. Lush ower beds lined the front, giving way to a beautifully green front lawn. Vines crawled up between the windows sprouting little buds. Morning glories I thought. Lights were on in various windows of the house, casting a yellow glow. It felt... homey.

"Are you going to sit there and stare all night? I'm tired." Grumbled my mate.

I shook my head, speedily opening my door and stepping out. I hadn't moved much over the course of the long car ride, and my legs were super stiff. I took a second to stretch them while still admiring the house. Upon closer inspection, I noticed the whole place was constructed of deep redwood. I bet it looked even better in the daylight.

"Lily."

It took me a minute for him to catch my attention. Nobody used my name; I'd always been called 'slave' or 'mutt', or other various derogatory terms.

"Yes, I'm coming. Just let me get my stuff."

"Don't bother."

"But."

"I'll get you some new clothes tomorrow. You can throw that suitcase out, and everything in it."

He began to walk to the house, but stopped when I opened the back door of the SUV. He sighed loudly, clearly irritated. Opening the suitcase, I dug through the 'clothes' that had been packed, really they were just rags until I found my objective. Closing the door, I clutched my necklace and joined him.

"What's that?" He asked.

"It's a necklace."

He raised an eyebrow.

"It's... well... it's the only thing I have that's really mine. I don't remember who gave it to me, but I had it before I came to Snow Moon... so..."

Why was I explaining this?

"Okay." He turned on his heel and I followed him, mentally rolling my eyes. He really was an ass.

He didn't hold the door for me, which I expected. Glancing around as I followed him through the door, I was again awestruck by how big this place was.

Paintings decorated the walls that I'd have to inspect closer later. The floor was carpeted a deep purple, contrasting nicely with the wooden interior. Antique-looking furniture was placed vicariously along the walls.

"This way. This floor has the common room, the kitchen, game area, and a room we use for Alpha meetings. It also has the dining room for meals. Second floor belongs to my Gamma and his family. Third floor is for my Beta and his family. The fourth floor is for us, and the fifth floor is the library."

That was the most he'd said to me since we'd met. Wait... us?

"Us?" I squeaked.