

Chapter 38

Lily

It was official- I was not a fan of malls.

Thara had dragged me around for hours today. First, we went to a spa, where I'd had oils and lotions and applied to my body, and a very painful waxing experience. That was never happening again. Then she'd taken me to a salon, and given specific instructions to the hair dresser, who spent two hours doing my hair. I'd ended up with a half up-do and big, loose curls falling over my shoulder and down my back. After that, we went out for a quick lunch before picking up my dress, something Thara had ordered for me. I hadn't seen it yet, but I was decidedly scared.

I'd begged her to take me home, and she'd finally relented. Now, we were sitting in Dimitris bathroom, (Our bathroom? I wasn't sure), with every possible brand of make-up a girl could hope to own splayed out over the counter. She had brushed, polished and pat. She used things I didn't even know existed until now to make me into the beauty queen she was aiming for. I told her to go light- I wasn't use to wearing make-up. And she wasn't allowing me to look in the mirror, so I could only assume that by now I looked like a clown.

"Stop fidgeting Lily, I'm almost done."

"You said that ten minutes ago. And ten minutes before that."

She rolled her eyes, re-focusing on her masterpiece.

"Your impatience will be rewarded, believe me."

Twenty minutes and a lot of bickering later, she finally declared me done.

"Wait here, and don't you dare look in that mirror. You can't see until your dress is on!" She rushed out of the room. Before I'd taken two breaths, she came breezing back in, a white garment bag in hand. Hanging it on one of the towel hooks, she unzipped it and ordered me to stand. Carefully, she helped me into the dress and zipped up the back, fixing my hair afterwards.

"Let me adjust this... and here.... perfect! Okay! You can look now!" She squealed.

Frightfully, I turned to the mirror to see what she'd done. My face morphed into one of pure shock as I took in the girl staring back at me.

She was beautiful.

Long, shiny red hair that was done sophisticated and mature, without overdoing it. Her skin was a light cream color, a hint of rose on her cheeks. Long lashes framed startling green eyes, made to pop by rose-gold eyeshadow and lightly applied eyeliner. Her lips were plump and red, bringing the whole thing together into a natural but sexy look.

The face was only outdone by the dress. It was form-fitting, slender, a gorgeous pure shade of white. It enhanced the cleavage, without being slutty, and accentuated every curve. It had off the shoulder half sleeves that had intricate lace designs cut into them with little gemstones woven in.

"Well? What do you think?" Thara asked me.

"Thara..." I swallowed. "I... I don't have the words..."

"You look stunning." She replied smugly.

I nodded mutely. I'd never doubt her again.

"Originally, this was supposed to be periwinkle, -" She touched my dress. "-But I thought, since your wolf is white..."

"It's perfect. You are, without a doubt, the best sister-in-law in the whole wide world." I beamed at her.

"I'm glad you like it." She grinned. Her eyes clouded over momentarily before clearing again. "Hazel is on her way up. Come on, let's get you into some shoes and then it's time to go."

Taking one last look in the mirror, I followed her out. Hazel stood in the middle of the room, wearing a light blue dress that reached just passed her knees, her usual hair-do twisted up into a tight crown on her head. When she saw me, her mouth hit the floor.

"Lily? Oh, my Goddess! You look amazing!" She exclaimed.

"Thanks."

Thara handed me a pair of white flats and I slipped them on. It was surprising how well I could move in this dress- It gave the impression of being tight, but I felt no different than wearing my jeans.

"Alright, let's go! You're going to be so happy with what we've done in the training yard!" Hazel gushed.

Apparently, the yard was the only space large enough to hold almost all, if not the entire, pack.

"I have no doubt." I smiled at her.

The girls talked as we made our way out of the packhouse, excitement vibing between them. Me? I was a puddle of anxiety. I'd never been good with large crowds, and now I had all of Blood Moon, (Or most of it), waiting to see me. I was not use to being the center of attention, always trying to be invisible in an attempt to avoid it. More than that though, with every step I took, my fears grew. From the moment I found out I was an Alphas mate, I never believed I'd be worthy of being a Luna. It didn't matter that it was Blood Moon; It could have been anywhere, and I would have felt the same.

I had grown up a slave. Unloved, uncared for. Now I had an entire pack to care for, and the weight on my shoulders felt crushing. How could I be everything they wanted me to be?

"You're a slave pretending to be a Luna."

Jennine's hateful words echoed through my mind, strongly reinforcing my thoughts. Who was I trying to kid?

"Lily?"

I met Hazels eyes, some distance away. I hadn't realized I'd stopped walking.

"What's wrong?" Thara asked.

"I... I can't do this."

"Hey, none of that. You'll do fine. It's just a few oaths, and the cut doesn't even hurt." She reassured me.

I shook my head. "No, I mean this. I'm not... I mean, I can't be..." My breathing started to come faster and I felt dizzy.

"Lily." Hazel put her hands on my shoulders. "Stop. Take a deep breath. In. Now out. Again. In. And out. Good. Now, listen to me. You can do this. You can. No, don't shake your head at me. I know you can do this, and you want to know why?"

I didn't reply, so she went on.

"You are kind. Smart. Caring. Loving. Attentive."

"Strong. Wise. Friendly." Thara chimed in.

"And you are a good person. You have a good heart, a good soul. I know, people say that all the time, but that is what counts here. You went through so fucking much Lily, I don't even know the half of it, because you won't tell us. But you're standing here, on the other side of whatever you went through. You're standing here, tall and head held high. Because you were

meant to come out stronger. You are the best choice for this pack, the best choice to be our Luna and lead us."

Thara put her hand on my back. "You can't see it the way we do Lily, but you've done so much good for us already. My brother is no longer the merciless tyrant he once was. He's smiling again, laughing again. He's looking after the pack fairly and justly, just like our dad did." Tears brimmed her eyes. "You're bringing out the good in him, which can only bring out the best in all of us. You were meant to do this. So, do it proudly."

I looked between them, the fog clearing. They really believed in me. They accepted me, trusted me. Sincerity rang in their words and their faces, breaking through the last of my remaining fear.

"Okay. Let's go." I whispered.

"That's my girl." They quickly enveloped me in group hug before pulling me along with them.

When we finally reached the training yard, I was as Hazel predicted, incredibly happy. Twinkle lights had been strung from the trees, casting a soft glow over the faces of the pack members. Beyond them was a small platform with a table. I could make out a large golden bowl and two golden goblets resting atop it. Tables lined with white cloth had been placed in various areas, filled with all manner of food and drink, which people helped themselves to. The mats and equipment had been removed, replaced by dining area of tables and chairs. A larger table faced the rest, decorated with vases of flowers. My eyes caught a Blue Star Gazer Lily, and I smiled. That would have been Greta, for sure.

"Where's Dimitri?" I asked.

"He's here. Somewhere." Thara answered.

"What do I do now?" I asked her.

"You come with me; I have to be up there too since I'm Dimitris family. Luke is standing in for Ben."

"Oh no, he's not."

We turned to see a very out of breath, very disgruntled Ben behind us.

"I'm here, and the show can go on." He gasped.

"You made it!" Thara exclaimed.

"Course I did."

"I'm happy you're here Ben." I gave him a warm smile.

"Me too munchkin. I would hug you, but I haven't showered in days."

"I can smell." I teased him.

"Doesn't matter. I made it. I wouldn't miss it for the world. I'm gonna go find Dimitri." He waved and disappeared into the crowd.

"I'll see you afterwards." Hazel gave me a hug before leaving as well, probably to find Clint.

"Come on." I followed Thara behind a black curtain I hadn't noticed before set to the right of the platform. It was positioned to block us from the crowd and the stage. I peeked around, looking for a sign of my mate.

"This feels more like a wedding than a Luna ceremony." I commented.

"Perhaps my brother is trying to make up for your guys' wedding."

That brought a blush to my cheeks.

A few minutes later, Ben and Luke joined us behind the curtain. Luke gushed over me, complimenting Tharra's handy work.

"Dimitri says we're about to start." Ben said. I took a deep breath, trying to steady my nerves. Remembering my friend's words, I held my head high. Then we heard Dimitri's voice.

"Welcome, Blood Moon Pack! Thank you, so much, for coming out tonight and helping us celebrate. In a few moments, you will finally get to welcome your new Luna!"