

Chapter 43

Dimitri

Together, Lily and I stepped into my office. Ben, Luke, and Thara were already there, along with a short blonde woman I assumed to be our witch. A little girl who looked just like her stood behind her, peering at me with a curious expression. Every pair of eyes except the two zeroed in our joined hands, then simultaneously went to Lily and I's new marks. The room was dead silent for a one heartbeat. Then-

"Ahhh!" My sister squealed and rushed us, enveloping us in a tight hug. My Beta and Gamma jumped slightly and the women and girl looked at her like she was crazy. "Finally! I am so happy for you guys!"

"Thanks, Thara." Lily patted her back.

Releasing us, Thara pointed a finger at me. "You better have a re-do on your wedding. Her Luna ceremony doesn't count! I want the chance to stand at the altar with my sister-in-law."

I rubbed the back of neck. "I'll think about it."

"What is going on?" The witch whispered to Ben.

"I'll explain later." He told her. He then stepped around my sister to give me a bro-hug. "Congrats man. I'm happy for you."

"Me too. Took long enough." Luke said from behind him.

"Can we get on with business please?" I asked eagerly. I was unbelievably happy that I finally got to be with my mate, but my friends, and especially my sister, were known for being nosy. They would undoubtedly want details of what happened between us to lead us being together at last, but

there were more pressing matters to be dealt with. And, there was a child in the room.

"I think that's a good idea." Lily said, squeezing my hand.

"Fine." Thara rolled her eyes.

I sat down at my desk, pulling Lily with me. She perched on my lap, my arms going around her waist. Everyone gawked at us until I cleared my throat.

"Ben?"

"Right. Everyone, this is Clara Whitethorn, and her daughter, Isabelle. Clara, Isabelle, this is our Alpha Dimitri, his Luna and mate, Lily, and our Gamma Luke."

"Ahem!"

"And that's Dimitri's sister, Thara. Though I'm not sure why she's even here. Shouldn't you be at work?" He asked her.

Thara shrugged. "I'm allowed to take days off. And I'm part of the Alpha family, I have a right to be here too."

"Whatever." Now Ben rolled his eyes. He seemed to be on edge.

I ignored them, turning to Clara. "Welcome to Blood Moon. Thank you for agreeing to come."

"I didn't have much choice." She scowled at Ben, who paled. I looked between them, confusion gnawing at me.

"What do you mean by that?" I asked.

She glanced down at her daughter, pressing her lips together.

"Isabelle, wasn't it?" Lily untangled herself from me, going to kneel in front of the girl. I saw Clara tense. "We have a terrific game room in the packhouse. Would you like to see it?"

"I don't-" Clara began.

"Okay!" Isabelle exclaimed. She took Lily's hand as she stood up.

"I'll have some of our warriors watch over here. Please, don't worry." Lily said gently to Clara. Finally, she relented. "I'll be right back."

Watching the way she smiled at the little girl, the way Isabelle immediately warmed up to her made my heart flutter. I couldn't wait to have my own pups with her; Lily was going to make an amazing mother.

"Will she be safe?" Clara looked at Ben, eyes wide with worry.

"Completely. Our warriors are the very best. Nobody will touch her."

My Beta had a look on his face that I couldn't really place. He was usually the joker amongst us, always happy; Right now, he was unusually tense. Part of me acknowledged that he was just as concerned for Isabelle as her mother.

"Is there something I should know? I asked the two of them. "About Isabelle?"

"What are you implying?" Clara glared at me.

"Is she a witch?"

"Obviously."

"Is she dangerous?"

Clara looked ready to explode. "There is nothing wrong with my daughter!" She yelled at me. Ajax growled in my head.

"He didn't mean that Clara." Ben put his hand on her shoulder, effectively calming her down.

"Okay, what is going on?" Luke was looking between our friend and the witch, over and over. Suddenly, his eyes widened, jaw dropping. "No..."

Ben paled even more. "Yup."

"It's not possible!"

"Well, obviously, it is." Ben huffed.

"Someone want to include me in the loop?" I asked, annoyed.

"Oh, for fucks sake." Clara threw her hands up. "He's, my mate. There, I said it."

My eyebrows shot up so high, they all but disappeared into my hair.

"What?"

"It's true." Ben said. "She's, my mate."

I shook my head, trying to make sense of their words. "But she's a witch..."

"Thank you, Captain Obvious." Clara sneered.

The snarky remark was lost on me, I was in too much shock. How was this possible?

"What'd I miss?" Lily came waltzing back into the room, stopping to take in our expressions and the tense atmosphere. "What happened?"

"Ben found his mate." Thara said quietly. I'd almost forgotten she was here.

"Really? Who is it?" Lily looked excitedly at Ben, who was looking at Clara, who was looking at the wall angrily. Connecting the dots, my mate did what none of us expected. As usual.

"That's amazing!" She gushed as she hugged Ben around the waist.

Clara spun around, only to be tackled by Lily in a giant hug. The anger on her face was replaced by surprise with a hint of uncertainty. Probably regarding Lilys mental health.

"Isn't it?!" Lily looked around the room. "Guys?"

"Uhm..." Luke seemed at a loss for words.

"Sure, why not?" Thara said.

Lily looked to Ben. "Are you not happy?" She asked him.

"I... uh..." He stuttered and Clara and Lilys faces fell.

"That's definitely not the right answer." My sister scoffed.

"I'm just... still trying to process it." He blew out a breath. "It's complicated."

"You can say that again." Clara said.

I held up my hands. "Okay, why don't we put this...development aside for now? There's other things we need to talk about."

"Sounds good." Ben said and Clara threw him a dirty look.

I looked at her. "I'm assuming he told you about why we needed you to come here?"

She nodded. "I'm afraid I can't help you."

I blinked at her. "Then why did you agree to come?"

"Like I said, I didn't have a choice." She glanced at her mate. "We're not like you, witches. If we reject our mate, we lose our magic. It's a punishment for rejecting the bond, a gift from the Goddess. Besides that, witches have a much harder time than wolves do staying away from their mates. It's painful and it effects our abilities."

Huh. Interesting. By the look on Lukes's face, he thought so too. I'd have to keep him from interrogating Clara about her species; I really didn't want her to turn him into a toad or something.

"Is there anything you can do to help us?" I asked.

"Ben said you think you're dealing with a Clan Elder. If that's true, there is nothing I can do. My magic is nowhere near that strong."

"Great." I sighed in frustration.

"So, we just find another witch." Thara piped in.

"There's no point. Only another Clan Elder would be powerful enough to help you, and you know as well as I do they won't even consider it. If my situation wasn't what it is, I wouldn't have even come here."

Ben flinched at her words, hurt passing over his face.

"There has to be a way to get to him." Lily drummed her fingers on my desk, thinking.

Clara turned to her. "Him? You know which Elder it is?"

Lily shook her head. "We only know his name. Gideon."

Confusion swept over Clara's face. "There is no Elder Gideon."

"What?" Luke, Lily and I asked in unison.

"There are four Elders, Cidion, Alyssia, Tate and Rytte. They've been in power for a long time, since before I was born."

I looked at Luke for answers.

"I don't know. I thought for sure..."

"Why did you think it was an Elder?" Clara asked him. He told her about James' disappearance from the dungeon.

"Ah. He is very powerful then. Just like you, we do have our handful of rogues. Witches who are not part of any Clan, who live by themselves. Unlike wolves, however, not all the rogues are bad. We retain our humanity, even though we live separate from the others. That being said, not all of them are good either."

"You talk like you're one of them." I commented.

"I am. I am not part of any of the four Clans. It is just my daughter and I."

"May I ask why?" Lily asked her.

"No, you may not." Clara snapped. I growled at her disrespect towards my mate, though it didn't seem to affect her. "It sounds like you are dealing with a Dark Witch, someone who specializes in using the Dark Arts. And my guess would be they are after you because you're a Mother Wolf."