

## Chapter 49

Lily

I had just finished setting the table when Dimitri walked in. His head lifted, sniffing the air.

"It smells amazing in here."

"Thank you." I smiled.

I'd spent the rest of the day preparing our dinner. We had medium-rare steaks, homemade potato salad, regular salad with cucumbers, carrots and tomatoes, freshly made dinner rolls, (Compliments of Greta), and a huge bowl of mashed potatoes. I'd also set a bottle of his favorite red wine on the table.

"I asked Greta for a list of your favorites." I told him as he took a seat.

"Everything looks and smells incredible. Thank you so much." He pulled me in for a lingering kiss that made my heart race.

"I hope it tastes just as good." I replied.

Dimitri wasted no time at all filling his plate. His eyes widened slightly as he chewed his steak, making me a little nervous.

"Wow. That is... Wow."

"Good?"

"The best I've ever had!" He exclaimed. "You should be a chef Lily, honestly."

I smiled. I had thought about it, but after spending my life cooking for Snow Moon, with much less gratitude than he was giving me now, a career in cooking just didn't excite me. I felt much happier working with Thara.

"How was your day?" I asked him.

"Alright. Alpha Killian of Harvest Moon requested to come here sometime in the following weeks. He wants to set up a trade-deal with us that I'm still considering."

"What sort of deal?" I asked curiously.

Dimitri took a bite of the potato salad, moaning loudly. "Did you make this?"

"Yes."

"Don't tell Greta I said this, but this is better than hers."

I laughed. "My lips are sealed."

He took a sip of wine, returning to our original conversation. "Blood Moon trades with various packs. Killian wants to negotiate the expansion of his pack, but that would place them right on our borders. Possibly closer, I might have to give up some land." He swirled the liquid in his glass. "I'm not sure I'm comfortable having them that close."

"Do you not trust this, Alpha?"

"I do. He's actually a good friend. But I have to think of the bigger picture, I have to think of the pack."

"What is he proposing?"

"In exchange for the land, he's offering us access to his warriors if we need them, and weapon resources." He sighed, taking another bite of his food. "It's a tempting offer."

I bit my lip, unsure if he was looking for a second opinion. I think he felt my hesitation because he reached over the table, placing his hand on mine.

"What do you think?" Dimitri asked.

"I think your right. It is a tempting offer, and one I think you should take." He raised his eyebrows. "I understand your hesitation. But this sounds like a good alliance, and from an Alpha you already trust. Our warriors are the best around, but it never hurts to have more people fighting on your side, right? And, Blood Moon doesn't have much in the way of weapons, I've noticed. We focus on hand-to-hand combat. It could be a useful skill for them to learn, in the long-run. I think that's worth giving up a small space of land."

I poured my thoughts out, hoping I didn't sound like an idiot. I had no past involvement in pack politics or anything of the sort. I held my breath, waiting for him to say something. Finally, he smiled, squeezing my hand.

"How did I get so lucky to have you as my mate?" He sighed and I blushed. "You're right, and I think this will be a good thing for Blood Moon, in the long run."

I released the breath I'd been holding, content that I'd helped him with an important matter. More, that my opinion mattered to him. We talked some more over our dinner, enjoying each other's company. I brought out his favorite dessert afterwards, pecan pie with vanilla ice-cream. I swear he almost drooled.

"Before I forget." Dimitri wiped his mouth, finishing his third slice. I had a feeling I was going to be making a lot of pies. "I have something for you." He reached into his jacket, bringing out a sleek black cellphone.

"A phone?"

"I did ask my sister to get you one, but I guess she forgot. I've already added the necessary numbers, mine, Bens, Lukes. And Thara's."

He passed it over. "Thank you." I turned the screen on, looking over all the little apps. I'd never owned a phone before.

"We don't use them much, but I feel better knowing you have one. Plus, Candy Crush is a great game."

I laughed, seeing he'd already installed it. This man could be so adorable sometimes.

"Now, I believe you had a surprise for me?" Dimitri leaned back in his chair, gazing at me expectantly.

"I do. Close your eyes."

He did as I asked. I walked to the bedside table, pulling out my textbook from the drawer. Setting it in front of him, I told him he could look. His eyes landed on the book, confusion crossing his face.

"Where did you get this?" He picked up the book.

"From Thara."

"Because...?"

His tone was not disapproving-he was genuinely confused.

"Because I'm going to start my studies to become a doctor in the pack." I said.

The confusion was swept away instantly. Surprise and pride lit up Dimitri's face.

"Really?"

I shrugged. "Well, I'm going to try anyways." I rocked back on my heels. "What do you think?"

His face transfixed with the biggest smile, stopping my heart. I was wrapped in his arms before I knew it, his lips moving against mine.

"I love it. You're going to do amazing; I have no doubt."

"You're okay with this?"

"You don't need my permission, Lily. If this is what you want to do, I would never stand in your way. You're so good at taking care of people, I can't think of anything better for you."

"I thought you said I should be a chef." I smirked.

"You definitely could be. But if this is what you choose, I'll support you all the way."

"Thank you. I love you."

"I love you too."

We kissed again, the atmosphere quickly changing into need. I'd only started undoing the buttons on his shirt when Dimitri tensed, causing me to freeze. His eyes were glazed over, mind-linking someone. He growled with annoyance, gently removing my hands but keeping hold of one.

"We need to go." He pulled me out the door, fixing his shirt as he walked.

"What happened?" I asked.

"Rogues." He spat.

Anxiety pooled in my stomach. Together, we ran outside, meeting a group of warriors. Bens's brother walked by our side, filling Dimitri in on the situation.

"A group was spotted coming in on the East border. We met them before they got too far, but another group caught us by surprise. I'm getting reports of a third group as well."

Dimitri swore under his breath. "They've never attacked with this many before. What is going on?"

We ran through the trees, and I caught the sound of fighting. The smell of blood was getting stronger the closer we got, and so was the stench of rogues. My face twisted into disgust at the rotten smell; It smelled like rotting flesh. I broke through the thicket, every cell in my body on high

alert. Wolves were everywhere, snapping and snarling at each other. I recognized Bens's wolf, Jude. He was going head-to-head with a small brown wolf while another snuck up behind him.

Dimitri shifted, rushing towards them and taking down the second wolf easily. Our men shifted, running around me to join the fight. I got ready to do the same when a dozen or so more rogues jumped from the trees. That would be the other group Ned had talked about. One ran in my direction, yellow teeth bared dangerously. Letting Aya come forward, my clothes shredded as I shifted, letting out a fierce, guttural snarl towards my opponent. He stopped immediately, taking in my size with raw undiluted fear.

In fact, everyone stopped. The rogues halted their attack, our warriors staring at me in awe. I'd been planning on making the truth known to the pack soon, we couldn't keep them in the dark forever. But this worked too, I guess. I crouched, ready to attack the wolf in front of me, our men getting ready to follow my lead. Suddenly, he threw back his head and howled loudly. Distant howls sounded off in the distance. To my utter shock, the rogues started retreating, running through the forest away from us. Alarm bells went off in my head.

What had just happened?

"Don't let them leave!" Dimitri commanded the group. "Bring back at least one, alive."

The warriors took off after the rogues. I was about to follow them when Dimitri stepped in front of me, shaking his head. He shifted back, so I did too.

"Are we not going with them?" I demanded.

He looked out into the forest. "That was a signal, I know it. It's a trap."

"Trap or not, we can't just stand here-"

"I know. I'm going with them. You're going home. Please don't argue either."

"Dimitri I'm not some damn damsel in distress. I can help, you know I can!"

"I'm not doubting you Lily, I'm trying to keep you safe! They only retreated after seeing you. This attack is different from before, and I think it's connected to Gideon."

My argument died on my lips.

"Please, go home. I'll be back shortly, I promise." He kissed me quickly before running after his men, shifting back into Ajax on the way.

I hated that he was right; Hated that I couldn't help my mate and my pack. Not wanting to be caught out here alone, I let my wolf out once more and ran through the trees heading home.