

Chapter 51

Lily

Alpha Phillip looked between the two of us, clearly trying to understand the situation.

"You two know each other?" He asked.

My mouth pinched into a thin line. So, she hadn't told him then. Why would she? Who wanted to admit they abused and tortured someone for years? I wondered how she got him to believe she was this sweet, innocent girl when she was anything but.

"Lily was a member of my former pack." Evelyn walked to us, taking her mate's hand. Her mate. How was someone like her mated to someone like him? He seemed so nice and she was.... her.

"Oh, that's nice!"

I gave him a tight smile, trying to keep my emotions under control.

"I should circulate, greet some more people. I'll leave you two to catch up."

"I'll go with you." Evelyn offered quickly.

"No, dear, it's fine. You stay here, talk to your friend."

Friend?

He moved away, leaving us alone. Dimitri squeezed my hand, but I couldn't focus on him. I stared at Evelyn, who seemed to be having a hard time meeting my eyes. Eventually, I found my voice.

"So, you're mated to an Alpha. Your parents must be so happy." My tone was harsher than I intended.

She shrugged. "Yeah, they are."

"Great."

Evelyn looked around the room, everywhere but me. It was starting to piss me off. She could beat me, made my life a living Hell for years, and now she couldn't look at me?

"The place looks beautiful." I said. "I'm a little surprised though. I would have thought you'd gone darker, to match your soul."

She flinched at my words, finally looking directly at me. I couldn't contain my hatred, letting it show on my face.

"Can we talk? Privately?" She whispered.

"No." Dimitri spoke up beside me.

"I meant all of us. I didn't think you'd let her come with me alone." She walked away. I looked at my mate and my friend.

"You don't have to." Dimitri told me.

"Might as well get it over with. She'll find a time to say whatever she wants to say anyways."

We followed Evelyn outside, into one of the many gardens. The many different species of flowers made the place bright, colorful. Their scents mixed together beautifully, wafting around us. Evelyn stopped near a huge rose bush, turning to face me.

"I didn't know if you'd be here, but I'm glad you came." She said. "I've been wanting to reach out to you for a while now."

I crossed my arms. "Why? To tell me you're a Luna now? I really don't care."

She shook her head. "Can you hear me out? Please?"

I really didn't want to. But I'd made the choice to follow her out here.
"Fine."

"This is harder than I thought." She laughed quietly. Running her hand over a rose, she blew out a breath. "When we were little, when you first came to the Snow Moon... I tried to be your friend. Do you remember that?"

I blinked. Searching my memories, I thought I did. Hadn't she tried to play some board game with me?

"Kind of." I admitted.

"Do you remember what happened when my mom caught us?"

That, I did remember. I'd forgotten it was Evelyn though. Luna Esther had broken the game and screamed at me. I'd ended up with a broken wrist that day.

"Yes." I swallowed. "What's your point?"

"After mom punished you, she punished me too. She told me to stay away from you, not to talk to you. She hated you for no reason, and I learned to too. I was told that every time you got punished, it was because you deserved it. I started to think like my parents. I found reasons to hurt you, to get you in trouble. I never knew why my parents hated you so much, but it was easier for me to let the blame fall on you for everything. If I stayed out late, or came home drunk, it didn't matter. They wouldn't do anything to me, they would take their anger out on you."

She was bringing back painful memories, ones I didn't want to see. "I'm well aware you used me as a scapegoat to do whatever you wanted Evelyn." I snapped.

"And that was wrong."

Huh? Did I hear her correctly?

"Ever since I met Phillip, -" She smiled to herself, " , -I've gained a lot of perspective. About who I am, who I was. And who I want to be. I don't want to turn out like my parents. I don't want to live my life full of hate and anger. What I'm trying to say is, I'm sorry Lily. For everything, everything I put you through. Everything Snow Moon put you through. I know, it doesn't even begin to make up for what I've done. But I needed you to know anyways. I'm trying to do better, be a better person."

Never in a million years did I think Evelyn would say those words. I didn't think she was capable of apologizing, for anything. To say I was shocked would be an understatement; Part of me was totally convinced I was dreaming.

"One apology does make up for a lifetime of abuse." Dimitri snarled.

Evelyn looked at the ground. "I know. I know it doesn't. That's not what I'm trying to do."

"Then what are you trying to do?" I asked. "Dimitri is right; I still have nightmares about everything that happened. And I don't even know if I can trust that what you're saying is truth."

"You have every reason not to believe me."

"Are you doing this for Lily, or for yourself? Because it kind of seems like you're trying to justify everything by apologizing now." Ben said.

"I'm doing it for Lily. I swear. But we really should get back, Phillip will be wondering where I am."

She patted my shoulder lightly as she passed, and I didn't even flinch at the contact. I didn't know what to think; Could she have changed that much? Could her mate have brought out the goodness in her? It seemed unbelievable. Not possible. Then again, I was a mythical wolf; I guess anything was possible, wasn't it?

"Come on, let's go." Dimitri pulled my hand, effectively also pulling me out my thoughts. We walked slowly back to the hall, my eyes catching

Evelyn and Phillip laughing with a group with people. Comparing this Evelyn from the one at Snow Moon, she did seem different. Relaxed, happier.

"Let's not dwell on this all night. Let's have some drinks." Ben thrust a glass into my hand. I drank mechanically, not really paying attention.

For a while, we mingled. I was introduced to different Alphas and their Lunas. I met Alpha Killian, and was more convinced than ever that his trade agreement was the right move. He was an explosively happy individual, always cracking jokes. I didn't think I'd ever laughed so hard before. His size and strength were equal to my mates, telling me he could also be dangerous. He would be a valuable ally, I was sure.

"Oh, Goddess help us. Look who's here." Killian jerked his chin over Dimitris shoulder. I glanced back and tensed as Alpha Theo and his Luna entered the room. They were dressed like a King and Queen, outdoing most everyone here. Luna Esther strode to her daughter, who had a tight smile on her face. Huh.

Alpha Theo on the other hand, caught sight of Dimitri. I immediately turned around, avoiding his eyes. What were the chances he wouldn't come over here?

"Alpha Dimitri. Killian."

I suppose that answered my question.

His voice grated against my nerves, causing all sorts of painful flashbacks. I ground my teeth together, fighting the urge to run away.

He has no power over me. I am safe. Dimitri and Ben are here. I'm safe.

"Theo." Killian greeted my former Alpha, leaving out his title. I liked him more and more.

"Where is your mate Dimitri?" I heard him take a sip of his drink. "Though I guess I understand you not wanting to bring her here, of all places. That would be quite embarrassing!" He chuckled. "Who is this lovely girl?"

I felt Dimitri tense. I squeezed his hand tightly while taking a deep breath. Then I slowly turned around, meeting Alpha Theos eyes. He gazed at me for a moment, cocking his head to the side. I could almost hear the click as he finally recognized me. To my utter disgust, his beady eyes roamed over my body, lingering on my chest. I wanted to throw up and punch him at the same time. My eyes glanced to the side. Evelyn was watching us with a little frown, eyeing her father coldly.

"Lily?"

My attention was pulled back to the man in front of me. I didn't have it in me to greet him, even without his title.

"My, my. You certainly have changed. I didn't even recognize you."

"I guess that's what happens when one has proper care." I replied.

His eyes narrowed. I knew that look. I knew that if I looked down, his hand would be twitching, ready to strike.

"I see your attitude hasn't changed as much as your face."

"On the contrary, my attitude has changed a great deal since leaving your 'pack'." My confidence was growing every minute, fueled by my hatred of this man. "I've learned what my worth is, what I'm capable of. It's been quite an experience."

His jaw ticked angrily. "Well, isn't that something." He sneered.

"Dear, you'll never guess who I ran int- Oh." Luna Esther appeared, looking me over. Her eyes widened when she realized who I was. "What on Earth are you doing here?" She spit.

"She is the Luna of Blood Moon. Did you not expect her to be here?" Ben asked.

"Certainly not! This is no place for someone like you!"

"Alpha, you may want to reign in your Luna." Dimitri hissed. His whole body was rigid with anger. I rubbed his back gently, trying to calm him down. Killian stood to the side, watching the whole thing while nursing his drink. I almost asked if he wanted some popcorn to go with the show.

"I cannot believe you, a respectable Alpha, would bring her here." Luna Esther continued. "One would think you would care about your reputation."

"My reputation?" Dimitri gave a hard, humorless laugh. "What about your reputation Luna? And you, Theo?"

"What the devil are you on about?" Alpha Theo scowled.

"I'm talking about the years of abuse you put my mate through."