

Chapter 59

Dimitri

I was stunned. Our group stood together, watching everything Gideon had to show us. My eyes were constantly going to my mate's face, analyzing the play of emotions there. This was hurting her, and I wanted to stop it. But I also knew that she needed this, needed to see it. I would help her through the aftermath, as best I could.

The image changed again, and honestly, it was starting to make me dizzy. This entire time, I'd been feeling odd; The air felt sticky on my skin, too thick. I noticed a while ago that the others were visibly uncomfortable as well, apart from Clara, Gideon and Lily. The witches made sense, but Lily was a wolf like me. I figured it must be because she was half witch.

"That doesn't change anything." Ajax said.

"No, it doesn't. I'd love her if she were part chicken."

A scream interrupted us, and I instantly pulled my mate closer, looking around. We were in a house, a small house. The younger version of Gideon paced in front of a room, worry and anxiousness set in his features. He looked more like the man standing in front of me now; A short black beard had grown on his face, and he looked more mature. Another scream echoed through the door and he cringed. A few minutes later, the cry of a baby was heard. Warmth spread through my chest; Lily had just been born.

A man stepped through the door, old with half-moon glasses. He looked drained, but he wore a big smile.

"Congratulations Gideon. You have a beautiful, healthy baby girl."

"I daughter?"

"Yes sir. She was a big one too, nine pounds, three ounces."

"How is Rose?"

"Tired, but relieved." The man chuckled. "Give my wife a few minutes to clean her up, then you can go see your family."

"My family..." Young Gideon grinned. "Thank you. So much Peter. I don't know how I can ever repay you for everything you've done for us."

"All I require is you bring that little girl over to see her papa. That is payment enough."

"And her nana." A short, blonde woman exited the room, her front stained with blood and some form of goop. I internally cringed, like the typical man I was.

"Of course. Once Rose is feeling up to it, we will come by."

"She is feeding the little one now. You can go in."

I gave the men around a hard stare. Quickly, they all averted their eyes. It may have been a memory, but I was still pretty certain Lily, and Gideon for that matter, did not want this many people seeing that.

Young Gideon pushed the door open, and we followed him into a bedroom. I looked at the painting on the wall, Clara looked at the ceiling, and the rest gazed at their shoes. The sound of baby Lily feeding was the only sound in the room.

"Rose...." Young Gideon choked back tears. "She's beautiful. Perfect."

"I know. Just wait, she is even more special than we thought."

I heard a tiny burp and a few seconds later Lily nudged me. Rose had swaddled her, tucking her into her arm. Curiously, I moved a bit closer. Lily opened her eyes, the color shining brightly against her pink skin. She

looked curiously at her father before letting out a huge yawn and falling asleep instantaneously.

"What... What..." Young Gideon seemed to be at a loss for words.

"I met the Moon Goddess Gideon." Rose said.

"What?" He repeated.

Tears left her eyes silently as she gazed at her baby. "Our daughter is special. She is chosen by Celeste herself to do great things. I am sorry, I cannot explain more to you."

"I trust you." Rose smiled at him. "Can I?"

"You have to ask? She is your daughter silly."

Young Gideon gazed at the sleeping infant in his arms. "What should we call her?"

"I was thinking Lillian... Lily."

"Your mother?"

"She would have loved her. She would have accepted her, and us. I know it."

"I love it. My little Lily." He kissed her nose. "I love you so much my little girl."

Gideon snapped his fingers silently. I briefly wondered if he relived these memories often, or if this was the first time.

"Lily! Where are you?"

We were in a forest, the sun shining high in the sky. Rose was wandering through the trees, Gideon walking behind her. They both looked older now.

"Lily, come on out. Your Mom is worrying." Gideon called.

I heard a giggle behind me. I stepped out of the way as a whirlwind of red hair ran past me, jumping into her mother's arms.

"There you are!" Rose nuzzled her daughter's neck, tickling her. I smiled as my mate's child self-erupted into fits of laughter.

"Mama, stop!"

She was set on her feet and Gideon took her hand.

"Lily, you know you shouldn't run off."

"Sorry Daddy."

"You worry us when you disappear. Stay with us from now on, okay?"

"Okay Daddy. I love you."

"I love you too pumpkin."

Gideon snapped his fingers, harshly and turned away. I jumped to the side as fire erupted beside me, almost knocking over Clara. It couldn't hurt me, of course, but it was so different from the happy scene a few seconds ago. I watched in horror as the forest around us burned and smoldered. Smoke filled the air, thick and strong. Squirrels and rabbits ran for their lives through the thicket, birds screaming in the trees.

"Take her Gideon!" I turned to see Rose shoving her daughter into Gideon's arms.

"Rose, please! Don't do this!"

"Mama, stay with me!" Lily cried.

"I have to, Gideon. I will lead them away, and then I will find you. Take her, now!" Not giving him a chance to refuse again, she ran away, shifting into a beautiful white wolf with black boots.

"Mama!" Lily jumped from her father's arms, racing after her mother. My heart was hurting at the scene.

"Lily, no! Come with me, come on. We have to go. Mommy will come back." He scooped her up and ran past our group, out of sight. We were left standing in the middle of a burning forest. I was confused why Gideon didn't take us elsewhere until a howl pierced through the air. It grated against my nerves, cut into my heart. The sound abruptly cut off, followed by a heavy silence.

Clara was crying silently beside me, wrapped under one of Bens arms. Lily stood in front of me, a look of denial on her face. I brought her back against me, rubbing her shoulders. There was nothing I could say, nothing I could do. Not even the mate bond could ease the pain of knowing her mother was gone. Gideon hadn't watched the vision with us, still turned away, looking into the smokey bush. His shoulders moved, indicating he too was crying. Another snap, and we were transported once more.

I looked around, recognition washing over me. We stood on the border of Snow Moon. Lily sat on the ground under a tree, crying. Gideon kneeled in front of her, smoothing her hair.

"I want Mommy." She sniffled.

"I know pumpkin. I know. It's going to be okay."

"You said she would come back."

He didn't answer her. Instead, he hugged her close, kissing her hair. "I love you so much Lily. And Mom does too. I'm so sorry."

"Sorry for what?"

His hand started to glow with a light blue hue. He placed it on her small head, mumbling under his breath. Tears streamed down his face and he choked on the words. Finally, he released her. The child who stared at him now had a blank face. She clearly didn't know who he was.

"Your name is Lily. You are five years old. Say it."

"My name is Lily; I am five years old."

"You are a werewolf."

"I am a werewolf."

"You..." Young Gideon choked on a sob. "You are an orphan." He managed.

"I am an orphan?"

"Yes. Say it, Lily."

"I am an orphan."

"Go into this pack. They will look after you until I find you again." He hugged her one more time. "I love you, so so much. Now go. Go!" He pushed her towards the border lightly. She looked back at him once before running through the forest. Her father watched her, fists clenched, heart on his sleeve. Screaming into the night air, he vanished. The trees started to spin, colors mixing together. I shut my eyes and when I opened them, we were back in the packhouse common room.

Clara stepped away from Ben, wiping her eyes. Luke sat heavily on the sectional, putting his head in his hands. Killian and his Beta just stared, absorbing everything they'd witnessed. Hazel was curled up with Clint, and Gideon slammed his old black book shut. I searched my mind, trying to come up with anything to say to Lily; I came up blank. What could I possibly say to her?

"You asshole!"