

## Chapter 63

Dimitri

It was so fucking hard talking about all this. Even with Lily. I hated the pity in her eyes, but she had a point; I couldn't ask for something I wouldn't give her. So, I laid it all out in the open, hoping it was a stepping stone for her.

"I don't know what you want me to do." Lily choked out.

I let my face soften. "I want you to open up Lily. I want you to talk to me, to trust me. Just like I did with you, just now. If not to me, then to my sister. Or take her offer, and see a therapist. I know you hate the idea, but if you keep everything inside forever, it will eat at you forever. I love you; I don't want you to be held back because of your past."

Her hands knotted the blanket, her teeth rolling over her bottom lip.

"Did it help you?" She mumbled finally.

"Talking to you?"

She nodded.

I thought about it for a minute. "It did. I'll be honest, I could do without the pity I'm getting from you. But I guess that means you care. But I feel...lighter." I admitted. In all truth, it felt like a huge weight was lifted from shoulders. She was the only person I'd confided all that to. The way I felt, my inner thoughts and demons. And it felt good. I only wanted the same for her.

"I don't know how." She finally said. "I don't...I don't want you to look at me different. I don't want you to see me... the same way as before."

I shook my head. "I won't. I'm sorry I hurt you. I'm sorry my past affected our relationship. And I'm sorry I couldn't get past it until now." I took her hand and pulled her over to me, wrapping my arms around her waist. "I guess I lied, kind of. It's not that I didn't want you, I always wanted you. I was just too much of an idiot to admit it, to want to admit it. Even to myself. But I always knew how strong you really were, deep inside. Ajax definitely knew. I promise I won't judge you, or look at you differently than I do now. I just want you to be safe, happy. And healthy, and keeping everything inside isn't safe, happy, or healthy."

She stared at me with wide, glassy eyes. Her bottom lip quivered slightly. Lying her head against my chest, she started to talk. A little at first, and then waves of tears streamed down her cheeks and onto my skin, mixing with her words as her story poured out of her.

"On my ninth birthday, I got a piece of moldy bread and sour milk. Theo ordered a big cake to be made, enough to feed the whole packhouse. I was ordered to serve it, and then sit in the corner and watch as they celebrated my birthday without me. I got sick from the bread and milk, and they just dumped me in the basement. I was forced to work the next day even though I was sick... I threw up all day. I threw up in the kitchen when I was making lunch and Esther... she... she... I got twenty lashes for it."

I held her tightly, not once interrupting and trying so fucking hard to keep my emotions at bay. She could feel them through our bond, and I didn't want her to know just how angry I was. I should have killed those two when I had the chance.

"Theo used a silver knife on me for the first time when I was twelve." She stopped and I waited. The tears never stopped, and I tensed.

"Why?" I asked as calmly as I could, but she shook her head. I didn't want to push her, but she was finally talking, finally letting it out. "Why?" I asked again.

Lily choked on her breath, burying her face so hard into the crook of my shoulder that it hurt.

"I-I asked him if... if I could have one o-of Evelyns old b-bras. I was starting to.... develop. H-he... He... told me to... prove it."

My hands fisted behind her back, Ajax jumping to the surface. I held him back by inches.

"I d-didn't want to. I refused. H-he said I-I was lying a-and he... he r-ripped my shirt off. I covered m-myself." Her voice lowered against my skin. "Because I wouldn't... he cut me." Her tiny voice cut on a sob.

I was fuming, not even able to keep it from her. The anger was so fierce, it travelled through the bond like fire. But I had to know.

"Did he ever... did anyone ever... touch you?" I ground the words out. I knew she was a virgin, or had been, but if they forced her to other things... I swear, I would run to that pack tonight with my warriors...

"No." Lily hiccupped against me. "I never let it happen."

Thank the Goddess for that small mercy. However, Theo's fate was now sealed. I wouldn't hunt him down, I didn't have to, but he was a dead man walking. His days of breathing and tainting perfectly good air were officially numbered.

After a couple minutes, Lily continued. I listened intently, stroking her back, her hair, her arms. By the time she finished, her cheeks were raw and her voice was hoarse. The things I'd heard tonight would haunt me forever. My mate cried for another hour and a half, screaming through her tears and I let her. She was a tornado of emotions that she deserved to be allowed to finally release. Throughout the storm, I offered her unlimited support anyway she wanted it. And when she finally fell into an exhausted sleep, I simply covered her with the blanket and kissed her forehead before lying beside her.

I'd been wrong before; She was stronger than grandma. I doubt even she could have survived what Lily had. Hell, I would give up long before this. It was a miracle she was here, in my bed alive and breathing. The thought made me pull her closer, wanting to protect her from everything. I felt guilty pushing her to do this; it might have been unfair. But she'd held it all in for so, so long. I could only hope she felt better in the morning.

For me though, sleep was impossible. I spent the night staring at my mate. While I did that, I planned different ways I was going to kill Theo and his mate. Perhaps not their daughter though, if she truly showed she regretted everything she did. And honestly, she didn't do half of what her parents did. A misled child, forced to act in ways she didn't understand because that's what she'd been taught. Still, she had a lot to make up for.

It was around four in the morning when Lily suddenly shot straight up. Immediately, I looked around the room, searching for any signs of danger.

"What? What's wrong?" I asked panicked.

Lily didn't answer me. Instead, she jumped off the bed and ran to the bathroom. A second later, I heard the sound of her vomiting. I was right behind her in a matter of seconds, holding her hair.

"Are you okay?" I asked anxiously. Fuck, had I stressed her that much? Was this my fault?

"Water. Please." She panted.

"Hang on."

I ran to the kitchen, getting her an unopened water bottle. She took a couple small sips when I brought it to her.

"It's so fucking cold in here." She muttered.

"Do you want me to run you a bath? Or a shower?"

"Hmm...maybe. I don't know." She sighed, leaning her head against the toilet seat. "I'm so tired now. Fuck."

"Come on." I capped the water and scooped her up, waiting to see if she felt sick again. When she nodded the okay, I walked her back to bed and covered her back up. She was out in seconds, the water bottle resting against her cheek.

She'd been getting sick a lot lately. Was she this stressed out? My stomach knotted all over again with the fact that I'd forced her to relive her worst memories hours after she got the shock of meeting her father. Goddess, was I the stupidest mate ever? It could have fucking waited. Feeling like shit, I crawled in beside her, wrapping my arms around her and giving her my warmth.

At some point, shadows from the rising sun streaked across the room; I hadn't slept a wink. Lily stirred in my arms, her arms stretching out.

"MGry." She mumbled sleepily.

"What?" I chuckled.

"I'm hungry." She announced clearly this time.

"You feel okay to eat?"

"Mhmm." She rolled over, kissing me heartily. "How about we start with a snack before breakfast?"

I raised my eyebrows. "Seriously? You were puking not five hours ago."

"I'm not puking now." Her lips moved to the mark on my neck, biting gently. My dick instantly stood at attention.

"Maybe you should eat first." I gulped.

"Okay."

With a cheeky smirk, my mate lowered herself slowly until she had me in her mouth. Not what I meant, but I'd take it happily.