

## Chapter 79

Lily

To my surprise, Killian joined us as we made our way through the portal Gideon had opened up. I hadn't even noticed him before. When we were safely back in Blood Moon, he wrapped me into a tight bear hug.

"I'm so happy your safe."

"Thanks. Can't.... breath.... Killian." I gasped.

He released me with a laugh. Dimitri was quick to claim me once more, pulling me into his side. We'd come out of the portal to the side of the pack house, which now had people running out of it. Mates reunited, children running into their fathers' arms. The scene made me smile as I absentmindedly rubbed my stomach. Dimitris hand covered mine, gazing down at me with eyes full of love.

"Lily!"

Thara pushed through the crowd, and I let go of Dimitris hand to meet her halfway, crushing her in a hug.

"Thank the Goddess, I've been so worried about you!" She cried.

"I missed you too Thara. It's over now; He's dead."

"And thank the Goddess again! Come inside; Greta has food prepared, are you hungry?"

I laughed. "Starving!"

We made our way into the packhouse, stopping to thank the warriors who'd fought by our side. The rogues were left in Killian's charge, to take

them to their new land. Temporary land, I thought. Perhaps some of them would join us, eventually. I took the time to look around as we walked; Blood Moon held a different perspective for me now. This was truly my home, and I was damn proud to be Luna. I bid goodnight to the last of the warriors who lingered, eager to have my mate to myself. Of course, it couldn't be that easy. The second the door closed behind our group; I was surrounded.

"Lily! I'm so glad your back!" Hazel pulled me in for a hug.

"You gave us all quite the scare child. Don't do that again." Greta chimed in.

Clint pulled Hazel away, kissing the top of her head. "I got to take down my fair share of rogues thanks to you." He grinned. Hazel and I rolled our eyes.

"Is the asshole dead?" Greta looked at Dimitri, who raised his eyebrows. I'm sure we all did; Greta rarely swore.

"Yes." Dimitri replied.

She nodded once. "Alright then. Come, sit. I have food and drinks coming." And she scurried off, leaving us with nothing to do but make our way to the cafeteria.

I sat at the first table I saw, exhausted. Dimitri sat beside me, Thara on the other. Ben and Clara took the seats opposite, Luke and Miguel beside them. Hazel and Clint sat farther down as Greta rolled out a trolley overflowing with food. My stomach growled at the sight; Goddess, I'd missed her cooking.

"Take what you like, there's more in the kitchen."

"You're the best Greta." I reached for one of her famous dinner rolls, filling my plate to the max. Gideon came to fill two plates for him and my mother, who was sitting silently beside Thara, looking down at the table. I kept an eye on her as we ate.

"So.... just throwing this out there, but why didn't you shift? You know, back at the castle?" Clint asked me. He ripped off a piece of roll and dipped it in gravy before popping it into his mouth. Everyone looked at me expectantly.

"Uh.... I can't shift. Not right now anyways."

Instantly, every pair of eyes became worried.

"Why?"

"What did he do to you?"

"For how long?"

"Guys!" I held up my hands, making them stop. "It wasn't anything Bastian did. Well, okay, sort of. But it was my decision. I put Aya away, sort of in a dormant phase, to protect the pups."

"How?" Asked Hazel.

"Celeste."

"The Moon Goddess?" Clara asked.

"Yeah. So quick update time for those who don't know; I've been having random chats with her whenever she sees fit to pull me into her realm. Or my subconsciousness anyways."

Both my parents eyed me with bewilderment. I turned to them to explain.

"Bastian wanted me to forget everyone. Dimitri, you guys, Blood Moon. He forced me to drink some potion, but as soon as he did that, Celeste pulled me away. Only it wasn't her this time. It was your dad." I looked at my mom. Her hand went to her mouth as I talked.

"You spoke with him, really?" She seemed on the verge of tears.

I nodded. "He said it was Celestes version of a 'loop hole'." I laughed to myself. "She can't interfere in our lives, our fates. So, she gave him a

choice. Whatever the potion was going to do to me, would do to him instead. I only had to act like it worked."

"And he agreed?" Gideon sounded a bit skeptical. Understandable though, given what my grandfather had done to them.

"Yes, he did. But not before he gave me the message for you two. He said it might be a blessing in disguise, to forget everything. Everything he did that hurt you."

"I'm not sure how to feel." Mom whispered. "On the one hand, I'm happy he realized and accepted his wrongdoings. On the other hand, when I meet him again, he won't remember me."

"I'm not sure about that, but I'm sure the Goddess has a plan in mind."

"I hope so."

Dimitri was tense and quiet beside me. I tried to meet his eyes, but he avoided it.

"Dimitri?" I placed my hand over his.

"You kissed him." He deadpanned.

I winced. I knew this would come up, but I was not going to deny it. I still felt guilty for the pain I know he must have felt.

"I'm sorry." I whispered.

"Did you... did you..." He didn't seem able to get the words out, but I knew what he was asking.

"You would have felt it, if I had."

He shook his head. "Clara took the pain away. So, I didn't feel the pain of the betrayal."

I cringed at the word 'betrayal.' But I had. I couldn't deny it, even if I wanted to. But I could put his mind at ease some.

"It was one kiss, one time. He never took it further, and I never did either. I would have given up the charade in a second if he had. I didn't have a choice Dimitri..."

When he met my eyes, I saw a vulnerability I'd never seen before. I hadn't felt any pain, but I could only imagine what he had gone through. I vowed to make it up to him, anyway I could. Finally, he blew out a long breath.

"I know. I'm sorry. You did what you had to, to survive. I can't say I wouldn't have done the same, in your position. And you kept our children safe. Just the thought of him touching you makes me want to kill him all over again."

I gave him a weak smile. "I know. Thank you." The atmosphere became noticeably less tense at my words. I turned my attention to Clara.

"And thank you." I said.

She stared at me. "Me? For what?"

"For finding me. How did you find me anyways?"

"Locator spell." She shot a glare to my father. Matter of fact, everyone did, except my mother. Gideon fidgeted in his seat, avoiding everyone eyes. Now that I wasn't distracted, I noticed for the first time that he had two black eyes.

"What happened to your face?" I asked.

"Your mate punched me."

"What?" I rounded on Dimitri who shrugged nonchalantly.

"This idiot never thought to use a locator spell." Luke scowled.

"It wouldn't have worked." Rose said. Everyone stared at her. "Until Bastian had Lily, he used magic to hide our location. He wanted you to come Alpha, and you." She turned to her husband. "His plan was to kill all of you, and take over Blood Moon."

"Huh." Dimitri scratched his chin. "Well, then I guess I'm sorry I punched you."

"You guess?"

They started to bicker, and I couldn't help but laugh out loud. Ben started chuckling, and soon, we were all laughing. It felt so good to be home!

"So, how did the deal with your wolf come into play?" Luke asked me when we sobered.

"I guess that wasn't just my decision. We didn't know what was going to happen, or how long I'd have to keep fooling Bastian. So, we agreed she would protect the pups until someone came for us."

"But your home now." Miguel pointed out.

"She knows that. I guess she'll come back when she's ready." I shrugged.

Dimitri wrapped his arm around my shoulder before letting out a yawn.

"I think we can continue this in the morning. I'm ready for bed."

Everyone agreed, and again, I was hugged by everyone. I stopped my mother as everyone filed out the door.

"You're welcome to stay in the packhouse." I told her.

She looked at Gideon. "Where have you been staying?"

"Uhm... in the cells." He muttered. She looked at me, eyes wide.

"It's a long story Mom. Catch up with Ben, and tell him to find a room for you two."

"Okay. Thank you. And Lily..." She bit her lip. "I am sorry. For the part I played. I never meant to-"

"Stop." I stepped close to her, wrapping my arms around her waist. "I know. I'm not mad. I understand. You don't need to feel guilty, because I know you did it to protect the ones I love. And yourself. I could only be

angry with you if you had sacrificed yourself instead. I never knew you, or I didn't remember until recently, but I want my mom. I want us to know each other, and be a family again."

I felt her tears drip onto my shoulder as she hugged me back. "Thank you."

When I released her, I looked at my father.

"I won't say I understand everything you did, but I understand better now. I also can't say I'm not still mad, because I am. But I'd like to work on our relationship too. I don't just want a mom; I want my dad too."

Tears shone in his eyes as he nodded. He opened his arms slowly, and I accepted his embrace. A little piece of me clicked inside, knowing I had the thing I wanted most my whole life; A family. I finally had my family back, and nobody was going to take that away from me.