

## Chapter 8

Dimitri

Today was a shit day. I'd gotten barely any sleep this last week due to stress. Rogues were attacking the borders almost daily now, becoming more and more violent. My men were taking care of them, but more just kept coming. I needed to figure out where the fuck they were coming from, and why there were so many. On top of that bullshit, Jennine hadn't left me alone all fucking week. The bitch was desperate. It seemed no matter where I was, she was right fucking there too. The kitchens, the training grounds, skulking around the packhouse, hanging onto me shamelessly. Staff who worked in the packhouse were starting to talk; it was only a matter of time until rumors made their way to Lily.

"But they aren't exactly rumors." Snickered Ajax.

"They are. Nothing is going on between Jennine and I anymore."

"The key word there is 'anymore'. I don't think our mate will care about the differentiation."

"Why would she care anyway? You saw her today with that boy."

"I thought you didn't care about her? That she was only here to serve one purpose. Why do you care who she talks to?"

"Fuck off."

My hand gripped the rail on the stairs so hard my knuckles turned white. Remembering the way Lily had laughed and giggled with that mutt made me pissed off all over again. I'd been out on a run, blowing off steam, when I heard her scream. Ajax had immediately changed course, heading

to our mate. I'd shifted and run to the packhouse, but what I saw made me see red. Lily was talking to another man, a boy rather, laughing and giggling like a school girl. I vaguely recognized him from training, he was supposed to be taking the warrior exams tomorrow.

What really got me was the intense rush of feelings I'd experienced. Wishing it had been me that she was laughing for. Me that she blushed for. Me that was holding her hand. Lily must be really naïve not to have noticed that that boy was flirting with her. And when he had looked at her neck... her unmarked neck... I'd had to hold myself back from killing him on the spot.

So, all in all, a really shitty end to a really shitty week. All I wanted was to go to my room, and sleep. I heard Ben coming down the stairs, laughing to himself. When he saw me, he skipped the last two steps, coming to a stop.

"Hey Boss."

"Hey. What are you doing up here?"

"I helped your Luna up to bed."

He was up against the wall so fast I wasn't even sure how it happened. My fist was pulled back aimed for his face; my other hand fisted in his shirt.

"What did you say?!" I growled.

"Whoa! Chill Dimitri! It was a joke, I was joking!"

I let him go, stepping back. He adjusted his shirt, eyeing me like I'd lost my mind.

"Where is she?" I demanded.

"Upstairs. Truth is, she had trouble getting back upstairs, I found her on the landing on my floor. I offered to make sure she got up here alright. You really do need to invest in an elevator man."

"Why didn't you mind link me?" I snapped at him.

Ben blinked at me several times. "I..."

"He didn't think you'd care enough to come help Lily. Was he wrong?" Ajax asked sarcastically.

I ignored him and focused on Ben. "Next time, you link me. Got it?"

Ben nodded, waving as he continued down to his floor. Taking the steps two at a time, I caught Lily's scent and inhaled deeply. It calmed my nerves somewhat. Turning the corner, I saw her and my breath whooshed out in relief. She was standing in the middle of the hallway looking between my door and hers. A small part of me wished she would knock on my door. A bigger part of me wished she would turn around so I could see her face. Fuck, what was wrong with me? The next second though, she sped into her room and slammed the door. I heard the lock click.

"Great. Now she's locking herself in." Grumbled Ajax.

"I have a key dumbass." I shot back.

"Oh yeah? What's the plan Dimitri? Unlock the door, storm in and force our mark on her?" He scoffed.

A small smile crept onto my face. "Not quite."

Marching to my room, I threw open the door and headed straight for my night stand. The top drawer had all the keys for this floor; I grabbed the one for Lily's and walked out of the room, not even bothering to shut the door behind me. With no hesitation, I unlocked her door and walked in. Her scent hit me like a brick wall. Closing the door softly behind me, I reapplied the lock and looked around. Light peaked out from under the bathroom door and the sound of water running hit my ears. She was in the shower. Images of her washing herself popped into my head and my sweatpants tented almost instantly.

Crossing the room silently, I sat on the edge of the bed waiting. Five minutes later, the water shut off and I could hear her on the other side of the door. If she walked out naked... I don't think I'd be able to hold myself back.

"This is a really dumb idea." My wolf whined.

The bathroom door opened and, mercifully, Lily was wrapped in a towel. Her hair was still wet and hung around her shoulders and down her back. She looked so much better than she did when she got here. The bruises were gone and she even looked like she'd gained a little weight. Her scent wafted in from the bathroom, carried by the lingering steam of the shower. Goddess, she smelled amazing...

It took all of five seconds for Lily to notice me. Those eyes, those fucking eyes of hers widened considerably and she let out a small gasp.

"W-what are you doing in here?!" She demanded.

I decided to play dumb. "I live here."

She looked to the door and I watched as her throat moved in an audible gulp. Plotting escape? Not likely.

"What are you doing in here?"

I got to my feet, watching her every move. "This is my house."

"Okay. So?"

I stepped forward. She stepped back.

"So... since this is my house, I have the right to come and go from any room as I please."

Another step forward. Another step back.

"You couldn't have waited until I was... clothed?"

Step. Step.

"Wolves don't usually have any qualms about being naked in front of each other."

"Well, I do."

One more step and Lilys back hit the wall. I closed the distance between us, placing my hands on either side of her head, trapping her. She really was a tiny little thing. I dwarfed her, having to lean down so our faces were inches apart.

"Around everyone? Or just me?" I asked.

I could hear her heart pick up speed. Her breathing was heavier, but her eyebrows creased in confusion.

"What do you mean?"

"I mean, would you have a problem being naked in front of that boy you were talking to earlier? Or do you just have a problem being naked in front of me? Your mate."

Her reaction wasn't what I anticipated. She straightened her back and fixed me with a steely glare.

"I have a problem being naked in front of anyone. Especially-," She stepped forward, shocking me into taking a step back. "-, people who bring me into their home, and then act as if I don't exist. Especially around people who dump me in a room by myself and don't bother to check up on me. And especially around people who buy me but are too repulsed by me to even touch me even though I'm their mate!"

I opened my mouth, but she held up her hand.

"I'm not done." She snapped. "You can't come up here after a week and bitch me out for talking to someone, boy or girl, when you haven't bothered to say one word to me since the day I got here. If you must know, Clint isn't the only one I talked to today. I also met one of the cooks, Greta."

Now, if you had seen me talking to her, would you be in here right now?  
No."

Where the hell did this little spitfire come from?

"Furthermore, Alpha, if you were expecting something from me by barging in here while I'm undressed, well you can just forget it. The man who didn't even want to kiss me at my own wedding-

"You're still on that?" I interrupted her.

Her eyes narrowed. "You're the one who came in here throwing the word mate around. If you really can't understand why that hurt me, then you're a bigger asshole than I thought."