

Chapter 337

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She swallowed hard, opened her mouth to speak but he was studiously ignoring her, turning to his laptop and beginning to tap on the keyboard. She swallowed a second time and took a hesitant step forward.

"I would suggest you leave before I change my mind," he said coldly, still not looking at her. "Karn likes you and he'd be pissed at me for tossing you out before he's had the chance to teach you the control you obviously need, otherwise your ass would be out of here right now."

He looked up then and his eyes were as cold as his voice. "As soon as Karn tells me you're not a danger to anyone, you're out of here, Lily. I don't give a fuck what little fantasy world you're currently living in. You want to think I'm your mate then fine, go right ahead. But let's get one thing clear: I will never mate with you. The sooner you believe that the better."

Lily let his words wash over her, waited for her wolf to surge forward to protect her as pain suffused her. Her animal remained silent and dormant within her even as she wept inside at his rejection. She could feel tears gathering but she bit her lip hard to stop them.

Mac could fight the mating pull all he wanted but she wouldn't give up. If he seriously didn't want her then he wouldn't have allowed her to stay at all. She'd be leaving so quickly her head would be spinning. She straightened her spine and tilted her chin defiantly, glaring at him before turning away and leaving the study without a word.

Mac stayed behind his desk as still as statue. He listened to Lily leave the house and followed her scent until she vanished into the trees in the direction the others had taken earlier. As soon as he was certain she was far enough away, he threw back his head and let out a bellow of rage so loud the windows shook. His fist lashed out and he punched through the mahogany table, splitting it in two jagged pieces that crashed to the floor.

Rage he'd never experienced before took hold and he reached for the broken wood to hurl it across the room. The broken table shattered further when it hit the wall, sending chunks of wood and plaster flying everywhere. He whirled furiously, looking for something else to break, something else to pound into oblivion.

There was nothing close at hand so he punched his fist through the nearest wall, swinging over and over again until his hand broke and bled profusely. Only when he couldn't swing another blow did he drop to his knees and hang his head, his breaths coming out sharp and fast.

He closed his eyes and saw Lily's frightened face before him. Her big brown eyes had been terrified and then so full of pain. The scent of her fear still lingered in the room, her anguished scream still resounded in his head. Her pain crashed over him, breaking him in two.

He had to push her away, had to make her hate him but it had ripped him apart.

He'd always thought the loss of his wife and child would be the worst anguish he'd ever have to bear. Hurting Lily was a different kind of pain, but it was just as intense, just as soul destroying. He craved to go to her, to beg her forgiveness but he knew he couldn't. She didn't belong with him no matter how much he wanted to keep her. He couldn't be who she needed him to be, but he could do his best to help her learn enough control.

It would be torture to have her so close and yet never touch her, but he deserved to suffer for what he'd just put her through. All he had to do was stay as far away from her as possible. If he couldn't be close to her then he would entrust her to Karn. He had every faith in his friend. He knew she would be safe with him. And after today's little lesson, she would never lose control of her wolf again and accidentally hurt the other man.

He just prayed that Lily would learn control soon and be gone quickly. He prayed he would not need to repeat today's lesson. He'd ripped her to shreds because it was the only way to keep her safe. He didn't think he'd have enough self-control to do it again, not when he could still feel each and every emotional wound he'd inflicted on her.

If he lost control, it would be disaster for both of them when Andrei Romanov came to claim his only daughter.

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Lily ran. She ran so fast tears didn't have time to fall down her face; they simply vanished as soon as her eyes filled with moisture. She wanted to scream out loud but she could sense the other Praetorians not too far ahead. They would hear her and turn back and she wouldn't be able to explain why she was so furious she was ready to level some trees.

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The shock of Mac's taunting and outrageous behaviour was wearing off and she was starting to feel anger. It wasn't just anger, it was a slow burning fury that was ready to overwhelm her. She was also furious to note that her wolf was still dormant within her. "You traitorous little hussy," she hissed at her animal. "He says roll over and you're on your back in two seconds flat."

Of course her other half ignored her completely. Their mate had exerted dominance and like a good little submissive the stupid animal was playing possum and probably wouldn't show itself for days.

Although she was angry with Mac, she did concede that she'd needed some help with her wolf. If she'd been able to control her emotions better she would never have accidentally hurt Karn.

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She slowed to a stop and leaned over to catch her breath, fighting the urge to throw up the food she'd eaten earlier. She could have killed Karn, and had come so close to shifting and hurting Mac too.

"You okay, Andrea?"

Brandon's voice startled her and she almost shrieked as she straightened abruptly to see him standing a few feet away from her. Heart thumping wildly, she took a deep breath and tried to calm herself down.

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She'd been so distracted she'd let a vampire sneak up on her. Sure it was only Brandon, but if it had been someone intent on hurting her she wouldn't have stood a chance against them. It was stupid to let her guard down; she couldn't allow herself to get so distracted again.

"Thought you were supposed to be running with the rest of them," she answered, ignoring his question.

He grinned at her and rolled his eyes. "Karn scented you. Told me to double back and make sure you caught up with the rest of us. I wasn't about to argue with him; didn't want to be tossed about like a rag doll again. He's in one shitty mood today. What did you do to upset him earlier? And why did Mac want to see you?"

Lily rearranged her ponytail, making it more secure. Brandon's presence was soothing her and she gave him a quick smile. "I've been known to piss off the most docile of people. Pissing off bad tempered bastards is easy after that," she answered. "Come on, show me where we're being tortured before Karn decides he wants his pound of flesh from me as well."