

Chapter 443

"Liliana Rose Romanov, you are consigned to kitchen duties for the next three months or until your pregnancy progresses to the point you need to rest, whichever comes first. I won't be completely heartless. You're excused breakfast duties as you're living up at the Praetorian compound, but you will be on lunch and dinner duties from tomorrow onwards and I don't just mean cooking, you have to clean up afterwards."

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Rafe watched confusion cross her face for an instant and then realisation kicked in. Her big brown eyes filled with tears even as a smile began to cross her lips and she threw her arms around his neck. "Oh, thank you, Rafe. Thank you for letting me stay. I swear I'll be on my best behaviour. I won't ever let you down again, I promise I won't."

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Swallowing down the lump in his throat, he held her tightly, feeling her tears on his neck as she tried to hold them back. Annie had been right. Sometimes circumstances dictated a person's actions and they had to make decisions in the heat of the moment that weren't always the best decisions. It was his job as Alpha to see the complete picture and to determine what was best for the pack.

He had no idea how long Lily would remain with him, but he knew right now it was the right place for her. It was for the good of the pack to have her with them. There was the potential to have the pack split if she left. He could never see Andrei and Loretta staying with their child banished. It was different with the new Alpha who was out there, that was simply the natural way of Were life.

No, Lily was his to protect until such time that another came to take up that mantle. All of the Vârcolac were his to protect, especially with the attack on Liam, which filled him with such rage it was hard to control his wolf. How could he give Lily's care into the hands of another when she was with child and vulnerable to an attack from the European covens? What kind of man, let alone Alpha, would that make him?

"I know you won't, honey," he whispered soothingly, stroking her hair as his eyes met Mackenzie's in the doorway. He nodded to the vampire and received a respectful nod in return. "Tomorrow at lunch time, now don't you be late." Rafe disentangled himself from Lily and stood up as she followed him.

"I need to head up to the compound. Everyone's gathering there to decide what to do with the female that attacked Liam. Will you two be coming? I know there was some talk about your condition, Lily, but the poison isn't harmful to Vârcolacs. I doubt there is any danger."

Mac stepped forward and pulled his mate into his arms. He had been listening to most of her conversation with Rafe, having awakened to an empty bed and panicking for a second thinking she'd run again. It had been hard to give her the space to work things out with her Alpha, but he'd understood the importance of it. "We might head up in a bit, Rafe. I'd like a little more time with my mate, seeing as she's going to be occupied for the next while."

Rafe nodded again, sending a smile towards Lily before turning and running into the trees. He shifted to wolf form, brown shaggy fur glinting into the dying sunlight as he disappeared.

"Are you okay?" Mac turned Lily in his arms, brushing at her wet cheeks. She gave him a warm smile, her eyes glowing with love as she gazed up at him.

"I'm lucky to have Rafe as my Alpha and I'm lucky to have you as my mate. How could I not be okay?" Standing on tiptoes, she kissed her mate soundly, trying not to giggle as he groaned and began to harden against her. He really knew how to make a woman feel loved, and she had the rest of her life to bask in that love.

To be continued...