

Lita's Love for the Alpha

Bonus Chapter- Not My Problem

“You want me to do *what?*” Lita asked her father carefully, all of her emotions building in a poignant clarity. Lita could hardly remember how long they’d been talking. After he mentioned her mother, time became unclear. All she knew was that he’d been talking the whole time and that he’d triggered the kind of emotions that whited-out the pain and left only Nyx behind. He couldn’t have said those words. He couldn’t have asked for such a ridiculous thing. Though the expectant face that met hers told her the opposite.

Anyone who actually knew Lita knew that Nyx only dealt in absolutes. Kill or be killed. Dominate or be dominated. It was clear in the way others tiptoed around her. And yet her father had the nerve to dismiss Lita’s years of trauma and abuse. He ignored the stress of her wolf being suppressed, even as it went against the very fabric of this archaic beliefs. And Lita knew he ignored it all in order to get something from her. Something neither he nor her mother deserved.

Lita’s eyes bled from black to red, coloring the world in rubies with each measured breath. She would not start a war, she told herself. She would not start a war with this Alpha. No, she would not start a war with her father.

I don’t know, Nyx growled, *could be fun to see the old man bleed. I want to show him what we can become when we’re not so civilized.*

Thank the moon I don’t take my advice from bloodthirsty wolves, Nyx, Lita replied, a proud smile in her voice. *One of these days, though, I promise I’ll really let you loose to give these men a lesson.*

“Calm down, daughter,” Asher laughed as if her change in demeanor shocked him. How could he think she wouldn’t react to such a suggestion? To the mention of her mother. This man knew nothing about her, and it was painfully clear to Lita that he had no desire to know her. That he would never see anything outside of his own interests. Anyone who could know Lita’s history and suggest she have anything to do with her mother—

“Daughter?” She parroted him, confused. How dare he call her that? Lita’s voice sounded wrong. Too calm and thick, too sharp and hollow. Cole stiffened, pressing his knee into hers, probing the bond with quiet alarm. He had to know she’d be out for blood.

Not now, Lita snapped at Cole, who released the thread immediately, and Nyx snarled in agreement. She didn’t want any distractions from him or his overprotective wolf.

“Obviously, I understand why you might hold a grudge or two against your mother, but that’s practically ancient history,” Asher insisted, crossing a tailored pant leg over the other. “She’s been stripped of her title and you’re a pack Luna. You have a strong Alpha at your side. Surely, your mother is no longer a threat to you, so there’s no reason to give into such irrational feelings.” His brows softened, as if he were addressing a child, his eyes urging her to see the logic in his dismissive words.

“Irrational... feelings...” Lita repeated aloud, testing the words on her tongue as if they were foreign. As if she didn’t understand them. Maybe she didn’t. Maybe with the flood of clarity came a lack of understanding for those who would try to use her. He thought she was a simpering she-wolf. Even as an Alpha in her own right, a Luna to an entire pack as he’d said... Her father saw her as a hysterical, dim-witted woman with absolutely nothing to contribute to a pack or her mate, except a birth canal. Nyx barked, the sound sharp as a whip and blanketed in a lethal calm. A killing quiet descended between them all, tense and heady.

“Asher, you don’t speak to my mate—” Cole started, snapping to attention as the insult finally landed. He leaned forward, blocking Lita’s view of her father, shielding her from harm and conflict as he always did. She wouldn’t let him this time.

Move, Lita said through the link, her voice a coiled spring ready to snap. She hardly recognized the sound or force of it. She hadn’t felt like this since the pits and that hellish time at Maxim’s compound. Nyx growled sweetly, rolling her shoulders with feral joy. She wanted to rip something apart.

“It’s fine,” Lita said aloud, “he should be allowed to say what he wants. It’s clear he has a point to make.” The reverberation of tones in her voice screamed strength, sending warning bells to any man smart enough to listen. Alpha Asher was clearly not one of them.

“Yes, daughter, you understand what I’m trying to make clear, don’t you? I only mean to point out that emotional baggage is a weakness. You shouldn’t let it define the decisions you make as a leader.”

“No, you’re absolutely right, Calvin,” Lita agreed, her voice layered in regular and Alpha tones. She enjoyed the tiny twitch of his left eye when she said his name that way. “If I were to let emotions rule my leadership decisions, I’d probably have gone for your throat the moment you suggested I take my mother in.” She didn’t soften the bite of her words with a fake smile. Lita didn’t want subtle, she wanted a sledgehammer to his head, especially as Cole still bridged the air between them.

Cole slowly threw a look over his shoulder, sending something warm down the bond. From this angle, she could see her father clearly.

Asher blinked, confusion and anger warring for control of his features. Indignation had him scowling. “Excuse me?”

He likely meant to intimidate her, but icy calm flowed through her instead, Nyx’s claws carefully notching into Lita’s soul for traction if they shifted. Lita’s hand wrapped around Cole’s forearm, enforcing her earlier words with an iron grip. He would not come between her and Asher.

She felt his surprise flow into her. The confusion, pride, and disgust for her father roiled through the bond until she grinned an unkind smile past his shoulder.

I will handle this, she said, her voice a metaphorical set of claws at Cole’s throat. He still hadn’t moved, and she needed to warn him of what would happen if he didn’t. For a moment she wasn’t sure if he would yield, his own Alpha instincts likely driving him to protect her. But when she dragged her mate back, he went without issue. Cole sank into the leather as Lita gently forced him into his seat. She leaned forward and met her father’s sharp eyes.

“Or, maybe a better example of being too emotional to make a good leadership decision is choosing to disrespect your bond with your Luna. To spit in your Beta’s face. Like my mother did when she gave into that pull with you. You’re both too selfish for anyone’s good and that’s probably a better example of a mistake than the innocent child you made. But what do I know?” Lita shrugged, dismissing her father, “I’m just a female.”

Cole didn’t resist, a heated smirk curling the edge of his lips. Something strong and liquid went through the bond again, but Lita ignored it, focusing on the spineless man in front of her.

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“That’s an outrageous thing to say! I meant no harm, Lita,” her father waved his hand wildly. “I merely think it’s expected that you’ll offer your mother sanctuary in your pack. No one would judge you for taking in a disgraced wolf. After all, you’re accepting *humans* for moon’s sake.” He chuckled cruelly, as if the idea was abhorrent, any semblance of his warm exterior melting into the man that had not cared what monsters took hold of his daughter. “Honestly, I’m shocked your mate hasn’t tempered all this spite out of you!”

“Stop,” Lita snarled, “You have no right to speak about my pack. My friends. Human or not, Jaz is pack. As are the other humans we’ve taken in. Be careful what you say next.”

“And as far as tempering *anything* about Lita—” Cole said, his voice deadly smooth—“I wouldn’t dream of it. I’m not the type of male that tries to break his Luna in by dominating her. It’s a disgusting practice, wouldn’t you say, Asher?”

Asher’s eyes flashed, his annoyance and disgust showing on his face. He opened his mouth to speak, but Lita let her hold on Nyx loosen.

“NO!” she hissed, her fingers elongating and curling into claws. Each finger pinched the leather until they punctured the armrest. Her muscles felt like they thickened, stretching with energy reserves. “If there is one line between us, Calvin Asher, know this—” Lita stood, her body unfolding to its full height and build—“You will *not* insult my pack.” Lita’s flesh chilled, her body tightening in anticipation of a fight. Her Alpha tone rang out, loud and heavy, equal to her mother’s. Equal even, she suspected, to her father’s. He flinched, one eyelid twitching uncontrollably as his own body began to change. His own claws pinched his seat, looking as if she’d slapped him in the face.

When he stood, their height difference became apparent. Slight as she was, Lita’s body was that of an Alpha, raw power and dominance enough to match any man in the room. And she would unleash the fight on her father if he challenged her. She didn’t feel weakened by their height difference, if anything, she felt it gave her an advantage, placing her closer to all his vulnerabilities.

He didn’t take a step forward, menacing and pissed from the edge of his chair.

“Do you understand?” Lita asked, not waiting for a response. “I will not offer my mother anything. Not sanctuary. Not a phone call. Nothing.”

“Apologize at once, daughter, and I will forget this momentary lapse in judgement,” Asher hissed, his breath warming the air between them.

“*No.* And I am not your daughter. You haven’t earned the right to call me that, and you never will. Imagine that I’m as dead to you, Alpha Asher, as you are to *me*,” Lita replied, “You think I don’t know what you’re trying to do? Trying to clean up the mess you’ve made in both of your homes by pawing off one of your lovers on me because of bad publicity? The sins of the father are his alone.” She grinned. “Clean up your own disaster.”

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“Do you have any idea who you’re speaking to? I can’t believe Diane raised you like this. You speak as if you have as much right to an opinion as I or your mate do when you don’t. You, Lita, do nothing except what you’re told. That is the role of a Luna. To follow her Alpha. Produce heirs. Handle the small matters of she-wolves. My *request* was a curtesy, silly pup. You *will* take her in and you will be happy to be of service to your father!” His hands curled and uncurled, his chest puffing out.

“You want to discipline me? Teach me how things work in your world? I dare you to try,” Lita mocked his obvious aggression, “Nyx is always eager to break the boot that tries to crush us. Look where all that Alpha male bullshit got Maxim.”

Asher growled, stepping forward, “You’ve been allowed to thrive under a weak hand. If no one else will correct it, I certainly will.” His Alpha energy tried to smother hers, the pressure threatening to force her to her knees. Lita saw Cole stiffen, claws punching through his fingertips. When he didn’t stand up to intervene, Lita breathed a sign of relief. She didn’t need her father thinking of her as the damsel in distress.

Lita matched Asher’s step forward and stance, refusing to back down. She straightened her back and threw her own aura in his face. He coughed, clearly not expecting her to retaliate. Lita seethed. She’d never cower again. Not to anyone, and certainly not to a man that had disrespected every ideal he claimed to uphold. Cole—to his credit—stayed out of it, until Asher surged forward, cocking the back of his hand as if he’d bring Lita to heel.

Lita shoved him back, letting her claws scrape down his expensive suit, puncturing the skin of his chest. He stumbled into his chair, throat rumbling with the promise of Lita’s pain as trickles of blood soaked the front of his shirt. Then, in a blink, Cole was bearing down on Asher, pushing him down into his chair hard enough to make the wood groan.

One palm on Asher’s chest, the other curled into a pointed fist, Cole roared in his face. “That was a stupid decision, even for you. Lay a finger on her, and it will be your last act as Alpha of this pack,” Cole promised, muscles straining. “I respected that you helped us when you didn’t need to. I appreciate it. I earned some loyalty from me, regardless of my personal feelings about you. But don’t think I’m blind to what you gained. It wasn’t a selfless act and you aren’t a good person.”

Lita could feel Cole’s energy smothering the room, Midnight baring their lethal teeth.

“I don’t like you, but it’s never been an issue. This though—” Cole nodded his head between them—“The things you’ve said to her. The things you’ve implied. That’s an issue for me and I promise, you don’t want this problem.”

Asher struggled against Lita’s mate, but he couldn’t break Cole’s hold. It only proved the point that natural Alpha strength would dominate others, but against another Alpha, it was nothing compared to training. Cole was the better athlete. The stronger fighter. Between the two, Cole would win. Lita knew it. Cole knew it. And Asher knew it too, his eyes calculating his options.

A sound rolled through Asher’s chest, a warning that things were about to get worse. Had he linked to his men? Were guards already on their way? Cole laughed, releasing the pressure on his prey. “When I *let* you get up,” he said. “I suggest you make a better choice than the one you were about to make. Or we’re all about to make some emotional leadership decisions. *Fuck you*, and whatever mutts you called in to help you.”

Cole backed up, giving Asher his back as if he posed no threat. Lita hadn’t been a part of the werewolf world for long, but that seemed like a universal slight against a man. Cole continued moving until his outstretched palm reached Lita’s shoulder, rubbing it in soothing circles. He slowly turned her toward the door.

“This meeting is finished,” Cole said, tossing the words over his shoulder as if Asher wasn’t worth the energy, “and I suggest you don’t bother my mate about her mother or anything other than an apology again.”