

Lita's Love for the Alpha

Bonus Chapter- You Like That, Huh?

Are you pretending not to hear me? Cole asked over the link, concern threading through his words.

Lita had stormed out of her father's office like a bat out of hell, barreling through Asher's Deltas as she fled. At the time, Cole snorted, knowing 'big bad' Alpha Asher had called for backup. He'd gone from trying to dominate Lita, to crying for his guards with Cole only a moment away from putting his hand around the man's neck. Lita hadn't found it funny, throwing hard shoulders into each man that refused to get out of her way. A few had even stumbled, glaring at Cole as they went to check on their Alpha.

Lita? Cole tried for the fourth time, only more silence echoing back. Cole kicked himself and Midnight snapped his jaws closed in irritation.

You humans are always making a mess of things, Midnight growled, prowling the edges of Cole's mind like the predator he was. *You should have let me take his throat.*

Cole bared his teeth, hating when his wolf took on that self-satisfied tone. *I don't take orders from anything that licks its own balls.*

Midnight huffed in a wet laugh, running his tongue over his canines. *I get no complaints from Nyx.*

Cole made a disgusted face, then ignored the wolf, knowing it would only antagonize him more to ignore him. So Cole focused on Lita's bond instead. He should have spoken up when Asher dismissed Lita, or when he spoke to Cole as if she wasn't there. But he'd been trying to remain civil with the man who ran the east coast packs. The one who sent a small army to rescue Lita. Cole hadn't wanted to bulldoze over that relationship. Just for Asher to say everything that made such a relationship impossible.

She probably felt like he hadn't defended her. Wolves defended their Lunas on all levels, and yet he'd sat there and twiddled his thumbs. But Cole had been getting a sense lately that Lita didn't appreciate when he stepped in. As if she'd rather he left her to handle her own fights, and it wasn't an unreasonable request for a Luna to make.

Maybe she wasn't upset because he hadn't helped. She'd told him to stay out of it after all. Cole rubbed the back of his neck as he followed the path his Luna made on her way out. He could clearly see the line of disgruntled wolves, still trying to get back in position to watch the fight. She was probably upset because he intervened. Frustrated, Cole linked the pack, giving them a sharp command to steer clear of their Luna until she calmed down.

She was more than capable of dealing with her own problems—an Alpha in her own proud right and he hadn't meant to make her feel weak, so he was trying to correct his behavior, to give her what he thought she wanted. Except Lita never seemed to make it easy for him. Cole tried to take that into consideration. Especially concerning a meeting with her father when their relationship was already nonexistent and Cole was already in the doghouse. But his damned instincts were so difficult to fight sometimes. If even one finger on Asher's hand had made contact with Lita, those Deltas would've had to pull Cole off of him. And Cole's pack would have been excommunicated from the east coast, or at the very least, Asher's events.

Perhaps *that* was her problem. Was this about what Asher asked? Cole probed the bond, wading through the flurry of feelings Lita unleashed.

Asher should never have asked you to accept your mother into our pack. You know I stand by your refusal one hundred percent, love. Cole said, hoping to assure her or soothe her, even as he knew she probably wouldn't respond.

The sound of the door slamming had drawn interested eyes from the crowd, and Lita's storming off didn't go unnoticed. Werewolves, much like humans, thrived on drama and getting the inside scoop on behind-the-scenes happenings. Cole scowled at them, letting Midnight's eyes flash and remind them exactly who he was. Immediately, they snapped their attention back to the ring. He returned his focus to Lita, who pushed deeper into the crowd. The issue with detecting emotions was that he couldn't always tell why she was feeling something. Lita's emotions weren't always easy to tie to a specific incident. And when she was angry with him, her emotions blended too much to tell exactly what had upset her.

At the moment, her bond felt like a hurricane. Cole could barely keep his footing, let alone gauge the issue. He reached for her shoulder, but she evaded effortlessly, slipping away. He brushed people out of the way in order to keep up and those wolves had the good sense not to say a word about it.

What's happening? Alex's voice beamed through the fog of Cole's mind. He opened a public link, one accessible to all their pack members in the immediate vicinity.

I told you I was going to ask first, asshole, Ace snarled through the same connection. *Luna's pissed. The fuck did you do, Cole?* Cole shook his head, knowing Ace was always one word away from getting punched at all times.

Don't let that miserable mouth ruin your pretty face, Stace cautioned Ace, borderline laughing over the bond, *Jaz would be upset if you came back with fewer teeth than you left with.*

I'm not known for my teeth, Stacey Ramos, Ace bragged.

Cut it out before I kick your ass out of the link. Cole snapped, *to answer your question, Alex, nothing bad happened, really. Asher's an asshole, but what else is new? He triggered Lita and acted like nothing happened. But she's ignoring me now, so I guess I fucked up, too.*

I'm not ignoring you, Lita snarled through the link, *You son of a—*

Wheewwww, Stace whistled, *Based on that response, I'd say ya'll are going to need some time alone. We'll hang out down here. I left the works in the kitchen, Alpha.*

What the hell is 'the works'? Brody asked, sounding clueless about women.

Can we please get him a girlfriend because—

Shut up, Ace! Several pack members said at once, making Lita laugh ahead of Cole. Shutting down the link, Cole exhaled with relief. At least she could laugh. That had to be a good sign. He would take Stace's advice and let Lita decompress upstairs.

Lita's head swam. She was so angry she felt like she might burst, and even Ace's idiocy wouldn't take that away. What she needed was a good scream. The kind that shredded the throat and pulled from the diaphragm. She needed to bellow her frustration and pain. Her irritation and acknowledgement of how unfair everything felt. As she pushed through the crowd, watching as the men in the ceremonial ring circled one another. One moved in one part of the ring, green linen pants and green paint that marked down his chest. And the other moved opposite green, but in red with paint down to his abdomen. Their posture turned more feral as they hunched toward the center. They weren't taking any fighting stance Lita had ever seen in the circuit and she wondered what they were doing.

Lita pinched her eyes closed, and when she opened them again, she watched the fighters once more. Backs bowed, arms relaxed into casual jogging form. Lita couldn't anticipate what was about to happen. The one in green lunged at the other in a swipe that didn't appear to be meant to connect with any vital striking area, grazing the side of a shoulder. It could have been a testing strike, one designed to gauge the other fighter's reaction time but, she'd never seen one use so little force or waste the advantage on an impervious part of the body.

It's not as if biceps and shoulders couldn't be damaged, they just couldn't be damaged enough by a direct hit. A submission move used to extend the joints would work to damage the shoulder socket, but that didn't appear to be green's goal.

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I know you're overwhelmed. I can feel how confused and hurt you are, mate. Talk to me. How can I try to help if you don't talk to me? Cole insisted, grabbing her arm from where he stood behind her. Lita shook it off, moving through the crowd. She was angry with him, but Lita was also angry with herself. She'd let Calvin blindside her emotions because, against all odds, she'd hoped that not all the adults in her life had been terrible.

Clearly, she was wrong. And now that meant she was disappointed and angry at herself for it.

How could he ask me that? How could he put that pressure on me?! Lita yelled, her voice echoing through the private link with Cole. Nyx flinched from the force of it and she heard Cole stutter step behind her.

He's a coward. A manipulative one at that. It takes a certain man, a certain type of wolf, to admit to disrespecting his Luna without an ounce of remorse. It doesn't surprise me that he would ask you to take your mother in—to let her join our pack as if she could ever deserve your forgiveness.

Why would he kick her out at all if he wants her in a pack?! Why put this on me? I hate them both, Lita snarled. *Hate them all. I wish I could just—*

Cole sighed, grabbing her shoulders as they reached the edge of the crowd, he pulled her to a stop, dragging her backwards until her back was against his chest. *You already know that answer, Lita. An Alpha willfully cheating on his Luna. No, he wouldn't face any consequences, but it doesn't look good. It doesn't sit right with his pack. The cat is out of the bag where you're concerned. Maybe there were suspicions and gossip before, but now it's in the open. So he had to make the problem disappear. Especially after Rafi quit. And now, he feels like if we take in your mother, it would kill two birds with one stone. It would get her out of the city, and it would ensure he still had access to her if he wanted.*

That's fucking disgusting, Lita hissed, spinning to face him. *No surprise that there's yet another man in power who wants his cake and to eat it too. Has he learned nothing from what happened to your father?*

*Maxim's downfall was a long time coming, baby, and I'm sure a lot of people wished he'd died well before he ever did. Men like that don't ever think the end will come. They feel invincible because their reigns in power are long. They aren't untouchable, but it's pretty damn close when you consider how large their packs are and how many resources they have at their disposal. *

The frustrated whine that echoed through their bond matched the flaring of Lita's eyes. They grew dilated, flashing between her natural dark color and the red of her wolf. It made Cole tense. *If you want me to teach him some manners, you only need to say the word. What's war when it comes to love, right?*

*Cole gave a half-hearted laugh, looking into her sad eyes. He cupped her cheek, placing a kiss on her forehead. *Apparently, I'm developing a list of wolves I have to correct later.*

Stop it, Lita snapped. *Stop fighting these battles for me! I can deal with my father myself, Cole! I'm the pack Luna and a damn strong Alpha, yet every time I turn around, you or some other male is stepping on my toes.*

And you can rip my head off for it, okay? Just not down here in front of everyone else. I do have some dignity left, you know? Can't we fight in private?

*Cole watched Lita's canines elongate until the tips punched down over her bottom lip. Heat flushed down the bond and she glared at him. Lita could place exactly what emotion he was feeling, but hot usually meant anger. He had the nerve to be angry at *her*? She wanted to break his damn nose.

His eyes flashed. Pulling her behind him, Cole took them both to the staircase and held the door open for her.

You're going to escort me to your own ass-whooping? She laughed, annoyed at how much that excited her.

I figure after everything today, I deserve it. The least I can do is let you get a free hit in.

A hit? As in one?

Lita cackled, throwing her head back to laugh out loud as she ascended the staircase. *I think I've come far enough to land more than one, love, and I strongly doubt you'll be letting me do it.*

We'll see, he chuckled through the bond, sending more of that heat. Only this time, Lita realized she might have misread the emotion. The feeling swept through her, making her skin pucker and sweat. Tingles fluttered in her stomach, her breathing growing shallow.

Does the idea of me kicking your ass turn you on? Is that what I'm feeling through the bond?

Cole said nothing for a moment as they reached the top step. He pushed the door open and held it again, as Lita raised her brows.

He shook his head, a heated smirk flashing some of his perfect teeth, telling her she was waiting for an answer she wouldn't get. The guards on either side of the door nodded at them both and turned away.

Look, you can kick my ass all over the suite and eat your way through a tub of ice cream. Drink a bottle of champagne. Make hot chocolate with the fluffy marshmallows if it'll make you feel better, Cole insisted with the door shut. *And if when you're done doing that you want to leave, say the word and we leave. The room. The showcase. The city. Any of it, Lita. *

Cole's voice poured through her head like warm tea, soothing and sweet. Lita hid her smile as she headed for the elevators.

It's not fair that my best friend covers your ass with my favorite things, Lita rolled her eyes, pushing the button. Cole laughed, brushing Lita's hair from her neck.

Who do you think asked her to buy them?" he said, his voice startling her as they slipped into the elevator.

It's not going to save you from a fist to the face, Lita shrugged, *And don't milk the broken nose either. You can take a little deviated septum, you big, strong Alpha.*

Cole's eyes flashed red and then deepened, molten hot sensation pouring down the bond between them. *Teasing me now? Very mature.*

And apparently you love it when I'm mean to you, Lita huffed, raising her brows at his expression. *Or am I misreading all this heat?*

He smiled, leaning against the side wall as he punched the button for their floor. *Dominance isn't mean. It's a natural state of being. And yea, for the record, Alpha aggression looks really fucking good on you.*