Lita's Love for the Alpha

Examining the Facts

"Is there anywhere else I can do the examination? The couch isn't ideal," doctor Morgan asked.

Cole picked Lita up and carried her to his bedroom so the doctor would have more room to work. Feeling her warmth in his arms was disarming. He couldn't help but remember those few minutes back at her apartment. Had he ever felt anything like it before? All that need and heat between them...

When he had laid her down, his gaze lingered longer than it needed to. She really was quite beautiful, despite the injuries that marred her body. Cole cleared his throat and joined Alex at the foot of the bed. He needed to find another place for the girl as soon as possible. He didn't want to form more of an attachment than he already had.

"I smashed his apartment to shit," Cole looked over at Alex as they watched Doctor Morgan work on Lita. His slender fingers were searching for a pulse. Then checking her lungs.

"The asshole?"

Cole nodded, his devilish smile made Alex laugh, "He's going to know another wolf was there. Just like I knew he was one the second I caught the scent in her apartment. I hope it drives him fucking crazy."

"Nothing in the apartment could tell you what pack he's in or what rank he is?" Alex pulled out his phone, "How are we going to track down his information?"

Cole shook his head angrily, "We have no choice but to wait for Lita to wake up. She'll have to tell us."

"We could wait at the apartment for him to return? That'd be easy enough," Alex clicked some things into the search browser of his phone.

"I suspect when he finds his apartment in that state, and Lita gone, he'll move quickly. And if he's another Alpha, someone else has probably already found it. Maybe a Delta or a pack wolf. He's bound to have someone watching the apartment. He might not return to it at all. We shouldn't count on being able to track him that way."

"Lita actually lived down the hall from a wolf? Her... ex—" Alex practically whispered that part, "was a wolf. You think he was stalking her? I've heard of exes going crazy. And what are the odds that a human girl finds herself mixed up with no one, but TWO wolves... I don't believe in coincidences like that."

Cole grunted, "I don't know. We don't know enough about Lita to say. It's definitely something to keep in mind. I know I found the key to her apartment in his place as well. I can only imagine what that means... I might not stop myself from killing him when I get the chance..."

"Jesus, poor kid. You think that's why she showed up that day? You remember how she looked? Like a drowned rat in those huge clothes. Feeble as all hell. Practically begging that we let her fight... and..." Alex hung his head, the words *I feel bad about doing nothing* hanging between them. Cole grunted in agreement, disappointed that they made her into a joke. They'd been so focused on trying to make her quit, they'd never thought of what would drive her to stay, "We weren't good to her. And she probably doesn't have anyone else treating her well either. Or she wouldn't be here." Alex looked up from his phone for a moment, exchanging a solemn look with Cole.

"I feel bad about it too, Alex. We didn't know, but it doesn't excuse teasing her and treating her like an outcast either. It doesn't excuse ignoring what we saw. She has to stay with the pack from now on, though, so there'll be plenty of time for apologies. He'd probably kill her if he ever got his hands on her again. You know how possessive wolves get."

"We're talking about him, or you?" Alex continued scrolling through a document on his phone, but he could feel his Alpha's stare. Cole glared and said nothing.

Alex suddenly sighed and looked up from his phone, "Well, I just scrolled the directory of her apartment building but that apartment's occupant is unlisted... worth a shot, I guess."

"Alpha, her vitals are low," Doctor Morgan pushed his glasses up on his face, "It's not alarming, but it is unusual for a girl of her age. Do I have your permission to check her body?"

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Cole nodded, motioning for Alex to turn around. The doctor sliced her t-shirt up the middle and removed it. Then her shorts. Cole drew closer when the doctor gasped and as he looked over his shoulder, Cole could see the ugly red area over her ribs. It was swollen and angry-looking, far worse than it had been that morning in the bathroom. The doctor continued lifting her limbs and inspecting every area of injury.

"Her body is having a hard time healing," the doctor mumbled, "The fever is too high, these bruises are deep. I'm going to need to start an IV and give her something for the pain."

"What about—" Cole glanced back at Alex, struggling to bring himself to ask, "Was she—?"

"No!" the doctor assured nervously, "No, I don't see any tearing in that area. Thank god for that..."

Cole felt Alex's hand on his shoulder. Alex was still facing the back wall, but was still trying to keep his Alpha calm, anyway. Cole hadn't even realized he was shaking in anger. These emotions made no sense. He didn't control himself. He didn't know what would have happened if the answer had been yes.

"I'll give you my findings in just a moment," the doctor mumbled, backing away from the angry Alpha.

Doctor Morgan took her pulse and temperature once more before running an IV drip and re-covering Lita with the blanket. Finally, he turned back to the men, "She's stable. Her body has been through a lot, but what's wrong with her appears to be more than just the attack. She's severely malnourished, dehydrated, and from what I can see of the skin around her eyes, she isn't getting much sleep. Her body isn't able to heal properly like that. The IV should help. There's something for pain and a muscle relaxer."

Cole clenched his jaw, realizing the girl had been in awful shape all along. And he hadn't noticed. Well, that wasn't entirely true. Anyone could have looked at her and seen she wasn't as healthy as she should have been. Like Alex had said, she was clearly underweight and the dark circles under her eyes told them she wasn't sleeping well. But they just thought she was a psycho fan of James'. No, it was more than that. They brushed her off as a joke, as someone to be forgotten. And he didn't know he would forgive himself for that oversight, when she'd clearly been hiding a lot of pain.

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How long had things been this way for her?

Why couldn't he let his father's teachings go?

"And it's my professional opinion," the doctor continued, "that she simply succumbed to exhaustion and stress. Between the state of her health and her body's fight to heal, she simply couldn't keep up. The body needs energy to heal, you know? Let her sleep as long as she can and when she wakes, keep her on bed rest or light activity until the bruises turn yellow. Make sure she eats and drinks plenty. I'll come back in a few days."

The doctor zipped his bag up and headed back off to the pack hospital. Cole had been planning to reject her and send her off to the female dorm, but based on the doctor's orders, she wasn't leaving his bed anytime soon. That was a complication, though it was clearly an unavoidable one.

"We'll talk later, I'm going to go check on Stace," Alex waved before disappearing back through the doorway. "Have someone clear out her apartment and bring her car," Cole called over his shoulder.

"Got it," Alex called back, the door shutting behind him. A few moments later, the front door closed as well.

Finally alone with Lita, Cole couldn't help but join her by the side of the bed. He brushed her hair away from her forehead, smiling at the

way she subconsciously leaned further into his touch. Her scent wrapped around him like a warm blanket and all he wanted to do was lie down beside her in bed. Would it really be so bad, claiming a human? He wasn't so sure anymore.

Would it really matter so much if their kids weren't Alphas? A human mate meant his blood would dilute. None of his children could be Alphas to take over his pack. And some would have a fifty-fifty chance of not being a wolf at all. He could hear his father's voice incessantly droning in his head. *Alphas breed Alphas. That's the way it's always been. That's the way it'll always be. We preserve the family legacy at all costs, Cole. What they want doesn't matter.* Cole stiffened. His father was so worried about the family legacy. The Tollison family name. He was so blinded, he couldn't even see how disgraced that legacy was. How awful Cole felt every time he wrote that name on documents. every time someone called him Mr. Tollison.

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But even with all that prestige attached to him, Cole hadn't taken over the family pack and he hadn't taken over the family business, much to his father's dismay. The sport that was supposed to only be a diversion all wolves enjoyed became an all-consuming passion. Leaving the family to train fighters and start a gym was a disgrace to his roots. It was a minor comfort after everything he'd endured in that family. To

know that he'd used his inheritance to disgrace his father made Cole smile. Then he looked back at Lita, running a finger under her chin.