

Lita's Love for the Alpha

Sense of Taste

If there was one thing his father knew how to do, it was get under Cole's skin so deep it was impossible to think straight. How could the man turn him straight into a ten year old child all over again with just a few sentences. He felt like his insides were burning, the taste in his mouth, bitter and thick.

We don't mix with their kind.

He cringed as he replayed the words in his head. Cole felt the tape tearing as he clenched his fists so tight he thought they would bleed. It had been years, several good, long years where he tried to decompress and remove his father's voice from his head. And still a ten minute conversation sank straight into his subconscious. Made him doubt himself and all the decisions he'd made up to this point. Was he everything he ever hated? Even as hard as he tried not to be...

His mind shifted to Erica. They both grew up together in the same community though in two separate packs. Ace too, though his pack was outside the community boundary. He didn't grow up being spoon-fed the same toxic shit but he'd dealt with the shit by proxy. They all grew up under the same ideology. One that condemned anything that was different or other. Like werewolves weren't the other in the grand scheme of the world. There were far less of them than there were of the humans. Hence, the need to keep it a secret.

Cole's father was the most distinguished pack Alpha in the community. And he didn't believe in mixing. Mixing religions, mixing breeds like human and werewolf, mixing bloodlines like Alphas and Betas, mixing races. Any of it. A bigoted traditionalist through and through. Purity had a dangerous undertone whenever he said it. His father's voice sounding the way bleach tasted. How many times had Cole had to learn that lesson? How many punishments had he endured? His father used that Alpha tone like a blade, cutting at all the pieces of Cole that dissented. It had pushed Cole to shift sooner than most, still a kid in every way when his wolf broke free.

Shifting brought relief from his father's manipulations but not the punishments. Those days were by far the darkest he could remember. And yet Cole had resolved the torture in his mind. The things his father had done to him didn't stick in his soul nearly as deeply as the teachings. They etched themselves in a dark, almost unreachable place. That was the source of his self-hate. The fact that his kneejerk reaction to new people, places, and things, was always one that sided with his father.

He thought of Lita. Alex hadn't understood what Cole meant when he said his father's voice was a hard thing to push out. He could never really understand because he hadn't been there. The thoughts were insidious and painful, excruciating to unlearn though he'd been trying his best. Lita was human and the breeds didn't mix. And that wasn't the only thing his father would have said about her.

Cole often thought Erica understood that he didn't subscribe to that belief system. That he couldn't make peace with that way of living. But he could see clearly now that she resented everything he held dear. He could see the way her comments seemed to belittle and judge. She'd never outright say anything but she'd plant the idea in his head, the grating, familiar suggestion that they were better than other people. She'd pretended to support him either because it suited her, or because his father had sent her to help bring him back to the fold. Regardless the reason, he had been stupid to trust her.

"Bro, what's going on?" Ace caught up with Cole just as he was throwing his leg over the ropes of the empty ring. Bedlam would be there any minute, "You've only had your mate for a few hours so I'll assume you're starting a fight because you're pining for make up sex already?"

Cole crouched down inside the ring, "Erica brought my dad. He's here."

"Aw shit, where is the body? I assume you killed him.." Ace flashed a smile but Cole could see his stress lines. This wasn't good for anyone. The man was lethal and steeled in his beliefs.

"Decided I didn't want the murder charge," Cole grunted, standing back up, "for now. Can you find Lita for me?"

"Fuck-" Ace pulled at his hair, "She's with Jaz don't worry. I'll keep an eye on Lita until you're done. Then you have to tell her Cole. It's not going to sound right coming from anyone else, okay? Jokes aside, she needs to know."

"Shit, Bedlam's here, find her."

"I'm on it."

Lita tuned out all the sounds around her. She became hyper aware of something wrong inside of her. Pain. Her mouth was in pain. And something warm filled the cavity.

It was blood. The odd, wet sensation leaking onto her tongue. Lita swallowed. She must have bit her bottom lip hard enough to break the skin when Erica showed up. That woman had a special way of getting under Lita's skin. Everything she did was passive aggressively insulting. Erica was talking to Jaz and it seemed heated but Lita couldn't hear it. She could only hear the rush of her heartbeat. The one that now seemed to be throbbing in her mouth.

Hesitantly, she reached a finger into her mouth, sliding it across the bottom lip to find the puncture. But she found nothing. She ran her finger through again, harder this time but again came up empty. It was definitely blood on her tongue but she hadn't bit her lip after all. She pulled her finger back to inspect the red staining the tip.

She swirled the tip of her tongue around, looking for the source. The heated conversation in front of her broke through all the confusion in her head.

"No bitch, you need to watch your fucking tone. Last I checked you ain't a motherfucking factor. Take your rejection and go. Bow out with some fucking dignity," Jaz put one hand on her hip, letting the other hang free like an invitation. Jazz's voice had changed, dropping two octaves lower. Lita hissed as she moved her tongue over her canines. They were sore as hell.

"Who the fuck do you think you are? People like you don't talk to me any fucking kind of way! I used to make an exception because I was trying to play nice for Cole's sake. I could have you disappeared without blinking," What the fuck did that mean? Was it the fact that Jaz was a human too or the fact that she was a bunny? Erica looked angry but not furious. Not furious enough to actually fight. Her idle threats were becoming more and more obvious. She wasn't a fighter. Obviously she had wolf strength but Lita couldn't help but wonder how much it would matter if the person using it didn't know how to use it in a fight.

"What the fuck does 'people like you' mean bitch because I'd prefer to know which one I'm beating your ass for?" Jaz pushed forward until she was right in Erica's face.

"Take your pick..." Erica spat.

Lita grabbed Jaz's arms, "Come on, fuck that bitter bitch, let's go!"

"You're going to run out of fucking saviors one of these days Erica... and I'm gonna bring popcorn for that ass-whooping," Jaz growled but allowed herself to be pulled towards the door. In her heart, she didn't want to give Erica the satisfaction or cause a scene at a time when they were supposed to be celebrating Stace's first fight. Lita and Jaz pushed through the doors towards the bleachers. One by one they went back over the barricade until they were mixing with the crowd.

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"I really fucking hate her," Jaz raged, shoving people out of her path, "So glad I don't have to pretend not to anymore. I swear there's something about her I just can't put my finger on. You know how people just give off a vibe?"

"Well if it makes you feel any better, I stole her man," Lita laughed when Jaz spun around, eyes wide with humor.

"Damn Lita what happened?" Jaz pointed at her red mouth.

"Oh uh," Lita balked. She didn't know what to say. Her teeth are bleeding? She hadn't even had a chance to look in a mirror and inspect the issue. She shrugged her shoulders, "I think Erica made me bite my cheek. I mean she could make Jesus punch her."

"Oh yea, you don't have to tell me. Two more seconds and I was on her ass," Jaz shook her head, "Anyway, Cole fights here but Stace fights over there. I know you wanna watch your boo so I'll go support Stace solo kay?"

Lita flashed her a thumbs up, watching her push through the crowd toward the far ring. Lita pushed herself up in the stands, finding some empty space as people got up to refill their drinks and snacks. She ran her tongue over her teeth again. This time they didn't sting. She couldn't taste anymore blood. Maybe she'd just clenched her jaws too tight or brushed her teeth too hard? It didn't make much sense but what did?

Cole certainly didn't make any sense to her. She watched him get into the ring and turn his attention to Ace. Lita was trying hard not to take his behavior personal but those nagging insecurities wouldn't let her ignore it. Was it her? Had she done something wrong? Damn, how many times had she found herself asking that question?

It was a cycle of events she was entirely too used to. Sweet and caring would turn into distant and cruel in a flash. She didn't think Cole would treat her like that but how could she be sure? What did she really know about him? Brian's influence on her psyche ran deep. Her kneejerk reaction was to take the blame even if she didn't know what she'd done.

"LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!" The announcer yelled over the roar of the crowd, "I'D LIKE TO BRING YOUR ATTENTION TO THE CENTER RING, WHERE WE HAVE BEDLAM IN THE RIGHT CORNER! AND MIDNIGHT, IN THE LEFT! LET'S HEAR IT FOLKS!!"

Cole stepped forward to the center of the ring, eyes dark and brooding. He swept his face through the crowd, landing on Lita. Watching his nostrils flare and eyes turn even darker, her heart raced. That wasn't an angry look. It was downright hateful. Now what had she done to make him look at her like that?