

Lita's Love for the Alpha

The Things in Between

Well there it was, the pit that settled in her gut four months ago and rotted. Back at last to have its victory over her once and for all. She'd killed a girl. A woman. A person. Her wolf whined and nipped for her to be strong and for her to understand why it had to happen ut Lita pushed back. She deserved to feel every inch of its agony. She had killed someone.

"And I killed her? Or at least, my wolf did?"

The silence was confirmation, "Was she given a proper burial?"

Lita didn't know why that fact bothered her so much. She'd taken another life. That was bad. Horrible. As much as Erica got under her skin it wasn't ever bad enough to wish death on her. Until it was. Erica wasn't innocent. She'd worked with Maxim to try and kill Lita.

She was fucking evil, her wolf insisted. Except she wasn't. And maybe neither was Maxim. Or her parents. Or even Brian. What did she really know of these people to pass that sort of sentence? DEATH. The finality of it, made her chest ache. Death didn't play favorites with souls one way or another. Or James would still be here. That much was clear but...

Lita flinched at her own thoughts. Where she might have shown mercy her wolf had none. The flashes of the images she had were viscous and terrifying. She was rabid. Or her wolf was, she wasn't sure. She wasn't sure exactly who desired the woman dead. Perhaps both.

She needed to deal with her feelings about what she'd done but her mind seemed obsessed with the idea that Erica needed to be given a proper burial. Her family needed to know. They needed to mourn properly. Hell, Lita belonged in jail. Perhaps it would make her soul one smidgen less guilty if she paid for the crime. And what even were the rules of engagement for this sort of thing? Surely the wolf world had their own justice system? Surely she wasn't going to get off without any punishment?

Her initial question was only met with more silence and the look on Cole's face made her feel even sicker. He was pale and unresponsive, "Cole?"

"She wasn't buried. There was nothing left to bury," he huffed like it had taken a lot for him to admit that. Nothing left to bury? Another crack in the mental armor her wolf had built. Was it all really so terrible underneath? The pain hadn't vanished at all, it had been pushed under the weight of her wolf's resolve. There was no guilt there. No remorse. Only survival. Lita remembered the silence of her wolf's conscience that night. Her mind raced. How could there be nothing left of Erica?

"It's not your fault, Lita. Sometimes our wolves do things for their own reasons. They're unique to themselves. None of this is your fault." He reached towards her but she retreated, sliding backwards a few steps. If there was no body left, that meant it was gone. How would it be gone? The heavy flash of a thought passed her mind. Wolves were animals at heart. Animals.

"I-I-m-my wolf a-ate h-her?" Lita thought she was going to faint.

"Yes." She didn't faint, instead she pitched up her entire stomach right there on the floor.

"Jesus," Cole sped to her side, lifting her out of the vomit and carrying her to the tub. Lita shook furiously, eyes glassy and distant. The rotten pit turned in her stomach again and again. What had she done? What had she done?

"I-I'm a monster, Cole."

"You're not a monster." His words were firm, eyes piercing but reserved. Cole was trying to salvage Lita's feelings but they were already wrecked. There was nothing left to do but feel them.

"You're a werewolf, calm down baby," He said it like it was the only thing that mattered. Like it excused everything else. Then he brushed her damp hair back and cut on the shower, "Wolves kill each other all the time. It's not an excuse but it's true." It was an excuse, or at least it was his attempt at one. He didn't bother taking off her clothes.

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Cold water pelted against her as Lita struggled to reign in her spiral. She hadn't ever dealt with the issue, pushing it down so she could worry about other things. But she'd stood in Erica's blood. She'd fucking eaten her. That was... she was...

"It's unforgivable. I'm despicable. I'm going to jail. Oh my god, I'm going to jail. Or worse, is there something worse? Oh my god, wolf justice. An eye for an eye? What about her family? And my wolf, she's a psycho! She ate someone! H-how does one even digest another person?! Oh my god. I'm gonna be sick again," Lita covered her mouth to stifle another gag.

"Just roll over baby, throw up, it's okay. I'll clean it up." She sunk against the slope of the tub, reeling and full of a chaotic emotion she couldn't explain. It wasn't just guilt. Or sadness. Or anger. It was fuller, more consuming. It was self-loathing.

Later that night after Cole had tucked her into bed. After she had sat in silence for hours making no sign that she had heard anything Cole said. After the goosebumps appeared across her skin from the cold water. After he'd dried and re-dressed her and after she'd finally let herself go numb, the dreams of James returned in fury.

The car wreck was violent, the engine broken and hissing thin smoke as emergency services made their way down the embankment. Lita had been staring at her brother for minutes, hours, days before the first officer appeared at her side. What was time anyway, besides something broken and frozen? Time could never move forward the same as it had before. She couldn't pull her eyes away from his body. He was dead. And she had killed him. Lita got her brother killed. Lita killed him. Brian had also killed him. And that driver too, who didn't survive his own injuries. And fate. Of course, fate had killed him as well.

Everything conspired to kill James and snatch his light from her life. And yet she felt the guiltiest. He'd been looking at her bruise. Yelling at her. Driving on that road, at that time, because of her and no one else. If he hadn't been so distracted he might have avoided the car or stopped in time. If she hadn't been so careless, he'd never have been on that road to begin with. He'd be alive.

And Stace would have her mate. Cole would have his best friend. Maybe she'd never have met Cole. Or been at that tournament or killed Erica. But then she'd still be with Brian and stuck in her parent's home. Maybe she'd be dead herself. Though that reality was far more palatable than the one she was currently in.

One officer took her arm. An EMT took the other, steadily leaning her against the carrying plank that had been set at her side. She couldn't tear her eyes away from James. Her brother, whose pulse was taken and a head shake exchanged between EMTs. They left him, returning to the others who huddled around Lita. Someone was applying a compress to her wounds. Another was trying to reset a bone.

She screamed. They couldn't leave him like that. They couldn't walk away without trying. *Save him! Please. Somebody help him!* Her voice was hoarse, shaking against the sobs wracking through her. But no one moved, the somber expressions on their faces screaming louder than the sirens. She couldn't even hear the sirens. No everything was drowned out in the terrible silence that emanated from that front seat. Full with her brother's body yet utterly lifeless.

Then the dream morphed. Those lifeless eyes that had been her brother's were now Erica's. She wasn't sitting in the front seat of a car, rather she was sprawled out on the floor beneath Lita's paws.

Large gashes leaked along her wolf body beginning at the angry severing of her throat. Suddenly Erica's body moved, shifting and snapping back into her human form. The injuries were worse, more life threatening, more violent. Lita's paws slid as she neared the body.

Now absent of fur, Lita could see the large chunk missing from Erica's shoulder and she became aware of the motion of her wolf's mouth. It was chewing. Another scream tore through her dream only this one was her name.

"Lita! Lita!" Cole shook her hard, frantic to wake her from sleep. Lita's eyes cracked open, rolling and losing their focus as she fought off the last image of her dream. Panic surged through her. Murderer. Killer. Evil.

"W-what's w-what's wrong?" she sputtered, trying and failing to push herself up against the pillows. Her body was still asleep, awash with all the complicated feelings she couldn't settle.

"You were having a nightmare, baby," Cole searched her face for any sign of distress, "What were you dreaming of? It's okay, I'm here... you kept saying 'I killed him. I killed him.' Who?"