

Lita's Love for the Alpha

Into the Woods

A low, frustrated growl rang out from behind her as she darted into the foliage. She hadn't had this much fun in forever, it seemed.

Rain came hard and fast against the trees. Lita had sensed it nearing and yet the sudden force with which the sky opened up shocked her. Within a few moments, the tops of all the trees were coated and slick with water pelting into the overgrowth. Her legs willed her forward, hard and fast as she embraced herself more freely than she ever had before. She was naked as the day she was born, nothing more to shield or hide behind and she was free. Free of every influence that had ever tried to rule her life.

Lita leapt over the fallen tree trunk on the floor of the forest. As it turned out, that wasn't a mere rim of dense trees as she'd suspected, it was an actual woodland, stretching off into the distance like open arms. She moved through the trees, wet and slippery with rainwater and somehow still felt warm like the hot core of her heart was alight. She'd never felt anything akin to the sensation of raw, savage happiness as she did when her wolf pressed their connection. Her wolf was there, below the surface, moving in restrained excitement as she watched them run wild.

She was quiet though, not asking to be released, scared of being pushed further into Lita's mind where it had lived all its life. Somehow, as out of shape as she was, as unused as her legs and lungs had been, Lita ran without restraint and without tiring. Her wolf seemed to send energy through her. The wolf was happy, even if it wasn't her own paws running through the sharp scents of the woods. That quiet joy propelled Lita forward, farther, faster, harder with no regard to the scrape of her soles on the hard ground. What had started as a mere thrill to entice and work Cole up into a lather, had morphed into her own release. A loud roar against the shackles of her memories and pain. She could be free. She could be happy.

She could hear the dull crunching of feet behind her. No, not feet, paws. Not two crunches at a time, but four. Cole had shifted, running his wolf after his half-wild mate in the freezing rain. Another low growl. If he wanted to catch her, his wolf would have been upon her in a flash, far faster and stronger than her own human legs. So it was clear they were playing a game.

I said never run from me... His voice in her mind was a hot tongue at her ear, a rough fingertip on her most sensitive parts. She shivered with an anticipation that promised more. Her body steamed against the dewing beads of water on her face and shoulders as she slowed to a jog, then a walk. She turned to face Cole's wolf once more, fear and excitement bristling her in equal measure.

He was on her in a breath, Cole's regal black wolf towered above her, hot steam puffing from his snout with every exhale. He studied her closely, like a predator with prey. She hadn't seen him like this since that day at the gym. Even at the tournament, he'd been fighting with Maxim, pinned and bleeding. He hadn't been this panting, strong beast before her, red eyes boring into hers. She had ran that day at the gym too and he had chased her. He would always chase her, she realized. That was the bond.

Reflexively, Lita brushed her hand into the soft, wet fur of his head. He shook, seemingly shivering at the contact. She remembered the feel of his hands sending electricity shivering over her own wolf body. He nuzzled her, pressing his warm head to the flat plane of her stomach, growling softly. She knelt in a patch of wet grass, hauling him down with her until his head rested in her lap. The rain was a distant concern as was her nakedness. Even his wolf seemed only to hold the gaze of her eyes. Until Lita felt the wet roughness of a tongue on her inner thigh, startling her head into a tree with a crack. His wolfy eyes gleamed. "Asshole," she hissed.

Tasty, he whispered into her head, *I like this view*. Glowering, she looked at him, "How? H-how do I do that?"

Link?

Lita nodded. *It's like... it's difficult to explain. Imagine a rope in your mind. A strong, thick, perhaps corded length of rope. Tie one end to yourself and cast the other out towards the person you wish to speak to. Hook it onto them. Then guide your words along the path.*

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It sounded far easier said than done. Lita visualized the rope, tethered herself to it but she couldn't get the hook to him, the rope sliding away into nothing. She tried three times before huffing into frustrated silence, her fingers digging deeper into the sides of his fur.

It's freezing, you should focus on shifting if we're to make it where we're going... you can learn to link later.

Chill bumps had spread across her arms. "Where are we going? I was simply running to wind you up, until you could finally catch me," Lita quirked her brow.

As appealing as that may be... Cole's wolf raised himself back out of her lap, *I had every intention of taking your wolf out into these woods anyway.*

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Lita stiffened, standing from the grass with a shiver that didn't come from the cold wetness everywhere. Cole's wolf watched her cautiously, eyeing every movement as if she were a startled doe.

Don't. He said as if he could see into her very soul. He knew she would run again. *We had an understanding.* Lita wasn't getting out of it. Especially not in the freezing rain that had started to make her shake, all her nakedness becoming painfully obvious. She should have kept the clothes on when she sensed it would rain. Now it was far too late to go back for them. She eyed Cole's wolf, surely he hadn't shifted while dressed, remembering the tatters of clothing that flailed about in that hall of wolves fighting. So he was most likely naked as well, though hidden under a dense double coat of fur. Where had all her mother's hard-taught decorum gone? All those years of training her up to enter a society of vultures...

Lita wondered what her mother would say now and then again, she didn't. She knew. Much like Maxim was disappointed in Cole for mating her, Lita's own mother would feel the same of Cole. *A man beneath our fine breeding*. A man beneath Brian, as horrible as he was behind closed doors. Cole's wolf watched her as if he'd sensed the turn of her thoughts. Sighing, Lita steeled herself to what she was about to do. All the heat seemed to dissipate the second she thought of her wolf taking over, "How do I let her out?" She felt him in her head, *Give her permission. Open the gates.*

Another instruction that sounded far easier than it was. She hadn't had luck with linking, doubting she'd fair much better in this. The day of the tournament the shift had happened out of nowhere, cleaving her nearly apart in white hot agony. She hadn't opened any gates then. In fact, she couldn't sense any sort of barrier around her wolf, who now prowled in anticipation. Lita shook her head. She was lost.

Just try. Visualize a gate and open it. She took a calming breath, shivering slightly against the chilled rain. Her mind imagined a fence, a slightly rusted, chain-link one that ran around the enclosure of her mind. She modeled it after a fence she'd regularly seen off the highway. It had encased a loading dock. Imagining a large gate at the front, she reached for it but hesitated, hovering her hand over the latch. Lita had just barely learned to control her nose, scratching the surface of her new self. But now, Cole was bidding her to control the shift, to feel it pass her from human to wolf in a fluid motion.

It'll be okay. His reassurance. His warm eyes staring through the rain. His promise to be okay, to not get hurt. Lita opened the gate and let her wolf out.