

Lita's Love for the Alpha

No

Cole thought Midnight was bad before he'd claimed Lita but this? It put all those old rages and mental fights over whether to claim Lita to shame. This was the worst he'd ever been. The wolf had nearly decapitated the bouncer outside the door, just for putting a hand on his chest to frisk him. One minute he was pissed, heading for the door and the next, he had all his claws out, pinning the bouncer by the neck against the wall. And thank god for Alex smoothing that over because another second spent waiting outside when Lita was inside doing god knows what would have only resulted in death. A lot of fucking death. Cole wasn't entirely convinced it still wouldn't.

What he felt for Lita ran deep. Deeper than he thought a bond could go. He could feel it in his wolf, in his bones and skin, in the air he inhaled, in the food he ate, in that part of himself that didn't exist on words. She wasn't just a part of his life. She was a part of him. Hell maybe all of him. It surely felt as if he wouldn't survive without that part. It was the majority of the reason he was even here, breaking into a lounge to drag her ass home. What he felt for her wasn't rational, it was instinctual and short of locking him up in chains, there was nothing that would have kept him from her right now.

They were having a fight. Okay, their first fight. And it was definitely his fault. But did that fucking warrant her running off to put on entirely too little clothing and dance entirely too fucking close to other males? No. No it fucking did not and he was already planning to roar that exact thing as soon as he found her. His better judgement said that Lita alone wouldn't have made such a selfish fucking choice. It wasn't her style. But that didn't excuse her. He was going to mar Stace's petty little face when he finally got his hands on her too though, for dragging his mate into this shitshow. This could've been worked out hours ago if not for those two nosey... Jaz was lucky she was human. He'd save her punishment for Ace, who might have been just as angry. Cole rolled his eyes, realizing that her torture was most likely going to end up being her pleasure. He'd have to think of something else to punish the human.

Of course Cole regretted telling Lita she was his property. It sounded ugly, it *was* ugly and not at all what he wanted to convey to someone who meant so much to him. It reminded him of his fucking father but...he wasn't necessarily lying and that was the part that bothered him the most about it. That's the part he felt genuinely sorry for. That possessive, dark side to his wolf was unpredictable and unforgiving but it wasn't lying. She was his to own and claim and ravage forever. But she was also his to love and honor and raise pups with. He couldn't always control that desire to claim, to control, to own, to protect. It was down to genetics and instinct but it didn't mean he didn't that she was person. She wasn't *just* his mate. That's the part that hadn't come out quite right. And now he was going to have to hash this conversation out in front of all the men that were probably drooling over her in that skin tight dress. That perfect body...

His fists were lethally clenched. This was not the time for arousal because that kind of mindset would definitely get someone killed for touching her. Cole shuddered to think of all his MMA training being used to pulverize shitless men who just had the unfortunate luck to touch his mate. It wasn't there fault. Being attracted to Lita was as natural as anything Cole was feeling and yet, he didn't fucking care. No one touched his mate. Even just the thought sent hot blood flushing through his veins. He felt his pupils dilating and his neck tightening. Cole scrubbed his face, cutting through the throng of people surrounding the bar. He needed to pull his head out of that dark place before things got out of hand. Thinking of Erica still tore Lita up a little and that bitch had it coming. If he killed some handsy drunk prick? Fuck, he didn't want to think about it.

For a moment, he thought back to her apartment. He thought back to how out of control he'd been the second he saw all those bruises. It wasn't just that someone had hurt his mate, though that was the main reason his soul raged. He lost control because someone had the nerve to touch his mate and he wasn't there. Brian could've fucking taken her and Cole had no idea, no inkling. He'd have been powerless to stop it while he paced like an idiot at the gym all night worried that she was going to expose them all. That would never sit right with him.

When he'd finally seen his failure to protect her, his wolf just rushed out, shredded everything he could touch. And the issue with that was all the collateral damage. Other tenants who had stepped into the hall could have been hurt because he didn't care. The people walking on the sidewalk when he made his way to the car could have been attacked. Hell, Lita herself was even vulnerable to him when she was slumped against the door. His need to fix the situation could've led to her being hurt more. His temper didn't have a limit, only a trigger. And he didn't want that switch flipped in a lounge full of innocent people.

Cole swung his eyes across the first crest of people lining the dance floor. He didn't recognize anything. Not a face, not a scent, not a piece of clothing. Where the hell were they? Alex spread out to the right of him and Ace brought up the rear, all staring out into the packed expanse of the Lounge. It hadn't seemed this crowded in all those pics but, checking his phone, Cole saw it was a little past eleven. Prime party time. He swiped out her contact info and dialed the number. One ring. Two. It rang until her voicemail kicked in.

"Not answering her phone!" He yelled over the rabble. Shouldering a guy into the wall, Alex took off towards the booths in the back. Ace headed over to the bar and high top tables as Cole reluctantly headed into the mass of dancing bodies. He tried her phone again. *Hey you've reach Lita, leave me some love after the beep!*

His stomach clenched. She'd just changed that voicemail answer yesterday. It was sweet really, how quickly she was learning to adjust to her new body and her new self. He could still remember that sad, waif of a girl that strolled into the gym, demanding to be trained. He'd thought he was the unluckiest bastard alive to have a mate like that. Fragile, human, pathetic. God he hated himself for how he treated her in the beginning.

How could he know she was the strongest woman he'd ever met and at only nineteen? How could he know she wasn't human at all or the least bit pathetic? That she was actually an Alpha equal to him in every way that mattered? She wasn't a ring bunny or a psycho fan. She was a broken girl who'd been abused and used all her life as if she weren't a real person and she'd lost the only family she ever really had when James died. Hell, no one had even really let her grieve that. Cole's head started to throb. And after everything she'd been through, he'd told her she was his property. He'd claimed her like she was fucking furniture. Regret was nearly palpable on his tongue. He was determined to make this right.

He caught Lita's scent on the stale, club air as a few people shifted into each other. Faint, like it had been a while since she was here, but clearly hers. He needed to remember his apology speech. Cole's eyes shifted red, his body pumping adrenaline everywhere as he prepared for a fight just in case there was an obstacle between them. *Don't kill anybody*, he ordered midnight. Cole figured the apology might fall flat if he went and gutted an innocent dude right before he begged for forgiveness.

I'm not making a single fucking promise. Touch my mate and die. Midnight could really be over the top when he wanted to.

Cole pinched the bridge of his nose. Please god let Lita be having a girls only party in the back. He pushed deeper into the swell of people, following that phantom scent. He couldn't see Alex or Ace anymore but that didn't really matter. He'd only brought them so they could restrain him if he lost control.

He cleared the dancefloor and ended up on the other side, near a long hallway that led towards the bathroom and back door. Surprisingly Ace and Alex were already standing there and their faces told him everything he needed to know.

"What's wrong?" Cole growled, grabbing Alex by the arm as he stared down at the phone in his hand, "Where is she?"

"I don't know what's going on," Alex's voice had hardened, his eyes flicking into his wolf's color, Ace did too, "Stace called and I could hardly understand her, she was crying so hard. I think she said *back* or *behind* and she definitely said Lita's name but the rest? I couldn't make sense of it."

"You got Jaz's scent?" Cole turned to Ace who only nodded and said, "It's faint though. I caught it by the tables. No sign of them or their belongings though."

"Same. I caught Lita's on the dancefloor but it's almost gone," Cole inhaled deeply several times, trying to clear his mind and sort through the scents. Then he was walking forward, still sniffing like a bloodhound. His eyes roved over every inch of the hall, watching for faces, anything that looked like what she was wearing, signs of anything strange. Cole stormed past the women's bathroom, then the men's, then the service closet and employees only room, until all that was left between him and that sweet scent was the back door.

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"Back," he mumbled to himself, throwing the door open with flare as he cut his eyes around the alley. The scent was stronger here but still light. He caught wind of another scent though, definitely male. His skin tightened once more as he noticed Stace's scent, hitting him like truck just before her body did.

Stace wrapped her arms around his own, tugging and crying and saying intelligible things that he couldn't understand.

"Wh-what's wrong Stace?" Alex tried to pull her away, despite her desperate, terrified pants. But she wouldn't let go, instead she used her wolf-strength to pull them both to the dumpsters, dragging hard until they could all scent what had her so terrified.

Cole's blood froze as he inhaled, sighting the splatter of blood on the brick, then lower to the vomit and a shoe, one that looked like it had been ripped straight off, the anklet still clasped closed. Stace was shaking and hyperventilating, her eyes glowing yellow and fierce.

"Th-th-they t-t-took t-th-th-em," she choked out a sob, "I-I-" Her face crumpled as her legs gave out. She pointed in the direction of the street, "I-I s-s-saw a v-van." Alex knelt beside her, smoothing her hair and whispering something Cole couldn't quite hear. His blood pumped too loud in his ears. Lita had bled right here. Vomited right here. But she wasn't anywhere. She was... and there was a van?

He inhaled again, snapping his tether on his wolf until he was half shifted. That faint smell near to Lita's bothered him, like cigars and citrus gum and...

"No..."