

Lita's Love for the Alpha

A Few Stitches for the Road

"This is bullshit!" Lita yelled, gritting her teeth as the doctor, she now knew as Sarah, worked the needle through the meat of her thigh, "Ughhh dammit that hurts. I would soooo bring that wolf back to life to kill him again. Who the hell bites someone's thigh?! Did he realize I would use it every single time I walked?!"

"Sorry," Sarah winced for the hundredth time, adjusting the needle slightly before skewering the other side of the wound. Lita had at least gotten a shirt and some underwear from the bag Ace gave her but the pants would have to wait until the wound was closed. From the feel of it, Sarah had to be at least halfway finished and Lita was liable to break the toilet bowl from the strain.

"Thank you, anyway," Lita grunted, "For trying to be gentle. For everything, really." Though it wasn't expressly said, the undertone was clear. Lita was grateful for the doctor risking her neck to give Ren the medicine. She was grateful Sarah had been willing to help her escape even if it never came to fruition.

"You're welcome even though I don't know how much I really helped. Giving you the medicine felt like my medical duty, to be honest. And telling Maxim you'd need two days off to heal didn't seem to do anything but get you thrown in the pits. Maybe if I hadn't said anything..."

"What the fuck are the pits?" Cole blurted, suddenly standing too close to the women, breathing heavily, "What did he do to you?" Hadn't Lita already explained she didn't want to hash out the gritty details until they were home? Men could be such blockheads when they wanted to be. Stubborn to a fault.

"It's like a fighting den. Maxim made it when he came back from the tournament, alone, a few months ago. Said the men were weak. Said they needed to prove themselves in order to move up in the ranks," Sarah relayed in a monotone, as if on autopilot. Lita could sense the moment she slipped into those familiar, scared shoes she wore around Maxim. Careful not to say the wrong thing, "Lita could tell you more herself but from what I heard, one of Maxim's men pushed her in and made her fight."

Lita couldn't even respond before Cole had barked a sound so angry she almost didn't hear the door shatter. She and the doctor both startled, looking over at the raging man who gasped for air as if he couldn't breathe. The cloth had fallen to the floor and blood flowed from his shoulder freely, as he roared, "I'll fucking kill him again!"

"Listen, it wasn't that big of a deal, I got out," Lita said to Cole, willing him to drop that line of questioning, "And I even killed the bastard that pushed me in so... it's squared, okay?" They already had a lot on their plates now that Maxim was dead, she didn't want Cole taking out his anger on Maxim's men too. Unless they deserved it.

"I'm glad things worked out the way they did, honestly," Sarah resumed speaking as if she couldn't sense Lita trying to change the conversation, "Your head wound was... I hadn't seen anyone gain Maxim's personal attention in a very long time. I was sorry to see it, scared for you even. But is it wrong to be happy for it as well? That because of you--" Sarah turned to Cole, "And you, we're all out from under his thumb?"

"I might have provoked him a little before he hit me," Lita huffed a laugh, forgetting Cole was standing there, fuming, "But the asshole was under my skin. I might have said I would enjoy watching his son rip him to pieces. And that didn't turn out to be much of a lie after all. And anyway, I feel worse for all of you. I know what it's like to have your wolf suppressed."

"Thank god yours was only for a few days."

"No, I'm not talking about this time with Maxim drugging me. I meant when I was younger. My mom suppressed my wolf for most of my life. I only just met Nyx for the first time a few months ago, at that same tournament."

The doctor nodded, shocked, "I'm sorry to hear it. I was in the process of figuring out how to reverse our suppressions while working with another pack doctor: Dr. Morgan. We'd been keeping track of where and when the suppressants had been used. I'd only heard of one case where the wolf re-emerged. Most of us were only dosed recently, within the last month or two. Prior to that, we were kept in check... in other ways. I'm sure you can imagine which ways those were..."

"I know Dr. Morgan," Lita's voice trailed off as if she were still working something out in her mind.

"He works with my pack," Cole cut in, "What you're saying makes sense because he seemed really interested in her medication when I told him about it. He helped her get off of it."

"Jesus what are the odds? So you're the wolf he told us about. Oh this is great, you know he's developed a case against your mom?! And Maxim too, not that the latter matters much anymore. He's tracked a few more wolves who had used the suppressants your mom makes at her pharmaceutical company. He was planning to gather evidence on them all. Last I heard, the council was moving to take action."

Lita stilled, she hadn't realized so many balls were in motion around her. She'd only heard about the council a handful of times since joining Cole's pack. They were just a collection of Alphas from packs in the U.S. that usually operated in name only because most of the time packs worked out their own issues. But this, Lita realized, suppressing wolves with medicine... it was over the line of what they would ignore.

"That explains your father reaching out to me," Cole, ruffled his overgrown hair, "When Ace told me he sent a message, I was skeptical. But we verified for ourselves; He separated from your mother and removed her from the pack a couple of weeks ago. He said he had no idea you weren't his or that your wolf was being suppressed but when he found out, he took action. I was wondering what triggered the action."

Cole scratched at his five o'clock shadow while Lita pondered his words, "So you think the council alerted him and the Alpha about what my mother had done?"

"I do," Cole nodded, "He thought you were just born wolf-less, which isn't entirely unbelievable. It's rare for an Alpha- Beta pup but it happens. I don't think he ever suspected she would have created something like that."

Cole leaned against the bathroom sink carefully. He'd managed to pull on some pants while he waited to get his shoulder stitched but they were already bright red from his blood dripping. He held an embroidered towel to the wound and it had also gone from cream to red.

"Finished," Sarah announced, moving to stand beside Cole, "Your turn."

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"What about what happened between Brian and me? Did he say he didn't know about what he was doing too? Did he say he thought I was happy? Or that I was in love? Because I told him the truth more than once. He told me growing pains were normal," Lita couldn't help the bitterness that seeped into her voice. She just felt so betrayed by the people she was supposed to be able to trust the most. Being raised by nannies had never stopped her love for her parents. Nor had the private schools and tense family dinners. In truth, it was hard for a daughter not to love her father deeply. And she always carried a longing for acceptance from her parents.

But Brian had been the chink in the very fragile bond they all had. And James's death had shattered that bond completely. What they after... making her agree to marry Brian... it was unforgivable. She didn't think it was even still possible to bridge that gap in her heart. Even if Rafi hadn't known about the suppression, he'd known she was unhappy. He'd known it was odd for a prospective Alpha to want a wolf-less wife. He'd known something was up. Who could he blame that on? There was no one who could convince her he was entirely innocent.

Cole's eyes went dark, his muscles tensing all over his body, as the doctor worked on his shoulder, "No. He didn't say anything about Brian, specifically. And I thought it best not to ask because ultimately we needed his help for this raid to work. We didn't have the numbers and I couldn't leave you here for a second longer than I had to. I just couldn't. You can hate me for it, but we posed a better chance of being successful if we worked with him. And I didn't want to have to kill him before I could get you back. At least not without your approval," he smirked at the last part, probably trying to lighten Lita's mood a little but she couldn't ignore the gnawing in her stomach. What would happen to her mother? What would happen to all the other wolves involved?

"Why did you need his help? What did he even contact you for? He's a Beta, not an Alpha. He doesn't control his pack and he has no reason to ever get in contact with you," Lita hissed suddenly, cutting her sentence off as she clamped her hands down in the toilet hard enough to scratch the layer of enamel. She was struggling to pull up her pants without touching the stitches, "Shit, why didn't I even feel the bite but I can't stand the burn of the stitches?... Arghh..."

Sarah bit back her laugh, "Adrenaline love. It makes impossible things, possible. But it's worn off now and the flesh is already too sensitive now that it's swollen. A feather would probably feel like a knife right now."

Cole growled as the doctor worked the needle in, eyes going wild and shifty, fists clenching and unclenching unconsciously.

"COLE! Hey!" Lita snapped, waiting for him to turn his head. She nodded gently, her eyes softening as she tracked the pained expression on his face. She knew it wasn't just because of the needle. "Why did my dad contact you?"

Cole gritted his teeth, breathing through his nose.

"He said he overheard your mother talking on the phone with Brian. Said that he confronted her about knowing more than she said. Your mother confessed that it was Brian who sold you out to Maxim. He'd been stalking you, as we already knew. But he didn't want his own hands dirty. He used Maxim to exert his own will. Who knows if he actually knew what would happen when you got here."

Lita sat with that for a moment, realizing that once again, she'd hoped Brian wasn't really as bad as he appeared to be. She wanted there to be some redeeming quality in him, not for his sake but for hers. What did it say about her that she'd fallen for someone who was terrible in every way that mattered? Why hadn't she seen any signs?

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Because she was a child, she realized. And he was old enough to know what to show her. And if her mother had been helping him win her over... helping him gain her trust... she was always destined to fall into the trap. What would have happened to her life if James had never died? She hated to think of his loss as a positive but the idea of being shackled to Brian forever... was too much to bear.

He'd helped Maxim. As if what he'd already done to her wasn't enough. As if her scars inside and out, weren't already payment enough.

"If you think for a second, I'd believe that Brian acted alone, without my mother knowing until later, you're crazy. If there was one thing she was willing to do, it was bury me. Especially if it meant no one would ever know what she'd done to my father- Rafi," Lita said.

Cole sighed, "I'm inclined to agree. I think too many people have assumed she loves you. But... I know what it's like to have a parent that doesn't truly love you so, I can pay if it meant she could keep her cozy life and power. I don't know how much of what your father said was true when it comes to his involvement. You'll have to speak with him yourself to determine that."

"Speaking of Rafi," Cole tilted his head, "Alex said everyone's rounded up and Rafi's ready with transportation. We should go decide their fates." Lita nodded.

The doctor tightened the thread and snapped it, tying it off quickly and moving to the door. Cole grabbed his shirt and tugged it on.

"I'm sorry you have more evil to deal with, Lita," Then she turned to Cole, "But I'm ecstatic Maxim is gone. I never thought I'd see it in my lifetime. I'll head outside with the rest of the pack, we're not all bad, you know. I hope you'll consider that when you decide our fates."

Lita watched her leave the room and started to follow when Cole grabbed her arm. He pulled her into a kiss. Not a devouring one, but gentle, probing. As if he were trying to remember her mouth, "I love you." His words fanned across her lips, "A million times, I love you."

"I love you too," Lita whispered, returning his gentle exploration, "I missed you every day."

"I hope you know," Cole laughed softly, planting delicate kisses all over her face, "There's no way I'm ever letting you out of my sight again. If you get mad at me, you'll just have to make me jealous from the living room."

Lita laughed hard until a few tears slipped free, "One last thing to do, and then we can go home. I can't get back fast enough."

Cole kissed her forehead, and winked, "Then let's make this quick, mate."