

Lita's Love for the Alpha

Let's Play A Game... I Hide...

Lita didn't come on the run. It was all Cole could think about. He'd just seen her in the gym and she looked fine. Yet she was giving him the cold shoulder. What did he do wrong this time? Maybe she saw his melancholy expression and thought the worst? *Shit*, Cole thought, he was fucking this up. Packs were supposed to run together. That's just how it was. A pack run without a Luna... it was like waving a giant red flag that something was wrong. Maybe in this instance, it wouldn't be that obvious. Everyone had to know how sensitive Lita was right now. But shit like this was making it harder to focus on everything he had on his plate. All Cole could do was throw himself in his work and hope she'd come around. Or maybe he should say fuck it to all the plans and spend his time reminding her how they could be together.

Would that be smothering for her? Cole had no fucking clue what to do anymore. And Midnight, as commanding and careful as he normally was on a run, stumbled over no less than two logs and four rocks during the run. Cole swore when Midnight hit another stone, knowing his feet would be aching when he shifted.

Like you're not distracted too, asshole? Fuck your feet, Midnight growled.

Don't get pissy with me, mutt if your eyesight is failing.

Failing as hard as your mate skills apparently.

Did you just—was that a joke? Fuck me, I didn't think you could be funny.

If you would just focus that energy on fucking Lita...

Alright asshole, Cole snapped, *One dig was funny. Two was rude as hell. Don't push for a third, I haven't done anything wrong.*

Yea, all that not doing anything has us on a pack run without our Luna. Great effort on your part. If he hadn't been so right, his wolf would have sounded like a brat. But alas, Lita's absence wasn't a good sign and Cole was doing fuck all about it.

How the hell is it my fault? Cole immediately got defensive because, after his conversation with Ace, he was feeling exposed.

Nyx is begging for it and I'm liable to forget all this human bullshit and take what's mine at the next shift. So whatever is wrong, it's between you two humans.

Cole rolled his eyes, *I'm working on it, okay? Don't get us in more trouble because you couldn't keep your urges to yourself.*

Work faster, Midnight barked, *I'm only as good as my instincts. And right now, they say I need to remind my mate who her Alpha is.*

I—that's honestly not something I ever want to hear you say again. Cole shuddered. *I know we're linked but you having sex is honestly not something I ever want to think about.*

I guess you'll be closing your eyes next time we see Nyx huh? Because that's a sweet piece of—

Please, for the love of all that is good in the world, stop talking about it! Cole was going to scream. He'd never had to listen to his wolf so worked up and he seriously never wanted to again.

Humans are so strange. I always watched you and Lita. Just makes me want Nyx even more. Especially all those little growls and whimpers...

Jesus fucking christ shut up! Watching two animals have sex is never going on my bucket list. I'll just pretend to go to sleep like I do every other time. I don't think I would survive witnessing something so traumatic.

Your loss, Midnight huffed, the ghost of a rumble in his throat. Cole wanted to barf. Linked or not, there was absolutely nothing sexy about this conversation. He was positive Lita felt the same but he was also sure Nyx wasn't so vulgar. Obviously, Midnight was thinking about Nyx and was just as attention-deprived as Cole. It affected him more because mating was a primitive, basic need for him.

Wolves were territorial and sexual creatures. It was hardwired into them to mate and produce pups often. Those traits went hand in hand with their power and position. The more powerful the wolf's blood, the stronger those urges were. Normally that wouldn't be a problem because humans and their wolf counterparts were on the same page. The mate bond was just that powerful. But right now, they were having a difference of opinion. It was making it hard for Cole to not think about Lita a million times again. Flashes of the things he'd already done to her mixed with flashes of things he wanted to do... he was in a near-constant state of sexual frustration.

Even now, Cole could smell enough mating pheromones in the pack to knock most wolves out of commission. He knew Alex's wolf was probably sniffing around some tail right now. At least someone was getting laid. That shouldn't have made him bitter but it did.

That was unfair. Cole knew it and it's why he would never act on his urges. Why he would never say any of this out loud. Lita deserved better from him, blue balls or not. Midnight's mindset was fucking with his head.

Cole enjoyed the brief break from being in control, allowing himself to think of Lita. Again, he wondered what the future would hold for them. He didn't like not knowing, didn't like all this distance between them. And he hated thinking that Maxim was helping to drive them apart. A fucked up parting gift from the dead bastard.

Andres' wolf howled nearby, signaling the end to the free run, and everyone slowed to a trot. Cole brought the pack full circle, once again at the gym doors where they all shifted for dinner. Cole grabbed his bundle of clothing, tugging on a pair of track shorts and a shirt.

"Hey Alpha," Stace weaseled between a few new members and Alex so she could reach Cole. "Have you spoken to Ace lately? I'm worried about him. I don't think he's dealing with Jaz the right way."

Ace was another wolf missing from the run. Cole was trying to give him space but outside of training, Ace hardly came around. Earlier in Cole's office was the first time he'd been alone with Ace since bringing Lita home.

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Cole grunted, "Maybe not, but he's dealing in his own way. We can't know how he's feeling when he doesn't talk about it." Cole reached into his pocket and fished out his phone, scrolling through all his notifications.

"Yea but, he's like family. Maybe he could sit down with you or Alex? I don't care if you have to hold him down," Stace sighed, pulling her hair into a ponytail, "He isn't joking or smiling anymore. He isn't as friendly. And he's too quiet, Alpha."

Cole clicked away on his phone, texting Andres and Alex with updates on fighting schedules and financials for pack resources. He looked up, "Stace. If he gets worse, we'll intervene. But speaking as an Alpha... he needs to sort through his feelings on his own. However long that takes. Obviously, I noticed the change in him and I'm concerned as well but I can't beat it out of him. And he won't appreciate too many noses sticking themselves in his business. Certainly not his emotions."

"Maybe... I don't know maybe if you ordered him to see Lita's therapist? She was telling us all that Dr. Elise is planning to stay on as a pack counselor. I just think..." Stace blew a breath, "Whatever I'm probably not helping. Men are impossible, especially werewolf men." His heart swelled again thinking of Lita's first act as Luna being so considerate. It gave him a pulse of hope he desperately needed.

"Hey," Cole reached out to hold Stace's shoulder, giving her a light shake. "There's nothing wrong with being worried about him. How about this, I'll suggest it to him? I can't make him go. But maybe if I give him the option it will help?" She seemed happy enough with that and he turned in the direction of home. Jumping back on his phone, he scrolled through missed calls and texts, finding one from Lita. A text from an hour ago that read, *Come find me...*

He smiled, his blood pressure ticking up a notch. A text like that, complete with a wink emoji at the end only meant one thing. His Luna wanted to play. Finally, she was breaking this quiet stalemate. His mind immediately went back to their time at the cabin when they played hide and seek. Laughing to himself, Cole tucked his phone back into his pocket. God forbid he deny her anything she wanted. Breaking into a light jog, Cole waved off his pack and headed home. *Fuck dinner.*

Two steps through the door Cole could already tell two things: first, the house was extremely dark. Not only were all the blinds closed because it was late evening, but the lights were off. He clicked the switch near the front door twice to no avail. As he made his way deeper into the house, he noticed the appliances in the kitchen were off too. There were still building materials piled around as he hadn't finished everything yet. But he at least knew he had plugged in the appliances. The living room was dark too. The television he'd just mounted two days ago didn't have the distinctive red blinking light.

His Luna had cut the power. That was the first realization. And second, her scent was everywhere—as if she'd rubbed herself against every surface just to throw him off. *Clever girl,* Cole smirked, knowing once again his sense of smell wouldn't be any use in their game. And now, he'd have to use his night vision too.

Already he could feel Midnight prowling around his subconscious, just as eager to play. He heard the sound of feet scuffling around overhead but he couldn't pinpoint which floor it came from. His heart jackhammered against his ribs, "You can run love, but you can't hide!" His voice echoed the house with a dangerous promise.