

Lita's Love for the Alpha

Bonus Chapter- There Aren't Enough Words

The elevator was too quiet on the way down to the lobby. Even the music did little to ease her irritation. If anything the gentle music only served to remind her of the hulking body a few inches away. He made her feel anything but gentle. Lita didn't have to face him to know he was still wearing his teasing grin and that she wanted to punch it off his perfect face.

"Are we having our first fight?" Ace asked playfully from the other side of the elevator car, arms crossed and brows raised in mock disbelief. He'd been just outside the bedroom door when Lita emerged. One look between them, and he'd already known she planned to sneak out without telling anyone. There was no getting rid of him after that.

"I thought our first fight was when you lied to get me to go to dinner."

"Okay, our second fight then. We've got to mark the occasion," he teased.

"I don't know, it depends," Lita growled, "Are you still refusing to tell me where Cole is?"

"I just want to take this time to say, that it's fucking adorable you can't go a few hours without a man who has the personality of an elbow." With a goofy grin, Ace shrank further back against the wall like he'd gotten the last laugh.

"That's not true—wait, an elbow? I don't even know what to do with that." The ding of the elevator preceded the opening doors and Lita instinctually moved in front of Ace to make more room.

"Oh come on," he said a little too loudly as people shuffled in, "You can't tell me you don't get it. They dig into your ribs and in general, I've never come into contact with an elbow I enjoyed."

Lita turned around and scowled, "He's your best friend. I'm one hundred percent going to tell him you said that."

"And it's still a body part I can't remove, so what's your point? Is comparing him to a kneecap better? It's a little less accurate because there are some knees I've enjoyed." His voice barely held all the self-satisfied humor. "And please tell him. In fact, I'll help you tell him so I can laugh at his reaction. He's going to reach a god-level scowl. Do you think it'll be steam or smoke that shoots from his ears?" Ace chuckled to himself and Lita fought her own grin.

"Steam and smoke are the same things."

"Debatable."

"Just stop talking, please," Lita sighed, ignoring the breathy laughter of the others in the car. Of course, they were women who thought Ace probably hung the stars. She'd seen their thirsty eyes well enough as they'd filed in. Normally, she would stay above such pettiness but these women were human, unaware of the secret world existing alongside their own. So Ace wouldn't be able to say much if she teased him. Lita gave him a devilish smirk over her shoulder and Ace squinted at her.

"You know, if you feel inadequate alongside my *spouse*, you could just say that." Ace opened his mouth to refute but she cut him off, "Don't get me wrong, I totally get it." Lita raised her hands, subtly drawing the eyes of the other women in the elevator. "When you see a fit fighter who isn't using steroids to boost himself, you probably feel exposed. I've heard *horror* stories of what that stuff does to your most notable parts." She heard the quiet snorts as the women averted their eyes.

Ace radiated heat. Lita's back was practically sweating under the force of his glare. She could imagine his jaw flexing, his hands balled to fists. "Lita..." he growled at her back. Lita had to fight to keep her face straight as if she were speaking the truth. "I'm just saying, what do elbows and knee caps have in common? They're both *hard*... *firm* parts of the body. Envy is totally norm—" The elevator dinged and the women filed back out on one of the lower floors. The doors had barely closed before Lita could hear them burst out into laughter.

She jumped to the other side of the car before Ace could snatch her up.

"And I'm the childish one?" Ace said, looking like fire was liable to burst out of his eyes. "Now they're going to go tell people what you just said."

"Oops," Lita gave a mock frown. "I hadn't thought about that. At least now I don't have to tell Jaz you've been flirting all weekend." She played the world's smallest violin and dared him to snap at her.

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"Give a girl a title and she just loses her fucking mind," he grumbled. "You're pissed because I won't tell you. I get that. But I don't know what you want me to do about it. Take it up with your damn *spouse*."

Lita grew serious, "I'm the Luna, I deserve to know what's going on, Ace. If it's something with another pack—"

"It's not pack business," he said exasperatedly, throwing his hands up. "If it were, I would be inclined to share because you're right, that's your business too. But it's not. What Cole's doing... where he is... it's *personal*, so no, I won't be telling you. If that means you're going to scream about my pretend erectile dysfunction from the rooftop, then so be it."

Lita blew a breath as the doors opened to reveal the lobby. It was almost impossible to be angry at Ace. He was the most loyal person she'd ever met. He never lied. Did he ignore social protocols? Sure. Did he often refuse to call Cole *Alpha* while agreeing to call Lita *Luna*, just to piss Cole off? Absolutely. And did he stir up trouble just to watch the drama unfold? Yes. But he didn't lie.

So if he said that Cole's business was private, then she believed him. Obviously, the others agreed with that sentiment because when Lita had left the room, she found the suite completely empty. There was no way it had been a happy coincidence that everyone left at once. No, those wolves had run off so they wouldn't have to tell her where Cole was either. And they left Ace behind, an Alpha who couldn't be bullied by another Alpha.

If it was happening to anyone else, she would have called it a smart play, but as it was her own situation, Lita just wanted to scream. She groaned her frustration, rubbing her temple. She was going to have Cole's ass when he finally showed back up. He would spend a very long night making it up to her.

"So I'll take your shameful silence to mean you're sorry and we have a truce?" Ace asked, slipping out of the elevator beside her. "Or is that glazed look a sign that I should make myself scarce tonight?" His smirk made her mad all over.

"Don't push it," Lita rolled her eyes, then turned her focus to the lobby. "You've been here before?" She reacclimated herself to the posh furnishings and tried her best to surmise where all the fighters were. Much like the tournament, she assumed the action was downstairs in the basement. There's no way they'd keep all this crystal in one piece otherwise.

"Once before, but it was mostly a blur. I think Cole and I snuck in right after we'd decided to do this fighting thing for real." Ace laughed, brushing his cropped hair like an old habit. "You should have seen the looks we got. Two scruffy wolves from rural Kansas, barely out of our first shifts, scuttling back and forth from the flea motel a few miles away."

"Really? I didn't realize you two came all the way here after escaping that hell hole."

"Hell, it wasn't our first stop, that's for sure. We holed up at a lot of dead-end places between there and here just to get our minds right. Cole had his inheritance but neither of us knew what to do in the real world. We couldn't even think about goals. All we thought about was fighting."

Ace grew quiet, walking over to the glassed-in pool area, "Growing up in a place like that made everything backward. Up was down. Left was right. We didn't even know how to talk to other people without repeating all the foul shit we'd learned. And we were—" Ace ran a hand over his mouth, "—So damn angry. At the world. At our fathers. At everything. I know you grew up in the same kind of luxury as Cole and yea, there's probably shady shit going on here too but Maxim's compound... growing up there was like—" His voice trailed off, eyes growing distant.

"Yea," Lita said, putting a hand on his forearm. She wasn't even sure he realized he was shaking. She tightened her grip, pulling him back from whatever he was remembering.

Ace's face went drawn and then he shuddered, "It wasn't all bad though, we met James here. And he was looking for a fresh start same as us." His voice took on a wistful quality. "James and Cole started dreaming up their wild plans, a pack unlike anything they'd ever had. Talking about what they'd do with their money. What they could build for other wolves like us. That's how they decided to hit the west coast. Get away from everything any of us ever grew up around. I was listening, ya know. And yea, I was excited. But I wasn't cut from the same cloth as the rest of you. I didn't dream big and blow money."

"You didn't come from money back in Maxim's pack?"

Ace smiled something unfriendly and cruel, "Nope." He brushed her hand away, forceful but careful, effectively ending the conversation where it stood.

"Come on," he forced a smile, putting on his playful persona even as Lita knew it was faked. "You've got to see downstairs. If you thought the tournament was large, you've no idea how big this showcase gets."

Lita wanted to say something but much like how she felt when someone offered condolences about James, she knew there weren't really words for it. Instead, she let him redirect the conversation, following him to the basement stairs.