

Bullied Mate Of The Lycan Kings – Chapter 151

Lily's pov

"You'll be alright, babe. I promise, okay? Tell her, Rhea" Chelsea said, the two of them watching me as I stared at my reflection in the mirror, wearing a simple black dress with matching black pumps, my hair in a high ponytail.

"Everything will be fine, Lily. I'm sure you're just going for formality sake." Rhea added and I turned to give them a smile that didn't reach my eyes. It couldn't.

My nerves were jittery, my hands shaking and I couldn't tell if I was nervous or excited.

Today is the day we find out the council's verdict on Cade. I had my shaky hands behind my back as I nodded at them and headed out to where I was sure everyone else was waiting for me.

Mariah had returned this morning, days after she had left and had briefed all of us on the state of affairs. Apparently, Victor had not lied about Gold Crest being untouched, even though it was closest to the borders and Night Shade had received the most damage from the attack.

The protectors of the wards had been slain by insiders, defectors who were working with hunters before the hunters proceeded to try to break through the wards.

But fortunately, the damage to Shadow cove as a whole was minimal and the situation had managed to be contained before any further damage could be done. For now, there was a curfew out to ensure that people were not on the streets and the cleaning unit had started working on clearing the weapons and damaged property off the roads and streets.

As she had given us the entire report, her words sounding almost like she was reliving the incident, all I could think about in that moment was that my mother was safe, but underlying that momentary gladness about her safety was immense worry because was this it? Were we really safe now? It all felt like the calm before a storm? Why did it feel like something worse was coming?

Today, we were heading to the Council headquarters where the Elders were going to give their verdict on all that had happened, including Gold crest's betrayal and how we would move forward from this as a community.

I spied Cade as he was led out of the house and into a separate car, dressed in a suit and he managed to give me a small smile before he climbed into the car. Seeing that he was not in chains made me hopeful that no matter what happened, it meant that Cade would be spared for the crimes of his mother.

"You're riding with us, duchess," Zac said firmly, opening the door to the back seat for me and holding out his hand.

I giggled, taking his hand, warmth spreading throughout my body when he pressed a soft kiss to the top of my hand.

"Thanks, Zac," I said, slipping in, laughing harder when he tried to join me but Aiden shoved him out of the way and climbed in instead.

Zac rolled his eyes and groaned something along the lines of needing some love before he got into the passenger seat.

Aiden promptly wrapped his arm around me and lifted me up and onto his lap, carrying me like a baby. "Don't be nervous, baby. I'm sure they're just curious."

"I'm not nervous about me or us. I'm nervous for Cade."

The entire mood in the car turned somber at that.

"The council is always fair," Aiden reasoned gently.

"Like they were fair with my father?"

Zac inhaled sharply and the car swerved to the right, Ren losing his focus for a second.

Aiden stiffened, guilt flashing across his eyes. "That's not what I meant, Lily."

My shoulders slumped, my eyes softened. "I'm sorry. I know, I've just been testy since I found out the truth. Cade won't deserve any punishment he gets."

I noticed the boys share a look and I narrowed my eyes wondering what they were trying to communicate with each other.

“Let’s just hope the council will be lenient,” Ren said, his gentle eyes finding mine in the rearview mirror and I relaxed against Aiden as I felt his warmth and strength rush into me through our bond, communicating back my love and gratitude to him.

Aiden rubbed my arms and breathed into my hair and I looked up at him, marvelling at the stardusts in his eyes., “I meant what I said, you know. I don’t want you beating yourself up whenever I bring up my dad. I don’t hold the slightest grudge towards you.”

He visibly relaxed at that, heaving a relieved breath and nuzzling my hair. “I know, princess, I know. But god, I needed to hear that.”

Throughout the car ride, I fought the urge to pull at my hair or fiddle with my dress, my entire body a bundle of nerves. The reason was because naturally, I wasn’t supposed to attend this meeting but the elders had specifically requested my presence, along with my mates. I had no idea why but was surely not because they wanted to see our faces, right?

The council headquarters was a giant skyscraper located at the heart of Shadow Cove, smackdab in the center of the city and it was my first time ever walking into the building.

Taking in a deep breath as I stepped in, I took my time to immerse myself in the surroundings. The floors were dark polished marble while the walls and ceilings were eggshell white.

At the center was a water fountain that looked up to the glass ceilings that was positioned above it, allowing the sun rays to illuminate it. The building looked untouched by the hunters and rebellion and I wondered if that was intentional or just pure luck.

As we approached the elevator, Mariah stopped in front of me.

“We’ll meet you upstairs, boys. I would like to have a word with Lily.” She said to my mates who looked very reluctant to part with me just as I was with them, but Mariah wasn’t asking for their permission.

She was a Luna through and through, not used to being denied and she looked like she wanted to talk about something serious too so after much hesitance, I nodded at them and Ren whispered through our bond to tell them

if I needed anything while Aiden pressed the button closing the doors, an adorable scowl on his face.

Leading me to the front of the fountain, she offered me a seat on one of the benches not too far from it and didn't waste time beating about the bush.

"They're probably going to tear you to pieces up there," she said without preamble. "I spent quite some time trying to convince the members of the council that you are not a danger to Shadow Cove. I honestly believe that but you must also play your part in ensuring that the others believe it. Do you understand what I am saying?"

I winced because I understood perfectly what she meant.

My powers that I was still learning to control.

Dahlia had struck again, killing one of the newly recruited soldiers that Mariah had returned with from the borders, someone she had no reason to distrust but who Ren had discovered upon her death while searching her memories that she was a part of the Rebellion. Even though Mariah had been impressed by my abilities, I had seen the way she eyed me worriedly when she found out that I had not even been in control of my actions, that I couldn't control Dahlia.

I opened my mouth to try to make an excuse, to tell her that I had been training with the guys, a story that was quite embarrassing because I had not initially planned to ask for their help, sneaking out to use the gym until my meltdown with Chase and they offered to train me.

I wanted to tell her that for the past few days before she returned, I had been endurance training with Ren, core training with Zac, strength training with Aiden and sparring with the girls, but I knew that it didn't matter if at the end of the day, Dahlia was still in control.

I knew that it would take a while before I could take on anyone twice my size thanks to my lack of training from birth unlike my peers but I was getting quicker and stronger on her feet by the day and although the boys were nice to me when I sparred with them, I was more focused on getting better rather than just beating them. All of which wouldn't matter if Dahlia still kept doing as she pleased.

"I'm not stupid, I know that there are some sympathizers among the council siding with the rebellion and who knows how many of them are really on

Cynthia's side, but you have to understand that in here, we follow due process." She sighed, taking my hand. "Your wolf can't act out of control and take lives however she pleases. In here, that's all it would take to start a war. Do you understand, Lily?"

I nodded, hoping Dahlia gets the memo and keeps her claws in. "Thank you for speaking for me before the council and for letting me stay at your place." I smiled my gratefulness. "I will try my best to keep Dahlia under control. The last thing I want is to cause more problems for Shadow cove." I answered and when she smiled and pulled me in for a hug, my eyes widened in surprise because it was the last thing I expected from her.

Pulling back to smile at me, she patted my hair.

"I should be the one thanking you, dear girl, for not bearing any ill will to my family even though you have every right to, considering how we had treated your father and your family in the past but more importantly, thank you for giving my son the will to live again."

"Zac?" My heart clenched, my curious piqued.

I always knew that the nonchalant happy-go-lucky image he exuded was only a mask to conceal his real emotions...

NO, not a mask... An armour.

"You know what he is, right?" She asked, tilting her head.

I nodded. Zac was part vampire, part werewolf turned by a girl he once loved.

"He's always in so much pain with himself, his mind, his wolf," she said and snatches of memories floated to mind at her words. Memories of Zac yelling at himself- no, his wolf, chiding him, restraining him. "When he first got turned, he'd keep screaming at the top of his lungs, how the only thing he wanted to do was kill everyone in sight and drain us of our blood, and for a newly turned one, he showed great restraint."

"We soon realized that the only way to keep him sane was to get him drugged up in small doses as we tried to rehabilitate him back into society and he got addicted to the drugs and even when he was discharged, he wouldn't stop chasing high after high.

“He was a drifter, never stays home, never stays in anywhere for too long really. I knew all about his party favours, the drugs, the girls. I tried to get him to take therapy seriously but it never really worked. I was terrified that one day he would not find something to keep him high and would finally decide to quit living.”

My hurt dropped. I was almost ashamed to admit that I didn't know... Unlike Ren, Cade and Aiden, I knew their pasts like the back of my hand.

I never had that conversation with Zac... I Loved him, I knew I love him, his blood flowed in my veins and I would give my life for him in a heartbeat... yet, details of his past were uncharted territory for me. Everything I know about his past was told to me by someone else.

“I'm grateful to you, Lily,” Mariah said, drawing me out of my reverie. “He's happy and alive in a way that I didn't think was even possible anymore. You might not understand what you've done for him or me or my family, but I'm grateful that you walked into his life.”

My eyes watered and I smiled, feeling like a weight had been lifted off my shoulders by her approval of my relationship with her son.

“Let's go get this meeting over with, I guess.” She said, standing up and leading me back to the elevator.

As we entered the boardroom, I paused at the door, taking in the entire place. The seats were arranged in a semi circle. There were thrones for the Alpha and Luna of the four founding packs and behind their thrones were seats for their constituents which usually consisted of their betas, gammas and zetas.

In addition to that, twelve Elders chosen by unanimous votes, usually consisting of the oldest and wisest werewolves in each of the packs were also in attendance and it usually was their judgement that was final, sometimes superseding even that of the royals.

As I looked at their faces, I prayed that they would be merciful towards Cade. That's the only thing that would loosen up the knot in my stomach.

Aiden was lounging in the throne meant for the Alpha of Night Shade and I chuckled, my heart swirling with pride at his unrepentant audacity but the rest of the council didn't find it so funny.

They looked horrified at his action and I understood that it meant a complete disrespect to Victor who by virtue of being Alpha was supposed to be on that seat since he hadn't relinquished the title to Aiden.

Night Shade and Gold Crest's constituents were eerily absent, so besides Cade and Aiden who sat in their respective corners, their entire sections were empty.

However as I sat beside Mariah, I realized that everyone's attention was now on me. I received a variety of stares, some curious while others were fearful and repulsed and I steeled my spine, looking away. The last thing I needed was to become bothered by it and unintentionally set Dahlia off who I was sure was itching to go on a killing spree but was swallowing her pride and rage like a good little wolf to avoid getting me into any trouble.

If I had any doubts that she only wanted what was best for me, she was doing a good job of clearing it up.

Ariel's smile from where she was sitting on her graceful throne at the head of the table designated for Silver Moon pack, Ren and Irwin flanking her sides made me relax a little and I returned her smile, happy that at least I had some allies in this place.

The commotion in the boardroom quickly died down as one of the elders started speaking, calling the room to order.

It happened all of a sudden. I started feeling hot, itchy and uncomfortable, like the room was on fire. Trying to search if the air conditioners were working with my eyes, I felt my heart rate speed up and realized that I was terrified.

No, not me. Dahlia was.

Dahlia was never scared of anything, in fact everyone in this room was probably frightened of her, so feeling her fear made me want to follow the urge to pick myself up and place myself in the opposite direction of it.

My ears were ringing, panic, shooting my heart rate, my palms sweating and the urge to leave started getting stronger, almost like Dahlia was screaming at me, yelling for me to run.

I couldn't make sense of why or what she was terrified of until I heard the doors open and the royals from Night shade walked into the room, Victor Vanderbilt leading them.

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Lily's pov

Familiar night exploded in the room and the entire room burst into pandemonium because when the darkness cleared, Aiden was no longer seated on the Alpha's seat but barreling towards his uncle, his eyes filled with murderous rage and when guards stepped in front of Víctor, their hands out as if to keep Aiden away, shadows seeped out of his body and flung them out of the way, knocking them into the walls around and I was sure that I was probably the only one in the room grinning with pride as the guards fell to the ground.

It was unclear whether they were just unconscious or dead.

With no one in his way, Aiden was on Víctor in seconds, slamming him against the wall and pinning him in place with a firm grip around his throat, his shadow hounds melting out of his body and baring their teeth on anyone that tried to get close.

"Stop this at once!" one of the elders screamed and the others agreed, hounding Aiden to put Victor down but if anything, it seemed Aiden was even more determined to do the exact opposite.

"Your uncle is still the recognized alpha of Night Shade and until the Elders give their verdict, raising a hand against him is a severe offence that is punishable by death." Another man yelled and a noose tightened against my neck as Dahlia's hackles rose.

Death? I obviously couldn't let that happen.

I rose to my feet immediately, my heart beating so fast, I was certain it would explode and even though I knew Aiden had every right to kill Victor after learning what he knew but with the way the elders were screaming and the way Victor raised his hands in surrender, doing nothing to defend himself but wearing a smug smile even though Aiden's claws were digging into his neck.

“I’ve always looked forward to ripping your throat out, uncle” Aiden growled, raising a clawed hand, his hounds taking a more ferocious form as everyone tried to get past them, “thank you for finally giving me a reason to kill you,” he said, refusing to look at us and it was another Elder, a woman this time that answered.

“The only way to overthrow an Alpha without facing punishment for treason is to challenge him to a duel and win.”

“Then let’s do it.” Aiden answered almost immediately, growling at his uncle who didn’t even flinch even though I was sure everyone was terrified of Aiden and his shadows right now.

Victor’s smirk widened briefly before his face changed to one that I was certain was to garner pity, his voice shaking.

“Where is your honour, nephew? Are you so desperate that you would challenge me, your handicap uncle who is yet to even recover from the injuries I sustained while trying to protect the pack during the recent invasion? Where were you by the way when it all went down happened?” He took a long look at directly at me and I bared my teeth in rage at him, giving him a Dahlia worthy f**k-you smile.

“Hmm, it’s easy to know where you were, playing lovesick puppy with your new toy. While I was at the forefront, you were hidden like a pathetic coward. And even after the attack?” He tilted his head, those grey eyes that were all the wrong shade peered at his nephew. “You couldn’t be bothered to show up to protect your parents’ legacy but suddenly you think you can be Alpha? Don’t make me laugh.”

Murmurs erupted in the hall and I could hear some of the elders agreeing with Victor’s point of view and it made me realize that Victor had been banking on Aiden attacking him so that he would discredit him in front of the council and even though I knew that Aiden couldn’t care less what the council or anyone thought of him, if he killed Victor now, he would never have their support or approval.

And I can’t let that happen.

Walking towards where Aiden pinned Victor, I heaved a sigh of relief as the pack of dogs parted, recognizing me as I passed through and when I touched Aiden’s shoulder, he flinched before his body registered that it was me and

relaxed, his face turning away from his uncle to look at me but I kept my eyes on Victor, making sure he saw my anger and that I knew what he was trying to do.

“This is not the right time or place, Aiden. You need to let him go. If you do this, you’ll have to deal with losing the council’s support or worse being separated from me. I can’t lose you, Aiden, I don’t want that. Do you want that?”

“No.” He finally answered, gritting his teeth as he dropped Victor to the floor and called back his hounds and I heaved a sigh of relief as he took my hand.

Leading him towards where the head of the table for the Night shade pack was located, I stared at him and he nodded with a smile, sitting beside me in the Alpha and Luna seats and there were audible gasps, the hall breaking into murmurs again until Ignazio, Zac’s father banged his fist on the table, causing the room to fall into silence,

“We were all called here for a reason so I suggest we get back to it so that some of us can go home and rest with our families. It’s been a long couple of days.”

Nodding, one of the elders asked Cade to take the stand and as the list of offences was listed off, including treason, murder and conspiracy to betray Shadow cove, I found myself biting my lip in worry.

“You may plead your case. If you are convincing enough and cooperative in helping us find where your mother might be hiding, then we will be lenient in our judgement but if we detect that you are lying to this council, to the elders, you will be torn apart by an executioner like any other traitor to the community.” One of the elders said and I couldn’t hide my terror.

As much as I didn’t want to lose Aiden, i couldn’t lose Cade either. I clenched my sweaty palms and prayed to the goddess that the council will at least be merciful if not fair.

I remembered how I had been forced to watch my father’s execution, along with my mother. It was so that we would never forget what he had done and to warn us of the consequences of following in his footsteps.

The council, from Cade's confession would find out the truth today, the truth that my father was innocent but that wouldn't bring him back. And that wouldn't change how my life was destroyed afterwards.

Aiden linked his hands though mine and his warmth caused me to look at him. I could see his guilt for the part he felt he had played in my life and even though I remembered as well, I had forgiven him. The two of us were victims of this conspiracy, had our families ripped apart by the greed of evil people. The only solace I had was that they would face the judgement that they deserved soon.

The room was silent as Cade revealed everything, including the role he played in his dealings with the hunters. Although I had heard this part of the story before, it really started to sink in as he narrated his experience. Wolfsbane, rhodium, ferablooms... those were recipes for disaster on their own. What was Cynthia thinking manufacturing then and worse, selling them to our enemies? Is she that greedy for wealth?

As he rounded off his speech, Mariah raised a hand and stared at him, amidst the murmurs that were brought upon by the damning revelations.

"Do you still stand by your claims that Victor worked with your mother against the packs and the stability of Shadow cove?"

"Yes, I do." Cade answered, his face solemn as he glared at Victor, his gaze unflinching.

"Victor had always been privy to my mother's plans and dealings with the humans and he was the one who orchestrated the entire m*****e and pinned it on Edgar Beauregard."

If a pin dropped in the room right now, it would echo because of the stunned silence in the room. The gravity of the accusation laid heavy like a cloud over our heads but it was Victor who broke the silence with a laugh that sounded amused as he rose to his feet, leaning on his walking stick.

"If I may be allowed to speak, dear Council?"

The man at the center of where the Elders was sitting, who I now realized had to be their leader, nodded and Victor bowed before he started.

“Let me say by reminding this great council of how I had foretold a great doom that would take place in the future if we allowed Lily to live and how nobody believed me...”

“Stick to your accusations, Victor” Ariel interjected immediately. “The prophecy you speak of is unfounded and we as a Council refuse to be remembered as one that killed a child because of something as vague as your words which from the new accusations, aren’t supposed to be worth a dime. Stick to pleading your case and do not speak out of turn again.”

Victor blinked, not expecting such a harsh rebuttal but he forced a smile and bowed.

“My apologies.”

Ariel didn’t answer him, only turning to look at me and I smiled, hoping she could see how grateful I was that she had my back. However, I made sure Victor saw the sneer on my face as he continued to speak.

“I suspected Cynthia’s affiliation with the hunters for years but she never let me get close enough to be certain about it which was why I never brought it up to the Council. It was only a few years ago that she began to let me in on her important dealings with the humans and I only played along because I wanted to rat out as many hunter camps as I could and get inside information that would be good enough to hold weight against the council. You do know that it is almost treason to accuse an Alpha of a heinous crime without evidence, is it not?”

Clapping his hands, he gestured to one of his men who stood up and handed a file to the Chief Elder, who was skeptical as he opened the document and began to read through the paperwork.

“The file contains valueable information about the hunters I’ve gathered over the years. I am not a traitor to Shadow Cove. How could I ever be? This is my home. Why would I collude with someone to have us killed? Our own people that I vowed to protect.”

Aiden’s growl shook the entire room and it looked like it was taking everything in him to not speak or lunge at his Uncle because the Council already looked like they were buying his story.

“So, Victor? Are you saying that you are innocent? How do you plead in regards to Cade Corrigan’s accusations?” Mariah asked and Victor shrugged.

“Cade is a hurt and confused child and if I were him, I would probably do the same. Try to convince myself that my mother couldn’t be acting alone. I might even go as far as he has and try to pin my mother’s atrocities on another person, especially someone that you wouldn’t mind if they died at the executioner’s block. But like I said, he’s a child so I won’t hold grudges against him.”

“You fvcking liar!” Cade growled, getting out of his seat and making for Victor but he was immediately grabbed and pulled back by the guards. “Tell them the truth, you lying, evil p r i c k!”

I could see the pain in his eyes, like I was staring into a mirror. I had once fought tooth and nail to try to prove that I was right, that my father was innocent but just like that time, it looked like we had already lost.

“If I may speak, council,” Ren spoke up, “I can use my powers to prove once and for all who is telling the truth and why it is Cade.”

“Except, we are aware of your interesting little bond group with Lily Beauregard as your central mate and you will do anything to protect who she holds dear, won’t you? Even lie to the council at the expense of the truth ” One of the elders sneered, a dangerous gleam in his eyes.

“Don’t go putting words into my son’s mouth now, Ezekiel.” Ariel chided coldly.

“That boy is not your son. He is the son of a w***e. Maybe instead of trying to sway the judgement of the council, why don’t you-“

“Keep my wife and my son out of your mouth, Ezekiel, or be prepared to face the consequences as soon as we leave this building.”

“Are you threatening an elder of the council?” The man named Ezekiel stiffened, his big eyes bulging out of his sockets at Irwin.

“Depends on if you continue to disrespect my family and I will gladly explain why that is not a good idea on your part since it is clear that you have forgotten your place here.”

The chill in Irwin's voice was enough to silence the very annoying elder.

"We will be taking a vote now." The chief elder cleared his throat to diffuse the awkwardness. "Everyone except the guards, of course, please cast your votes now." The chief Elder said and the ten minutes that followed felt like an hour.

It probably felt worse for Cade since they were deciding his fate and when the results came out, even Aiden looked like he was going to explode with anger. Zac and Ren wore mirroring expressions as the verdict was read.

Only my mates, me and the alphas and lunas of Silver moon and Poison Fang had voted to have Cade forgiven and Victor punished.

"As you know, our verdict does not mean that things are just as they seem." The chief elder said to Victor. "In light of the valuable information you have given us today, concerning the hunters' camps and their plans against us, we do not believe that you are disloyal to Shadow cove. It is not in our best interests to find out that you were dining with Cynthia while knowing about her dealings with the hunters all along. Your movements and calls will be closely monitored and reviewed weekly to ensure that you are not a threat."

No... My heart sank. How can they do it? How can they do this?!

"As for you young man" another Elder said to Cade, and my hands shook with fear.

"You are to cease producing Rhodium and wolfsbane immediately. Your mines and wolfsbane fields will be confiscated. And you and all of Gold Crest cease to be a part of the Shadow cove community, effective immediately. From now on, you will no longer be protected by the wards or the joint forces that govern Shadow Cove. You are to leave the city at once and if you set foot into our community again, you will be killed on sight and your representatives arrested and deported."

There was pandemonium in the house because while some people felt the punishment was too lenient, others advocated strongly against it, including Ariel, her eyes brimming with anger at the horror of the situation.

"A death sentence! This is as good as a death sentence to send one of our own outside the wards!"

"Just kill him now! Kill the traitor!"

“He is just a child. You cannot punish him for the sins of his mother.” Ariel said, her voice clear and firm.

“That is why we are sparing his life, Luna.” The Chief responded and tears trickled down my cheeks because it felt like all those years ago all over again. A child paying for the sins of their parents.

“This is as lenient as the council will ever be with the child of a traitor, especially because Cade willingly confessed to partaking in her crimes. We can’t let him go unpunished.” Another Elder added and all I could do was hold on to Aiden’s hands, my entire body shaking with anger and pain at such a sentence.

“What the actual f u c k?” Zac exploded, livid. “It’s clear that the council is not as fair and just as we all think. It’s obvious whose side you’re on. What? Did Victor promise you immunity? Cash or are you all just so far up his a*s, you can’t even think clearly for yourself? This is all bullshît!”

“I suggest you don’t reduce to such vile and profane way of speaking, Talaverra.”

“I will talk however the fvck I want, as\$hat!”

“I’ll have to ask you to leave immediately.”

“My son will not be sent out of this room like a common hooligan.”

“Then I suggest you train him up properly, Mariah.”

“Why don’t you come and say that to my fvcking face, Rico?”

Cade didn’t look surprised at the verdict, bowing respectfully but when his eyes found mine, I saw the pain that he tried to hide and I was about to go to him when Victor spoke, silencing the chaos.

“There is something else I wish to reveal to the Council. I had thought this would not be the right time but in light of the current insecurity in Shadow Cove, I believe it would be best to introduce my daughter to the Council so that she can be protected and treated like the rest of the royal offsprings in this room.”

Narrowing my eyes at him in confusion, I looked at Aiden who was also perplexed by Victor's words and it was obvious that Zac and Ren didn't have a clue that Victor had a daughter as well from their confused looks.

Waving a hand at the door, the guards pulled it open and my mouth felt like it would fall to the ground in shock when Mauve walked in, grinning wide.

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Aiden's pov

"No way," Lily whispered, her eyes finding mine in blatant disbelief.

Static silence rung in my head.

The entire room seemed to suddenly become smaller as I tried to process what Victor had just said. Well, it didn't even need so much processing when the evidence of what he had just said was standing in the room with us, her smile as wide and as power hungry as the man who just announced that he was her father.

"Ren, tell us," Zac demanded telepathically through our bond. "Is he telling the truth?"

Nothing but stunned silence was Ren's response and a look in his direction told me that he was stuck in a state of shock and dissociation, his eyes wide in frozen disbelief, snow white hair stuck to his sweating forehead, his hands clenched at his sides.

I didn't blame him. He was seeing his abuser for the first time in weeks.

"No," Ren replied, his voice tight, but I couldn't tell if he really believed that or if he was trying to convince himself. "I don't believe this shit."

I was absolutely disgusted as Mauve walked in like she owned the place, sashaying towards where Lily and I and the rest of the Night shade royals were seated and winking at me before taking her seat.

"Hello, cousin" she said, like she needed to announce her presence to me. As if she wasn't already being a nuisance by being here alone and my entire body was shaking with rage as I wondered what Victor could have planned with this announcement this time. How was it even possible that Mauve of all

people in the entire Shadow cove community was his daughter? The same Mauve who had tried to suck me off even when she was mated to Ren? Who had tried to get me to fuck her... The same Mauve that had in the most malicious and humiliating way tried to get Lily killed on her birthday? She was my cousin?

Tuning back in because I needed to hear what Victor had to say about this, I forced myself to remain seated as he spun what I was sure was a web of lies to all of us present.

“This is my daughter, Mauve. I humbly ask this esteemed council that my daughter be treated like you would treat any of the princes gathered here.”

The murmurs in the crowd increased and I saw that Ren was shaking his head at me, also looking surprised which meant that he had not sensed that Víctor could be lying.

Lily looked like she couldn't even believe what was going on in the room and even though her hand was still wrapped in mine, she refused to look in the direction I was seated, and I knew it was because Mauve was sitting in that direction.

“Why have you waited this long to reveal her to the council?” Ariel asked, raising an eyebrow that told me she wasn't buying the bullshit as well and I mentally applauded her restraint because I was here trying to remind myself that I could not kill Víctor right now if I wanted to ascend as Alpha.

“Its quite the contrary. I didn't wait all this time as I myself only also discovered that I had a daughter a few months ago. I was involved with her mother eighteen years ago and the recent attack caused her to reach out to me. There was a dna test of course, carried out in one of your hospitals, unless there is cause to doubt the integrity of your institution, Mauve is my blood.”

Ariel gritted her teeth and nodded once.

“I had intended to leave her in the shadows for her own protection and continue to provide for her because it would be tough adapting to this lifestyle if I were to throw her into it without much training since I'm sure I have a few enemies that would like to use that against me, but I realized that perhaps there was safety in proximity and I want to keep her close to me. We have seen one too many tales of disloyal and ungrateful family members betraying their family.”

He looked at me as if making sure I knew that he was talking about me and then Cade, who looked away, his eyes more downcast than I had ever seen him.

“I don’t want to die without making sure that my daughter gets the recognition and peace she deserves. She deserves to have her parent in her life and vice versa. Am I right, Mauve?”

Mauve nodded with a smile and I was so appalled by the show that I wanted to leave but Lily beat me to it, her eyes like daggers as she finally looked between Mauve and Victor before stomping out of the room angrily.

The slam of the door was hard and I was about to stand up and go after her when I heard Ren telepathically.

“I’ll go after her” He assured us, rising out of his seat and leaving the room and when I looked at Zac, he nodded for me to remain calm. If this was in the past, I would have ignored and rushed outside but right now, I was sure that Ren was going to take care of her and calm her down in a way that I never would.

Glaring at the door where they left through, I watched as Mauve rose and went after them and I didn’t wait, I got up minutes after her and headed out, not trusting anyone but myself to protect my mate, especially if Mauve was involved.

Stepping out into the long hallway, I tried to head in the direction of their scent but just as I made a right turn, a hand clamped around my arm and I was slammed against the wall by a very angry Víctor, whose false smiles were long gone, dropping his act as he glared ferociously at me.

He must have not anticipated that I would not be afraid of him because he frowned when I grinned, because I was excited that we were finally here, away from prying eyes and the judgement of people that would stop me from finally getting rid of him.

My grin widened, relishing in the joy that I would have when I finally killed Víctor but the strangest thing happened when I tried to call my shadow as nothing came. Infact, it felt like I could not feel my shadows again when they always used to feel like a limb, an extension of me.

“Well, well, not so tough now, are you?” Víctor sneered and I was about to ask him what he did to me when his hands dig into my shoulders, his claws siding to my skin.

I gasped in pain, feeling poison pump into my veins.

“You didn’t think I’d let you go unchecked with those powers of yours now, did you?”

“M- my arm...” I can’t feel my arm.

He grabbed my other arm with his poisoned claws and I bit back on the urge to scream in pain. I won’t give him that satisfaction.

“I should have killed you years ago, you insolent child,” he sneered in my ears. “Just like I killed your father.”

There it was. The bitter, cold truth.

My eyes widened, my heart stuttering in my chest. I already knew it, already knew the truth from Cade, but having him confess it just solidified it. Made it more present. More true.

“No!” I growled, trying to fight him off.

“It’s a pity I need you alive. What a shame that such unprecedented powers was gifted to mere kids that won’t even know what to do with them. Not for long, nephew. Not for long.”

“I’m going to f u c k i n g kill you!” I growled, tearing out of his hold and wheezing in pain.

My chest wouldn’t stop constricting. My lungs wouldn’t function properly. What the hell did he do to me?

I couldn’t ponder on it too hard because he suddenly grabbed me by my hair and slammed my head against the wall.

Pain exploded in my skull. I staggered, trying to find my footing, blood dripping down the side of my head as the entire room spun.

“Kill me? Don’t make me laugh,” he roared, kicking me in the gut, grabbing my left arm and twisting so hard that I felt my shoulder dislocate from its socket.

Blinding pain shot through my arm. Stars dotted my vision.

I growled, trying to escape his hold, simultaneously fighting the poison shutting down my system and trying to summon my shadows.

“You’re so weak. So pathetic, it’s laughable.”

He was actually laughing now, roaring with glee like there wasn’t a council meeting going on several floors above us.

“You sicken me,” he said, pushing me so hard that I stumbled and had to lean against the wall, fighting for my next breath.

Sweat and blood dripped down my head. There was the faint scent of something... Rhodium, I realized.

This bastard snuck rhodium through the borders.

“Do it,” he urged, his eyes bright, taunting me. “Kill me.”

“You bas-“

Crack.

He backhanded me in the face so hard, I swayed on my feet, fighting back the urge to show my pain as I tried to get back on equal ground with him.

“You want to kill me, don’t you?” He howled, malicious glee dancing in his eyes. “Do it! Kill me! If you’re man enough.”

I lunged at him, he sidestepped and wrapped his hand around my throat, squeezing hand. “I should end you for this insolence-“

“Let him go.” A cold, murderous voice filled the hallway, calming the racing thoughts in my head and we both turned to look at Lily.

She was flanked by Ren and her eyes seemed darker, filled with something that was both old, cold and ruthless.

“Let him go,” She repeated and even though I didn’t know Víctor to ever listen to anyone, something about the way Lily’s voice sounded so cold and the way her entire body echoed with barely restrained fury made him stop and I

couldn't tell if it was just Lily right now or Dahlia, her wolf whose actions were volatile and inherently violent.

Hand wrapping around my neck, Víctor tossed her a wicked grin, not taking her threat seriously.

“What will you do if I don't? Huh? What will you do?” He sang, his tone mocking like he couldn't even imagine answering to someone like Lily.

Ren growled and attempted to step forward but Lily raised a hand and stopped him, advancing forward until she was standing in front of Víctor and her eyes glowed as she wrapped her hand around his arm and easily removed it from my neck to the surprise of all of us in the hallway, especially Victor.

“Let go of my hand” He said but this time, even his voice stuttered and I tried to wrap my head around how he was now scared of Lily when minutes ago he was barely even listening.

“Why should I?” She asked, a genuine clueless frown on her face. “What will you do if I don't?” She asked mockingly, repeating his previous words.

“W- What are you doing?” Victor asked as her grip on his hand tightened and her eyes looked even darker, still Lily but something much colder and when she squeezed his hand hard, I watched as Victor, the same man that had abused me all my life crumbled to his knees in agony.

“What am I going to do?” She asked, tilting her head, “is that what you asked just now? Do you want to find out?”

She couldn't hear him through the mindless garble he just uttered and she pulled him closer, her lips pulling back into a sweet smile. “I can show you.”

Before I could fathom what she wanted to do, she crushed his hands, the sound of bones breaking filling the air and he screamed so loud, the rest of the council must have heard him by now.

He was sputtering, gasping, trying to wrench his hand free. She brought her face close to his ear and whispered in a tone so silent and cold, the temperature in the hallway went down a few degrees.

“If you ever lay a hand on him again, I will rip your heart out and feed it to the dogs.”

“What?” He gasped.

“I said,” she drew even closer, shadows melting out of the dark corners and hovering around us, “if you touch my mate again, I will tear you chest open, like this,” she said, raising a clawed hand and digging into Victor’s chest, her claws tearing at his skin and muscle, “crush your ribs,” there was the sound of crushing bones and Victor folded in on himself, screaming at the top of his lungs as Lily’s fingers dug and dug, “and rip out your pathetic, wicked heart.”

She’s going to do it. She’s really going to do it and she was smiling through it all, a malicious smile that chilled my bones.

“This is just a demonstration of course-“

“Lily-” I called out, reaching for her. “Don’t-“

“Aiden,” she said softly, turning around to give me a gentle look, “I’m going to need you to be quiet while I teach your uncle a lesson.”

“You can’t kill him- the council-” my lungs collapsed on me and Ren rushed to my side, snapping out of his shocked reverie at seeing his sweet girlfriend go apesh;t on Victor.

“s**t,” he cursed, placing a hand over my wound. “Rhodium. How-“

Footsteps started approaching us, the sound of someone bounding through the halls and Zac whipped out of a corner, panting hard, “tell me why Mauve is telling the council that-” his eyes suddenly went wide as he took in the scene before him. “Holy SH;t! What the hell happened here?” He pinched the bridge of his nose and groaned. “Sh!t sh!t sh!t! Don’t tell me that b***h wasn’t lying when she said Lily-“

I realized what all of this was immediately. A set up. Did this bastard set us up?

I heard the elevator ding again, footsteps marching in our direction and my heart sank.

The rest of the council was coming, soldiers and guards marching towards us. They would be here in no time and the last thing I wanted them to see was what Lily had just done. What I was sure would be interpreted as Dahlia's handwork. Victor would solicit to have Lily punished as he sees fit and I can't let this bastard get his hands on my mate.

Snatching her away from where she stood, I practically threw her to Zac who was waiting to catch her.

"Get her out of here. Now! Ren, stay with me and heal the worst parts of his wounds." We needed to make sure they believe that I was responsible for this. I can't let them punish Lily. I can't let anything happen to her. Nothing mattered except making sure my mate was safe.

Nodding, Zac lifted her up and ran for the elevators, covering her mouth and wrapping his arms tight around her waist as she struggled and tried to break free, her eyes wide with comprehension of what I was about to do. Ren got to work immediately, practically draining his life force.

I tried to give her a smile, pain crumpling my lungs, tried to tell her that I would be okay but all I could see was devastation in her eyes as the doors to the lift closed on her while the soldiers made it to us, seized me and dragged me away.

Bullied Mate Of The Lycan Kings – Chapter 154

Lily's pov

"Let me go, Zac. Please, let me go" I screamed as he pulled me away but his hand quickly covered my mouth and I could only look on in horror as I was pulled into the elevator and Aiden's eyes were the last thing I saw as the doors shut, soldiers seizing him.

"For fvcks sake, let me go dammit" I yelled, writhing against Zac as he kept my hands away from the elevator buttons. He cursed and braced his hands on the walls, caging me in and counting under his breath while the elevator chugged down.

"Take me back." I begged as he dragged me out of the lift and he growled at me, ignoring my rants and even tightening his grip on me as we got to where the car was parked.

“Get in right now, Lily.” Zac commanded and shoved me into the car, locking the door so that I could not get out and driving off at a speed that was not human.

He'd glance behind us once in a while to see if we were being followed and the farther away we were from Aiden, the worse I felt.

We weren't even heading in the direction of Poison Fang and I didn't want to ask him where we were going because he looked too pissed to talk to me right now.

I didn't want to cry. I didn't want to scream even though my entire body was aching to let out a scream so chilling I was terrified that it would shatter the windshield of the car.

Devastation crept in as we moved farther away from the pack and my rage turned to guilt because I could not even blame what I had just done to Victor on Dahlia. Not when I was fully aware of what she was doing. Not when I was happy to see Victor finally in pain as opposed to being the oppressor.

I had loved every moment of it and if not for the intervention from Aiden, I was sure that if Dahlia wanted to kill him, I wouldn't have stopped her. This was the first time that I was actually in support of her taking a life, especially when it was that of someone as miserable as Victor Vanderbilt. I had been too thoughtless about the consequences of my actions, just focused on causing harm and now Aiden was going to pay for my anger.

Since anger did not seem to be working with Zac, I decided to try another approach.

“They are going to punish Aiden or worse if we don't go back now, Zac. You know that, right?” I said, trying to keep my anger in check.

If anything, my statement only seemed to infuriate him more because he growled, his hands tightening on the wheels.

“Lily, right now, I need you to shut it-“

“What the hell? Let me out of the car right now, Zac Talaverra or I swear to God...”

The wheels screeched to a halt almost immediately and he slammed his hand on the wheels, turning to glare at me, his eyes glowing, showing that his wolf was at the fore front of his mind and I was sure that whatever he was going to say now, he and his wolf were in agreement.

“For once, Lily. For f u c k i n g once, will you think about yourself? Aiden is a royal. He has had enough encounters with the council by now for this to be a walk in the park for him. This is not Aiden’s first rodeo with the council and he knows all about them enough to play their games and come out relatively unscathed. You think you would stand a chance if you decided to own up to almost murdering an Alpha? One who didn’t even touch or threaten you in any way? They will tear you to pieces.”

The fact that he was making so much sense only infuriated me more.

“I don’t care, Zac. I am not going to run away from a fight and let someone else take the blame for my actions. I’ve been running away all my life, I’m sick of it. I’ve been training everyday to make myself stronger, so that I can fight for myself and you want me to feel better about Aiden taking the blame for me? What makes you think that any one of you suffering in my place will make me feel any better? If you think that, then you don’t know me at all!” I screamed at the top of my voice, my words echoing through the entire car before I even realized what I had ended my rant with.

Before I could tell Zac that I had only said the last part about him not knowing me was to thoughtlessly hurt him, he grabbed my face in his hands, his eyes glowing even brighter than before and it should have scared me, but I was too angry with him to be scared of the beast that lurked in those eyes.

“I don’t give two flying f***s what you think about me, Lily. I don’t give two shits if you think that I don’t know you or love you because I know that I damn well do. All I care about is keeping you safe and keeping our bond alive. You think Ren would choose differently? Or Aiden? If it ever came down to one of us or you, we will never give you up. We die anyways if you die, none of us can live if you die so we will die trying to protect you and you’d better start accepting the truth right now.”

The truth felt like a huge slap on my face and I shook my head, refusing to accept that kind of reality. A reality where the people I loved would die because of me.

“I don’t want to accept that. I refuse to accept it. I refuse to be a burden to any of you. Victor was trying to hurt Aiden. Should we have stood there and done nothing to save him? If we can explain that to the council, if we can show them the kind of person Victor is, then-“

Zac’s cruel laugh cut me off mid speech and he looked at me like I was a naive little girl.

“After what you saw today in the Council meeting, you still believe that they would do something like that? Honestly, Lily. I forget that you’re too good for this world. How can you still have faith in the Council after the spectacle that happened this afternoon? These are the same people that ordered my parents to put me down like a rabid dog when nobody believed that I would survive being a hybrid. They are the same people that stopped Aiden from killing Victor today when he should have done all of us a favour and gotten rid of the bastard. Or are you so quick to forget what they did to your father? They made you watch when he was torn to pieces like the traitor they thought he was. Did you forget so soon or are you so ea- “

A slap resounded in the air and the last thing I saw before I kicked the door open and jumped out of the car was Zac holding his face in shock from where I had slapped him.

My rage had hit the highest point and I wanted to tear something apart. Tear someone apart.

I was about to start running when Zac grabbed me, not more than five steps away from the car and dragged me back, shoving me against the back door and shackling my wrists at my sides with both hands as I kicked and screamed at the top of my voice for him to let me go.

“I f*****g hate you” I screamed at him, but I should have known that even if I said I wished him dead, he wouldn’t budge.

“Yes, baby. Hate me all you want, but don’t ask me to let you go back and throw yourself to the wolves. Don’t ask me to do that because I will not do it. I cannot live without you. You are the only thing, the only thread that my humanity is hanging on to, and if I lose you, I lose everything. Please don’t do this right now. Be a good little mate and listen to me for once. Get into the car and let’s get you far away until you’re safe. We can fix this mess when I’m sure that you’re safe.”

"f**k you, Zac." I quipped and when I tried to remove my hands and he still didn't budge, I gave him a cruel smile.

"Instead of me being a good little mate, why don't you lead by example and be a good little pup by letting me go?"

To my shock, Zac released my wrists and just when I thought he was going to let me go, he wrapped a hand around my neck and fisted my hair, tugging hard so that my chin jerked up.

His eyes were still glowing. He was more his wolf than himself and desire pooled between my legs as he ran his thumb up and down my angry, racing pulse. He pressed his lips to my ear and I gasped when he bit my ear, chills running down my spine.

"Acting like a mean girl to me right now is doing the exact opposite of what I'm sure you intended, duchess." I felt the cruel curve of his smile.

Before I could retort, he slammed his lips against mine and I groaned as he kissed me with a violence that was unlike anything I have experienced before.

Something exploded in my stomach, my entire body tingling with the sensation of getting kissed by Zac. He bit my bottom lip, hard, his fangs coming out to play and desire bursted in my lower abdomen, want and need feeling the veins. This wasn't the time or place but my hormones didn't care.

He swallowed up my moan and my fists clenched his shirt and tugged, buttons popping open and scattering on the tarmac. He groaned when I scraped my nails down his toned stomach.

His grip of my hair tightened as he tilted my head and kissed me harder, plunging his tongue into my mouth.

My heart slammed against my ribcage with a force that should have knocked me out as his body fitted in mine like puzzle pieces. Heat poured from his body into mine as he let go of my hair to grab my ass, squeezing hard, palming my hips and whispering groans against my lips as our kisses rolled into more kisses.

He suddenly released my lips, leaving me delirious, breathless and dizzy. His eyes were pools of darkness and nightmare, heating over with lust as he leaned back to look at me while his hands caressed my body; squeezed my

breasts, my sides, my hips, slid behind my hips to grip my a s s, leaving searing molten heat in its wake.

He caressed my thighs, slipped his hands to the inside of my thighs, sliding up and taking my dress along with it upwards until my little black panties peeked into view.

A tremble ran through his body, greedy lust darkening the pools of darkness that was his eyes. He seemed to be fighting a mental battle as he gripped my s e x through my panties, his hands trembling.

“F u c k, baby, you tie me in fvcking knots,” he rasped, his other hand slipped behind my a s s, his fingers running up and down the silk material between my a s s cheeks, my lower abdomen liquefying from his touch.

Not wanting to be outdone, I cupped his e r e c t i o n and squeezed, eliciting a sharp groan from him. I slid my hand up and down his length, and he let out another pained groan, his eyes dropping to watch me rub him through his pant.

He squeezed his eyes shut, his hands on my body tightening so that he was gripping so hard that I'm sure he intended to leave bruises.

He suddenly grabbed me and spun me around, pressing my front to the car and I groaned as he bent me over the trunk of the car and pushed my dress up. I gasped out loud when he smacked my a s s. Hard, but swallowed it, not wanting to give him the satisfaction of knowing that it turned me on to be spanked by him.

He was paying me back for slapping him. Teaching me a lesson.

He rubbed the sting of the slap away and smacked me, again and again, heat and wetness pooling between my legs and I bit my lip hard, drawing blood as tried my hardest to hold back my pleased groan.

He pulled my hair to the side and kissed neck, right before he plunged his fangs deep into me and I whimpered as ecstasy exploded into my veins until I was dizzy with desire.

“Don't hold back your moans from me, duchess,” he rasped, rubbing his erection against my a*s, his hand slipping beneath my panties and pinching my cljt and my legs turned to noddles.

“Apologize,” he said, rubbing circles around my clit.

I moaned breathlessly and shook my head, panting out loud. I was so wet, it dribbled down my thighs.

“Say it, duchess.” He hissed, plunging two fingers into me at a go.

I gasped, pleasure bursting behind my eyelids as he pumped into me hard and fast.

“Sorry. I’m sorry,” I whimpered, tears running down my cheeks, my hands clenched on the trunk.

He suddenly let me go and an embarrassing whine escaped my lips when I felt the loss of his fingers in me.

He turned me around and kissed me so deeply that goosebumps sprouted on my skin.

“Get in the backseat,” he rasped between kisses, not wanting to stop the assault on my lips as he pulled the door open.

One moment, he was kissing me like I was the air he was breathing in and the next, I was straddling him in the back seat of the car, completely lost in him, all thoughts of our fight feeling like a past memory, swiftly replaced by lust and desperate desires.

“I won’t be gentle” he growled against my neck and that was the only warning I got before he pushed up my dress, ripping my panties and plunged fingers into me to make sure I was wet and ready for him.

I whimpered as he worked me hard and fast, while I kissed him hard, biting his lip till I drew blood.

“I hate you.” I gasped as his fingers pulled out of me and his grin was brilliant as he lifted my hips, his claws digging into my a*s cheeks so hard, I could feel my backside burn.

“You want to act like a rude little b i t c h?” He growled, “put your money where your mouth is and fvck me like one.” And the two of us gasped when he slammed into me hard.

“Fu ck!” we said at the same time when he was fully seated inside me and I was right where he wanted.

“That’s it baby. Take it in. Take it all in,” he rasped, his eyes of darkened lust focused on where we connected.

That large beautiful c0ck filled me up.

Not waiting for him to catch his breath, I began to move. Up and down, up and down, back and forth, hard and fast.

“Fvck, Lily. Fvck, that feels...” He stumbled, a wave of tremour rocked his entire body. “Oh fvck.” He groaned and his hands gripped me hard and guided my hips as he increased the pace, his hands slapping my a s s as the car rattled and shook with the force of our thrusts, none of us willing to back down for the other.

I threw my head back with a scream when his mouth caught my neck and he bit into it as I continued to ride him, guided by his grip on my waist.

I’d never thought car s*x would feel this good.

On that deserted road, the only sounds were my moans and Zac’s grunts as he ploughed me with a beastlike frenzy and reckless abandon.

Bullied Mate Of The Lycan Kings – Chapter 155

Zac’s pov

The silence was taut and filled with many unspoken words as I drove after our tryst in the car and if anything, the s e x had not fixed anything at all between us, only managed to somehow make it worse if the angered look on Lily’s face was any indication.

Well, I was frustrated at her as well because I was trying to make sure that she was safe and yet all she wanted to do was throw herself in harm’s way and put her life in jeopardy.

Heaving a sigh of relief as I turned to the road that led to my family beach house, I stole a glance at her and saw that she was still looking outside the window, her body stiff as if she was trying not to explode in fury again and I my chest tightened in frustration as I parked in front of the duplex.

“Where the hell are we?” She asked, finally looking at me and ten fingers clenched into two hard fists as I fought the urge to grab and shake her out of that attitude, choosing instead to answer her question.

“Private beach. It’s been in the family for years and it’s one of the many private properties that the council has no knowledge about. Nobody knows about this place except my parents so we’ll be safe here and free from the council for a while. At least until Aiden gives us the signal that we can go back.”

At the mention of Aiden, her body seemed to shut down and I could see her guilt in her eyes before it disappeared and got covered up by rage again.

Unbuckling my seatbelt, I got down from the car and rushed to the other side just as she was opening the car to stretch out my hand and she merely looked at it before jumping down by herself and walking ahead to the door, her mouth in a pout.

I chuckled because if I wasn’t so frustrated by her stubbornness, I would have told her that she was being so adorable right now and instantly, I remembered how starkly different she was from the Lily who had stood over Victor who looked like he was seeing the most horrific thing in his life as she stared down at him. She had looked so sexy, standing there cold and ready to take his life and all I had wanted in that moment was to drop to my knees and show her just how turned on I was by her.

I wasn’t joking when I said this side of her did things to me. It made me want to take her against the wall and f**k her brains out until she’s screaming my name and melting the rigidity in her spine.

Opening the door, I left a healthy amount of distance between us, careful to not cause her to explode with what I was sure now was restrained anger directed at me as I showed her around the house and she paused, her eyes taking in the exquisite interior.

“Sometimes, I forget how rich you are. How rich you all are.” She mused, more to herself than to me.

“If it makes you feel any better, none of this is mine. It’s my parents.”

She forced out a laugh, some light returning to her eyes. “Sure. That makes me feel so much better.”

If she knew just how much a smile from her, a glance from her, makes my entire day, she'd probably be terrified of me.

She was currently peering at a picture gallery on the wall.

My mother was responsible for that. When she wasn't playing with knives and guns, she was redecorating all of our houses and I smiled, happy that my mother had approved of Lily. Not that I would have left her if she hadn't but it was nice to know that she approved of our pairing especially because I wasn't Lily's only mate.

Opening the door to the guest room, I moved away for her to enter and paused at the door.

"Stay here while I make a call to Ren and see what is happening over there."

She parted her lips in a smile that dripped with menace.

"Of course, my prince. I'll stay here like you ask. You wouldn't want your hostage to listen in on your precious phone call, would you?" Her voice dripped with sarcasm and I was about to tell her that she didn't need to take it this way but she slammed the door in my face before I could even get another word out.

Ren would probably fare better here than me, I thought with an exasperated sigh as I walked back into the living room, walked past it and into the kitchen to whip up a meal for my mate and I.

Just as I brought out my phone to make the phone call, I heard Ren's voice in my head, so clear it was as if he was standing in the room beside me.

'Zac, where are you now? Is Lily safe?'

Knowing that he would pick up my thoughts since he was the one that opened this mind link, I answered that we were fine and safe, still reeling from the fact that Ren could reach me at his distance.

"She is. Very pissed, but she'll live. And I'm fine too, by the way. Thanks for asking." He could probably feel my eye roll through the bond.

"Don't be like that."

“Nah, it’s cool. I’ll do the same too. Tell me what is going on over there.’ I said, raising a bottle of water to my lips.

Ren groaned and his mounting frustration and dread filtered through the telepathic bond. “We have a plan; Aiden and I. It’s a long shot but it’s the only chance we’re going to get to expose Victor once and for all.”

I leaned against the counter, “I’m listening.”

“Victor still has a grip on the Council, i bet he lined some of their pockets to sway the others. We have no idea how Mauve comes in with all this and with our powers not working on him, we need to-“

What?!

“Woah woah WOAHH! Back the f u c k up! What do you mean your powers don’t work?”

“I mean I tried to search his mind throughout the meeting but it was like trying to find cracks in a solid wall. I couldn’t get through. I think he’s using some high level dark magic, but Aiden thinks it’s rhodium. He detected it when Victor attacked him.”

My chest tightened painfully.

“Lily’s powers worked on him just fine.”

“It’s either Lily’s powers operate on a higher frequency than ours, or Victor set us up, either way, both our offensives couldn’t work on him. When I tried to heal him before the soldiers arrived, I detected an unhealthy amount of rhodium in his blood. And rhodium is illegal in Shadow Cove.”

“You think that’ll be enough to sway the council?”

“No. There’s something deeper and darker going on. Something I can’t quite put my finger on.”

“And Aiden acting as bait is going to reveal that?” I deadpanned.

“Hopefully. I checked in with Cade when I had my worries about our powers not working, if he knows anything about it. What he told me was very disturbing.”

“Tell me.” I fisted my hands

“Cynthia and Victor have been preparing for a clash with Dahlia for years. They couldn’t get a hold of any one of us, so guess who their test subject and labrat was for their many experiments.”

Cade...”

“Correct. When they found out that he was vulnerable to rhodium, they tried to see if there was a way they could permanently make rhodium a part of their body. They couldn’t test on themselves directly, so they kidnapped unsuspecting werewolves and subjected them to a series of tests and experiments until they were compatible.”

My heart dropped. “What?” This was sick. Sicker than I thought these two were capable of. “They must really want dahlia, huh?”

“Cade says there’s a huge lab somewhere in Night Shade where Victor keeps his test subjects. Like every Night Shade werewolf, he has an affinity for magic and has been testing extracting wolves from their hosts for almost a decade, in preparation for when they have Lily.”

“Holy s h i t!”

“It’s a long stretch, but with the knowledge we now have, if we can get Aiden in Victor’s possession, I can link my mind through his and see what he sees, know where he keeps his victims and expose him once and for all. Even if he gets killed by Aiden in the process, there won’t be any repercussions because we’re ridding Shadow Cove of a traitor.”

“That’s a very long stretch,” I sighed, blowing out a breath and raking my hands through my hair. “Lily’s not going to like this.”

“Lily doesn’t have to know.”

“The hell she does!”

“We don’t want her to worry herself over this.”

“Give her some credit. She can handle it. She’s dying with guilt over here because Aiden is taking the fall for her. She has to know that there’s a plan

behind all of this. That he's not just doing this mindlessly. Leaving her in the dark won't help us earn her trust."

Pensive silence for a few seconds. "You're right."

"I'm never wrong."

"Work on that ego."

"It's perfectly fine the way it is. Now, back to the issue at hand, how did you convince the council that it was Aiden who maimed and almost killed his uncle?"

"We didn't. Victor did."

"The fvck?"

"Victor did not reveal to the council that it was Lily that had hurt him. Instead, he concurred that Aiden was responsible and because of how Aiden acted when Victor first entered the room, the council easily believed it. He managed to convince the council to hand Aiden over to be punished by him."

Chills ran down my spine.

"And you're still sure this is a good idea?" I asked, just to be sure that we were on the same page.

"It's the best we have. It's not like we can turn Lily in."

"F U C K no."

"Then we have to play his twisted little game and pray the goddess will be with us."

"Fvck" I cursed out loud before realizing that there was infact nobody in the kitchen with me.

Whatever punishment Victor would give to Aiden would be worse than the council will ever give but. It would be even more terrible and humiliating than facing the council at this point but a part of me was glad that it was Aiden and not Lily that had gotten into his clutches.

Ren's voice was clear like a song in my head as he answered that he shared the same sentiment because at least Victor would not be able to dogde the plan that was now in place for his sake.

"What's most disturbing to me is the rhodium. I should not make any conclusions without proof but I'm sure that Victor has trained himself to develop an immunity towards it because such large amounts present in his blood would have killed any other werewolf and would still be enough to rid a small pack of werewolves.'

'If that is true then, Victor is practically a living weapon at this very moment.' I fired back, feeling very f u c k i n g unsettled by the news.

Wolfsbane was bad enough but rhodium, even in tiny amounts, could kill even the most powerful lycans.

"I Still don't think this is a good idea."

It's the best option we have at clearing Cade's name and getting rid of Victor in a way that the council will not disapprove of, Zac'

Fvck the council, I thought and for a moment I wondered how easier our lives would be if we just f u c k it and take matters into our own hands. Victor needs to die yesterday.

When I entered back into the guest room, I paused to take a look at Lily where she was standing in front of the open window, staring out at the sea while wearing one of my shirts.

Filled with fear and so much love, I hugged her from behind and she froze, her stiff posture becoming relaxed after a few minutes.

"I'm so sorry for today, Lily. Please believe me. I did everything I could and dragged you out here because I love you and want you to be safe."

She sighed and nodded, looking up at me before turning around in my embrace.

"Aiden is in the mess that he is in right now because of me. I know there's nothing I can do to change that, staying here is the wisest thing to do, but it's eating me up, Zac." She trembled and buried her face in my shirt. "I can't help it. Victor is horrible. What he did to Aiden... what he does to Aiden..."

“I know,” I hugged her fiercely, kissing her forehead. “I know, sweetheart.”

She looked up at me with so much trust in those glassy green eyes and I felt on top of the world.

“It’s not your fault. Aiden was probably going to kill Victor himself the second he had the chance. Nobody even likes him.”

“Yeah but I won’t survive if something ever happened to him.”

My heart throbbed. Ren’s disclosure weighed heavy on my tongue and I suddenly understood his reluctance at wanting to tell her the situation Aiden put himself in.

“There’s a plan, but you have to promise not to freak.”

She narrowed her eyes at me, dread filling up those jade green orbs. “Tell me.”

By the end of the plan Lily still looked very skeptical but she believed that it was the best shot that we had. Just as I was about to head back out to the kitchen so I could make dinner for us both, Lily received a phone call and the way her eyes changed as Bia’s voice came out sounding rushed and terrified.

“Bia, tell me Exactly what happened.” Lily said and I heard Bia talking hysterically.

“Someone... There’s someone in my house, Lily.”

“What, like your dad?”

“No,” Bia’s voice trembled. “It’s one of those nights where I have to stay alone, except I’m not alone, there’s someone in here with me, I can feel it. I’m so scared, Lily,” her voice shattered as she broke into helpless tears.

We looked at each other in dread and I swear, I heard her heart sink to her feet.

“Go up to your room, lock your doors and windows.”

When the call ended, I knew that Lily was about to march out of here.

“I’m not letting you go anywhere, Lily, not when Victor and Cynthia are still out there and for we all know, Bia’s cry for help could be a trap.” I stated and Lily glared at me.

“It’s definitely a trap,” she reasoned, “that’s all the more reason we should go to her. She has nobody, Zac. And we can’t exactly call the police on her because we’re not supposed to expose ourselves to the humans. If it’s a trap, so be it but I will not abandon my best friend. Will you help me out or will I have to do this alone? Because with or without your help, I’m going to my best friend.”

She folded her arms and quirked an eyebrow at me and I sighed, rolling my eyes because I already knew my answer.

Bullied Mate Of The Lycan Kings – Chapter 156

Zac’s pov

We shouldn’t have come. We shouldn’t have come. We really shouldn’t have come.

Azrael’s voice was a broken record in my head and for once, I agreed with him whole heartedly.

The back of my neck prickled with dread as I parked in front of Bia’s house.

This was not the assignment that Aiden and Ren had given me. Both him and Ren would probably think that we were still back at the beach house, safe and out of sight, laying low like the two of them had instructed especially with the fact that Victor would probably be looking for Lily now, his vindictive a*s one that we would do well to fear.

But when Lily had thrown down the gauntlet and said that she was not going to sit back in the beach house and let me be the one to come out here and check on Bia who she was sure was in trouble, I knew that I had no choice.

She loved her friend, she would do anything for her friend, even charge headfirst into unknown danger, into a situation we were both sure was a trap. And god I loved that about her.

But now as we both sat in the car, looking out at the porch of Bia’s home, the silence on the street was almost deafening as if it was trying to warn us. That

we were missing something very important. That something was coming. That something was here.

Maybe I was being paranoid, but my fears were very valid, especially with the recent turn out of events.

“Thank you for bringing me here. I knew that you didn’t want us to come in the first place.” Lily answered and this time when she looked at me, she looked a lot less likely frustrated with me like she had earlier today. Immediately, I mentally convinced myself that I was indeed overreacting.

If Aiden or Ren were in trouble, I would do the same.

“You’re welcome,” I answered, sharpening my senses to see if I could find anything remotely suspicious in scent or sound. I could not sense any heat or scent in that house but Bia’s very faint scent and maybe that should have relieved my anxiety but all it did was make me even more concerned, my attempt to rationalize why we were here a waste.

“I’ll be in and out with Bia. We won’t take long.” Lily said, quickly kissing my cheek and before I could even tell her to be careful or allow me to be the one to go, she was out of the car with an agility that was not human, sprinting towards the front door. I found myself smiling at how cute she looked, rushing into danger and quick to throw caution to the wind for someone she cared about, not even caring that this was a trap or not.

Well, if this was a trap for Lily, whoever orchestrated it would have to answer to me.

Getting down from the car, I walked briskly towards the house and I had just reached the door when I felt a chilling presence behind me.

Immediately, I turned, taking a defensive stance but the blood drained from my face to see Lily behind me, a melancholic expression on her face.

“You just went inside,” I said, unable to hide my confusion. Was there a back door here somewhere that made her come out on the other side?

“It’s too late. Bia isn’t in there. I checked everywhere but I couldn’t find her.” Her voice broke and my heart dropped. “We came here for nothing. Let’s head back home.”

I wanted to walk up to give her a hug, it was instinct at this point, but there were two serious oddities with her answer.

First, Lily was never the type to just give up on searching for her best friend if she didn't find her inside.

Secondly, home? We had just come back from the beach house, which Lily absolutely hated because she didn't like hiding so why would she be in a hurry to go back now?

Except... I took in her facial features, the arch of her brow was slightly higher than Lily's, there was a glimmer of seductive mischief in her eyes that Lily did not possess and she lacked the around sweetness, kindness and fierce loyalty Lily carried on her persona.

I took a step back, my heart squeezing in my chest as the realization slammed into me.

No.

I didn't want to believe it. Didn't want to be right. More than anything, I didn't want to believe that the person standing in front of me was not Lily but the more I looked at her, the more I had to admit to myself that I was looking at the person that I was sure I had killed with my bare hands.

No.

I didn't want to believe it. Didn't want to be right. More than anything, I didn't want to believe that the person standing in front of me was not Lily but the more I looked at her, the more I had to admit to myself that I was looking at the person that I was sure I had killed with my bare hands.

Callista.

"You're not Lily, are you?" I asked and even as I did, I already knew the answer.

Her smile was slow and eerily similar but also different from Lily and my body froze to ice as she finally spoke, that hint of Italian accent that she had tried to hide now in full view.

“Hello, Zachary.” She tilted her head to the side, a cruel frigid smile on her lips, “Did you miss me?”

Lily’s pov

I hoped I was not too late.

Rushing into Bia’s house, I paused to take in the disorganized state of the living room. It looked like a war zone. The entire place was turned upside down like there had been a brawl but I couldn’t pick up any other scent besides Bia’s in the house. How was that possible?

There wasn’t anything in particular besides the signs of a struggle that unnerved me; there was no scent of blood or stench of death.

Well, I didn’t need to wait to find out. I needed to find Bia first. She would be able to tell us what happened.

I didn’t know what it said about me. I was happy that Zac hadn’t forced himself to go in after Bia himself, while I waited in the car like a kid. He trusts me... in a way that makes me feel more confident in myself and in my new found abilities. In a way that makes me feel like maybe I’m not just a big sack of nothing compared to my more powerful mates. Like I could stand by their sides without feeling like a burden, a joke.

I was still upset that I wasn’t where Aiden and Ren were but I was no longer angry with Zac for pulling me away, because he was right. The others would have done the same and I needed to choose my battles and choose them wisely.

Well, the current battle now was locating my friend and when I called for her several times and didn’t get a response, I decided to follow her surprisingly faint scent, growing increasingly worried with each step up the stairs.

Just to be on the safe side, I shut my eyes and inhaled slowly, conjuring up my darkness and giving shape and life to it and when I opened my eyes, a tiny little tabby cat made of nothing but shadows stood in front of me, her head tilted as she peered at me with curious black eyes.

I learnt very quickly into my training with Aiden that wielding these creatures took more power and control than I had initially thought when one of my creatures lunged at me and tried to bite a chunk out of my arm. Since then, I

decided to take it one step at a time and work towards creating my own cat army one kitten at a time.

“Hi, Taryn,” I greeted, stretching a palm out at my little feline and giving her a snack I kept with me at all times to slowly buy my way into her good graces.

She took the cookie in her mouth and curled her tail, letting me scratch behind her ear as she purred in satisfaction.

“You’ll protect me, won’t you?” I asked, laughing when she climbed up my leg and settled on my shoulder.

I made my way into Bia’s room where her scent was strongest and paused, surveying the entire room.

Bia never locked her room windows, even in the middle of a storm but this time the windows were shut like I had told her to do, but not just that, the blinds were down and the entire room was shrouded in darkness.

Taryn suddenly hissed, jumping from my shoulder and hissing like a possessed kitty at a corner of the room, her fur raised.

“Bia?” I whispered, rounding the bed and found her huddled into a ball, moving back and forth like she was trying to rock herself to sleep.

Something was awfully wrong here, but she looked unharmed so I heaved a sigh of relief. Whatever had happened here, we would get to the bottom of it. At least she was safe.

Rushing to kneel in front of her, I pulled her in for a hug, shocked by how cold her body felt to the touch and when I pulled back and looked at her, she was sobbing quietly and Taryn was still hissing like crazy.

Bia’s body felt like she had been in a morgue. Well, that explained the shivering.

“Hey, B. It’s me, I’m here with Zac and we’ll take you somewhere safe. We’ll talk about everything on the...”

Before I could finish my statement, Bia pounced on me like a leopard did to its prey, pinning me down with a strength that I knew Bia never had. Even before

I found out about Dahlia, when I thought I was an omega, I was stronger than my delicate human best friend.

There was nothing human about the way Bia was looking at me right now, her entire body shaking as I tried to hold her away from hurting me and when she finally spoke, her voice was hoarse and sounded almost monstrous.

“I’m so sorry, Lily. I didn’t want to have to do this. I don’t even want to hurt you but my body is not listening to me right now and I’m so hungry, Lily. I’m starving. My teeth are aching. Please, just a taste. Let me have a taste.” She whispered, her entire body trembling as tears streamed down her face and dropped onto mine and that was when I finally paid attention to her eyes.

I thought they were red from crying but this red was nothing close to that. Bia wasn’t human anymore, I realized with horror and tears trickled down my cheeks as I tried to imagine how she must have tried to fight against being turned into a vampire against her will. Not a hybrid like Zac but a strigoi. More ruthless, less control, eternally thirsty.

No no no!

My momentary distraction caused Bia to almost bite into my neck and I kicked her off, crying as I slapped her hard when she tried to jump on me again. I was suddenly grateful for all those times I spent training with the boys and getting beat up by Chelsea in the name of sparring.

Taryn growled ferociously and I turned to see my little kitty was now a giant black cat as big as a small horse and I called her back to me before she pounces on my best friend and tears her to pieces.

Unable to stop herself, Bia tried to grab me again and I maneuvered out of her clutches and slid behind her, grabbing a hold of her.

“I’m so sorry, my love.” I whispered, hitting her head hard against the wall and dragging her towards the bathroom while she clawed at the floorboards, kicking and screaming. Throwing her in, I locked the door, my legs giving out on me as the weight of what had been done to my friend dawned on me.

This was my fault. Befriending Bia had put her in the line of fire.

I knew immediately who was to blame for this.

I never thought Victor and Cynthia would play dirty like this, that they'd do what they could to hurt me and break me, including hurting my liaising with vampires, our mortal enemies.

"Please forgive me, Lily. Just let me out. I swear I'll behave. I'm just so thirsty and my entire body feels like it's on fire. Please, Lily. I didn't mean to hurt you." Bia cried as she banged on the door and I rose to my feet, wiping my eyes.

Zac! He would know what to do about this, especially because he was turned against his will. Thank God he was here.

"I'll come back to help you soon, B, I promise. Please hold on." I whispered against the door and rushed back downstairs to get him.

However, the moment I stepped out of the front door, my heart stopped beating in my chest and my lungs closed in on me as I took in the scene before me.

Zac was staring like he had seen a ghost and I suppose he had, because standing beside him was someone that looked exactly like me.

She was the reason Zac had been so cruel to me when he met me for the first time.

My wicked doppelganger.

Callista.

Very much alive.

Bullied Mate Of The Lycan Kings – Chapter 157

Lily's pov

When Rhea and Chelsea had tried to explain to me that Callista had looked exactly like me even though they hadn't ever wondered if she was me thanks to her more eccentric and self confident nature, I had wondered what it would be like to stand face to face with her, not that I ever wanted to see her after hearing what she had done to Zac.

But as I stood in front of Bia's house, hearing how my friend banged hard on the door for someone to let her out and knowing that I had rushed here for a solution only to be met with greater problems like my mate's ex and sire coming back from the grave, I started to put two and two together.

If my calculations were correct, then the person who had turned Bia was Callista

That explained it because there was no reason Bia would have let her get so close to her, an absolute stranger or let her into the house if she had not pretended to be me.

And she did an absolutely fantastic job of trying to look like me even.

I didn't know who had given her a picture of me because her hair was straightened to mirror mine, her eyes large and doe eyed and she even had a birthmark on her chin to match mine.

But what was starkly different about us was our smiles. Hers was filled with wicked delight like she revelled in evil.

Well, we were not outnumbered, I thought as I tried to scan the area and came up with no other scents that could spark my paranoia. Zac and I just needed to knock her out and quickly leave with Bia before she woke up.

My plan was solid, except that I hadn't anticipated Zac standing still as Callista walked towards him and my heart turned to lead and dropped into my stomach when he let her touch him, not even acknowledging that I had come outside.

As if Callista wanted me to understand what was going on, she put her arms around Zac's neck and leaned up on her tiptoes to brush her lips against his and my heart felt like it was about to fall out of my chest in rage and agony as he held her and kissed her back.

I stumbled back, clutching at my aching chest, completely blindsided.

Why? Why was he even doing this?

How could Zac do something like this? And with the woman who had forcefully turned him?

Peering at me, Callista laughed and flipped her hair, her eyes narrowing in contempt.

“You look like you’re about to raze the world. Why? Are you surprised that he kissed me? Well that’s what you get for thinking you’re special. I can’t believe that you actually thought that Zac pursuing you was real. I can’t even believe he fell for a cheap knock-off of myself. A downgrade if you’ll ask me.”

I had no idea where it came from or if I was because in that moment, I was enraged to the point where I could feel something like a locked door open in my mind, but I stretched out my hand and like the way I had seen Aiden fashion out his hounds from nothing but shadows, I made a spear and pointed it at Callista, my eyes narrowed to slits.

“You died. Zac killed you. So how is it possible that you are here? What do you want from us?”

I had to believe that Zac was under some kind of spell because it was easier than having to accept that he had allowed that kiss.

I loved Zac, I trusted him with my entire heart. He’d never do anything to intentionally hurt me.

Callista shrugged, throwing her head back in a laugh that was filled with confidence and sultry in a way that I could never be, holding Zac’s arm and running her fingers down his torso.

“Oh, darling, you? I have absolutely nothing that I could possibly want from you. I have no use for you. But Zac?” She gazed up at Zac, running her hand down his chest, her blood red lips parting into a vicious grin. “Oh, I can find plenty use for him.”

And just as quickly as she spoke, she pulled him down and sank her fangs into his neck.

Zac fell to the ground in pain and held his hands to his neck, his eyes rolled back as he screamed and my eyes widened in horror.

“Zac!” I screamed and reached for him but Callista raised her hand, fingers sharpened into claws and aimed at Zac’s throat.

She forced him to his knees and grabbed his neck, grinning at me.

“How do you like this?”

Blinded by rage, I swiped my spear in a wide arc at her, narrowly missing Zac, thank the goddess, and catching her in her abdomen. She stepped back, letting go of Zac and sneering at me, not expecting my attack and I thanked the goddess once more that she had underestimated me.

The spear in my hand faded, my control slipping for a split second as I stepped in front of Zac, shielding him from his sire’s cruel gaze. I had zero experience in actually fighting a vampire. But Dahlia would! Of course she would.

Fisting my hands, I tried to summon Dahlia’s powers and snuff out Callista’s life but all I was met with was nothing with a brick wall, only that this time instead of stark silence, her voice was clear as day in my head.

“I cannot take her soul, child, because she doesn’t have one. My powers only work on the living and as she is undead, there is nothing for me to take.”

“I cannot take her soul, child, because she doesn’t have one. My powers only work on the living and as she is undead, there is nothing for me to take.”

Unable to stop the bitter laugh that escaped my mouth because of course! The very first time I wanted someone dead, something like this happened.

Taking a deep breath, I called on Taryn and in her large black panther form, still annoyed at getting called back in too early, she lunged at Callista, causing her to stumble and fight back.

Sweat broke out on my forehead from the energy I was exacting on keeping Taryn alive and Callista occupied and rushing forward, I dragged Zac a few distance away, huffing and puffing from pulling all 200 pound weight of him and knelt in front of him, trying to shake him awake from what looked like a trance.

“Wake up, Zac,” Tears accumulated in my eyes as i shook him over and over. “Snap out of whatever hold she has on you. Please!” I cried and begged but even though he looked at me, it felt like he wasn’t seeing me at all.

“I didn’t think a day would come when I would have to explain this to a mutt of all things but it seems you’ve been living under a rock so allow me to educate

you on vampire lore.” Callista said with a laugh pinning my creature to the ground.

“I sired Zac. My venom was what made Zac into one of the very few surviving hybrids and thanks to that, if I will it, Zac will do my bidding. To Zac, I am god, darling.”

No.

Shaking Zac hard again, I cupped his face and tried to shake him awake.

“Please, come back to me.” I was hyperventilating, my hands trembling on his face. “Come back to me, Zac!”

“It seems your mutt brain refuses to understand that Zac is mine,” Callista sighed in mocking pity, “a demonstration should set things straight. Zac, honey,” she called out, “teach her a lesson.”

Before I could even move, Zac grabbed me by the throat and rose to his feet, lifting me up in the air and I choked, hitting his hand to let me go.

“Please don’t do this. It’s me, Lily.” I begged and kept hitting him. I was still trying to unclasp his grip on my neck when a bright light made me turn my head to see a convoy of cars approaching.

I wanted to believe that they were not coming here but when they stopped right in front of us and Cynthia stepped down, I was certain that this was only going to go from bad to worse.

There she was, prim and poised, with her honey brown hair tied up in a bun at the base of her elegant neck and a white pants suit cut seamlessly to fit her lean and lithe frame.

Almost a dozen soldiers dressed in black suits walked behind her as she approached us and stopped only some feet away.

Her eyes moved from my form to Callista and she clicked her tongue.

“Don’t play with my prize like that. I told you to get her for me, not dangle her up like a slab of meat. Put her down now.”

“Oh you’re no fun.” Callista answered but she turned and faced us again.

“Put her down, Zachary. But don’t let her out of your sight.”

Like a log of wood, Zac dropped me to the ground and I could only look at all of them in confusion, my body shaking with rage.

Pulling me up, Zac continued to hold me hostage and all I felt when I looked at Cynthia was pure, unadulterated hatred.

As wolves, we all knew who the enemy was. Is Cynthia so desperate to get what she wants by liaising with the enemy?

“Why would you even partner with a vampire to hurt your own kind? Why sell weapons to the humans, Cynthia? Why are you even doing all of this? Are you so blinded by greed that you have no room for sound judgement anymore? Is it really that important that you are ready to sacrifice everyone in your pursuit for greed and power?”

Cynthia looked like I had slapped her with my words, but she smiled, adjusting her suit jacket.

“Why, Lily,” she sighed. “It’s because of one thing. Being good has only gotten me pain and disgrace. Being good only got me squashed like an insect. I have no problem with you. In Fact, I might have looked away and let my son have you as his w***e if you weren’t the vessel to so much untapped power. It’s a real shame that you have to die for me to get what I want.”

I knew what she planned for me already but the words seemed to hurt me all over again and it was obvious that I couldn’t reason with her.

“I’m so sorry, Zac,” I whispered, not interested in dying tonight. I took my knife out and slashed his arm, causing him to drop me. I sommersaulted back a few steps, landing by the front door of Bia’s house.

Surveying the people I was planning to flee from, I realized that I was fiercely outnumbered.

Well, Dahlia said her powers only worked on the living, right?

I stretched out a hand and hoped Dahlia would sense what I wanted her to do, but this time it also didn’t work. Not on Cynthia or the men that were pointing guns at me.

From the way Cynthia looked unbothered, I was certain that this time it wasn't Dahlia who was ignoring me because I was sure she wanted to survive as well.

I needed a distraction while I tried again, I realized.

"If you really want me to go with you, you should fight me one on one and stop making people do your dirty work for you. Or are you scared of me, Cynthia?"

I drawled, taking on a fighting stance.

"Darling, I am many decades ahead of you and trust that there was a time when senseless taunts used to hurt me in the past. Now? Not anymore, I'm afraid "

While she spoke, I tried to reach for my powers again, narrowing my eyes and hoping that it would find a way to work.

Cynthia's eyes widened at my outstretched hand and shook her head.

"Would you like to know why your powers aren't working on me and my men? Well, you are going to die soon anyways so I might as well just tell you why. Rhodium, Lily. Rhodium."

Rhodium? How?

"I knew all about my son's powers from when he was very young which was very peculiar even for royals as not all of us had abilities, and especially not as powerful or intense as his. Of course, being the scientist that I am, I had to find out why." She gleamed, clasping her hands. "Why was my son so powerful? More powerful than any lycan before him?"

I swallowed and looked at Zac who was bleeding out of his neck, a vacant look in his eyes, the perfect robot, the perfect soldier.

Cynthia continued. "After a series of tests-"

"You mean torture," I corrected.

"Call it what you want, Lily. The only thing that affected him was rhodium. I deduced that if small amounts of rhodium could render his powers useless, with the right dose, it would do the same for you and the rest of the boys. That was what piqued my interest in the element and made me mine rhodium in

such a large amounts. As I speak to you now, I made sure to inject myself as well as my men with a dose of rhodium before coming here because I need them too much to let your wolf snug out their lives. Of course this is just an experiment and I have no idea how long the effects will last for. I didn't even think it would work which is why I needed someone close to you to get you for me."

Zac, I thought with horror and she nodded before she even continued.

"Zac was the only one that wasn't present at the meeting with you, I heard and there was no way he would have agreed to hand you over to us in his right mind, so I tracked down his sire and with the right incentives, she agreed."

"Incentives?" I growled, "what did she promise you? Land? Territory? Money? An eternal supply of victims?"

Callista shrugged, looking at her nails, "a little bit of all."

"And why did you have to turn my best friend? She has nothing to do with any of this!"

"No reason. I was just bored."

This was a lot to take in and the more I tried to process the information, the more terrified I was about how much planning Cynthia had done about this, however, one question still lingered in my mind.

How was Callista still alive? Zac had told me that he ripped her heart out and I must have been staring at her with so much hatred because she laughed.

"Oh, since it's confession time, I guess you want me to explain how I'm alive to you, don't you?"

I gritted my teeth and looked around, trying to come up with an escape plan but it's not like I could leave without Zac and Bia. I just need to hold up for a little while, at least until the effects of the rhodium were off.

"Well it's really simple. Zac ripped out my heart and dismembering a vampire's body is ineffective because we can just put ourselves together again. It was so fun, really. I made it more dramatic than it should have. It's a little party trick that every vampire is familiar with every now and then. The only true way to kill a vampire is to rip us apart and burn our parts to ashes so that we can

never come together. Of course, this is a closely guarded secret and it means that even moreso, I'll have to kill you for knowing this." She said with a careless smile that made me feel like ants were crawling on my arm.

"There's no hard feelings, doppelganger, although, I must admit, I'm a little jealous that Zac would move on so quickly. I have to remedy that as soon as I can."

"Zac," she looked at Zac, stretching out her hand to him and his gaze snapped to hers, alert and eager to obey her command.

She pointed a blood red finger at me, "rip her apart."

Bullied Mate Of The Lycan Kings – Chapter 158

Lily's pov

"Zac, rip her apart."

The command hung heavily in the air like lead.

His eyes shone with a predatory gleam as he stalked towards me.

Now, it was my heart that turned to lead and dropped to my feet.

I struggled hard to remember Aiden's instructions while he trained me; never give your attacker your back, never retreat unless you have an offensive plan, never turn your back on your enemies, you might as well give them the go ahead to kill you. It's going to make them seem like predator and you like prey. Do you understand me, Lily. Stand your ground and fight back.

I wondered if he'd be so keen on me fighting back if he knew that it was Zac I was up against.

I couldn't fight Zac and I hoped to all the high heavens that he was feeling the having sentiment.

"Zac," I called out, swallowing the dread in the pit of my stomach. I raised my hands in surrender. "It's me. It's me, Lily."

The shine in his eyes dimmed. He took another step towards me and suddenly stopped. His eyes hardened and he gritted his teeth as he forced himself to stay rooted in place.

He was trying to fight the compulsion!

A glimmer of hope surged through me and my eyes brightened.

“Lily?” He rasped with great difficulty.

The tortured look in his eyes tore me to pieces. He held his head and roared and when he looked at me again, he was panting hard and his eyes were going back and forth between normal and enraged glowing red.

“Fight it. Fight it, Zac.” I begged and it seemed my words finally got through to him because he froze and his eyes cleared and as he looked at me, I could see that he was tortured by this entire situation but just as quickly as his eyes cleared, they started to change again and he growled, fisting his hands and holding his head, the moment of clarity only lasting for mere seconds.

“Run, Lily. Run as fast as you can. And if it comes down to it, kill me.”

I shook my head, tears breaking out, “I can’t. I c-”

He let out an earth shaking roar again, his feet rushing forward but he stilled, pulling himself back, his entire body taut with tension. “Lily- Lily,” he rasped, “I love you. I really do.”

I cried harder, my lungs tightening around my heart as he dropped to the ground and I watched in horror as his bones started to crack, fur covering his smooth skin as his clothes melted into his form. I didn’t need to be told twice that if I continued to wait here, he would tear me apart and so as he completed his turning into lycan form, I sprinted in the direction of the woods, running as fast as my legs could carry me.

My eyes brimmed with tears as I heard him catch up to me, his growls filled with nothing but pure malicious intent and even though my legs were starting to tire out, I couldn’t stop. Callista had turned my own mate to a predator and made me prey. If I survived this, I would find a way to make sure she stayed dead.

As fast as I was though, Zac in his lycan form was faster and just as I took a sharp left in the woods in an attempt to confuse him, he crashed into me, his paws knocking into me and I screamed in agony as his claws slashed into my stomach, tumbling on the floor until my back hit the root of a tree.

The pain from his claws to my stomach was almost dizzying but I couldn't let myself dwell on the pain and I quickly tried to get up on my feet, fashioning a shadow shield that would help me keep him at bay so that he couldn't reach me.

"Please, Zac. You need to fight her compulsion. Come back to me. Please, please, please!"

My control shifted and the response I got to my pleas was to be knocked into the ground.

Growling, he grabbed me by the throat and pushed me hard against a tree. All the breath in my lungs wheezed out as my back connected with the tree and he kept squeezing and squeezing my throat.

"I'm sorry," I whispered and, fisting my hands, I hit him hard on his arm, again and again and he slammed me even harder against the tree.

Grabbing his neck, I placed my feet on his chest and pushed hard against him, doing an effortless but effective maneuver that Ren had taught me, I wrapped my legs around his neck and twisted both of us so that he tumbled to the ground and instead of taking me with him, I kicked him away as soon as his hold on me loosened.

I pushed away from him and tasted escape for a few short seconds before he grabbed me and flung me against another tree.

My entire body was throbbing with pain and when he picked me up again, I dodged his first two blows but the third caught me against the side of my head, sending me sprawling.

I winced in agony, pain flaring from colliding with the ground on my bleeding side.

Zac picked me up again and threw me against the tree, over and over again until I realized in horror that he was toying with me exactly like a predator does to their much weaker prey and was enjoying it.

He flung me on my back on the ground and seeing an opening, I grabbed his neck and kneed his skull with all my strength. I crawled away as soon as he let me go. Standing up and planting my feet on the ground, I widened my stance and brought my fists up. This time, I made it to three blows and managed to get one in before he punched me in my stomach. He grabbed my arm and pulled hard when I doubled over in agony. I cried at the flare of pain in my shoulder joint as he practically ripped my arm from its socket. Holding my arm, he kneed me twice in my abdomen, grabbed my air and flung me on the forest ground.

I ate dust for the umpteenth time today.

Not giving me a chance to gather my wits from where he scattered it all over the floor, he kicked me away, sending me flying and slamming my back against a tree. Pushing myself up, because I certainly wasn't going to lay down and die and make this easy for him, I rose to my feet and, gathering momentum, I ran towards him, prepared to spear him in the midsection and tackle him into the ground.

My plan failed almost immediately because he only picked me up like I weighed nothing and slammed me on the ground again.

My entire body was screaming at me, pain flaring to life in every muscle in my body. Finding myself at my wit's end, I crawled back, my body trembling in pain as he kept approaching me.

He pounced on me and drew his hand back, ready to go for the killing blow and I whimpered, closing my eyes as I prepared for what I was sure was my final breath.

I took many more final breaths before I realized that Zac was stalling on taking my life.

Opening my eyes again, I saw that his fur had receded and his face was back to normal, even as his clawed hands were still raised to s***h at my face.

He's struggling, I realized, his entire body trembling on top of mine.

I grabbed his face, my thumbs stroking his cheekbones and tears sliding down my cheeks. "It's okay, Zac. It's okay. I love you, I love you, it's me, Lily. I'm Lily."

I repeated the words over and over again until the feral look in his eyes cleared.

His hand was mid air and he was trying his best to keep it from coming down on me. His eyes were fluctuating between lycan glow and human and he was shaking, tears dropping down his cheeks as he forced his hands behind his back, the movement looking like it physically hurt him to have to go against Callista's orders.

"Lily?" he gasped between sobs, refusing to look at me and I cupped his cheek, forcing his face to mine so that I could look into his eyes.

"It's alright, Zac. It's fine, see? I'm alright. We're alright. Just come back to me. Come back to me, please."

We were both crying and trembling and begging.

"I can't. You need to get out of here because I don't know how much longer I can hold off for."

"You won't kill me. I know it."

Just as I was about to touch him again, certain that he could win the fight in his mind, there was a flash of brown that knocked into him and sent him flying several feet from me, his back hitting a tree and before I could go to him, Cade knelt in front of me, his face lighting up with a relieved smile as he pulled me in a hug.

The Calvary is here.

"I'm sorry I'm late. I stopped to pick the others on the way." He whispered as he helped me to my feet and that was when I finally noticed Angelo in the woods with us and a team of people that were armed to the teeth like he was. Hunters.

Nodding, I heaved a sigh of relief, glad they could make it. It had been a last minute idea to contact Cade and Angelo on our way to see Bia just in case we were walking into a trap and needed back up. An idea I was glad I acted on.

"Thank you for coming. I was worried you wouldn't get my message."

“I’ll always come for you, sunflower.” He said, his gaze softening. “Looks like you held up pretty nicely,” he commended.

I was definitely beaten up pretty badly and I’m sure my face was more battered and bruised than he let on, but I attempted a smile, wincing and realizing that I was bleeding from where Zac had slashed me. Turning to look at him, I saw that he was back in his full human form.

He was holding his head, his eyes filled with disbelief at what had just happened, his entire body trembling and as I moved to meet him, Cade grabbed my arm and held me back.

“From what I just saw, he tried to kill you. Look at you bleeding out onto the ground and still wanting to go to him. How can you be sure that he is even in his right mind?”

Zac flinched like Cade’s words had physically hit him and he recoiled, his face filled with guilt as his eyes met my belly, to where he had clawed me, a gash that was still bleeding profusely.

“I’m sorry, Lily,” he gasped and staggered to his feet, walking towards me but Cade blocked his path and it was obvious that he was skeptical of whether Zac was still in her mind control.

Zac hung his head low and was about to take steps back but I touched Cade’s arm and when he looked at me, I nodded. “No, It’s alright, he won’t hurt me. He’s okay now. He came back. He fought his hardest against Callista’s command and came back to me.”

Cade didn’t budge, merely looking down at where I was still bleeding and I cringed at how it looked but I was sure that he was himself right now and I will heal in no time.

“I trust him, Cade,” I said and just as Cade gave a grunt of approval, there was a scream that sounded a lot like Bia.

Angelo took to his heels immediately at the sound of his girlfriend and some of the hunters went with him.

“We need to head back,” I said and Cade nodded.

Immediately, we all headed out of the woods and into the clearing where I paused as I witnessed Cade's soldiers and Angelo's hunters fending off Cynthia's men and Callista's vampires while we rushed into the house, Angelo long ahead of us.

The three of us froze when we entered to see him pointing a gun at Callista, his eyes filled with devastated terror as he looked at Bia who was held against her sire, with Callista's hands to her throat.

"What have you done to her?!" He roared, shaking. "What have you done to my girlfriend?!"

Bia shook her head, sobbing her eyes glowing red as she tried and failed to not twitch.

"Please don't shoot. Put the gun down, Angelo. She's going to kill me. She's going to kill me if you don't." she begged and Callista laughed.

"I would listen to her if I were you!"

Just as I was about to signal Cade that we needed to make a plan, we felt another presence enter the house and turned to see Cynthia, her carefully styled blonde hair still in place and her fingers and clothes clean, not a speck or a wrinkle on her.

Of course she had been too unbothered to join in the brawl. It looked like she had even gone back to the car to wait for her minions to deliver me to her hands.

Her frown deepened when she sighted Cade.

"Last I heard you were exiled from Shadow cove and yet here you are again, actively trying to destroy my plans that I have laid out for years."

Cade flinched and stumbled back as his mother approached us, her heels clicking against the floor.

"All your life, you have been nothing but a colossal disappointment and it makes me wonder what mistake I made to birth someone that always brings shame to my family name."

“You’re wrong” I snapped, growling at her and stepping in front of Cade to shield him from her chilling, condescending gaze. “Cade is the best son you could have ever wished for. It is you who is a mistake of a mother for ever subjecting Cade to as much pain as you did. He’s your son but all you ever saw was an experiment and a means to an end. Cade shouldn’t be ashamed of himself, it is you that should be ashamed of what you have done to him and for dragging your family name through the mud. I’m sure the previous alpha and Luna must be rolling in their graves at what you’ve become.” I completed, seething in anger.

Cynthia merely looked at me like she was bored of my reply and shook her head. “I wouldn’t know. Perhaps you can check in with them after I send you to your grave.”

“Nice offer, but I’ll pass,” I said, giving her a saccharine sweet smile that dripped with poison and absinthe.

“You will never understand, Lily,” she tsked. “I don’t even expect a simpleton like you to understand what I am trying to achieve. You are weak, have always been weak and Cade has followed in your footsteps, forgetting that this world is a dog eat dog world. The strong will always oppress the weak and those who cannot keep up have to pass away quietly for those that are stronger to reign. You, my dear, must die for me to be strong and I used to feel pity for you about it but now I will enjoy tearing you apart.”

“Well, I’ll like to see you try,” I growled, taking a step forward but two of Cynthia’s men suddenly entered the house and flanked her side, in their wolf form, baring their teeth at me while Cynthia grinned. I hated that my powers still couldn’t work against them thanks to their ingestion of Rhodium but I guess brute strength would have to do for now.

I was about to attack when Cade placed his hand on my arm and when I turned to look at him, he shook his head with a smile and stepped in front of me as we watched his mother step out of the house leaving her wolves to attack us.

“Stand aside, Lily. This fight is between me and my mother and it’s time to do what I should have done years ago.”

Immediately, he lunged for the wolves and transformed mid air into a large golden brown wolf, charging headfirst into the men that had blocked the road and tearing them to pieces, clearing the road towards his target; his mother.

Bullied Mate Of The Lycan Kings – Chapter 159

lily's pov

With Cade gone, Zac and I turned to face Callista with a trembling Bia still in her clutches.

Angelo's hands trembled around the gun pointed at her, his voice, a devastated whisper, "What did you do to her, what did you do to her?" His eyes were wide with horror as he slowly came to the realization that Bia was no longer human.

"Let her go." I seethed and Callista chuckled, tossing Bia towards Angelo who dropped his gun and caught her in his arms.

"My hunters will stay. I'll see to Bia." He said and I nodded, refusing to take my eyes off Callista especially because I knew that Bia was in safe hands.

"Oh Zac." Callista tilted her head, a mocking look on her face, "I'm a bit heartbroken that you moved on so easily from me, I mean I could have sworn that I left a lasting impression on you but it seems I was wrong. Maybe this time, after I'm done with this cheap knockoff by your side, we can continue from where we left off. I know you miss being under me." She gleamed, "the struggle was always the best part of keeping you captive. I can almost remember the look in your eyes, the taste of your tears as you begged me, please, please, please, don't do this to me." She giggled, mocking his tone and winked at him and the way Zac went pale, his eyes going dark immediately made me gasp in horror as I finally understood that he must have been under her control when she made him do things like that. S e x u a l things like that.

The b***h had raped him, heaven knows how many times.

Zac was frozen, he couldn't move, like he was trapped in those awful memories, one where he's still a victim and Callista is his tormenter and I could finally understand the tortured look in his eyes when he told me that he could not stop himself and that he was sorry. He hadn't been able to stop himself from doing her bidding in the past too even though she had practically raped him.

How could I have missed it? A disgusted feeling welled in my stomach. All those times I had accused him of still having feelings for Callista were coming

back to bite me in the a*s. All those times that I had told him that he only liked me because of who I am but because I bore a resemblance to her. I choked down on the nausea rising up my throat at the fact that I even bore a resemblance to his abuser.

I don't even blame him for trying to kill me the first time we met. I finally understood his visceral response to seeing me that day in the cafeteria and why he had always said I was nothing like Callista.

Even Dahlia who hardly ever acted like she was practically living inside me stirred in my chest and just as she did, I realized that she had been obviously unable to do anything because of the rhodium in the air but it seemed like it was wearing off because her presence was stronger and she was as enraged as I was, the two of us in agreement for the very first time.

"Oh sweetie, don't look at me like that," She huffed me and gestured towards Zac "he enjoyed all of those things as much as I did. If you've f****d him, you probably already know that he knows his way around a woman's body. I taught him that. I taught him everything he needed to know. He had been so eager to please me, remember, Zachary? Remember how you used to follow me around like a desperate little dog, thirsty for affection? You were so clueless on our first night together and so horrible but so cute and that was why I kept you. You were so naive and loyal. Fiercely so, I was sure that no one could ever take you away from me." She cackled something in me snapped.

I felt it at the same time that my powers were unleashed on her. My will was dahlia's and she was in full symphony with me; Callista could not leave this room alive.

I stretched out my hands and darkness blasted into Callista. She let out a shrilling scream as I flung into the wall, colliding into it with a thud so hard it caused a huge crack in the wall.

Darkness slithered out of me and, fashioning the darkness into ropes, I wrapped them around her ankles like a lasso and lifted her up, knocking her over and over into the ground and against the wall before flinging her across the room into a metal window. I heard cracks of bone and smelled her dead blood and for the first time, I smiled in the face of cruelty.

Dragging her back again, I held her bound and whipped her, enjoying the screams she made and just then I heard growls and turned to see other

vampires rushing into the house. I turned sideways, ready to try to fend them off but Zac was quicker, snapping out of his reverie and springing into action. Bursting into his lycan form, he didn't hesitate, tearing them to pieces and I saw Callista's smile that had formed when she thought her backup had arrived vanished, causing me to give her a smirk as we both watched Zac use his powers to burn their torn apart body parts on the floor to pieces right after. I noticed that Callista's eyes widened in fear of Zac while he used his powers and realized that she hadn't known about it. She didn't know about Zac's powers. Cynthia mustn't have briefed her about it.

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"For all you've done to him, I want nothing more than to kill you with my own hands. But your life is not mine to take."

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"I love you," he whispered and I smiled against his lips, kissing him back.

Callista would watch him be happy before dying and that was my punishment to her. As Zac headed towards her, she cried and tried to wiggle out of the way but she wasn't going anywhere because I had impaled her to the wall. Pinned her there like a annoying little insect.

"Please, Zac- Zac, please don't do it, I swear that if you let me go, I will disappear from your lives and I will never come back. I swear to you. You know I keep my promises."

A ball of fire sprang to life on Zac's hand and she screamed, trying and failing to rip herself off the wall.

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your ashes in my hands.” And before Callista could get any word out, fire erupted on his fingertips and her beautiful face started to disfigure and melt, his other hand against her stomach.

She died screaming, her body turning into ash.

The silence in the room was palpable and besides Zac’s heavy panting, there was nothing else to be heard in the entire room. Zac stared at Callista’s ashes, took it in his hands and let it slip through his fingers. There was a look of shocked disbelief on his angelesque face like he couldn’t believe that he had actually killed her, that the creature behind his nightmare was actually dead.

“She’s gone,” he whispered, a lone tear trickling down his cheeks and I nodded, tears streaming down my face as I hugged him tight, pulling back to kiss him hard.

“It’s real. This is real, you just killed her, for good this time and she won’t be coming back to torment you anymore. You can rest easy now.” I whispered against his lips and his face finally broke into a bright smile, his eyes still brimming with tears and when he pulled me back for a tight hug, I winced, causing him to let go of me and he flinched when he looked at my side to see that his claw marks were still on my body.

His hands trembled, his eyes filled with guilt and I shook my head, taking his hand and placing it on my side. I took his face in my hands, forcing his eyes to leave my side and focus on the love in my eyes.

“I know that it wasn’t you and that’s all that matters. You could never hurt me. I know that and I love you and I’m so proud of you for fighting.” I said so he could see that I wasn’t angry or afraid of him and he nodded, placing a hand on the back of my head and pulling me closer to press a lingering kiss on my forehead.

Taking my hand, he led me out of the house. I leaned heavily against him, as we walked further into the woods just in time to see a large golden brown wolf, who I was sure had to be Cade pin down another honey brown wolf a tad smaller than him on the ground. Both were seriously injured but the wolf on top tore the head off the honey brown wolf and for a moment I was afraid that I was wrong, that it was Cade who was beneath and not above.

Was I wrong? Or was it over?

My ears were ringing with a sharp piercing sound, my hands trembling as my heart pumped dread into my arteries.

The dismembered wolf gave me my answer as it slowly transformed back into human and I saw that it was Cynthia's head that had been severed from her body.

Zac, like me, heaved a sigh of relief as Cade transformed into his human form, lying on his back, facing the sky and panting hard, a glassy look of disbelief in his eyes. All of the wolves from Gold Crest rushed into the clearing and took in the scene before them.

The humans bent a knee while the wolves bowed their head in submission as they all began to chant and howl. I knew what the chant meant.

It was one of submission.

They had accepted him as their new Alpha.

Hail Cade Corrigan. King of Gold Crest and protector of the first wolves. Hail the new alpha of Gold Crest pack.

Bullied Mate Of The Lycan Kings – Chapter 159

lily's pov

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She died screaming, her body turning into ash.

The silence in the room was palpable and besides Zac’s heavy panting, there was nothing else to be heard in the entire room. Zac stared at Callista’s ashes, took it in his hands and let it slip through his fingers. There was a look of shocked disbelief on his angelesque face like he couldn’t believe that he had actually killed her, that the creature behind his nightmare was actually dead.

“She’s gone,” he whispered, a lone tear trickling down his cheeks and I nodded, tears streaming down my face as I hugged him tight, pulling back to kiss him hard.

“It’s real. This is real, you just killed her, for good this time and she won’t be coming back to torment you anymore. You can rest easy now.” I whispered

against his lips and his face finally broke into a bright smile, his eyes still brimming with tears and when he pulled me back for a tight hug, I winced, causing him to let go of me and he flinched when he looked at my side to see that his claw marks were still on my body.

His hands trembled, his eyes filled with guilt and I shook my head, taking his hand and placing it on my side. I took his face in my hands, forcing his eyes to leave my side and focus on the love in my eyes.

“I know that it wasn’t you and that’s all that matters. You could never hurt me. I know that and I love you and I’m so proud of you for fighting.” I said so he could see that I wasn’t angry or afraid of him and he nodded, placing a hand on the back of my head and pulling me closer to press a lingering kiss on my forehead.

Taking my hand, he led me out of the house. I leaned heavily against him, as we walked further into the woods just in time to see a large golden brown wolf, who I was sure had to be Cade pin down another honey brown wolf a tad smaller than him on the ground. Both were seriously injured but the wolf on top tore the head off the honey brown wolf and for a moment I was afraid that I was wrong, that it was Cade who was beneath and not above.

Was I wrong? Or was it over?

My ears were ringing with a sharp piercing sound, my hands trembling as my heart pumped dread into my arteries.

The dismembered wolf gave me my answer as it slowly transformed back into human and I saw that it was Cynthia’s head that had been severed from her body.

Zac, like me, heaved a sigh of relief as Cade transformed into his human form, lying on his back, facing the sky and panting hard, a glassy look of disbelief in his eyes. All of the wolves from Gold crest rushed into the clearing and took in the scene before them.

The humans bent a knee while the wolves bowed their head in submission as they all began to chant and howl. I knew what the chant meant.

It was one of submission.

They had accepted him as their new Alpha.

Hail Cade Corrigan. King of Gold Crest and protector of the first wolves. Hail the new alpha of Gold Crest pack.

Bullied Mate Of The Lycan Kings – Chapter 160

lily's pov

The silence in the car was almost palpable and I knew that each and everyone of us present in the car now was struggling with different things at the same time.

There was Cade who had to grasp the reality that he had just killed his mother and had automatically taken her place as Alpha of Gold crest pack. It meant that he was saddled with the responsibility of trying to clear the Corrigan family name and I was certain that the Council was not going to give him an easy fight. Then there was Zac, my playful but deeply damaged mate. I had always thought that beneath that playful smile and arrogant smirk lay something more, something very devastating and even though I had found out what had happened to him, the fact that he seemed to be in such great spirits had made me downplay the kind of horror that he must have faced. It was not until I saw the visceral reaction to Callista or her triumphant smile that I realized how she had broken him and it was now that I finally understood his mother's words to me and her profound gratitude that I was with her son.

He looked like he was in deep thought, his eyes outside the window and I wondered how relieved he must be feeling now, knowing that the person behind his torment was gone for good this time. I wondered if he was at peace. If he was less disturbed.

Then there was Angelo, seated at the third and last row of the armoured SUV with Bia wrapped around him. When I had first met Angelo, he had burned me with silver and warned me to stay away from Bia. The last thing I would have ever imagined was that he would actually be willing to work with wolves despite how much I knew he had been raised to hate and fear us. Maybe it had everything to do with Bia but nevertheless, he was with us now. I wondered if he was still angry with us and if he still thought of us as mindless beasts that needed to be eradicated from the earth.

Bia, oh my friend, Bia. She was never going to be human again, would never feel her heart beating the same way again. I would always look at my friend and remember that somehow I was responsible for her vampirism. I wondered

what she thought of me now. I wondered if she blamed me for what happened.

And then there was me. Cynthia was dead and I should be relieved but I can't, especially with Victor running amuck somewhere with my mate in his clutches. I was currently a body bag of nervous energy, worried for my friends and those I hold dear.

I didn't know what was going to happen to my best friend now that she was no longer human. What her father was going to think of her.

Turning around from where I was sitting in the second row seat of Cade's SUV with one of Cade's men behind the wheel, I looked to see Bia, her head bowed over Angelo's wrist as she hungrily fed on him and even though I knew Angelo despised all supernatural creatures, he looked like he didn't even mind being fed on. I was sure that it had everything to do with the fact that it was because it was Bia.

Zac was sitting beside the driver in the passenger seat and I saw him glancing to the back now and again, keeping an eye on Bia and I was sure that he would quickly stop her before she went too far I forced myself to swallow back tears, my heart hurting for my best friend as I imagined the difficult journey that she was going to be starting.

She wouldn't be able to walk in the sun so carelessly now and Bia loved going to the beach. I would watch my best friend slowly lose her humanity and watch her become dependent on blood to survive.

Shaking my head so that the tears wouldn't drop down my cheeks when she looked up and found me staring at her, blood dripped from her lips, her face was filled with guilt, which was probably because she attacked me. I wanted to tell her that she didn't even need to be sorry for it but she looked away and Angelo held her close to him, patting her gently. I finally looked away and decided that it was best to have hope Zac had overcome his urge and with him as her guide, Bia would

too.

Speaking of Zac, I chanced a glance at him and I saw him stiffen when our eyes locked before looking away. He had started keeping his distance from me again ever since he helped me into the car and I knew that even though I had assured him over and over again that I was fine and that he didn't need to

feel bad for what happened especially because he was not responsible, I knew that he was still beating himself up for everything Callista had made him do. I understood that he needed time so I would give it to him and I would stand by his side forever.

Cade glanced at me and when I gave him a smile, he returned it but it didn't reach his eyes. A somber look quickly replaced the smile and I realized that he was probably hiding more than we could see about how his mother's death had affected him. After all, despite everything, she had still been his mother and he had loved her with all his heart and hoped that one day she would come around. I could feel a lot of pain through my bond with Zac and feel Cade's grief. If they needed space to deal with their grief, I would try my very best to be there for them.

It was barely seconds after I had just thought that that Cade grabbed my wrists and pulled me onto his laps. My eyes widened at the sudden action and when I tried to move away, he held me tight and buried his face in my chest, causing my eyes to widen in alarm. I was just about to ask what was going on when he finally whispered, his voice sounding hoarse

"Please don't leave. Even if it's only for a few minutes. I know that I shouldn't mourn her, that I should be glad that she's gone. I just need something to tether me to the present. To reassure me that this is not a dream. That this is real. That she's gone."

"Oh, Cade," I responded, my heart thudding in my ribcage as I crushed him to my chest and caressed his hair, my heart hurting for him.

I didn't know how long I sat there but after a while I could feel his tense shoulders relax as I continued to pour warmth and comfort to him through our bond. It was surprising in itself that I could even communicate with him that way especially because I had yet to bond with him but I was glad for the opportunity to be able to provide him with comfort during a time like this.

"We are here, Alpha," the driver said and I looked up I saw the gates of Gold crest coming into view.

Immediately, I looked at Cade, my eyes filled with panic. "Really? Are you sure that we can go in?"

"What do you mean, Lily? This is my home and you're always welcome in my home."

“We can’t take my best friend in there and if you haven’t noticed, the entire convoy is filled with human hunters who fought with Angelo and they are banned from Shadow cove.” I knew that he would get the message I was trying to pass across as I nudged my head towards Bia.

It seemed I was not ready to accept that she was a vampire yet as much as I had originally believed.

Cade’s response was to hug me even closer.

“Gold crest isn’t a part of Shadow cove anymore, sunflower and the last time I checked, I am Alpha of Gold Crest. That means, I don’t answer to the Council which is beautiful since I never liked them anyways.” I almost face palmed myself for easily forgetting.

“Oh.” I whispered, my face turning red with embarrassment and nodded sheepishly “I knew that. Of course I knew that. I was just trying to test you to see if you knew that as well. Excellent answer by the way.”

My attempt to make him smile worked because he grinned wide, the shadows in his eyes leaving and tugged gently at my cheeks.

“You’re so adorable” he cooed and pulled me in for a deep kiss that took me by surprise. When he let me up for air and smiled even wider, I knew that I couldn’t resist him. Butterflies exploded in my stomach as I Im back.