

## Chapter 7

Lily

An embarrassingly loud scream left my lips as I spun around, my hand clutched to my chest in fright. The man who was running laps earlier stood in front of me, his hands raised in a gesture of apology.

"Sorry, sorry! I didn't mean to scare you! I was just wondering if you were okay?"

"What?" I gasped.

"Well... you looked kind of sad, maybe. And you were standing here all alone. I thought maybe you were lost or something..." He trailed off.

"I was talking to Aya." I blurted out. His eyebrows creased in confusion as he glanced around me. He probably thought I was crazy. "My wolf." I clarified for him.

"Oh..."

"Yeah."

Now he looked embarrassed. He shoved his hands into his pockets and looked around awkwardly. It was pretty adorable honestly. Up close, he really wasn't as much of a man so much as a boy. Maybe my age or even younger. He certainly had the body of a man, but his face held onto his youth, making him look cute and shy. His hair hung into his eyes, which were a light blue.

"Uh...that's a pretty name. Aya, I mean." He said.

"Thanks."

"I'm Clint." He offered me his hand we shook once. His hand was warm and soft. A warrior, he was not.

"Lily."

"Haven't seen you around before Lily. Did you just move here?"

I shuffled my feet a bit. "Yeah. Last week." I replied.

"Cool." Clint smiled and I hesitantly returned the gesture.

"So uhm... what do you do for fun around here?"

"Usually hang around in the game area, or the common room. When I'm not out training anyways."

"Is that what you were doing?"

"Not really. I was just running out some stress."

"Oh." I paused. "What uh... are you stressed about?" I asked.

"The warrior exams. They're tomorrow. I'm hoping to pass and begin warrior training, give my dad something to brag about." He ran his hands through his hair as he talked.

"Your dad doesn't brag about you?"

"Well, sometimes, but mostly he saves the bragging rights for my older brother." Clint rolled his eyes so heavily I was surprised they didn't get stuck. I didn't really know how to reply to that, but I found myself relaxing as we talked.

"Can I help you get home?" He asked suddenly.

"Huh? Oh, no thanks. I know the way pretty well." I looked pointedly at the packhouse.

"You live here? Wait..." His eyes widened. "Are you the new Luna that arrived last week?"

Why was it so hard for me to admit I was the Luna of this pack? Maybe it was just hard to admit I was mated to the Alpha of this pack.

"Yup, that would be me." I clipped out.

Clint was staring at me like I'd grown a second head. "What?" I asked.

"Nothing. Just...wow. Sorry, I mean..." He stopped to take a breath. "I just... didn't take you for a Luna at first." He mumbled hurriedly. I laughed out loud at his expression. He looked so...frightened!

"It's alright Clint. No need to look like your seconds away from being thrown in a dungeon." I giggled. "I'm not exactly Luna material, I know."

His face softened. "Nah, I don't believe that. Yeah... looking at you now..." He stepped to the right, putting his fingers to his chin as if in deep thought. "Yeah, from this angle, I can totally tell. You're definitely a Luna."

"Stop it." I giggled again.

"It's a pleasure to finally meet Blood Moons new Luna." Clint made an exaggerated bow.

I rolled my eyes. "I'm not technically Luna yet." I said.

Clint glanced at my neck and away again.

"Well, may I escort you back inside Luna Lily?" He offered me his arm, earning him another eye roll.

"I guess so."

Taking his arm, we began the walk back to the front of the packhouse. Suddenly, I had the feeling I was being watched. Looking behind me, I froze in place. Dimitri was standing under a tree not far away, his arms crossed, his expression stone cold. How long had he been there? And how had I not noticed him before? Our gazes locked and shiver ran from my head to the soles of my feet.

"What's wrong?" Clint asked. Following my gaze, he spotted Dimitri and he paled. Immediately, he dropped my arm and stepped away from me.

"Oh, shit." He whispered.

I looked between Clint and Dimitri, making a decision. A really fucking stupid decision. Taking Clints hand, I turned my back on Dimitri, and continued walking, towing Clint behind me.

"Are you crazy? I like living Lily!" Clint breathed. I shrugged.

"I'm allowed to have friends, aren't I?" I asked him.

"Well yeah, but-"

"But nothing. You haven't done anything wrong. You were nice enough to come talk to me, and offer to show me the way back to the front door. That doesn't mean you're getting a death sentence."

"It might!" He squealed. The look on his face would have been funny, if I didn't believe he was serious. Some mate I had.

We rounded the corner, out of Dimitris sight. Walking up the drive to the door, I said goodbye to Clint and wished him luck on his exams. He was glancing around nervously, as if expecting my mate to come charging out of nowhere and murder him. He took off rather quickly and I let out a sad sigh. Heading into the house, I made my way to the stairs, taking them one slow step at a time. By the time I reached the second floor, I was gasping for breath.

"Sit down for a minute." Aya chided me.

I didn't even have it in me to argue. Slumping to the landing between the flights of stairs, I leaned my head against the banister. I sounded like a chain smoker. So attractive. At least this gave me a few minutes to reflect on my dumbass behavior. Maybe Clint was right, and I was crazy. It wasn't that I thought Dimitri cared for me in anyway; he'd been pretty obvious that he didn't. But I had just blatantly disrespected not only my Alpha, but my mate and husband. It would be a miracle if I lived through the night after what I just did. Or maybe he would take his anger out on Clint... that thought had me feeling extremely guilty. What had I just done?

"You look like you're about to throw up."

For the second time today, I screamed at an unknown voice. Except this one offered no apologies, just an amused smirk.

"You want some help? Or maybe a bucket?" He asked.

He stood on the second last stair, leaning against the railing. Brown wavy hair complimented his chocolate eyes and mocha skin. He had a carefree air about him, but there was something else; An aura of authority that surrounded him. As Dimitri was the Alpha, I guessed this was either his Beta or Gamma.

"No, thanks." I declined.

"Suit yourself. Only forty-two more stairs to go to reach your floor. Good luck." He patted me on the back as he went to pass.

"Wait!" He paused to look down at me. "Forty-two?" I asked.

He shrugged. "Give or take a couple steps."

I groaned loudly. "I'll take that help if it's still on the table?"

I heard a snicker, and then I was lifted off the floor and set on my feet. Flourishing his hand dramatically, he gestured for me to go first. We began the horrid climb together, him a step behind me.

"Dimitri needs to install an elevator." I gasped.

"You're only the hundredth person to make that suggestion."

I glanced behind me. "Beta or Gamma?" I asked him.

"Beta. Benjamin, Ben for short. Don't ever call me Benji though."

"Okay...nice to meet you Beta."

"You can call me Ben, Luna."

I stopped short, nearly tripping over a step. Ben caught me by the elbow, helping me right myself.

"You can't honestly be surprised that I know who you are?" He asked.

"No... No, I guess not. You're just the first person to address me as Luna today without me having to tell you who I was. It caught me off guard."

He smirked and we continued up in silence. By the time we reached my floor, I was once again winded and cursing every stair in this house.

"I can make it from here. Thanks, Bet- Ben."

"Anytime Luna." Ben saluted me before turning and trotting down the stairs. Literally, the way he moved reminded me of a horse.

"You can call me Lily!" I called after him.

"Lillith?" He shouted back.

"NO!"

His laughter floated up to me. Shaking my head, I headed down the hallway to my room. Dimitris scent was faint in the hall. Remembering my conversation with Aya, I debated if I should wait for him or not. We really needed to talk. But then I remembered my stunt with Clint, and I quickly fled into my room instead.