

CHAPTER 85

CHAPTER 85 A Lycan King's Mate

Murmurs filled the air as the assembly filed into the Moonlit Sanctum, a grand

hall reminiscent of a theater. Rows of booths stretched before them, each

separated by fancy railings, creating an atmosphere of anticipation and

intrigue. @.n o . o

Lily sat in a booth to herself, a sense of unease tugging at her.

'Calm down. We need to maintain our composure. We have to show that we

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strong. We need to keep a clear head,' Dina said within her.

In the booth across from her, Brandy and Mandy were chained to their seats,

their expressions a mix of resignation and defiance. Mandy glared at Lily, but

Brandy looked defeated as she stared at her feet. She didn't like that they were

chained there like that and noticed the bruises on them. Had they been beaten?

'They are getting what they deserve,' Dina growled. 'Don't focus on them.'

On the stage, bathed in the soft glow of moonlight filtering through stained-glass

windows, sat the eight elders, their presence commanding reverence. Elder

Richard, one of the two representatives for werewolves, had been chosen to

speak on behalf of the elders.

Debra couldn't help but glare at him. She would never forget his face. He was

the same elder who decided that Abigail would be taken to Kenneth.

"That's him," Debra whispered to Ethan. "He is the one that is in bed with

Kenneth. I am sure of it."

Ethan frowned slightly. Elder Richard was highly revered in the werewolf

community. He had done a lot of good, so he couldn't help but be shocked that

Kenneth was in his ear. Ethan would have to be careful with revealing his true

nature.

Elder Richard took a step forward, his seven counterparts observed from their

seats, their ancient eyes focused on him. The chatter in the hall ceased, and a

collective hush settled over the assembly.

"We thank you all for gathering here today. Before we proceed with the trial, we

must address a matter of great importance," Elder Richard stated, his voice

carrying through the grand hall. "The matter of the last female heir of ancient

blood, Lily Bray. It is our duty to ensure the preservation of this lineage. Lily

Bray, please stand."

Lily rose gracefully from her seat and curtsied to Elder Richard, her heart

pounding with a mixture of anxiety and anticipation. She earned nods of

acknowledgment from the elders, their expressions unreadable.

"We apologize for the struggles that you have had to endure throughout your life

and we will ensure that you will have retribution. You have displayed such

strength, and we do agree with the Lycan King's judgment of you, that you are a

she-wolf worthy of praise," Elder Richard explained. "And because of that,

preservation of ancient blood is paramount. Your feelings on the matter are

secondary to the duty you carry."

Lily's brow furrowed in confusion as she tried to process Elder Richard's words.

She couldn't help but feel a growing sense of dread at those words. Duty? What

did he mean by that?

"May I ask a question, Elder?" Lily inquired, her voice trembling slightly.

"Proceed," Elder Richard granted.

"What does it mean that my feelings are secondary to duty?" Lily asked, her eyes

searching his for answers.

"You are a mate-less she-wolf, and I am sure you wish to preserve yourself for

your mate. However, we believe it is in our community's best interest that you

provide a child to each pack and pride," Elder Richard replied.

The revelation sent shockwaves through the audience. Gasps of disbelief and

outrage rippled through the crowd, while some remained neutral, absorbing the

weight of the decision.

"You are spitting in the face of the Moon Goddess by doing this!" someone

yelled.

"This is for the benefit of our community. We will select strong males from each

pack and pride that will father her children. Her honor and dignity will be

maintained for her mate when he is found," Elder Richard explained.

"Elders! You praise her and insult her in the same breath. She is not a

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mare to be pimped out," Ethan, the Lycan King, growled, his voice resonating

with anger.

"If you cared so much for her treatment, then you should have marked her as she

is deserving to be a Lycan King's mate. Since you did not, she will fulfill her

duty until her mate is made known," Elder Richard retorted, his tone

unwavering.

Kenneth exchanged a tense glance with Lily. "This is unacceptable. Lily has a

mate and he is Matthew Hunter."

Startled by his words, Lily looked at Kenneth in disbelief. Kenneth looked at her

with an expression that meant for her to keep her mouth closed. Lily's face

contorted in rage. 'How dare he continue to try to control us?!' she thought

angrily.

Lily whipped around to face Elder Richard. "Elder, if I may?" Elder Richard

nodded. "Matthew Hunter is no longer my mate. We had a rejection ceremony. I

rejected Matthew, and he accepted the rejection," Lily replied, her voice

unwavering.

"When did this happen?" one of the elders asked, their collective curiosity

piqued. "We did not hear of this."

"What do you mean?" Jack, Matthew and Garrett's father, chimed in. "My Luna

and I were invited to Blue Creek pack for the rejection ceremony almost two

months ago. We witnessed our son accepting the rejection."

"This rejection ceremony was not sanctioned, and because of that, the mate mark

will be removed, and Lily will be returned to her fated mate," Elder Richard

declared, his tone leaving no room for argument.

"Are you really going to enforce an archaic practice? You never wanted

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ceremonies reported," Ethan demanded, his voice tinged with frustration. If he

didn't believe Debra before, he believed her now.

"Watch your tone, Ethan. Yes, you are still the Lycan King but you will respect

our authority. No one challenges you to continue with the old ways at the Winter

Moon Celebration," Elder Richard retorted. "This is a different situation. With a

Goddess-blessed she-wolf, we should all be wary of going against the fated mate

bond."

Elder Richard explained before turning his attention back to Lily, his gaze

penetrating. "You will renounce Garrett Hunter as your mate immediately."

"I will not," Lily said firmly.

"Then, we will do it for you," Elder Richard argued.

"No, you cannot do this! She is my second chance mate! I feel the bond! You

cannot do this," Garrett exclaimed, his voice laced with desperation and anger.

"If this was true, she would have marked you, and yet, she wears an incomplete

mark. Why does she not feel the bond?" Elder Richard questioned.

"Because my wolf never accepted the rejection. Our bond is still there, but

faint," Matthew finally spoke up. "My brother stole her from me before I could

make things right with her. I only wish for a chance for us to have a happy

future."

"Then, we will proceed with removing the mate mark and return her to her

proper mate," Elder Richard said. "Restrain her. The process is painful, my child,

but it is nec