

Chapter 12

Haven Kramer POV:

I walked back to the bed to check on Demetri. His temperature felt stable, but his condition was still precarious. I needed more than just a quiet room; I needed resources.

A polite knock sounded at the door. A middle-aged man in a crisp butler's uniform entered, his hair perfectly combed. He gave me a deep, formal bow.

"My lady," he said, his voice smooth and measured. "I am the estate's butler, Silas Reynolds. I heard what transpired. From now on, any requests you have, please direct them to me."

I studied him. His eyes held none of Villarreal's hostility, only a shrewd, calculating intelligence. This was a man who understood power dynamics. He had seen the wind change direction and was adjusting his sails accordingly.

I nodded. "Very well, Silas. I need the pack doctor to come here at once. I want a full report on the Alpha's condition."

I had to know what their official diagnosis was.

Silas agreed without hesitation and left with quiet efficiency.

Phoebe whispered, "He seems much better than that old hag, my lady."

"He's a weathervane," I said, my voice low. "He points whichever way the wind blows. But for now, that's useful to us."

A short time later, Silas returned with a tired-looking man who I assumed was the doctor.

The doctor bowed. "My lady, I am Dr. Forest Sullivan. Regarding the Alpha's condition..."

He sighed a heavy, defeated sound. He began his report. It aligned with my own assessment: organ failure from silver poisoning sepsis from infected wounds. The outlook was grim.

"We have tried every herb and healing ritual," Dr. Sullivan said, his face etched with shame. "But the silver has seeped into his very bones. The wounds did not close. We... we can do nothing more."

It was the conclusion I expected. The medical knowledge of this world was simply not equipped to handle this level of heavy metal toxicity and complex infection.

"I understand. You've done your best, Dr. Sullivan," I said calmly. "From now on, I will be taking over the Alpha's treatment. I may require your assistance with certain supplies and tools."

Dr. Sullivan stared at me, his eyes wide with disbelief, but he didn't argue. He simply nodded, his expression a mixture of skepticism and professional courtesy.

After he left, a wave of hunger hit both me and Phoebe. I sent Phoebe to the kitchens for food. Now that I had established some authority, I expected, at the very least, a decent meal.

She returned quickly, her face a mask of fury. On the tray she carried were two bowls. They contained a thin, watery liquid with a few limp pieces of vegetable floating in it. There wasn't a single drop of oil.

"My lady," Phoebe said, her eyes red with anger. "The kitchen staff said... they said Mrs. Villarreal ordered that the Alpha is only to have clear broth. And as his mate, you must adhere to the same diet."

I stared at the bowl. My blood ran cold. So that was her game.

Unable to confront me directly, she resorted to this petty, insidious form of attack. She knew I needed strength to care for a patient, and she intended to starve me into submission.

She was careful. She didn't deny us food outright. She just hid her malice behind the plausible excuse of a "patient's diet."

This wasn't about food. This was another declaration of war. She was telling everyone in this house that while I might have won a single battle,

the real power, the control over daily life, was still in her hands.

"I argued with them," Phoebe said, her voice thick with frustration. "But they only listen to her." I picked up one of the bowls. A sour, unpleasant smell rose from it. This wasn't food for a sick man. This was slop for pigs.

I set the bowl back down on the tray with a sharp crack.

Phoebe jumped. "My lady?"

A cold smile spread across my face. "She thinks this will stop me?" I looked at the pathetic meal. "Fine. The war has begun."



