

Chapter 13

Haven Kramer POV:

I ignored the spoiled soup. My priority was Demetri. His body was failing, desperate for real nutrients and medicine.

From my meager luggage, I retrieved a small, oilcloth-wrapped bundle. It contained a few rare herbs, part of my mother's collection.

"What is that, my lady?" Phoebe asked, her eyes wide with curiosity.

"Something to save a life," I said simply, selecting a few herbs known for their detoxifying and restorative properties.

I had Phoebe build a small fire in our room's fireplace. Using a small, spare pot, I began to brew a medicinal tea.

While the herbs simmered, I checked Demetri's wounds again. Some of them were beginning to ooze.

I unwrapped the bandages on his chest to clean them. In the dim candlelight, his pale skin was a canvas of crisscrossing scars, a shocking testament to his battles.

The tea was ready. Phoebe brought it over, the air filling with a strong, bitter aroma.

The sharp, medicinal scent seemed to stir him from his deep unconsciousness. I saw his eyelids flutter, just for a second. His breathing quickened. It was as if the weakness of his body had momentarily broken his perfect facade.

I filled a spoon, blew on it to cool it, and gently tried to part his dry, cracked lips.

Just as the spoon touched his mouth, a hand shot out and clamped around my wrist. It was ice-cold, but the grip was like iron.



I froze, my body rigid. The tea sloshed from the spoon, staining the bedsheets.

My head snapped up. I was staring into a pair of wide-open, ice-blue eyes.

He was awake. This wasn't a passive observation. This was a direct, angry reclaiming of control.

The strength in his grip was astonishing. Pain shot up my arm.

Phoebe gasped, nearly dropping the bowl.

Demetri's gaze moved from my face, to the spoon in my hand, and finally to the wounds on his own chest.

His throat worked, and a single, raspy word tore from his lips. It was the first time I had heard him speak.

"... Out."

The sound was weak, but the command, the pure loathing in it, was unmistakable.

I didn't move. I just looked at him. "You need this medicine," I said.

My calm seemed to infuriate him. With his other hand, he reached for the bandages on his face. He trembled with effort, but his resolve was absolute.

I knew the wound on his face was the most volatile. Despite my earlier cleaning, the silver's poison was more aggressive than I'd feared. He had been shielding it from my touch ever since he regained a flicker of consciousness.

"Alpha, no!" Phoebe cried out, her voice a terrified squeak.

He ignored her. With a sudden, violent motion, he ripped the bandages away. His face was revealed in the flickering candlelight.

One half was the face of a handsome, aristocratic man. The other half was a horror that had worsened despite my best efforts. The necrosis had returned with a vengeance, the flesh peeling back to reveal the white of the bone beneath.



The skin around it was a sickening blackish-purple. This wasn't just disfigurement. It was a supernatural decay that defied my previous treatment.

Any other woman would have screamed. Fainted. He stared at me, his blue eyes burning with a self-destructive malice. He was waiting. Waiting for my revulsion, my fear, my pity.

But I gave him none of it. After the initial shock at how quickly the infection had spread, all emotion drained from my face. It was replaced by the intense, detached focus of a surgeon facing a critical relapse.

I leaned closer, my eyes tracing the edges of the wound, assessing the extent of the necrosis, the type of infection. "The wound is extensive, with dead tissue and a strange, dark color spreading outward. It needs to be cleaned out immediately."

My voice was as calm and clinical as if I were delivering a lecture in an operating theater.

The malice in Demetri's eyes froze. The reaction he had anticipated, the one he had prepared for, never came.

The iron grip on my wrist loosened, just a fraction.

