

Chapter 14

Haven Kramer POV:

I felt the pressure on my wrist ease, but I didn't pull my hand away. My focus remained entirely on the wound on Demetri's face.

"The silver poison has already damaged the facial nerves," I murmured, more to myself than to him. "If it's not treated, even if the wound heals, the left side of your face will be permanently paralyzed."

My words were a needle, piercing the hard shell he had built around himself. I saw a faint, almost imperceptible tremor run through his body. His grip tightened again, his blue eyes blazing with a mixture of humiliation and fury.

"Have you seen enough?" he rasped, his voice like sandpaper.

He searched my face, desperate to find a crack in my composure, a hint of disgust or pity. He found nothing.

My gaze was clear, my expression calm. I saw a patient, not a monster.

Finally, I lifted my eyes from his wound and met his gaze directly. "What you look like is irrelevant to me," I said, my voice slow and deliberate. "What matters is that I am your mate. Our fates are bound together. Therefore, I must heal you."

I offered no words of comfort, only the cold, hard logic of survival. It was more powerful than any expression of sympathy could ever be.

Demetri was speechless. He had been ready with a barrage of cruel words to counter my fear, but this... this cold, clinical detachment, this declaration of survivalist logic, it stripped him of his weapon. He had nothing to attack.

Phoebe stood by the door, not daring to breathe, watching the silent battle of wills between us.



I gave a small shake of my captured wrist, the spoon still in my other hand. "Now, drink the medicine." My tone was not a request. It was a command.

"This is the first step," I told him. "It will suppress the infection and give you some strength. We have a lot of work to do."

He stared at me, his eyes a raging storm, as if trying to see into my very soul. His inner wolf was snarling, fighting against the feeling of being controlled.

I held his gaze without flinching. After a long, tense silence, the storm in his eyes began to subside. It was replaced by a profound weariness, and... a flicker of self-mockery.

Slowly, his fingers uncurled from my wrist. I pulled my hand back. Angry red marks circled my skin where he had held me.

He didn't speak. He just slightly parted his cracked lips. It was a silent signal of surrender.

Relief washed over me. I had won this round. I refilled the spoon, cooled the dark liquid, and carefully brought it to his mouth.

He swallowed it without protest. The intense bitterness made him grimace, but he did not resist. Spoonful by spoonful, I patiently fed him the entire bowl of medicine.

Phoebe watched, utterly stunned. She had likely never imagined the famously fearsome Alpha could be so... compliant.

When the bowl was empty, I picked up a clean cloth to wipe his mouth. Before I could touch him, he jerked his head to the side, avoiding my hand.

His defenses were still up. His compliance was only a temporary truce.

I didn't press the issue. I simply withdrew my hand.

A wave of exhaustion seemed to hit him after he took the medicine. His eyelids grew heavy.

"You need to rest," I said, picking up the clean bandages to re-dress the wound on his face.

He watched me with a complex expression in his eyes, but he eventually closed them, allowing me to work.

This time, he wasn't faking. The medicine had pulled him into a deep, genuine sleep.



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