

Chapter 19

Haven Kramer POV:

Demetri was silent for a long time. I thought he was going to refuse again.

Finally, a low, guttural sound rumbled in his chest. A reluctant "Mm."

The knot of tension in my stomach loosened. I turned and got him another bowl of broth. This time, he ate it without protest.

That afternoon, Phoebe returned, her face beaming. The butler, Silas, had readily agreed to my request. He had already sent someone to the city to purchase the finest portable stove and cookware.

Everything was proceeding according to plan.

To create an effective treatment regimen, I needed to understand this world's standard approach to silver poisoning. I had Silas summon Dr. Sullivan again, asking him to bring all the medicines prescribed for Demetri.

Dr. Sullivan arrived with a large parcel of paper-wrapped herbs and several vials of potions. He looked confused, but he complied with my request.

After he left, I closed the door and began my analysis.

I unwrapped each herb, one by one. The first was a dried, silver-green leaf with a faintly numbing scent. I crushed a piece between my fingers, brought it to my nose, then touched the powder to my tongue—just enough to taste the mild, astringent bite. Silverleaf, I recognized it from my mother's old texts. A common painkiller. Soothing for surface aches, but useless against systemic poison.

I set it aside and reached for the next.

This one was a dark, crumbling root with a bitter smell. I knew it as well—a gentle sedative, often given to restless patients. It would make him sleep, but it wouldn't heal a single cell.

One by one, I worked through the entire parcel. I sniffed, tasted, examined the color and texture of each herb against the memory of everything my mother had taught me. The vials of potions were even worse. One was little more than sweetened water with a dash of crushed moonflower

petals. A placebo. Pretty, useless, and expensive.

By the time I reached the bottom of the parcel, my jaw was tight.

Not a single one of these remedies was designed to actually combat silver poisoning. At best, they were mild painkillers. At worst, they were a way to keep him quiet while his body rotted from the inside out.

No wonder Demetri's condition had deteriorated so badly. They weren't treating him. They were just watching him die slowly.

I sat back on my heels, staring at the useless pile of herbs spread across the table. A cold weight settled in my chest.

To heal him, I couldn't rely on any of this world's medicine. I had to use my own knowledge, my own formulas.

But how could I administer my own remedies under the watchful eyes of Dr. Sullivan and the others? If I simply declared their methods wrong, they would dismiss me as a madwoman or, worse, a poisoner.

I needed a foolproof plan.

My gaze drifted to the trunk I had brought from home—the worn wooden one that held my mother's belongings. Inside were not just her rare herbs, but also packets of seeds and mineral powders I had packed under the guise of "dowry items." No one had questioned them. No one had even looked twice.

A plan began to form.

I would continue to request the official medicines every day. Phoebe would go through the motions of brewing them. But the foul-tasting, useless liquids would be secretly discarded—poured into the chamber pot, rinsed away with water, never reaching Demetri's lips.

The real medicine would be what I prepared in my new, private kitchen. Potent compounds disguised within his daily meals. A tincture here, a powder stirred into broth there. Nothing that would raise suspicion, nothing that would taste obviously medicinal.

It was a dangerous gamble. If I was discovered, I would be accused of attempting to murder the Alpha. The very act of replacing his prescribed treatment would be enough to condemn me, no matter my intentions.

But it was the only way.

I took a slow breath and let my mind shift into the familiar rhythm of formulation. I needed a plant-based alkaloid that could bind with silver ions and flush them from his system. I needed a powerful anti-

inflammatory to calm the necrosis spreading through his tissues. And I needed a catalyst—something to stimulate cell regeneration, to coax his body into remembering how to heal itself.

Fortunately, among my mother's collection, I had the ingredients for a start.

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