

Chapter 33

Haven Kramer POV:

I stared at Demetri's rigid back, completely baffled. His mood swings were more violent than ever.

Did I offend him? I replayed my words. I had only made a purely medical request. For a doctor, asking for a patient's bodily fluid sample was perfectly normal. I remembered he had a similar, resistant reaction when I first examined his legs.

Perhaps as an Alpha, he had some unspoken hang-up about his body being treated this way.

I decided to ignore his mood. The treatment couldn't be delayed.

"Phoebe, bring me the 'Ghost Face' mushrooms we collected yesterday, and the lab rabbits," I ordered.

At the word "rabbits," I thought I saw Demetri's shoulders tense.

Phoebe soon returned, pushing a small cart. On it was a cage with two lively white rabbits. Another shelf held jars, bottles, and the strange-smelling mushrooms.

I pulled on a pair of gloves and began processing the samples at my makeshift workstation.

As I mashed the mushrooms to extract their juice, I spoke to Demetri without turning around. "These rabbits are for toxicology studies. Before I use any new medicine on you, I have to determine its safe dosage and side effects."

I picked up a small scalpel, preparing to scrape some dried pus from the bandages I'd changed last night.

"Of course," I explained, "it would be much more effective if I had a 'fresher' sample. The 'fluid' I need is the pus draining from your still-festering wounds. That's where the toxin concentration is highest."

Silence.

The room fell completely, deathly silent.

After a few seconds, I heard a sound from behind me... the sound of

teeth grinding

I turned around, confused. Demetri had rolled over. His face was no longer red, but a furious, mottled gray. He was glaring at me, his eyes promising murder.

"What is it?" I was genuinely bewildered by his ferocious glare. "Pus is the most ideal material for the experiment. Is there a problem?"

"No problem," he bit out from between clenched teeth. He whipped his head back around, presenting me with the back of his skull, radiating a "do not speak to me" fury.

I was completely lost. This man was impossible.

I shook my head and decided to focus on my experiment. A man's mind was more complicated than an alchemical poison.

Just then, a knock sounded at the door. Silas Reynolds, the butler, walked in.

He bowed respectfully to me first, then turned to the furious lump on the bed.

"Alpha." Silas's voice was heavy. "A messenger has arrived from the capital. He brings a summons from the Alpha King for the annual summit."

The news was a stone dropped into a still pond.

I stopped what I was doing. The Alpha King's summit? I knew from my mother's memories that this was the most important gathering in the werewolf world. All Alphas were required to attend.

Demetri turned his head back, the anger on his face replaced by a deep, cold gravity. "When?"

"One month from now, in the capital, Silvermoon Citadel," Silas replied.

One month? My mind raced. The timing was terrible. At my current pace, in one month, I could at best suppress the progression of his illness and make him look like a normal, albeit weak, person. There was no way I could restore him to a state where he could handle the challenges of the summit.

"Are there any special requests in the summons?" Demetri asked, a sharp edge to his voice.

Silas's expression grew even more serious. "Yes. His Majesty specifically inquired about your mate, and implied... that he hopes to see her at the summit."

My heart sank. Me, too?

I realized it instantly. This was a trap. A trap for Demetri, and for me. They didn't just want to humiliate the "crippled Alpha" in front of all the other leaders. They wanted to see what kind of woman this "wolfless" mate from the Kramer family truly was.

I looked at Demetri and found him already looking at me. Our eyes met, and in that shared gaze, we both saw the same message: the war was about to escalate.



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