

Chapter 40

Haven Kramer POV:

The wait was long. Mrs. Villarreal paced the room like a restless lioness, shooting venomous glares at me every few moments.

I sat quietly in a chair farthest from Demetri's bed, my head bowed, looking like a prisoner awaiting sentencing.

Demetri kept his eyes closed, as if the whole affair had nothing to do with him.

About an hour later, Silas finally returned, leading an elderly man with white hair, a stern face, and a leather medical bag.

"Alpha, Madam Kramer," Silas announced with a bow. "Dr. Foster has arrived."

Mrs. Villarreal pounced like a shark that smelled blood. "Dr. Foster! You're finally here! You must seek justice for me!"

Dr. Foster was clearly taken aback by her fervor. He took a polite step back, his brow furrowed.

He turned to Demetri and gave a slight nod. "Alpha Contreras, it is an honor to be of service. But may I ask why I was summoned so late at night?" His voice was steady and courteous, carrying an air of authority.

Demetri opened his eyes. "Please examine Mrs. Villarreal," he said in a weak voice. "She claims... she has been chronically poisoned."

Dr. Foster's frown deepened. He sized up the agitated, red-faced Mrs. Villarreal, his eyes filled with professional skepticism.

"Of course." He set down his bag. "Madam, please sit and extend your wrist."

Mrs. Villarreal eagerly sat, holding out her wrist, her face alight with the certainty that the truth was about to be revealed.

Dr. Foster placed his fingers on her pulse, closed his eyes, and listened intently.

A few minutes later, he had also checked her eyelids, her tongue, and tapped her knee with a small hammer.

The room was so quiet you could hear a pindrop. My own heartbeat was as steady as a clock.

Mrs. Villarreal stared at Dr. Foster, waiting for him to pronounce his diagnosis of "poisoned."

Finally, Dr. Foster finished his examination. He packed away his tools and stood up, his expression strange.

"Well, doctor?" Mrs. Villarreal asked impatiently. "Am I poisoned? Am I dying?"

Dr. Foster looked at her, his tone one of utter confusion. "Madam, with all due respect..."

He cleared his throat and announced in a loud, clear voice, "Your body is... perfectly healthy. One might even say 'robust.' Your pulse is strong, your breathing is deep, and aside from being somewhat... agitated, there are no signs of poisoning whatsoever. Not even the slightest indigestion."

The words were a thunderclap, exploding over Mrs. Villarreal's head.

The triumph, the anticipation, the victory on her face froze, then shattered into a million pieces, leaving behind a blank, disbelieving void.

"No... impossible!" she shrieked, her voice cracking. "You're lying! I've been in agony every day! How could you not find anything?"

Dr. Foster, insulted by her accusation, scowled. "Madam, I stake my forty-year reputation on my diagnosis! There is nothing wrong with your body!"

"You were bribed by her!" Mrs. Villarreal had lost her mind completely. She pointed a trembling finger at me and roared at the doctor. "This bitch must have paid you to lie! You're in this together!"

Dr. Foster's beard trembled with rage. "This is preposterous!" He turned to Demetri and bowed stiffly. "Alpha, forgive me, but I cannot stay any longer. If you wish to pay my fee, please have someone deliver it to my clinic." With that, he picked up his bag and stormed out.

Mrs. Villarreal's last lifeline had been snapped by her own hand.

She collapsed into the chair, her face ashen, still muttering "Impossible... impossible..."

I stood up at the perfect moment and walked to Demetri's bed. The look of a wronged victim was gone, replaced by the calm satisfaction of a successful plan. "Alpha," I said softly, "thank you for your cooperation."

Demetri looked at me, a flicker of approval and amusement in his eyes,

but he quickly hid it.

He turned to the ashen-faced Mrs. Villarreal. His voice was not loud, but it carried the cold, unquestionable authority of an Alpha.

"Silas."

Silas, who had been waiting by the door, entered immediately.

"Drag this madwoman away. Lock her in her room. No one is to let her out without my command. Cut off all her food and water."

Mrs. Villarreal snapped her head up, staring at Demetri in horror, but before she could beg for mercy, two strong guards rushed in. They grabbed her by each arm and dragged her out like a sack of garbage. Her screams and curses faded down the hallway.

The room was finally quiet.

"Well done," Demetri said, looking at me.

I smiled at him. We had won this battle.

He then turned to Silas, the warmth in his expression vanishing replaced by the coldness of a ruler. "Now, tell me about the Alpha King's summit. Why has the King truly summoned us?"

Silas bowed. "Alpha, according to our sources in the capital, the official reason for the summit is to discuss the growing threat of rogues. But the real purpose... is likely to review the health of several Alphas who have been ill for a long time, or were seriously injured in the last war. To decide whether to... reallocate their territories."

