

## Chapter 5

Dimitri

"How are we for patrols on the Eastern border?"

I was in my office with my Beta, Ben, and my Gamma, Luke. I needed some sort of distraction this morning. I'd sent Thara to look over Lily, for obvious reasons. The girl was covered head to toe in bruises and cuts. I needed some sort of plan to get her healthy again. A strong Luna made a strong Alpha, and she wasn't strong. At all.

"We have enough for the East, but we could reinforce the South. Rogues have been targeting along there more frequently." Said Ben.

"Alright. Get Ned on it ASAP." Ned was my head warrior, and Ben's twin brother. Both had fought for the Beta title, but Ben won fair and square. Luke came from a long line of Gammas, so he was the obvious choice for the role. Ned was more than happy to take the lead as head warrior and train others into the best damn group of fighters this side of the country.

"Will do Boss."

Before either of them could say anything else, the door slammed opened and Thara marched in, breathing hard with a destructive expression on her face.

"You and you. Out." She pointed to Ben and Luke, who raised their eyebrows at me. I nodded, so they left looking confused. I turned my chair towards Thara.

"Well?" I asked.

"Well?! Dimitri, that girl is covered in marks! And her back..." She gulped.  
"What the fuck happened at that pack?!"

"Her back? What's wrong with her back?"

"It's mutilated! She wouldn't tell me who did it, only that it was caused by silver. It looks like someone cut her with a blade over and over and over..."

Thara sat heavily in one of the chairs across from my desk, tossing her little black notebook at me. I started flipping through the pages. Goddess. Lily wasn't just unhealthy, she was malnourished, dehydrated, severely underweight. Bruises covering most of her body, signs of physical and mental abuse...

I closed the book.

"What's the treatment?" I asked straight-faced.

"Food and water. Lots of it, often. But small meals first, I doubt her stomach can handle a hearty meal. I couldn't understand why her wolf wasn't healing the minor injuries. like the bruises. But she's so weak, so that means her wolf is too. With good care, and rest, her wolf should start to heal her again. But her back... it'll never heal properly." She shuddered.

I nodded slowly. "I'll have the cooks prepare something for her, at least six times a day for now."

"She thinks your repulsed by her." Thara said suddenly.

"What?"

"Exactly what I said. Dimitri, you're her mate. And her husband. But, more importantly, her mate. The bond between you two will also help her heal."

I rolled my eyes. "I don't have time to wait hand and foot on her Thara."

She glared at me. "Are you even going to complete the mate bond?"

I shrugged. "Of course. When she's not so fragile."

"Physically? Or mentally?" She demanded.

"Physically, obviously."

"So, what? If she's not ready to complete the bond, you're going to force her?!"

I sighed. "I'm not having this conversation with you again Thara. You know-"

"Oh, I know Dimitri! I know that you don't give a shit about that girl upstairs! I know that you have this ridiculous notion that you didn't even have a mate! But here's what I know; I know that if you force Lily to complete the bond when she doesn't feel ready, she will never be the strong Luna, you want her to be! She has been abused by someone, or multiple someone's, probably for a very long time-"

"And I will find who is responsible Thara!" I growled.

She took a deep breath. After a brief silence, she turned on her heel and left, slamming the door on her way out. I sighed heavily. I was being a dick, but she didn't understand. She never had! She was right about one thing; at twenty-three years old, I had given up a long time ago thinking I had a mate out there. I'd looked everywhere in this pack, looked at every unmated girl. I went to neighboring packs, and nothing. What are the chances I'd happen to find her at an Alpha meeting that I hadn't even wanted to attend?

Ben had basically dragged me to Snow Moon, the one pack we didn't really associate with because it's Alpha was beyond useless. I hadn't been there since I was a kid, with my father when he was Alpha. Alpha meetings were supposed to be about renewing allies, gaining new ones, and discussing potential threats. I hadn't even considered that I'd meet a girl with haunting green eyes and a wildflower citrusy scent who would turn out to be my mate. As soon as she'd entered the room, Ajax my wolf, had gone absolutely wild. It had taken almost all of my self-control to

reign him in and keep him from marking her right there in the middle of the hall.

The same hall I'd married her in a week later. Admittedly, seeing her walk down the aisle in her long white dress, the way the skirts flowed around her as she moved... she looked beautiful. And awful. Red marks that would surely turn to bruises soon had covered her cheeks, and a thin line of blood was running from her busted lip. Already formed bruises had dotted her bare shoulders, and I assumed from that that the volume of her gown was purposefully made to hide the extent of her injuries and the state of her body. Now I know I had been right.

But did I care about her? No. That may sound horrible, but Mates, Lunas especially, were potentially disasters waiting to happen. They served to make one stronger, that was all. When an Alpha lost his Luna, it was well known that he would never be the same. Most killed themselves just to escape the pain. When I had been younger, I'd idolized the idea of finding that one person, my other half, to love and love me back. But over the years, I learned that while a mate made you stronger, they could also be your downfall. This is why I would complete the bond with Lily, but she would never be my mate, the way mates usually worked.

There would be no intimacy, no real love. I didn't have time for love.

"Alpha?"

I raised my head to see Jennine standing in the doorway.

"Don't you dare." Ajax growled in my head.

Occasionally, Jennine and I would fuck. There were no feelings between us, she was simply really easy and a good stress relief. And I was pretty stressed right now.

"Shut up." I told Ajax and beckoned Jennine forward. She smiled and closed the door. The dress she was wearing left nothing to the imagination, but for some reason I wasn't aroused.

"I'm not doing this. We're not. We have a mate now."

"So? We haven't completed the bond."

"I don't care! I'm not going to let you hurt our mate by fucking this whore!"

"You're so tense baby." Jennine had moved to stand behind me, moving her hands over my shoulders in what she classified as a massage; really, it felt like talons digging into my skin. Her touch made me uncomfortable, edgy in a way it never had before.

"I'm not in the mood for foreplay." I grumbled.

She stepped in to the side, swiveling my chair to face her. In one quick motion, she had my pants unzipped and pulled down. Her tits were practically hanging out of her dress as she leant forward. I had the urge to look away.

"That's fine. We can get straight to it. I'm always eager to please my Alpha." She purred. Had her voice always been that nasally? Goddess, it was annoying.

"Sure." I mumbled.

Down went my boxers, and embarrassment colored my expression. I wasn't hard at all. I mean, at all. Jennine raised her eyebrows, clearly not expecting that. I didn't say a thing.

"Are you not excited to see me baby?" She asked.

"No." Ajax growled.

I was silent.

"Maybe this will get things going." Standing up, she reached back and I heard her zipper. The dress fell in a puddle around her feet and she smiled at me. Of course she wasn't wearing anything underneath. I looked back at her dispassionately. I should be rock hard right now; she had a great

body. But my wolf is adamant unwillingness to betray our mate wouldn't allow me to appreciate it.

"It's not just me. You don't want to do this anymore than I do."

Didn't I? I sat there, not saying a word, and Jennine's smile faltered a bit. Little things I hadn't noticed before, right now really bugged me about her. Her eyes were too close together, and a boring dull shade of blue. Her hair was so fake blond, I was surprised it was still intact from all the bleaching. Her lips were thin and her nose was a little upturned. her body... yes attractive, but just... average too. These little things should be inconsequential, but they weren't. I wasn't shallow per se, but in my head, I saw a pair of bright green eyes and I heard Lily's laugh. Jennine was just an easy lay that had run its course.

Standing up, I fixed my clothes.

"What are you-"

"Sorry, this isn't going to happen. And it's probably best that it doesn't ever again." I said. Her jaw dropped.

"But... Dimitri-"

"Alpha! I am Alpha to you! Now, go." I walked over and opened the door, not even caring that if anyone walked past, they would see her naked.

She huffed angrily and I rolled my eyes. Grabbing her clothes, she quickly slid into them and walked out. I slammed the door behind her.

"I hate you." I told Ajax.

"You would have hated yourself more."

If he was right, I didn't acknowledge it.