

Chapter 16 Cooking stew

Lila's POV

In the picture, my grandmother, Corinne, was sitting in this same vanity, in this room I frowned and glanced around

Could this have been my grandmothers' old room?

Did she live in this packhouse?

My mother never mentioned that my grandparents lived in the packhouse

I couldn't get over how beautiful my grandmother was, she looked exactly like my mother It made me sad that she was no longer around. I wished I could have met her. I continued rummaging through the other pictures that occupied the mirror and saw that there was another one with my grandmother, standing beside my grandfather, James.

They looked so happy and in love This was the kind of love story I wanted Minus the dying and the being held captive by the Alpha for years. I wondered how long after this photo was taken my grandfather was held captive and my grandmother died.

It made me feel sick to think about it.

I placed the pictures on the vanity, it was strange that they were just sitting there. As if this room hasn't been touched since my grandmother lived in it.

I went toward the small table across the room where I placed the platter of tea and took a sip. The tea was still so hot, and it tasted delicious There was a small cup of milk on the platter as well as a couple of sugar cubes

It was perfect.

Enzo was investigating the invasions around his pack; I would be lying if I said I wasn't a bit worried about that. This many invasions in one pack were uncommon and I wondered what it was stemming from.

I had an uneasy feeling in the pit of my stomach as I thought about it.

There was a light knock on my door, bringing my mind back to the here and the now.

"Come in," I said from across the room.

I was pleased to see Dee standing at the doorway, she had a pleasant smile and a kind look in her eyes.

"Sorry to bother you, miss Lila. But I wanted to ask if I could get you anything. Maybe some food?"

I smiled my appreciation to her.

"How about I help you in the kitchen, Dee." I say to her in return, walking toward the door She rose her brows.

"Oh, no... it's okay" she said with a light chuckle. "I'm used to cooking by myself."

"I'm pretty handy with a knife, you know." I say walking into the hallway Her entire body seemed to have frozen at my words, making me laugh. MI honestly don't mind. I need something to do.

What are we making?"

she gushed into a grin as she spoke.

"I was thinking stew?" She asked, following me down the stairs.

"Sounds delicious. I love a good stew. My mother has an amazing recipe. Of course, I don't want to mess with your own recipe."

"Maybe we could combine them?" She suggested. "I'm always looking for ways to improve my recipes."

"I would like that," I said with a smile.

We made our way into the kitchen. It was huge and extremely clean and very organized. I could tell she doesn't let many in the kitchen.

She already had most of the ingredients placed on the counter. I went straight to the vegetables scattered across the counter and began washing them while she set up the equipment.

"It's strange having help in here," she admitted. "I'm so used to being alone most of the time." "Nobody should be alone all the time." I tell her. "It's nice to have company once in a while. "

"You are very kind, Miss Lila; " she breathed. I began cutting the vegetables while she made the broth. She rose her brows as she noticed how fast I was going. "Who taught you that?"

"My mother, "I answered. "She cooks wonderful meals."

She gathered the vegetables and placed them in the pot she was cooking in. I grabbed some ingredients that my mother uses and started sprinkling them in the pot as well.

"So, you've been the house mother for long?" I asked, peering over at her.

She had a thoughtful look to her that I admired.

"For over a decade, " she finally spoke. "I was here when Enzo's father was here."

"Wow," I breathed. "So, you knew Enzo when he was a boy? "

"Yes," she answered "He was only 9 when I met him. He was a thin pup, and he was terrified of being here without his mum." She looked saddened by the memory. "I knew he would need a mother to help him get through, so I cared for him like he was my own"

"You're like his mother?" I asked, raising my brows. "And yet you are treated like the help "

She laughed at my wording.

"I don't do anything I don't want to. I enjoy being a mother figure to not just Enzo, but to the pack too. This packhouse would go hungry if I wasn't here. Their laundry would go undone, the flowers would all wilt, and nothing would get cleaned. Everything I do, I do out of love. Not just for the pack, but for Enzo too."

"He's lucky to have you in his corner. "I said fondly, and I meant that.

"He might be a little hard around the edges, but his heart is in the right place," she continued.

It was nice to hear that from someone who knows him so well, but it made me wonder what happened to Enzo's actual mother. I wanted to ask, but something inside of me told me not to.

"He is full of mystery," Val said in wonder.

It smells delicious already." I breathed, peering into the pot of stew; my mouth was watering, I didn't even realize how hungry I was until I smelled this food.

"We make a great team," she chuckled. "I hope Alpha Enzo brings you around more."

Once we finished cooking, we poured some stew into a couple of different bowls.

"I'm going to bring this to Beta Ethan, " she said before leaving the kitchen.

I grabbed a bowl for myself and sat at the center counter with the stools. I waited for her to return before I started eating.

She frowned when she saw my untouched bowl.

"Why haven't you eaten yet?"

"I was waiting for you," I said, raising my brows. "It's rude to eat when your party isn't eating yet."

She laughed as she grabbed a bowl for herself and a couple of glasses of water for each of us. She sat beside me on the other stool and together we both ate.

We were mainly quiet as we enjoyed the delicious flavors of the stew. Both our recipes worked really well together, and I was proud to create a dish with someone I was now considering a friend.

A few others, who live in the packhouse, entered the kitchen and started grabbing their own servings. Most of them said nothing to us; some muttered "Hello, Dee, " as they took their servings. Some even said, "Thanks, Dee," before leaving the kitchen with their bowls.

"Hopefully there will be enough left for the Alpha," I say to her with a laugh.

"Oh, I already set some aside for him," she said, matching my laugh.

That was smart.

After we finished eating, I helped her clean

"You really don't need to help, " she said fondly.

"I don't mind," I say in return.

She paused for a moment as she took in my face.

"You know, you're the first woman Alpha Enzo has ever brought home, " she said, glancing at me as I dried the dishes she handed to me.

"The first?" I said, surprised. "He's a very handsome Alpha. How is that possible?"

"He was never interested in dating before," she said, a small frown placed on her lips. "He always said that relationships make you weak. As a small boy, he always had these big ambitions in life. Having a mate would just get in his way. At least, according to him, it would."

I felt my heart falling into my stomach at her words; I wasn't sure why that upset me so much. Maybe because I could feel Val lowering her gaze, saddened by the harsh reality.

Our mate doesn't want a mate.

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