

Lita's Love For The Alpha Chapter 8

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Bras and Brian

Lita followed Stace into the lingerie store like a shy child because she'd never actually bought these things for herself. Suddenly, she wondered if that made her pathetic, or if Stace would judge her. For years, it was her mother who bought her underclothes. And for the last two, it had been Brian who did it, claiming he preferred her to wear what he liked. And he never seemed to get her size right no matter how many times the bras mashed her chest in. It all had seemed so normal. Now, as Lita looked at the store full of women and teenage girls, she wasn't so sure.

Stace took them to the women's side of the store, away from all the bright colors and panties with words on them. She held up a mesh dress that stopped at her waist, exposing everything below. She giggled, "Now this is what you wear when you bag your first fighter, okay? Best to make an impression so the word will spread. If there's one thing a bunny knows, it's that an excellent reputation is everything."

A girl like Lita, from the wealthy upper east coast, had no business talking about sleeping with fighters, as in multiple, in a public store. At least, that's what her mother would say. Her mother, Diane, daughter to a prestigious, if not destitute, family line, was the head of a pharmaceutical company. They made vaccines and mood stabilizers, two things Lita was well versed in. Her mother's family name mattered in all the inner circles, but supposedly, Lita's grandfather burned through the legacy money before it could pass on. So, Lita's mother grew up eating ketchup sandwiches in Chanel clothes. Making a dollar stretch around the block while looking like millions.

That was half the reason Diane Clawe never let Lita stray too far from Brian. A name could get a girl anywhere, her mother would say, and money will keep her there. That's how her mother ended up with her father, Rafi, short for Raphael. Raphael Dillard wasn't a household name, an adopted kid from the inner city, but he was well off now with his job. He had an excellent position in the inner circle of the city and made boatloads of cash, ensuring the wealthy avoided tax fraud. As a high-powered lawyer with his own firm, Rafi could command a courtroom and a ballroom with Lita's mother dutifully draped over his arm.

Both moved freely in the upper echelon of society, which left little time for raising Lita or her brother, who were brought up by a slew of nannies and private schools instead. What they lacked in love and parental instincts, Diane and Rafi made up for in etiquette and couth. And money. If there was anything her mother was good at, it was throwing money at a problem to make it disappear. How many times had her mother paid for

special healing treatments when she'd turned up with bruises? How many times had her mother thrown money at emergency room doctors to keep things quiet? Or signed her name to another donation at Lita's private school her senior year when the bruises were more difficult to hide?

Was that the example Lita wanted to follow? Or did she want to look at life from a different view? There was no telling what else she might find in a different walk of life. One in which women were empowered enough to choose their own sexual partners for no reason other than that they enjoyed it. There might have been a stigma attached to what they did, but if everyone was a consenting adult, what did it matter what they did behind closed doors?

"Do they — uh, the fighters—do they pay you guys or something?" Lita asked, as clueless as a child in the world of adults. She rushed to clarify herself before Stacey could get upset. "It's just you make it sound like a job. References and reputations. Word of mouth and prospects. I just want to make sure I understand everything." Lita felt heat creeping up her neck as Stace stared. And stared some more. Before she burst out in a fit of laughter that made Lita's entire face hot.

"Hell no, babe!" Stace guffawed, her icy blonde hair spilling over her shoulders. "We 'box boots' because we want to. Because it's fun and it feels damn good to let loose. But there are no transactions involved. Jesus Christ." She shook her head again, frowning.

Lita winced, curling into herself with embarrassment.

"Don't worry, it takes a lot to offend me. You're good. It's just how we talk about the circuit, ya know? I'm just giving you insider knowledge. I didn't mean to scare you into thinking this is anything more than a good time. If you don't want to sleep with anyone, you're still cool with me. Jaz might give you some shit, but she'll be chill about it too. Nobody's going to throw you out of the gym for being you. Whoever you want to be. A bunny or a fighter or just a chick that likes to work out. We're all strays in our own way. My advice is to check the lifestyle out and if it's not for you, no harm, no foul."

Stace shrugged like it was all so simple and turned back to the rack of dresses. Lita marveled at the freedom Stace seemed to possess. She wasn't pushed into a box of any kind and if she was capable of shame, she certainly didn't have any about her body or the topic of her hobby. Lita watched Stace hold up several bras and panties up to herself in the showroom mirror.

"Shit, sorry, we're not here for me," she apologized, "The sportswear section is over here. What's your bra size?"

"I'm wearing a 32c, I think... but I don't think it's the right size. It's pretty tight. Especially after the last month of working out," Lita admitted quietly. Anger was easy,

embarrassment was hard. And somehow, she'd been more embarrassed in the last twenty minutes with Stace than she had in months.

"Kay, no problem. Let's get you fitted and try some of these on. You're probably gonna need one of each kind at least and matching yoga bottoms. Some leggings wouldn't hurt either. How are you on funds? I could loan you some if you need it. I know this stuff can be a little expensive..." She watched Lita expectantly, but casually. There was no maliciousness in the observation.

"No, I'm good," Lita replied, watching Stace motion an employee over.

For a moment, she wondered what her life would have been like if she'd been raised with Stacey as a friend.

Like during her sophomore year in high school, when James took up MMA fighting and swore, he was dropping out of school to pursue it full time. They'd hardly had a conversation about it before he took his trust fund and ran. He'd run all the way across the country, insisting that the people he found in the fighting circuit had opened his eyes to the way life was really supposed to be.

She could understand it now. Spending time with Stace, working out with Alex. The exercises hurt, but the vibe at Alpha's was comfortable. She felt secure and this time she was spending with Stace, showed Lita an entirely different way of thinking.

Lita's parents would be livid to find her at the same fight club James started, and making friends with the same friends he'd had. And loving it. Loving the budding new confidence and strength she felt each day. Her parents had expectations of her, just like they'd had of James. He'd ignored their wishes, perusing his own passion even if it meant losing them. Lita wondered if she had the strength to do the same.

She could still remember her mother saying that sometimes men showed their love in physical ways. But it would go away if she could just get herself together. Stop making him mad. Dress appropriately. Hold her tongue. Lita was drowning under the weight of it, and she didn't even have her brother by her side.

Stace smiled at the employee and pointed to Lita. "She needs a quick fitting, if you don't mind." Lita held up her arms for the fitting, but the lady frowned as she wrapped the tape over her bust. "What size are you wearing right now, honey?"

"32C."

"Let's fit you in the fitting room, okay? I think the bra is throwing off the measurements."

Lita followed her to the fitting room and dutifully stripped out of the bra without taking off her shirt. She didn't want to risk anything showing. Not her scarred back or her faded bruises.

“Oh my gosh!” Stace and the employee, whose name tag said Amy, gasped when they stared at Lita’s chest.

“What?” Lita asked, staring down at herself. Was there something wrong with her chest? Did she have funny nipples or something?

“Who bought you this bra?” Amy asked, as she studied it, completely shocked.

“Uh, I think it was my boyfriend... well ex-boyfriend,” Lita admitted, “He bought a lot in this size. Said it looked perfect. Why is something wrong with it?”

“Honey, it’s smashing your boobs down to nothing. You don’t feel the pressure? I mean, Jesus, from here it’s at least three sizes too small,” she said, “If it weren’t for the material of this sweater, you’d look like you had double and triple boobs with the way you were spilling out over, under, and at the sides.”

A moment later, a larger bra size and a thin t-shirt were handed to her and as soon as the other two left her alone, Lita stripped in a flash. She took a deep breath, adjusting to the way the bra let her ribs expand without digging. In the mirror, she could see the difference immediately.

Lita frowned.

“How’s it look?” Amy yelled over the door.

“Great, thank you,” Lita said quietly, opening the door so they could inspect the fit.

“Wow!”

“Wow is fucking right,” Stace said, sharing a secret look with Amy before she left the fitting room, “So... your ex-boyfriend, huh?”

“Yea, Brian,” Lita shivered slightly, returning to smooth curves of her breasts. She couldn’t help but smile at the comfort and shape of the new bra and Stace didn’t miss it. She looked at Lita like she had many things to say, but she kept them to herself and only said, “Glad he’s an ex.”

Lita changed her clothes at home and slipped out to the parking garage without seeing Brian, but the second she reached her SUV’s door, she heard his voice.

“Lita?” he called, mimicking the morning, “Wait up, we didn’t get to talk this morning.” He did a light jog over to her, and she silently thanked herself for wearing a hoodie. How did he always know exactly where she was in their apartment complex?

“Hey... I was just heading to the gym.”

“Oh okay, you go a lot... like every day. Maybe if I get a membership there, I’d actually see you,” he playfully pouted, looking every bit as innocent as she wished he was.

“Yea,” she laughed, “Sorry, the therapist said it’s good for me to go alone, ya know? Work through my anxiety and stuff. Anyway, I should go, or I’ll be late for my personal training session.”

“Personal training?” he growled slightly, “It’s with a chick, right?”

“Of course!” Lita lied, feeling like her heart was going to jump right out of her chest. Though, now that Stace was going to be her teacher, she wasn’t really lying. And he didn’t need to know about Alex.

“Mmhmm, it’s paying off, though. You look good, different. Well anyway, I wanted to tell you this morning, but you were rushing... the new martial arts movie comes out tomorrow, so I’m taking you for a date.”

“Bri—” Lita began, trying not to cringe at her pet name for him. “We’ve been over this. A break is a break...”

“Listen, Lita,” he mumbled, crowding her personal space, “I’m a patient man. At least I’m trying to be patient for you. But we’re going to the movie, okay? Or we’re going to be having a different conversation.” Lita caught every single implication he didn’t say. Her first reaction was anger, but fear quickly overtook it. A deep, desolate fear, learned over the last two years spent with him. Those hands could be so gentle and yet so cruel. Those long, toned limbs could be a comfort or a pain, and Lita knew which she would prefer. On autopilot, her body slipped into the familiar role as if she’d never left, nodding and bending her head lower like a submissive.

“O-okay, sor-ry,” she muttered with a fake smile.

“Great!” his face immediately lifted in victory, “Be ready by eight. I’ll come by your place first.”

Lita nodded as he stepped back enough to let her into her vehicle. Her heart felt heavier, weighed down by all the instincts she couldn’t fight. He’d mastered her, hadn’t he? Convinced her body and soul that she was less than him, existing solely for his pleasure or pain. She glimpsed her own future before her eyes. The one that ended in misery. Either spent under his boot, his fist, or a dark depression she’d never crawl out of. If he ever found out the truth about the gym... she shuddered to think about it. But refusing to fight was unthinkable. She’d already scraped enough around at his feet, Lita had no desire to spend her future doing it as well. James had lost his life for this, for her future freedom. So, she had to keep fighting.

No amount of training would wash away the fear. HE ingrained it in her. Wrote it in her bones. Would there ever be a point where she wouldn’t feel like cowering? Lita didn’t

think so. She closed her car door and managed a half-hearted wave as she pulled out of the parking spot and headed towards the street. She was going to get herself killed, but at least then she'd be with James.