

Chapter 190

The crudeness of the setting against the luxury of the ingredients had actually stimulated his senses and he'd found he'd enjoyed the experience immensely. But that had been her goal.

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He wasn't oblivious to what she was up to most of the time. She had forced her way into his life and decided that she was going to heal him. If she came at him head on he would have been intractable and she knew it. So she worked subtly and in unusual directions to tease him back into life. Sometimes she even managed it for a brief period of time before the melancholy set back in. Nothing deterred her though.

Sighing again, Dayton knelt of the rug and accepted the glass of champagne she handed him. He stretched out on his side and relaxed, taking a sip from his glass as he watched her intently. "So, what's brought the cat out today?"

Silvery green eyes flashed with amusement as she met his gaze. "I met a man," she laughed softly. "A very bad tempered, mean old vampire to be precise. He broke my ribs and then tossed me from a tree."

He automatically tensed, overcome with a wild fury which surprised him in its intensity. He knew Rayne could look after herself but after meeting the children this morning his old Beta instincts to protect were still hovering too close to the surface. He could see that she was perfectly fine but he was still enraged that someone had hurt her.

His emotional reaction to the cat was becoming harder to deal with. She had woven a way through his defences over the decades despite his attempts to keep her out. She was the only one who had managed to do so and he often wondered what it was about her that was so special. What was it about Rayne which dented his carefully constructed armour?

"I told you to keep away from Alexei and Andrei." Was his cool response though his deep blue eyes were flashing dangerously, giving away his fury.

More silvery laughter as she placed a plate of cheese and fruit before him with a mouth watering spicy pastry to accompany it. "It wasn't one of those vamps, Day. I don't know who this one was but he was pretty spectacular. Long red hair, deep lavender eyes and the most incredible body I've ever seen. My cat was very impressed with his strength and ruthlessness. For a moment I thought he was going to kill me but then he appeared to change his mind and let me go."

A loud rumbling growl escaped Dayton as she calmly told him she had come a hairsbreadth away from death in such a matter of fact tone. She actually sounded impressed that the vampire had tried to kill her.

Rayne smiled at the raw fury she saw in his eyes. He was reacting just how she wanted him to, just how she had hoped he would. The chinks in his armour were growing wider, her objective being to keep those cracks open long enough for his emotions to bleed through. Suppressing them for so long had only hurt him. It was time he started living again.w©w.nóvELw@rm.com

And he was her link into the Pack that she had been summarily banished from. She had no intention of staying away from the children. She had to be close to them, scent them, touch them, learn what it was about them that called to her so. There was so much she didn't know about herself and she had a feeling those little ones would give her the answers she had been seeking her entire life.

Leaning forward she traced her fingers lightly along his clenched jaw, soothing down the rage with her soft touch. Her actions were twofold. She wanted to help him deal with the unexpected emotions he was feeling and she wanted to completely infuriate the vampire standing outside watching them.

"Eat," she smiled gently. "The pastries are delicious." She stroked his jaw lightly again and then sat back and concentrated on her food feeling the cold hatred directed at her back from the woman outside.

Freya had found she couldn't get the wolf out of her mind all day long. She coldly analysed what it was about him that irritated her so much as she sat in Nors' home and watched her two year old nephew play with building blocks on the sitting room carpet.

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Unlike the Romanov twins, her brother and his mate spent more time at their own house than they did the compound. She knew they did it for her. She was uncomfortable around the wolves and their compound. Accepting Ashleigh and now baby Liam into her family had been a challenge but one she had been able to overcome with time. They were now just as precious to her as her brother.

But accepting the other wolves was a much harder task. She couldn't shake off two thousand years of enmity towards them so easily. She wouldn't do anything to hurt them unless they hurt her or her family, but that didn't mean she wanted to spend every waking moment in their Compound the way the other mated vampires did. She tolerated them because she had to. It was all she was capable of.

Which was why her interest in the male wolf from the other day was irritating her. She'd been trying to fathom out what it was about him that had set her off, made her want to sink her fangs into his neck and taste his blood, killing him into the bargain. Maybe it was the way he had looked right through her, as if she didn't exist?

Freya was a vain woman and she knew it. She was aware how she turned male heads of all species. Never had a man looked at her as if she was asexual and that grated on her nerves because that was what the wolf had done. And by doing so it was almost as if he had silently challenged her. His disdain angered her, brought out her feral side. And her protective side. He had wounded Ashleigh with his rejection and that added to her annoyance with him.

"Look, Aunt Freya," Liam cried with delight, pointing at the rickety tower block of bricks he'd just built. The sound of his sweet voice soothed some of her inner rage and her expression lightened from the dark scowl she was wearing and a small smile crossed her face.

"Very good, Liam," she responded gently, moving from the sofa to sit on the floor beside him. "That's eight bricks high. You're improving daily with your skills." The words weren't particularly designed for a child his age, the praise difficult for her to enunciate, and yet it drew the widest smile from the adorable child beside her.

Liam Eriksson had his father's dark auburn hair but his mother's chocolate brown eyes. His baby features were starting to change into that of a grown up little boy and he had Ashleigh's gentle spirit as opposed to his father's more volatile temper.

He loved his mother and father as only a child could, enthusiastically and unconditionally but he particularly adored his aunt with her multi coloured hair and cold eyes. No matter how much she smiled he never saw any sparkle in the deep green of her eyes and that made him feel sad.

He may be only two years old but Liam saw things with a maturity far beyond his years. He looked at his pretty aunt and he knew that deep down inside she hurt badly. He could sense most people's feelings if he wanted to though he didn't make a habit of doing it in case they realised he was doing so.

He didn't want mummy and daddy worrying that something was wrong with him. He knew they did that, that all the Pack were concerned for him and the other children because they didn't know what they would grow into. Which was just plain silly in his opinion because he knew they were all going to be just fine. But grown ups were funny that way sometimes because they loved their children so much.

Aunt Freya was the only grown up that he had trouble blocking so he didn't try anymore. Despite her cold eyes her mental voice almost screamed out to him. Today she was very angry so he tried to distract her with his block building. Sometimes it worked and other times it didn't. Today it appeared to be working a little.

"Hug, Aunt Freya," he demanded, his arms reaching up towards her.WWw.noV(e)WóRm.com

Enchanted with the little being in front of her, Freya gathered him carefully into her arms and let him bury his face in the side of her neck as he played with her hair. She felt a tenderness for the boy on a level she was not used to dealing with. Usually she would try and fight these emotions but it was impossible with Liam.

"Ash, get a camera! Freya's being all warm and fuzzy. We need to capture this moment," Nors Eriksson yelled over his shoulder as he entered the sitting room to see his sister cradling his son so tenderly. His voice was full of amusement though his eyes were shining with love as he looked down at them.

He was an Ancient vampire and one of the largest of their kind. Standing close to six and a half feet tall, his shoulders appeared just as wide. He was loosening his hair as he talked, still dressed in a dark grey Armani business suit having just returned from work.