

Chapter 204

Liam wouldn't stop crying and it was driving Ashleigh insane with worry. Every time she asked him what was wrong he just pointed at his heart and said it hurt. She could detect nothing wrong with him physically but as she started to panic, she tried calling Nors anyway. It wasn't like Liam to cry like this; he very seldom cried.

The sound of the front door opening made her sigh with relief. Nors was instantly at her side, his weary expression turning to one of concern. "What's wrong with him?" he asked urgently, touching his son's forehead but not finding a fever.

Ashleigh bit her lip and shook her head. "I don't know. He just keeps saying it hurts and pointing at his chest. I can't find anything wrong with him though."

"Liam, tell Daddy what's wrong," Nors coaxed gently, cradling his face in his hands gently.

"Hurts here, Daddy," Liam sniffed his hand over his heart. "Always hurts here but not this bad." Big brown eyes implored him. "Help her, Daddy. You have to help her."

Nors and Ashleigh shared puzzled looks and then turned back to their son.

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"Help who, Liam?" Ashleigh asked gently. "Who does Daddy need to help?"

Big tears rolled down his face as he looked up at his parents. "Aunt Freya," he sobbed. "She hurts so bad, Mummy."

Nors stiffened at his words, still raw from his most recent encounter with his sister. He had no idea what Liam was talking about though his son's distress was ripping his heart out.

"How do you know Aunt Freya is hurting, sweetheart?" Ashleigh coaxed, seeing a hard expression on Nors' face at the mention of his sister and wondering if they'd had another fight.

Liam knew that he'd have to tell them now. He was scared they'd be angry with him for keeping it secret but it was the only way to save his aunt. "I can feel her inside," he whispered. "I can feel everyone inside but I don't because it's too much feeling. I can't stop feeling Aunt Freya though. She hurts all the time."

His tear-stained face was anxious as looked at his parents. "That's why I give her all those cuddles, so she will feel a little better. It mostly works but not all the time."

Ashleigh released her breath staring at her son in awe. "You can sense other people's emotions?" she asked, barely able to comprehend what her child was telling her.

He nodded slowly. "Right now you feel worried about me and a bit scared too because I've told you my secret. Daddy feels very angry inside but he feels bad, too. He's hurting."

Stunned, Ashleigh turned to Nors, waiting for him to repudiate what his son had just said. She held her breath because she couldn't deny that Liam's words were an accurate reflection of her emotions.

"He's right," Nors choked out, staring at his child in amazement. His son was telling them he could read emotions. It was staggering. He stroked Liam's head gently, giving him a reassuring smile, letting him know that they weren't angry that he'd kept this secret.

"What you said about Aunt Freya," he said quietly. "Are you telling us that every single time you see her she is hurting inside, even when she's smiling and talking to us?" The wrecked sitting room in her house was coming to mind as he waited for Liam to answer.

He nodded solemnly at his father. "It's different today though. Aunt Freya isn't here but I can feel her anyway. This is the worst badness I can feel from her. This one makes me cry it hurts so much. I don't usually cry when I feel it."

Nors closed his eyes and took a deep breath, trying to come to terms with his son's strange gift. If what he was telling them was true and he had no reason to doubt him because he knew exactly what Nors was feeling right now...

He couldn't get the wrecked room out of his mind, Freya's blank expression, her words about the painting. A deep fear began to pulse inside him and he opened his eyes again.

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"You're not crying now, Liam," he said with a faint tremor in his voice. Ashleigh gave him a worried frown, knowing something was happening but not aware of what it was.

"That's because Aunt Freya's not hurting any more," his son answered, a sleepy yawn coming from his mouth as he cuddled into his mother. Sensing emotions always made him feel sleepy.

"Nors?" Ashleigh's voice held a tremor of fear in it, her eyes wide as she looked at him. She didn't know what was going on but she could feel his fear running through their mate bond.

"Take Liam to the compound," he ground out, fear overwhelming him as he hurried from the house. He raced through the night towards his sister's house only ten minutes away. How long had he been gone? Less than half an hour? More?

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"Freya!" He crashed through the front door almost taking it from its hinges. Silence greeted him.

Nors flew through the house, moving at supernatural speed to check each room, finding each the same as the last: completely destroyed. He couldn't find a trace of his sister, finally giving up as he went back downstairs and stood looking at the sitting room.

The painting was missing from its place on the wall, lying shattered on top of the rest of the furniture. What had she said to him about it? That the painting was her, full of pain and despair. Broken.

Nors bit his lip hard, fought to stop the tears running down his face as he realised that he hadn't listened to Freya. She had tried to tell him and he was too angry to hear her. He hadn't meant what he'd said to her. He'd been angry, lashing out. She must have known he didn't mean it. He had always been there for her. Why hadn't she believed he would be here for her this time?

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