

## Chapter 205

His perfect mate, his perfect son. Her words crashed inside his head and his tears fell a little harder. Freya didn't believe there was room for her in his life any more. She hadn't adapted to the changes. She had tried her hardest, but it had been too much for her and he hadn't even noticed the signs. His two year-old son had more insight into his sister's psyche.

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"I'm sorry, Freya," he whispered into the empty house. "Be safe, wherever you are."

It was late by the time Nors reached the compound. He'd gone home first to gather some clothes. He had a feeling they would be staying the night and if he was honest with himself he needed to be close to the pack right now. Ashleigh met him at the Alpha's house, worry etched all over her face.

"Where's Liam?" he asked as he wrapped his arms around her and took comfort in the feel of her body pressing against his.w©(w).NôveIW@r@c©M

"Mallen checked him over and gave him a clean bill of health. He's with the other children upstairs at Aaron's," she answered quietly. "Dayton's here with his friend Rayne. I know what Freya did."

He stiffened as he heard the pain in her voice, knew she was fighting with two conflicting loyalties. Dayton had been her brother's closest friend, a part of her family before she was born. Freya was his sister, a part of her future and the happiness she had found after losing everything. Choosing between them would be agony for her.

She raised her head from her chest and looked up at him. "Is she okay, Nors?" she asked in a small voice. "Liam said she was hurting all the time. I can't believe I didn't see it, didn't know that she needed help."

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Wolves were pack animals, they loved communally, were there for all of the pack when they were in pain. It hurt to know that she hadn't been there for a member of her family when she'd needed her.

"I don't know," he breathed softly stroking her cheek gently and wondering how he could love this amazing woman any more than he already did. He could see her concern for his sister in her eyes. She genuinely cared about what happened to Freya. "Come on, let's go in. I need to tell Rafe what's happened."

Ashleigh pulled him over to the library and they entered together. Nors stiffened when he realised that the Romanovs were there with their mates as well as Aaron, Jen and Rafe. His gaze went immediately to his Alpha.

"Relax, Nors: the twins are here as pack, not Council members," Rafe said quietly. "This is not an official complaint."

Nors searched his gaze for a moment and then turned to look at the Romanovs. Andrei shot him a grin and Alexei rolled his eyes. "Your sister is safe, Nors," Alexei said. "She'll get to keep her head a little longer, though how she's managed to keep it this long is beyond me. She makes Andrei look like a choir boy."

~~His brother reached over Loretta to thump him hard on his shoulder. "I resent that," he growled laughingly. "Fucking choir boy!"~~

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Some of his tension left Nors as he watched the twins banter together. Everyone in the room with the exception of Aaron and Jen had been in the Council Chambers the night Caleb Cullen and the other Ancients had taken apart the Council and forced the current alliance between Vampire and Were.

They had all heard his words that night. Caleb would personally kill any vampire who threatened a Were or even thought of harming one. No excuses; no chance to state their case; nothing. It would be instant and completely final. Freya's actions could constitute a threat to a Were.

Ashleigh led him over to one of the sofas and he sat down beside Aaron, pulling his mate into the vee between his legs so he could wrap his arms tightly around her. He needed her strength at the moment. He had painful things he needed to talk about, private things he hadn't shared even with her. He had to make the pack understand.

The twins settled back with their mates and Rafe turned his gaze to Nors. "We're here to discuss several matters but the first one is Freya," he said with a slight frown on his face. "Have you spoken to her, Nors?"

"She won't be a problem," he answered tersely. "Not our problem any more. She's gone."

Ashleigh twisted her head to look at him, a startled gasp coming from her. "Where? She just left without telling us?"

All eyes were on him and he sighed deeply, closing his eyes for a long moment before slowly opening them. "I was angry when Rafe called me and told me what happened. I was more than angry; I was livid. I went to her house and we had words. I didn't notice at the time that she was acting strangely. More strangely than she normally does. When I went back tonight she was gone, the house completely destroyed. She took every room apart with her bare hands."

Ashleigh shivered in his arms and twisted around so she was in his lap and holding onto him tightly. She could feel his pain through their bond, feel his self disgust, and she worked to soothe him as her own heart twisted painfully at the news.

Alexei and Andrei were instantly alert, sitting forward on the sofa they shared with their mates. Gone was the earlier banter; in its place was cold hardness, alert eyes searching the other Ancient's keenly.

"Has she crossed over?" Andrei asked, his voice hard as his agile mind immediately began working through various scenarios of what they might need to do to contain a rabid vampire.

Nors shook his head. "She's not a danger to anyone else. She would have stayed if she was. She's only a danger to herself right now." His grip on Ashleigh tightened as she whimpered a little in fear at his words.

"Explain, for us non-vampires," Rafe ordered, his concern ratcheting up a notch at the expressions on the vampires' faces.

"You all remember Graves," Alexei said somewhat drolly, eyeing up Rafe as he did so. As if they would ever forget the vampire who had almost destroyed the Hanlon pack to get to Lacey because he considered her his.

"He was one step away from becoming totally feral, from crossing over completely. Actually Demetri was almost at that stage that night, too. Crossing over is when a vampire loses all humanity, like when a Were goes rogue. There is no reasoning with him. He turns into a killing machine and must be put down instantly."

"Nors?" Rafe asked.

"She has not crossed over," he insisted, rage starting to build up inside him as his fear for his sister grew: if they went to the Council with this and convinced them that she had, then her life was over. Every vampire on the planet would be looking for her. She wouldn't be safe anywhere.

Rafe knew this was torture for Nors but he had to press the issue. He had to know just how far gone Freya Eriksson was. "You sound so certain, Nors. How can you be? Your sister has always walked a very fine line between right and wrong. Didn't your own Council consider executing her?"

The furious glare he got from the other man didn't faze him. He held it as a long slow hiss escaped Nors' lips and Ashleigh's arms tightened a bit more around the huge vampire until he calmed slightly.