

Chapter 206

"I know my sister," Nors finally said quietly. "She wouldn't have left if she'd crossed over. Her first thought would have been to take out those she felt had wronged her. She would have come after me and Ash first, then the pack to get to Dayton and Rayne. The fact that she left means she's still fighting to retain her humanity."

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"Why, Nors?" Ashleigh asked, tears running down her face. "Why now? What's pushed her over the edge like this? I just don't understand."

He looked down at his mate, carefully wiping at her tears. He found he couldn't speak to the entire room but he could talk to his Ashleigh. "We had different mothers," he said quietly. "I was almost fourteen when Freya came along. She was the most darling little thing you could ever imagine. I fell in love with her instantly, was completely besotted with her. She was still a child when I was made into a vampire. I was furious that I had to let her go. I just couldn't stay away. I waited until she had grown up and I went back for her. I told her what I was; I explained about the life I led. I asked her to join me."

He swallowed hard as the memories came back as though they had happened only yesterday. "She agreed to be Sired and I, in my arrogance, did it. I had no idea what I was doing, what I was consigning her to. My Sire had been Ancient, a strong mentor to lead me through the bloodlust that was a craving beyond torture when I was first Sired. I thought I was strong enough to mentor Freya. I was wrong.

The first time she drank blood she killed. It wasn't just one human either, she killed an entire family. I managed to spirit the children away but she went through the rest of them, grandparents, parents, brothers and sisters living in the same house as they did back in those times."

He sucked in a deep breath, his expression haunted as the room sat silently listening to his tale. He kept his gaze locked with Ashleigh's because he couldn't go on without her strength.

"She screamed, Ash. She screamed such a scream of utter heartbreak when she came back to herself. She stood looking at herself in a mirror, completely drenched in blood and she screamed as I've never heard anyone scream before. She broke that first day. She died inside and she's never truly recovered since. I should have killed her then, should have ended her suffering, but I couldn't do it. Not to my Freya. Instead I tried my hardest to teach her, to help her through the transition until she could control herself."

The entire room remained silent with the exception of Ashleigh's soft weeping as she listened to the heartbreak, guilt and self loathing thick in his tone. She could feel his agony through their bond, knew he hated himself for what he'd done to his sister.

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"I was able to contain her most of the time though she ran to excess in the first five centuries until she came to the Council's attention. Then I had to do something drastic to try and reach her. It worked. She calmed down, seemed to come to terms with what she was. I thought she had crossed another line when she accepted you and Liam into her life. Again, I was wrong."

Nors' eyes turned to his Alpha who was watching him with such compassion it was hard to meet his gaze. "That's why I know she hasn't crossed over, Rafe," he whispered. "Because she doesn't want to be what she is. She never has. She would arrange her own death before she ever again became what she was that day."ww.w.©OvëLŴ©©m.c(o)m

He swallowed hard, glancing back at Ashleigh though he was still talking to his Alpha. "She may already be out there looking for a way to die right now. I told her she was no longer welcome in my home, to stay away from Ashleigh and Liam. I've taken away the only thing that was keeping her anchored. She may feel that she doesn't have anything left to come home to."

The silence was deafening. Then Rafe spoke, looking at the Romanovs with a hard gaze. "This is pack," he said quietly, letting a little of his Command tone come forward. "Make no mistake about that. If I have to command you two to keep silent I will. Freya is pack because of her connection with Nors and Ashleigh. We take care of our own. Until such time as we learn otherwise, Freya is no danger to anyone."

The twins looked at each for a long moment and then slowly nodded. They knew the bond between siblings, the need to protect each other against the world. They had been doing it for centuries. They could understand Nors' need to protect his sister until there was no other option available to him.

"As long as she poses no threat," Andrei finally answered, his tone firm. "If she crosses over then this is Council business, Rafe. We can't have a rabid vampire on the loose any more than you can have a Rogue running around."

It was with a heavy heart that Rafe nodded his agreement. He knew it would destroy Nors if the vampires had to take action against his sister but he also knew that sometimes the hardest decisions had to be made to protect the Pack. He watched the big vampire carefully for any sign of disagreement.

"We have to consider all options, Nors; you know that," he said quietly. "We'll do our best for Freya but you must realise that our best may not be enough."

Nors swallowed hard against the lump of pain wedged firmly in his throat. He wanted to argue with them, to reassure them that this option would never become necessary, but he knew he couldn't because he just didn't know for certain that his sister would be able to recover from whatever had set her off.

"I understand," he breathed softly, holding Ashleigh tightly as he uttered the words that implied his agreement to ending his sister's life should it become necessary.

There was another lengthy silence as everyone digested this bleak prospect. Freya might not be a favourite among the other Weres but Ashleigh and Nors loved her and their pain was evident.

"You're sure Liam was accurately sensing Freya's emotions?" Rafe finally asked, judging it time to move on to another reason for their meeting: to talk about the hybrid children.

"He told me how I was feeling, and Nors," Ashleigh answered, wiping at her cheeks and working to control her emotions. "We're positive he can sense emotions, although we have no idea how."

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"Lily can talk to wolves when in human form," Loretta announced, a slight frown on her face. "She talked to Dayton when he was in his wolf form."

They all looked at each other, wondering what other powers the children might possess. They had been expecting some kind of abilities to show themselves but not this soon, not when the children were still so young. They were beginning to reveal abilities the Weres had no knowledge of; they didn't know how to counteract them or how to teach the children to use them safely.