

## Chapter 207

"Neither Dara or Cassia have displayed any signs of unusual abilities," Cedar sighed, referring to her daughters. "That doesn't necessarily mean they don't have any, though. If Liam could keep his a secret--and he's only two--there's no telling what our girls are keeping quiet about." She couldn't keep the concern out of her voice and Alexei hugged her tightly to his chest, dropping a kiss on her forehead.

"The only way to know for sure is to sit the children down and talk to them," he said practically. "Until we know exactly what they can or can't do we can't form a plan of action. Caleb and Annie probably need to know about this new turn of events."

Rafe agreed. "We'll talk to the little ones first and get a more complete picture before we call them in for their opinion. Aaron, will you organise a safe environment to talk to the children?"

His second in command smiled. "Right here is the best place. They all love being in your house; running rampant through here is the highlight of their day. They may be young but they're full of confidence. You lot are probably a lot more concerned about this than they are. To them it's normal."

His words relaxed the group a little as they realised they were most probably true. Their children did possess a strong streak of self-confidence. They knew they were safe at the compound.

"That's settled then," Rafe agreed. "Which leaves us with the last item: Dayton and Rayne. I'm going to recommend they stay at the compound a bit longer despite Freya having left."

His gaze turned to Alexei and he raised an enquiring eyebrow. "I take it you don't have any issues with that?"

A smile quirked the vampire's lip as he hugged his mate a little closer. "No problem at all. Dayton and I are going to get on just fine."

His Alpha continued to size him up, looking for any hint of deception. Only a short while ago Alexei had been ready to rip Dayton's throat out. His sudden turnaround bordered on the miraculous.

"I can control myself," Alexei snorted, a tinge of annoyance creeping into his tone and causing Cedar to laugh softly.

"Keep telling yourself that, love, and just maybe we'll believe you," she teased lightly to break his sudden tension.

He mock-growled at her and then kissed her hard, promising payback for her teasing when he got her alone.

"Keep an eye on the wildcat," Rafe continued as he smiled slightly at the couple's easy banter. "I'm sure she's harmless but there's something odd about her. I don't mean posting guards or anything; I've given her free passage in the compound. Just be aware of anything out of the ordinary where she's concerned."

Parents were suddenly alert, wondering what it was about Rayne that had their Alpha preaching caution. Most of them hadn't met the cat yet, though they had seen her about the compound during the day.

"Rayne won't cause any harm," Jen said quietly, speaking for the first time. "Don't ask me how I know because I can't tell you. I've spent time with her and she's amazing with the children. She adores Dayton too. It strikes me that anyone with that capacity to care isn't a threat, even if she is a little different."

"I didn't sense anything hostile about her either," Aaron backed his mate up. "I was comfortable enough to leave her alone with Jen and the kids. My wolf wouldn't have allowed that if she posed any kind of threat."

"I'm not saying she's a threat," Rafe answered. "She's an unknown, and it's always wise to be vigilant when we don't have enough information about someone. That's all I'm saying."

wWW.mo(v)ELwôRm.(c)ørm

The others nodded their agreement as the meeting broke up and everyone started filing out. Nors headed upstairs to collect his son as Ashleigh made her way to the first floor room they used whenever they stayed overnight at the compound.

She shook her head when she noticed he had forgotten to pack a nightshirt for her although he'd remembered to pack his own silk pyjamas. She changed into the pyjama top and climbed into the huge bed, her thoughts on Freya. Where was she? Her sister-in-law was out there somewhere, alone, hurting in a way that she understood because she had once hurt that badly herself. She wanted to be able to help but until Freya came home there was nothing she could do.

Nors entered the room and gave her a little smile, lowering their sleeping son carefully onto the bed beside her. He changed into his pyjama bottoms and climbed in, positioning his mate until she was in his arms, their son draped across his chest. This was what he needed so badly at the moment, his family safe around him.

"She's stronger than you think, Nors," Ashleigh whispered. "She'll come home and she'll be just fine."

"God, I hope so, Ash," he breathed, his voice full of anguish. "I hope one day she'll be able to forgive me for what I've done, that she'll find peace and acceptance."

"She loves you. She will always forgive you. You just need to forgive yourself, love."wWw.NoVz/WôRm.cOm

He lay awake long after Ashleigh fell asleep, listening to his family's deep breathing, his thoughts on his beautiful sister. He would forgive himself only when Freya found peace. Until that day, he would always hate himself for what he had done to her, what he had made her.

\*\*\*\*\*

Dayton was reading a book, unable to sleep in the unfamiliar surroundings. He rested against the headboard, curious as to what had been going on in the Alpha's house. He had seen the vampires arrive with their mates, heard the soft murmur of indistinct voices behind the library door. It was clear some kind of meeting was taking place and he suspected it had something to do with him and Rayne.

He wasn't surprised when his bedroom door opened silently and Rayne slipped inside with her customary smile. She was still dressed, despite the late hour. He didn't find that too surprising, either. Nothing about this woman surprised him any more.wWw.NoVeLWôRm.CôM

WwW.NoVeLWôRm.cOm

"Can't sleep?" she asked, crossing the room with feline grace and crawling onto the end of the bed to sit cross-legged, her green eyes intent on his.