

Chapter 247

He shifted to wolf form and waited for his mate to lock up the retreat. Then they took off into the trees, vampire and wolf flying through the forest at breakneck speed.

"I'll point out the traps for you," Freya remarked in a droll voice, just the smallest hint of teasing creeping into her tone. The wolf growled loudly in response, his disdain clear to hear.*wWw.nOvêlwOzMcOm*

A wide smile crossed her lips as she ran beside him. This felt right, the feeling of peace within her almost perfect in its sweetness. She wanted to run with this wolf for eternity. She wanted the peace that only he could give her. As she ran she dared to dream that maybe one day she could have what she craved so badly.

"Aunt Freya!"

The loud shriek was accompanied by the sound of little feet hitting the dirt as Liam raced towards Dayton and Freya as they walked into the compound. They'd stopped long enough for Dayton to revert to his human form and dress, choosing a more sedate end to their long run.

Freya was surprised by the strong surge of emotion that rushed through her as her nephew ran towards her. His pleasure at seeing her was uninhibited, the enthusiasm of a child who had yet to learn to guard his emotions to protect himself. She would have had to be made of ice not to reach down for this small child and gather him up in her arms.*WV.(n)oel(w)Rm.cOm*

He clung onto her fiercely, laughing in delight as she carefully cradled him against her. She was always careful with her touch with him; terrified she would hold him too tightly and accidentally hurt him.

"Missed you," he whispered against her neck dropping little kisses wherever he could. They tickled and she found herself struggling to contain her laughter at his touch. She wasn't normally one to laugh but she was doing it more often these days. She found it a little unsettling but also invigorating.

"I didn't expect to find you at the compound," she said gently.

"In light of some recent developments, we thought it best to remain here until a solution could be found," Nors answered from the doorway to the Alpha's house, his gaze searching his sister's face intently.

She raised an inquiring eyebrow, wondering what developments he was talking about. Her protective instincts kicked in and she tightened her grip on Liam just a little more. If anyone thought to harm her nephew she would quickly disabuse them of that notion.

Nors strode down the steps and approached her quietly. "There is no outside threat," he said gently, seeing the building fury in her eyes and wanting to alleviate it.

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He touched her cheek gently, soothing her as he always did. "I'm glad you're home, Freya."

She leaned into his touch, feeling relief flood through her at his constant love and support. "I'm glad to be home, Nors."

He smiled then, genuine warmth crossing his face as he kissed the top of her head and extracted his son from her arms. "I cleaned up the house, arranged new furniture. The kitchen and bathrooms will be completed at the weekend. You made quite a mess." He turned and headed into the house.

"You didn't need to do that." She followed after him, Dayton a step behind her remaining silent as he watched the siblings interact for the first time. He knew how important Nors was to her. He wanted to get a feel for their relationship so he wouldn't inadvertently step on any toes and cause issues later on.

"I didn't but I wanted to. You needed a home to come back to. Ash would prefer if you moved in with us. She is being quite insistent on that point so be prepared for it. Be gentle with your refusal. If you hurt her feelings I won't be pleased."

She stumbled in surprise, Dayton hands around her waist the only thing that kept her upright.

Nors turned, his eyes quickly taking in the proprietary hold of the wolf, the way his sister did not automatically pull away. He managed to hide the shock from his expression, meeting Dayton's gaze with a cool one of his own.

He couldn't help being concerned by what he was witnessing. The wolf had been damaged beyond repair only days ago, now he was making a claim that he instantly recognised but his sister probably had no idea about. If Dayton was unable to go through with this, if Freya allowed herself to care and it went to shit, it would break her completely.

"Aunt Freya doesn't hurt so bad any more, Daddy. Neither does Dayton." Liam's words whispered in his head for the first time and he looked down at his son in surprise, awed at the sound of his mental voice and also his words.

"You will tell me if she hurts?" He should have felt bad about asking a two year to do this but he was quickly coming to realise his son was a remarkable individual despite his tender years.

While he was still childlike in most aspects, when it came to other people's emotions he had a level of maturity which was almost frightening. He had worked tirelessly to try and ease his Aunt's suffering on his own. Now he had his parents to help him.

"She's going to be okay, Daddy. I know she will because she's not alone any more." Liam was so confident that Nors felt himself relax, his gaze softening slightly as he looked back at Dayton. His nod was almost imperceptible but it was there, his silent acknowledgement of the wolf's claim to his sister.

"I've managed to arrange for your painting to be repaired too," he said as if nothing untoward had just happened. "The restorer said it was a bit of a mess but was confident she could have it back to its former glory."

Freya felt Dayton's hand tighten on her waist and instead of moving away as she should she leaned back against him, knowing that the news of the painting meant something to him. He'd said it didn't matter that she'd destroyed it and she believed he meant it at the time. But it was obvious that having it repaired did matter to him a great deal.

The sound of more footsteps broke their connection as he dropped his hands from her and she took a step forward to complete their separation. She felt instantly bereft and her heart twisted hard. She was craving his touch as she'd craved no other.

Nors was sharp enough to notice her confusion and would most probably ask her about it. She wasn't sure how she was going to answer him when he did.*(w)WV.nôveI(w)a(r)m.cOm*

"Ah, you're both back." Rafe said as he walked down the stairs. "I'd like to see both of you in the library."

It wasn't a request and Freya automatically balked at his tone. She didn't know where the Alpha got off thinking he could order her around as if she was a pack member.

Dayton's hand on the small of her back surprised her. She was walking where he nudged her before she even knew what she was doing. She shot him an irritated glare but he only gave her a half smile and continued to urge her to follow Rafe into the library.

The Alpha appeared to be distracted as he sat behind his desk and waved at them to sit. Dayton retrieved a chair from a corner and placed it in front of the desk. He stood behind it as Freya glared at him again before she sat down facing Rafe. His smile grew slightly as he rested his hands on the back of the chair, his fingers grazing the nape of her neck soothingly. He felt some of her tension subside.

"You are causing me a problem." Rafe's intense gaze was focused on the vampire, a slight tightening of his lips signalling his displeasure.

"Now, I know you're an Ancient and think you're all that but your behaviour is unacceptable. You can hiss and spit at me all you like but you're not leaving this room until we get a few things straight. Nors and Ashleigh are pack. They're my responsibility and anything that hurts them hurts me, which effectively makes you my responsibility too."