

Chapter 256

"Tell the vampire to back away." Dayton's words were hard, his expression murderous.

"Come near and I will kill you instantly," Gard growled, his fangs elongating as his eyes began to glow softly.

uWw.nOvêlwO(r)m.coM

Rhianna stepped in front of him blocking his view of the others. "You need to release her, brother," she said softly. "I know you want to protect her but right now she needs the arms of someone she trusts. She needs time to come to terms with this."

"Don't ask that of me," he ground out, naked fury in his voice. His hold on Rayne tightened, his hand threading through her hair as he rocked her gently.

"Gard, you must." Rhianna's tone was firmer, allowing no room for argument. She reached out and ran a hand over his hair. "She needs her pack's love. She needs to feel safe. When she is ready she will come to you."

With an anguished groan Gard dropped his head against the side of Rayne's neck, his lips whispering against her skin in a tender kiss. "Forgive me," he whispered. "I will wait for you in our special place." He released her and rose, striding out of the house without a backward glance.

Dayton immediately scooped Rayne up and carried her out of the room and upstairs to his. He heard the door closed quietly behind him.

"Pull the covers down," he said softly, waiting for Freya to do as he asked. He gently lowered the distraught woman into the bed and pulled off her boots. Then he covered her and sat down beside her.

She had stopped crying but now she stared off into the distance, unaware of anything around her. Her distress was heartbreaking to watch.

Freya sat down beside him, wrapping her arms around his waist and resting her head against his back. She had no idea what had happened downstairs. All she knew was he was hurting because his cat was hurting and she wanted to give him comfort. She didn't even know if he wanted the comfort from her.

When he didn't push her away she held him more tightly, letting him know she was there if he needed her. They sat like that for so long she must have drifted off because she woke to the feeling of being moved. For a moment she thought Dayton was taking her to her room then she realised he had dragged a large comfortable chaise from somewhere and had moved it close to the bed. He was stretched out full length on it and was settling her against his chest, a warm blanket covering them.

"I thought you would sleep in your bed," she said quietly, still struggling with her insecurity about the other woman.

"One kiss," he whispered, closing his eyes and stroking her hair gently as his lips brushed the top of her head.

Warmth spread through her and she relaxed in his arms letting sleep claim her once more.

*****Forgiving the past can bring such sweet joy.*****

She felt pain. It was a hot, rushing agony running through her but it wasn't physical. Physical pain she could cope with, understand it would heal eventually but this mental anguish was something she didn't know how to combat. She knew she had to open her eyes, to face it, but she didn't want to.

"You're awake."

The feminine voice startled her so much she did open her eyes, staring in surprise into the cold green depths of the stunning woman who was lying on some fancy sofa beside the bed. Rayne knew who she was instantly, having seen Freya Eriksson at a distance. What the vampire was doing in her room she had no idea, then she realised she wasn't in her room but was in Dayton's.

She couldn't remember much that had happened after her memories had come back. Gard's betrayal had been all that had registered before her mind had gone blank. She reached out with her senses and knew she was alone with the vampire. Not a good thing judging from what her friend had said the night before.

w(w)w.noœt(i)wQr.m.C(ø)(m)

"Dayton had to talk to the Alpha," Freya said when she didn't speak. "He asked me to watch over you. You are safe, cat. I take my responsibilities seriously."

Rayne swallowed; her mouth so dry it almost hurt. The vampire moved then, rising with a fluid grace that was mesmerising to watch. She really was stunning even with her clothes rumpled and her hair slightly tangled. She used an economy of movements as she vanished from her line of sight and returned with a small tray with some toast and condiments and a glass of fruit juice.

"When Dayton was injured he recovered quickly with food," the vampire remarked, a smile tugging at her lips as if she was reliving a memory that pleased her. "The wolf that came to make breakfast was not pleased to find me in her kitchen."

Rayne blinked slowly, staring at the other woman in confusion as she placed the tray on the bed beside her and then retreated back to her own 'bed'. "You made me breakfast? Why?"

"You're in his bed. You need to recover quickly so you can leave it before it becomes intolerable to me."

The words were cold and brutally honest. The vampire didn't want her sharing Dayton's bed and wasn't afraid to come right out and say so. Instead of making her afraid of Freya, the vampire's honesty actually impressed her. Dayton was right. Freya was close to accepting the mating bond. Her possessiveness was that of a vampire but it was also that of a mate.

"I know he's told you there is nothing between us other than friendship, Freya," she answered after taking a sip of the juice to wet her throat and ease the dry ache. "You can trust what he says."

There was a long pause and then the other woman nodded slowly. "I know he speaks honestly. That is why you're still alive."

Another blunt truth; which caused a deep well of pain to rise up inside Rayne. Being alive didn't feel so great at the moment, not with the agony fighting to claim her soul and destroy her completely. Tears filled her eyes and she looked away.

Her reaction had Freya hissing in annoyance. "When I am given a task I perform it, cat. You remain safe because he asks me to watch over you. I do not go back on my word."

"Maybe I wish you would," she whispered back not looking at her. She knew she didn't mean the words but they tumbled out anyway and was greeted with silence. She sipped at the juice again and then forced a bite of toast down her throat.

Freya watched her eat, fighting down the need to remove her bodily from Dayton's bed. She knew her reaction was irrational. All she had to do was think 'one kiss' and she remembered just how Dayton had proven to her that she was all he was interested in. But it was so hard to let go of the old ways, particularly when she saw Rayne as a threat.

She had to remember that this woman was someone he cared about, that hurting her would be hurting him. She tried to focus on something else. "You are over three millennia old?" She remembered Caleb's tale so long ago about the first hybrid child who was supposed to have died. If Rayne really was that child then she was older than she was.

"Yes."

WWw.N(ø)reLW©m.c(ø)m

The response was dull and lifeless and caused her to frown. Rayne's wound was not physical. Freya knew how very much mental wounds could fester. She also knew what loneliness felt like. She heard it in that one word and felt a strange kinship click into place.

"It is difficult to walk alone," she finally said, her tone a little softer and drawing the other woman's gaze once more. "I have always been alone despite having Nors trying to keep me alive. Until Dayton."

That brought a slight smile to Rayne's face and a bit of warmth. "He has that effect on people," she conceded. "I too was alone until I found him."

wWw.Nevelw©R̄M.CoM

Silence fell again and then Freya sat up watching her intently. "May I scent you?" she asked curiously. "I've never met a being as old as you before. I'm intrigued."

Rayne nodded after a brief pause and Freya moved forward, inhaling softly against the side of her neck. The wildcat was tense but allowed her to indulge her curiosity. She was impressed. Baring one's throat to another was a mark of extreme trust.

"I know he belongs to you, Freya." The words were a whisper so soft they were almost undetectable.

She relaxed slowly and pulled back enough to look down at Rayne. She smiled and there was a hint of warmth in it. "He belongs to you too," she conceded. "He loves you. For that reason alone I will protect you. I will not have his heart broken again for any reason."

"Have you told him you're in love with him?"