



Chapter 275

Dayton stopped long enough to let Aaron know he was fine and then ushered Freya upstairs to his room. He took her straight into the bathroom and turned on the shower as she undressed silently. Now the adrenaline was leaving his body he was left with a pressing need to check every inch of her skin for marks.

Not that he expected to find anything on her but his wolf was going crazy inside him and he had to give in to his irrational need. He turned to find his mate naked and blood-streaked, her expression carefully guarded as if she was waiting for him to say something she wouldn't like. She was clearly concerned and so was he.

Her standoff with Rafe in the forest showed that she was struggling with adapting to the pack. It wasn't that she didn't try to understand the group's needs; it was as if she was incapable of doing so. That didn't bode well for the future and they both knew it even if they hadn't spoken of it yet.

Silently, Dayton tugged her into the shower with him and rinsed the blood from her body. His touch was gentle, his fingers examining every inch of her and finding her skin unmarred. Even though he'd expected it, he still couldn't hold in the sigh of relief as he wrapped his arms around her from behind and held her close to his chest.

His own body carried faint bruising though the main injuries had healed quicker than he'd expected them to. He wondered if was because of a combination of her previous healing of him and her mating bite. He hadn't completed the mating yet but maybe he was already feeling some of the benefits of the partial mating.

"I want you so much it terrifies me," Freya whispered softly, breaking the oppressive silence. "I'm not terrified because of the need you inspire in me, but because I don't think I can be what you need me to be, Dayton."

She turned in his arms and her composed expression had melted away, concern on her face as she stared up at him. "What if I can't accept the pack? What will that mean for us?"

He bit the inside of his lip, his expression tense as he pondered her question carefully, listening to his wolf as well as his own heart. He reached up and brushed her wet hair away from her face tenderly. "Then we will be a pack of two, Freya. I won't lie to you and tell you that I don't want to be part of this pack because I do. I never thought I'd ever feel this way again but being here has shown me that I need pack life to feel whole. But if push comes to shove, I need you more. There is no one more important than you, nothing I wouldn't willingly give up to be with you."

Her breath caught at the promise she read in his eyes, the sincerity in his quiet words. He would truly leave the pack if she couldn't cope with it. He was willing to sacrifice everything for her if she allowed him to. Part of her was tempted to take the easy out he was giving her. But she knew that was wrong, what the old Freya would have done. She had come so far all because of the man who held her so tightly and swore he would never let her go.

For some strange reason Rayne's words came back to her and she realised that if she couldn't believe in herself then she would always be able to believe in Dayton. It was enough to make her want to try harder. Her mate thought she had it in her to be one with the pack. The Alpha also thought she did too, despite being angry with her. Maybe it was time to start listening to others rather than her doubts?*WwW.nOvElw@rm.cOm*

"I'll try harder," she promised fervently. "But I'll need your help to stop me fucking up again."

"Always," he breathed against her lips, his arms tightening more around her. "I won't let you drown, honey. I'll always be here for you."

His mouth took hers in a fierce, hot kiss that that promised her his words were true, that he would always stand by her. All she had to do was let him in, surrender to him and she could complete the journey she'd started the moment she'd laid eyes on a wounded wolf that had nothing left to live for.

Her kiss was desperate, the longing deep within her to have what everyone else appeared to take for granted, spiralling out of control as she clung to him. She'd never felt so vulnerable in her entire life and yet she'd never felt so secure either. Being wrapped in Dayton's strong embrace gave her a feeling of belonging that was so poignant, so heartfelt that she didn't stop the tears that slowly trickled down her cheeks.

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Dayton could feel the tremors running through her body, knew she was overwhelmed by everything again. He gentled his kiss before slowly raising his head to stare down at her.*©WwW.novElw@Rm.cOM*

Seeing his vampire looking so vulnerable tore at his heart. He knew how strong she was having watched her take out the vampires earlier with a speed and grace that had taken his breath away. His mate was lethal, able to defend herself and the pack if only she could finally accept them as hers to protect.

He kissed her again softly, lightly teasing her lips with tiny rubs of his own as he soothed her distress as he would have soothed a wolf. The power of touch, the power of honest affection given freely was a great healer. He used his tenderness ruthlessly against her until she melted completely into his arms, then he raised his head again and smiled.

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"As much as I'd love to take you here in this shower, I've a penchant for feeling a nice soft bed beneath us." His tone was teasing but also full of the crippling need he didn't try to hide from her.

"Rafe said he wanted us downstairs in an hour. We've already wasted most of that time."

Her practical response made him laugh out loud as he hugged her closer. The fact that she was actually listening to what Rafe had said made his heart kick up a beat and hope flare deep inside him. "Rafe can wait, honey. I'm not done with my inspection of your luscious body for injuries."

Freya pulled away from him, frowning as her movement caused water to cascade over her face. She moved closer to him again, slicking back her hair. "He gave us an order."

His wolf growled loudly, wanting to be with their mate, irritated that she was choosing this moment to be the sensible one. Dayton agreed with his wolf and decided to forgo the intimacy of the bed he so desperately wanted to indulge in with her. She was right on that aspect; they didn't have the time he'd need to satisfy himself between a pair of silk sheets.

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