

Chapter 302

Freya's position reminded him of a time so long ago, when he'd had no clue she'd belonged to him but had been compelled to save her. It wasn't that memory which halted his angry words; it was the expression on her face as she gazed down at their child.

The sheer wonder, the total adoration he witnessed on her face made his heart skip a beat and a wealth of love bubble up inside him. She had come a long way in the last year, was almost unrecognisable to the woman he'd first met.

She would always be Freya, would always have her moments when she struggled to contain her more feral instincts. But she was adapting, integrating with the pack and motherhood was coming easy to her despite her initial fear of failing.

Dayton rested against the doorframe watching his family in the stillness of the night. He stood as silently as possible listening to Freya talk to their daughter.

"Do you feel the breeze, little one?" she whispered softly. "Can you scent the night air and see the sparkling stars? This is your world now, your home where you will always be safe from harm."**W@w.n0veL(w)O©.M.&O**

She leaned forward and pressed a gentle kiss on the baby's forehead; her smile beatific as a little hand grabbed a lock of multi-coloured hair and held on. "You have so many guardians, so many protectors who will keep you safe, my daughter. I would die for you in a heartbeat as would your father. Your Uncle Nors will slay a thousand enemies to protect you; your pack will stand at your side through anything."

She laughed softly as the baby gurgled up at her and tugged at her hair. "Your grandmother will hug you a lot," she added in a slightly disgruntled tone. "You will need to endure that for your father's sake. It makes him happy and when he's happy we are happy."

She sighed and kissed her again, changing her hold to cradle the babe in her arms. "You have cousins just like you. They will protect you because you're the youngest. They will most likely underestimate you, daughter mine, but we both know you will be strong and resilient. You will need to be especially protective of your cousin Liam. He has a gentle soul, is so empathic that I fear for him sometimes. You have a blood bond with him. You will keep him safe."

A slow smile crossed Freya's face as she stroked her daughter's cheek gently. "You father will be overprotective to a fault. You will need to forgive him that, it is a wolf thing. He won't be able to help himself."

A soft laugh rumbled from Dayton's chest as he pushed off the doorframe and walked the handful of steps to sit down beside them. His big hand gently brushed his daughter's head. "You've known I was there the whole time, haven't you?"

Freya smiled and leaned against him as his arm wrapped around them. "I knew the instant you woke up just as I know that to the east of us there are three vampires and an additional three to the west. There's two behind the house and one about a mile directly ahead of us. I think that's a bit of overkill personally. I am slightly insulted the Praetorians don't believe we can protect our own child adequately."

He laughed and kissed the top of her head, hearing the subtle rebuke in her tone even as her love washed over him through their mating bond. Of course she'd known exactly who was where and how safe it was to introduce their daughter to the forest and the night.

"Your mother is right, Elina. Your father does suffer from over protectiveness. An annoying trait but at least he isn't mapping your entire life out for you before you are even a month old." His tone was light and teasing but he still earned a glare from his mate.**www.Nóve©worMl.côm**

She snorted in irritation. "You have witnessed the lunacy of my fellow male Ancients. They treat their sons as males and their daughters as fragile, breakable things. I will not allow that for my daughter. She will know her own worth and be confident in her abilities."

"I would never dream of treating my only child as the centre of my universe, sweet love," he teased her gently.

He understood the fierceness behind her words. Andrei and to a lesser extent Alexei were treating their female offspring as being fragile. It was a mistake and he envisioned the trouble it would cause in the future as they grew up. Freya had been most vocal about it and had had numerous arguments with them over it.

Andrei had been refusing to speak to her for nearly three months now after she'd called him an 'insecure, snivelling excuse for a vampire who was so scared of his own shadow he was a disgrace to their nation.' Or something along those lines, he couldn't remember the exact phrasing.

It had been a tense moment requiring Rafe to step between them when it looked like they were about to fight it out. He'd diffused the situation and warned Freya to keep her personal views to herself. Thankfully for once his mate had heeded their Alpha and backed down. Discovering she was pregnant had distracted her enough that she'd decided to ignore the other Ancient from that point onwards.

"Have you finished reassuring our daughter, vampire?" he asked after a short silence. "The air is growing cooler and she's almost asleep again. Come back to bed, love. We promised Rafe we would return to the pack before Elina's first month had passed. It's time to go home."

Freya sighed and rose gracefully. She had desired the first month of her child's life away from the pack, to be alone with Dayton and their daughter at the retreat. Pack life was easier but she'd been worried that she might not be a good mother and hadn't wanted an audience if she'd failed at it spectacularly.

Loving Elina had turned out to be as natural as loving her mate. She was confident she could hold her head up high when they returned to the pack, that she could be a good mother as well as a good pack Beta. Her Alpha hadn't wanted them to be outside the pack's main protection but he'd acceded to her request. It was her turn to prove his trust in her.**wwW.NovêLwórm.©(o)m**

She smiled up at Dayton and passed him their daughter to carry inside. She followed him but hesitated as she closed the door, staring deeply into the forest.

A year ago she had first felt like she truly belonged, that she had found her way home. But it was this moment, as she prepared to join her mate in their bed, her child lying safe in her basinet beside them, which truly completed her sense of belonging. She was finally home.**www.n0veL@Or m.(c)om**

The End