

Chapter 342

"You do know who my father is, don't you?" she muttered defensively. "How many males do you think were willing to take him on when it came to his only daughter? They were too frightened to even kiss me let alone do anything else."

His heart banged painfully in his chest and he reached out with a gentleness he didn't know he possessed, tilting her chin up so their eyes met. "Was that your first kiss, sugar?" It should have been a stupid question to be asking a woman of her age but her expressive eyes answered him eloquently.

Mac wanted to kick himself. The uncertainty he'd seen on her face when he'd broken off their kiss was now very understandable. He'd had to use all his self-control to restrain himself, digging deep inside to find the cold, ruthless edge he wore so easily. And Lily had thought it meant she was somehow lacking in her sensuality. He swore long and hard.

"Liliana," he breathed softly, cradling her face gently in his hands. "You could tempt an angel to abandon heaven for one taste of your sweet lips. Never doubt yourself as a woman. I want you so badly it's only a lifetime of control that's stopping me from taking you right now. I know it's wrong to want you, to crave your taste and your touch. But still I crave you with everything inside me. If you believe nothing else I ever say to you always believe that."

He kissed her again, a soft gentle touch. He didn't want to incite her passionate nature, knew he would succumb if she melted into his arms again. His kiss was full of reassurance and tenderness, letting her know that she was a beautiful, sensual woman any man would give his right arm to be with. [WwW.NoVeLwOrM.Com](#)

He pulled away reluctantly to stare down at the woman who had somehow managed to reach inside him and find the hidden well of softer emotions he thought he'd lost centuries ago.

"I really need to leave, Lily," he finally sighed, resting his forehead against hers because he didn't want to let her go just yet. It felt so good to be with her like this, to feel her breath on his face and her warmth against him. "Remember your promise. Do whatever Karn tells you."

Lily watched Mac stand up, feeling bereft when his hands left her. He confused the hell out of her and made her feel so insecure one moment and so protected the next. The short glimpses she'd seen of the softer side to her mate made her heart race hard in her chest, made her believe that she would be able to win him. But every time he retreated behind his walls, as he was doing now, she knew she'd have to start breaking them down all over again.

He walked out of the room without a backward glance and she swallowed hard, her fingers touching her swollen lips tentatively. A slow smile curved over her face and she lay back against her pillow. As first kisses went, Mac's were pretty spectacular whether they were hot, fiery, and passionate or gentle, slow and loving.

Her wolf rumbled her approval and she stretched languidly on the bed. She was content with the progress she'd made in this first foray against Mac's heart. She'd proven he wasn't indifferent to her. He had told her that he wanted her. It was only a matter of time before she was in his bed. Once that happened, her mate would never be able to leave her again.

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Mac leaned against the wall outside Lily's door and closed his eyes, wondering just exactly where he'd left his brain because he certainly wasn't using it today. He couldn't believe he'd been stupid enough to kiss her. He'd known it would be crazy to give in to the temptation and yet he'd gone and done it anyway.

Now her taste was in his mouth, and his body craved the feel of her soft skin. Walking away from her had been sheer torture and all he could think of was going back inside the room and finishing what he'd started. He had to be completely out of his fucking mind to behave no better than an untried youth.

But she was Lily; so beautiful, so feisty and sassy, and so bloody vulnerable. He wanted to wrap his arms around her and protect her from the world. He had to remind himself that she wasn't his no matter what she thought. He couldn't be who he needed to be, couldn't do the things he needed to do if he allowed himself to be sidetracked by the woman on the other side of that door.

His body stiffened with tension and he opened his eyes to look down the hallway. Unsurprisingly, Karn stood at the head of the stairs looking as if he hadn't been to bed yet. His expression was neutral, but Mac could tell he was displeased about something.

Grabbing his pack, Mac walked past Karn, ignoring his friend as he headed downstairs into the wrecked study. A minute later Karn entered too. Mac knew Karn would have checked on Lily before following him down. The fact that his friend had felt the need to check on her cut deep.

"I hope she wasn't in this room when you wrecked it," Karn said quietly, disapproval lacing his voice.

Mac shot him a quelling look and surveyed the room slowly. "Make arrangements to clean this up," he answered coldly, not deigning to respond to Karn's comment. "Pietro called and I have to go to Europe. I need to stop by Annie's before I head over there, so I'll stay at the apartment the rest of the night. I need to pick up a few things anyway."

"What do you want to do with Lily?"

Mac moved to the fireplace to stare into the empty grate. "She stays here, Karn. Make sure nothing happens to her. She's promised not to shadow while I'm away so protecting her should be easy enough. Pietro thinks something is about to happen and I need to check it out firsthand. I also need to let the triumvirate know." [©\(w\)W.NoVeLwOrM.Com](#)

Karn watched him for a moment, feeling a mix of anticipation and concern. It was only a matter of time before their unknown enemies struck again and part of him was itching to pit his wits against them. The rest of him was trying to work out how to keep the Vârcolac safe.

"I'll keep her safe from the vampires," he finally answered. "But what's to protect her from you, Mac? I don't know what the fuck happened in here earlier or what you were doing just now in her room, but she needs to be fully focused on the here and now. She can't afford to have her head up her ass because you're fucking with her mind."

He watched his friend tense and waited for him to explode. Mackenzie didn't always like hearing the truth and tended to lash out first and think later. He was prepared to get his ass handed to him on a plate, but his friend obviously dug deep and managed to restrain himself.

"Your point is duly noted," Mac answered in a cold voice. "I won't be around so she'll be focused on what she needs to be doing. I've told her to listen to you and she respects you anyway so her focus shouldn't be a problem."

He turned to pierce Karn with a cold stare. "I appreciate your concern, my friend, but tread carefully. What goes on between Lily and I is not your concern. I strongly suggest you remember that."

Karn knew it was pointless to argue with Mac when he had that look on his face. He was right on the very edge of his self-control and it wouldn't take much to tip him over. He wisely kept his mouth shut. [WwW.NoVeLwOrM.Com](#)

"I had the apartment cleaned up earlier," he told his friend, changing the subject. "It stinks of cleaner and you need a new carpet but I've managed to find a rug to hide the worst of the damage."

Mac nodded almost absentmindedly and then let out a long sigh. He rubbed his hand tiredly over his face. "How the fuck did everything go tits up, Karn?" He couldn't keep the weariness out of his voice. It was a sign of the trust he placed in Karn that he lowered some of his carefully constructed barriers when he was alone with the other man.