

Chapter 353

Kallum joined her on the bed, opening his own can of soda and helping himself to another burger. "I wondered if he was fighting the mating pull. He kept going on about how you were going home once you'd learned control but his body language was saying the exact opposite. I think the only reason he agreed to let me come here was because he realised I was the best person to keep you safe while he was away."

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Lily was devouring chips as if she hadn't eaten in a week. For all he knew maybe she hadn't. She met his gaze with a frown on her face. "He's being difficult. I think he doesn't believe he's good enough for me. The number of times he's told me he has no intention of mating with me. But I did get a kiss out of him last night before he left."

Her expression turned dreamy and a soft smile curved over her lips. Her face literally shone with radiance and for a moment Kallum could only stare at her in wonder. He'd never seen this side to his sister before, so soft and ethereal. Usually she was fierce or arguing with their father. Sometimes she was forlorn and prone to bouts of low self esteem. When she thought of Mac she was more alive than he'd ever seen her, even with having just witnessed her interaction with her new friends.

His heart melted and his smile was full of affection as he leaned over to touch her cheek gently. "You never forget your first kiss," he breathed softly, his love for her evident in his voice.

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Lily laughed and tried to wipe the goofy look from her face. She knew she had to have one because of Kallum's reaction. "So, who was your first kiss, Kal?"

He grinned and eased back on the bed. "Wouldn't you like to know?" he teased before relenting. "My first kiss was Rowan."

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His sister's eyes went wide with shock at finding out he'd dallied with the daughter of the pack's most senior Beta and second in command to their Alpha.

"Oh my God! Seriously, you and Rowan? Weren't you scared that Aaron would kick your ass?"

He shrugged nonchalantly. "She is older than I am and I was twenty at the time. Plus she's a Were as is Aaron. Unlike our vampires they don't have the same hang-ups about their grownup children indulging in their perfectly natural, healthy sexual appetites."

Lily was still shocked. Rowan and Kallum? They had such opposite personalities. Rowan was very quiet, studious almost to fault. Despite her being a Were, Lily had a hard time imagining the other woman having a romantic interest in anyone let alone her brother.

"You can close your mouth now, Lila," Kallum grinned. "It was fun while it lasted but it wasn't serious. We knew we weren't mates. There's a lot more to Rowan than meets the eye. You shouldn't be so blinkered." His tone was fond when he spoke of her, making it obvious that he still had warm feelings towards Rowan.

It wasn't that Lily didn't like her, because she did. She was fond of all of Jen and Aaron's children. She'd just never pictured her brother being intimate with anyone she knew very well. She'd always assumed he indulged his appetites with some of the less well known females in the pack.

She gave him a startled glance. "It was just Rowan wasn't it? I mean...you didn't do anything with Elina?" Dara and Cassia were their blood cousins so she knew Kallum wouldn't have been tempted in that direction. That only left Elina as being the sole other female she was close to.

Kallum shot her an incredulous look. "Lila, I love Elina to death you know that but seriously could you see the two of us together that way? She makes Freya appear warm and cuddly and that's saying something."

Lily bit her lip hard upset by Kallum's assessment even if it was accurate to a certain degree. "Elina's not cold," she reprimanded with a frown on her face. "You know why she's the way she is."

Her brother's expression sobered into something dark. "Yeah, we all do," he agreed, a hint of self-loathing in his voice. Lily had surprised him with her question and he had reacted without thinking. He felt a rush of guilt wash through him at his insensitivity.

Elina couldn't help the way she was. As a child she had been prone to laughter, a sweet little thing that raced around the compound squealing in joy. Until one day she had come across her cousin Liam hunched up in pain, his face a mask of agony. His empathic abilities had peaked out of nowhere, driving him to his knees and overwhelming him because he couldn't shield himself from all the emotions within the pack.

She'd hugged him instantly, her little face turning so smooth and calm in the blink of an eye. As the expression died on her face, the pain began to ease from Liam's as they'd connected on a level so deep no one could explain it. The little girl, barely seven years old, had stared solemnly into her older cousin's face and whispered an oath she had kept to this very day.

There was no more laughter from Elina, no more spontaneous hugs, no more smiles of such heart-tugging beauty people stopped in their tracks just to bathe in them. Elina's oath to always be at Liam's side and to buffer him with her own mental barriers had most probably saved his sanity. But the price had been all the joy and happiness that should have been hers.

Kallum swallowed hard and looked away from his sister. "If there was something I could do for her, anything, you know I would," he whispered. "But she won't let any of us in, Lily. She won't even let Annie try to find a way to buffer Liam. I want to help Elina, but I just don't know how to."

Lily could hear the heartbreak in his voice and she curled herself around him, snuggling into his chest and letting her wolf have a little bit more freedom. She knew it would call to his wolf; that it would ease him having their animals react to each other as only wolves could.

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"I know, Kal and so does Elina. She knows we're all there for her. One day she'll get her chance to finally free all the emotions she's buried for so long. One day Liam will be happy too. I'm certain of it."