

Chapter 354

Kallum rubbed his cheek against her hair and allowed himself to slowly relax. His smile was still tinged with a hint of sadness but his eyes weren't as bleak as before. "Are you challenging Annie for her oracle position, sister mine?" he teased lightly.

"No, but I have faith in that we're all destined to find someone special. When that happens for Elina and Liam, there will be no choice but to find a solution to Liam's problems," she answered quietly.

They lay silent for a moment and then Lily sat back up feeling her brother's inner balance settle once more. "You were telling me where you met Mac?"

Kal smiled at her fixation on the topic. "You sent me to Annie's," he reminded her. "I'd just arrived when Mac chose that moment to show up too. Annie must have called Caleb home as well because he showed up and we all had a little talk about things.

Mac was pissed at Annie for not revealing your identity when she vetted the new recruits. She didn't bat an eyelid at his disapproval though. Caleb was pretty pissed too, but she didn't back down. The end result was they all agreed that now that we're grown, we have different needs when it comes to the Praetorians."

www.novelWorm.com

He sat up and caught her gaze his expression serious. "I know what happened with Karn, why you were so upset, Lily. It's made us all realise that the Vârcolac need outside stimuli, to be less sheltered by the pack. We can learn a lot more about protecting ourselves here and how to just be around other people."

Lily's expression turned miserable, her eyes haunted. "I lost control. I could have killed Karn. Mac was livid with me. He pushed and pushed at me until I almost lost control again and then he ordered me to control my wolf. It was hard, but I managed to do it. But it was frightening."

Kal reached out to hug her, wanting to take the stricken look from her face. "The Praetorians can give you what you need, Lila. Mac can give you what you need. You made a mistake and you're working to fix it. You shouldn't be so hard on yourself. From the short period of time I've had to study Karn, he doesn't seem to hold it against you."

She let him soothe her because she didn't want to feel the guilt of her actions. And because he was Kal and it was what he always did. When they were younger, Lily had protected him because he was her little brother. The roles were now reversed and he was the protector, the one they all turned to when things became too much.

"You think Liam and Elina could be helped by coming here," she guessed accurately. "Kothari too."

"Maybe," Kallum agreed stroking her hair gently. "The decision of who comes here will be Karn's but he strikes me as an intelligent man and he obviously has a deep rooted need to protect us. I'm sure once he meets them he'll see their need is just a great as yours."

w@w.novelWoOm.coM

Or so he hoped. He didn't know Karn and was working on first impressions. He was usually a good judge of character, but there was always a first time to be wrong about someone.

"Dad's finally coming around." He changed the subject peering down at her face to see her reaction. "He got a little riled up about you thinking you were a monster. Mom finally managed to get him to listen and while he was being so receptive, I pointed out the obvious that you were a grown woman. He didn't like it, but he had to admit the truth, albeit reluctantly."Www.novelworm.co.com

Lily's eyes flew to his concern crossing her face. "Did you tell him about Mac?" If her father knew where she was, knew about Mac then he'd come and most likely attempt to drag her home. The resulting bloodbath would be a nightmare.

Kallum shook his head. "He knows you've found your mate but when I left he had no idea who or where you were." He watched relief cross her face and felt bad. "That won't last long, Lila. Caleb and Annie are going to let the pack know what's happened. They've promised they'll make sure Dad doesn't come here."

His sister wrenched herself out of his arms and flew from the bed. She began to pace up and down in agitation. "What if he doesn't listen? You know what Dad's like when he loses his temper. Karn was right. I'm a danger to the Praetorians. Mac should have made me go home the moment he discovered who I was."

"Lila..."

"No, Kal. You know I'm right. If Dad loses control he's going to come and he'll take no prisoners. Uncle Alexei will probably come with him too. If they go against Rafe, this will not just hurt the Praetorians, it will also split the pack."

Lily could feel her wolf trying to surface, could feel the animal wanting to reach out and take control to protect her. Kallum's anxious voice sounded from a distance as she fought to maintain control. For the first time that she could remember, her brother couldn't seem to breach the panic welling up inside her. Her wolf refused to listen to him.

"Liliana!" Kallum called to his sister, but her eyes were unseeing, terror creeping across her face as she stared blankly at him. His wolf surged forward, reached out to hers and found an animal so feral there was nothing he could do to try and soothe the beast.

He was smart enough not to approach Lily. If she shifted and he was within touching distance she'd lash out. The sound of the door opening made him stiffen until he scented Karn.

"Best to keep your distance and be prepared to move quickly if she shifts," the vampire said calmly, his pale blue eyes intent on Lily. "She's blindingly fast in this state."

Their voices were a buzz in her ears as she struggled with her wolf, tried to convince her everything was going to be okay. Lily knew it was her panic which was setting off her animal, that she had to calm down but no matter how hard she tried nothing seemed to work. The only thing that had worked was...

The hiss of sound so close to her ear, his scent invading every inch of her being refusing to be ignored. "Don't you fucking dare shift!"

Lily shuddered, closed her eyes and dropped to her knees. Her wolf howled in fury, but the fury was now targeted in a different direction. It lashed out, clawed to be free but his words kept reverberating through her mind until finally the animal listened. And then it howled once more, a mournful sound filled with such pain and longing.

"Mac," Lily whispered tears running down her face as she lowered her head to the floor and shivered in the aftermath of fighting her wolf so violently.

Kallum was staring at his sister in shock, fear pounding through his veins like a living thing. Whatever had just happened appeared to be over and he wanted to go to her, but he'd never witnessed this before and he waited for Karn to give the all clear.

"Front and centre, Romanov," the vampire barked, his voice cold and hard, his order implacable.

There was a moment of complete silence and then Lily rose smoothly, standing to attention with her arms clasped behind her back. Her face was wet with tears but her eyes were fixed on Karn's, awaiting his next instruction. She'd gone from wild animal to the perfect soldier in the blink of an eye.

Karn watched her shrewdly for another long moment and then nodded his head in approval. "At least we all got to keep our throats intact this time." His tone was sardonic even as his eyes remained hard.

Lily's expression turned crestfallen. She refused to meet Kallum's gaze not wanting to see the shock and horror on his face at her loss of control. It was different with Karn because he knew just how weak she was. "I'm sorry," she whispered with a catch in her voice.

"Sorry is too late when someone's lying dead at your feet, Lily," Karn barked out. His voice was like a razor sharp blade slicing her skin and she flinched.

He growled in irritation. "This isn't going to work."

"It has to, Karn. I can't keep losing control like this. If you send me back to the pack it will only happen again eventually and I'll hurt someone. Please don't send me back. Please! I need to be here."

She was begging and she hated how weak it made her sound, but she knew she had to convince Karn that she was in the right place. She was equally aware she was pleading to stay with the Praetorians when it was the very thought of her father decimating them which had caused her loss of control.

The loud snort he gave surprised her and she watched his expression carefully trying to work out what he was going to do.

"I've no intention of sending you back and you damned well know that," he grunted pulling his cell phone from his pocket. "I said this wasn't going to work and it bloody well isn't the way things are going. I never once said I was giving up on you though, did I?"

He flipped open his phone and hit the first speed dial as the two Vârcolac watched him silently. He was conscious of the fact Lily appeared ashamed to look at her brother and that concerned him because it was apparent how close they were. If Kallum Romanov couldn't contain Lily, then there was only one option open to them.

"Are you on the plane yet?" he growled into the phone when it was answered. "Well get your ass back here."www.novelWorm.com

There was a pause as he listened to what was being said and then he growled loudly. "I don't give a fuck, Mac. You left me in charge of protecting Lily and I'm telling you I can't fucking do it. And from what's just happened neither can Kallum. So stop giving me shit and get your ass back here and do what you signed up to do a quarter of a century ago. Protect the fucking Vârcolac!"