

Chapter 356

Lily was fascinated and repelled at the same time. She knew her father wasn't perfect, that his dark side was something most sane people feared. But he was still her father, still the rock she clung to when she was frightened. She didn't want anything to come between them and yet she knew she needed to know what it was about him that made her the way she was. She couldn't hide from the beast within.

"Tell me," she whispered even though she was afraid of what was to come. Another rush of love and reassurance invaded her mind along with a strong sense of pride.

"When my Rose was hurt by my people, when I thought we had lost you before we'd ever had the chance to know you, I crossed over, Liliانا. I stopped dancing the killing edge and embraced it. Blood flowed that day, but more than that, I took a vampire apart piece by piece. I felt no remorse, no constraints, only mindless satisfaction as I listened to Roberto's screams as I ripped him apart."

He paused again, taking another deep breath as he relived that day as if it was only yesterday. "Your mother brought me back," he finally said when his daughter remained silent and waiting for his next words.

"For some reason, watching her walk barefoot through Roberto's blood was just so wrong on every level. I was tainted, beyond redemption, but she was beauty and light, the other half of my soul. I couldn't bear to see my taint on her skin, couldn't bear the thought that if I left her forever, someone else would hurt her as she'd just been hurt.

She didn't give up on me. My Rose refused to let me lose myself and clung on with her love and acceptance, seeing past my horrendous act and finding something worth saving in me. She gave me back my sanity and she gave me back my little Lilac. When I felt you still alive and growing in her womb, I knew I was being given a second chance and I was greedy enough to reach out and grab it with both hands."

Lily felt more tears falling, heard the pain and suffering her father had carefully kept hidden from his children. So much guilt and self-loathing, so much self doubt over whether he deserved the redemption he finally found with his family. She loved him so much she was sending that love down their bond in an instant, no hesitation at all.

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"I don't know if I'm as strong as you, Daddy," she admitted brokenly. "I thought Kal could help but I lost control today again even in his presence. There's only one person who seems able to calm my wolf when she goes feral but he has so many lives he needs to protect. He needs to be able to concentrate on them and I know he feels he can't do that and be my saviour too."

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Andrei's mental tone was gruff when he answered her as if he was trying hard to hide his emotions. "Your mate. I think only a true mate can soothe the beast within our souls, Lily. Can you tell me why he can't do both?"

She couldn't answer that question. To do so would give away everything and though she knew it was about to happen anyway, she wanted a few more hours of pretending, of dreaming that everything would somehow work itself out.

"It's because of me isn't it?" Andrei suddenly asked and there was so much pain in his words that she thought it would crush her. "Am I so terrible, Lily? Have I failed you so badly that you believe I would take the one thing in your life that would grant you the peace your soul needs?"

A choked sob ripped out and she buried her face into the pillow again trying to muffle the sound. She didn't want to hurt him any more, didn't want him to know she had thought that, that just about everyone who knew him expected something so terrible from him.

"I love you, Liliانا. I will always love you no matter what. When you're ready, come home so we can talk more. Get in touch with your mother too because she's worried about you and it's unfair to punish her because I've been a complete ass. I would never hurt your mate, daughter mine, no matter how angry I became. When I've earned your trust back, I hope you can believe that."**WW(w).nϣve©Ŵórm.(c)OM**

He cut off their contact and she felt guilty that she was glad of it. Her emotions were so raw, his revelations staggering. And yet just knowing that she wasn't alone, that her father truly understood the sheer terror she felt deep inside, did help ease her pain a little.

Forcing herself from the bed, Lily headed into the bathroom and took a shower. She dressed without paying any attention to her clothes, her thoughts chaotic as she tried to work out what to do for the best. She had almost come to her decision when she heard the sound of a car pulling up outside and knew her time had run out. Mac was home.

The sound of raised voices startled her when she opened the bedroom door. She'd had no idea the sleeping quarters were soundproofed in the house but it was the only explanation for not being aware an argument was in full swing. Squaring her shoulders she peeked over the banister down into the entranceway.

Her breath caught as her eager gaze took in every nuance of Mac's expression. His eyes were molten black, his features hard and uncompromising as he stared down Kallum as if it was an every day occurrence for him.**w©W.nϣv©(!)wôRmm.©©M**

Her brother was equally impressive and more astounding because she'd never seen him this way before. Kal was usually so easy going, so understanding but the man facing off with her mate was rigid, so furious his eyes were actually glowing with flecks of pale amber. Power wafted off him in waves.