

Chapter 395

Andrei actually felt some sympathy for Mackenzie. If Lily had been as determined as Loretta, then he hadn't stood a chance against her just as he'd never stood a chance against his Rose.

Maybe he could handle this whole mating thing better than he'd initially thought. Seeing Lily so alive, the love and happiness on her face as she spoke of her mate...that was priceless in his eyes and if it was what Mac gave to her then he could accept it.

"You love him." It was a statement rather than a question. He could see her emotions clearly in her expression.

"He's everything to me, Dad," she smiled softly and then her brow furrowed and her eyes narrowed. "You're not going to do anything silly like play the overprotective father routine, are you?"

It had crossed his mind, he couldn't deny that, but he knew he wouldn't do anything to let his child down again. She had made her choice and despite the few misgivings he had about Mac's past, he conceded the other vampire was an excellent choice of mate for his wayward daughter. He had the strength to not only protect her but to keep her in check when she needed it.

"I told you I wouldn't." He kissed her forehead and hugged her close again, enjoying this moment with her. "If he gives you even a fraction of what your mother gives to me I could never take that away from you, honey. I'm surprised he's not in here with you."

Lily laughed and gave him another squeeze before moving out of his arms to perch on the edge of his desk. "He would've been only Mom and I managed to persuade him to stay away until we had time to talk."

Andrei knew just how hard that would've been for Mac. Any mated male would struggle to allow his mate to go into a potentially hazardous situation alone. It would be doubly worse on a newly mated male who was being subjected to all manner of extreme emotions. He could remember his own instincts going haywire when he'd first mated with Loretta.

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"Dad, you're growling," Lily sighed, amusement creeping into her tone.

He shot her a lopsided grin. "Sorry. Thinking about what newly mated couples get up to isn't a wise move in the same context with my daughter."

"Dad!" she blushed scarlet, scandalised laughter filling the room. It filled Andrei with such joy to hear the sound and see the happiness on her face. It was all he'd ever wanted for his children, to be happy. The changes in Lily were so easy to see and they were all good changes.

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Lily sobered at the serious note in her father's voice. She could tell he was still feeling responsible for something which wasn't his fault. He probably always would and she didn't know how to convince him otherwise. She'd felt his pain and despair when she'd told him about it. It was buried deep within him. Cauterising that wound would be nigh on impossible.

"This morning my wolf was content for the first time ever," she admitted in a quiet voice. "She listens to Mac, respects him as her mate. I know it's not always going to be easy and there will be times when Mac may have to be very harsh to help me, but I know together we can achieve anything we set out to."

That brought a raised eyebrow from her father and her own curiosity to the fore. "How does Mom help you?"

The smile that crossed his face was so full of love she found herself automatically smiling too. Her parents' relationship had always been beautiful to watch as she was growing up, the way they just fit so well together and obviously adored each other. It was the template from which she'd built her own dreams of what her life would be with her mate when she grew up.

"Your mother soothes me with her love. I guess it would be different for you and Mac because I'm the aggressor in our relationship and while your mother is pretty formidable herself as a Beta, my beast requires her love to be tamed rather than aggression."

She nodded her agreement. "My wolf needs to be dominated when she gets out of hand. She needs someone stronger, more aggressive than her to make her submit. Mac does that instinctively though I don't think he likes it very much. The one time he had to do it, he wrecked a room right afterwards."

She sighed deeply at the memory, and then she smiled ruefully. "Hopefully we won't have to redecorate the house too much even if it's badly in need of it. That man sure does like dark wood."

Andrei was quiet, taking in her words and working on the guilt he felt inside. It was good to know Lily had the safety net she needed but still he felt bad that she even needed to have one. If he had been stronger then maybe she wouldn't have had to deal with this aspect of her personality.

"I haven't thanked you for all you've done for me," Lily said quietly, her expression sombre as he turned to look at her with a surprised expression. She gave him another smile so full of love he wondered how he could have been so lucky to be blessed with such a wonderful family.

"You've kept me balanced all my life, Dad. Kal has too to a certain extent but the reason I was able to control my wolf for so long was because of you. She respects you as a dominant male in her life. I know you feel as if you've given me some kind of curse but you also gave me the means to fight it by loving me and protecting me as you have. I don't want you to feel guilty about this. It's just one of those things and it has shaped me into the person I am today."

Andrei slipped an arm around his daughter, pulling her against his side as she wrapped her arms around him. "When did you get to be so wise?" he asked gruffly, his emotions once more close to the surface. "You've grown into a wonderful young woman, Liliana. I'm so proud of your strength and integrity. You're everything a father could wish for and more. I love you so damned much it hurts sometimes."

She felt tears gather in her eyes again but they were happy tears this time as her father's love and approval surrounded her in a warm cocoon. She adored him so much. Having his love and respect meant the world to her. "I love you too, Dad," she whispered. "So much that I get scared sometimes I'll let you down so badly you'll find it hard to forgive me."

"Never, Lily," he ground out hoarsely, pulling her tightly into his arms and kissing the top of her head. "There is nothing you or your brother could ever do which would make me turn away from you. You're my children. You're my life just as your mother is. I would forgive you anything and give my life to keep you safe. Don't ever think otherwise, honey."

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Silence filled the room as they hugged each other tightly. Lily had always had a special connection to her father but it was different now, stronger in a way she could never have imagined. He was no longer treating her like a child. He'd opened his heart and mind to her, shown her his fears and his deep love for her. She hoped she'd given him the same feeling of peace and acceptance he'd given her.www.n@VetŴorm.(e)OMI

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"You'va kapt ma balancad all my lifa, Dad. Kal has too to a cartain axtant but tha raason I was abla to control my wolf for so long was bacausa of you. Sha raspacts you as a dominant mala in har lifa. I know you faal as if you'va givan ma soma kind of cursa but you also gava ma tha maans to fight it by loving ma and protectang ma as you hava. I don't want you to faal guilty about this. It's just ona of tosa things and it has shapad ma into tha parson I am today."

Andrai slippad an arm around his daughtar, pulling har against his sida as sha wrappad har arms around him. "Whan did you gat to ba so wisa?" ha askad gruffly, his amotions onca mora closa to tha surfaca. "You'va grown into a wonderful young woman, Liliana. I'm so proud of your strangth and integrity. You'ra averything a fathar could wish for and mora. I lova you so damnad much it hurts somatimas."

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Silanca fillad tha room as thay huggad aach othar tightly. Lily had always had a spacial connaction to har fathar but it was diffarant now, strongar in a way sha could navar hava imaginad. Ha was no longer traating har lika a child. Ha'd opanad his haart and mind to har, shown har his faars and his daap lova for har. Sha hopad sha'd givan him tha sama faaling of paaca and acceptanca ha'd givan har.