

Chapter 396

"I think it's time to go tease Mac now," Andrei finally said, his tone full of mischief. "I'm quite partial to my study door so maybe we shouldn't tempt him too much by staying in here any longer."

His unrepentant expression at her low groan told her he wouldn't be dissuaded. "I've got to get some fun out of all of this."

Lily sighed in defeat and rolled her eyes. At least having her father onsite was better than the alternative. They were just going to have to put up with his brand of teasing until he got it out of his system.

Mac couldn't tear his eyes away from the open doorway even as Loretta bustled around the kitchen, the noise and smell of cooking assaulting his senses. He could feel Lily's erratic emotions through their bond and he was desperate to go to her but knew she wouldn't thank him for interfering.

It was only Loretta's calm attitude which was holding him back. She clearly knew her family dynamic and if she was unconcerned about her mate and daughter being alone then it stood to reason that he shouldn't be worried either. And yet, he wanted to go to Lily, itched to protect her from whatever Andrei was saying which was making her swing from misery to joy and then back again.

"Remarkable." Loretta's laughing words dragged his attention from the doorway and he looked around to see her watching him intently. She had a sparkle in her eyes and he could see exactly what it was about the wolf that attracted Andrei. She was the perfect foil for his erratic personality. She was a blend of strength and compassion which was very much part of her children's personalities.

"I don't know what I'm more impressed with," she continued, turning back to the stove and flipping some bacon in the frying pan. "The fact those two aren't screaming at each other or the fact you're still seated in that chair."

Like Mac, she could feel her mate's emotions and knew he was struggling with coming to terms with how to cope with the changes in Lily. Unlike Mac, she'd had countless years to come to know her mate and knew he was handling everything just fine, so therefore, she wasn't concerned about what was going on behind the study door.

She'd taken time to watch Mackenzie, to get a feel for who he was as a man and her daughter's mate. She was impressed so far. It was killing him to stay away from Lily but she'd asked him to and he was trying hard to give her what she needed. Loretta had no doubt he'd fuck up just as much as he succeeded but it was obvious he was willing to try and that was the important thing.

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Loretta beamed a wide smile and nodded her head in thanks for his compliment. "Oh, I'm going to just adore you, Mac. I knew Lily would pick a good mate. Kal will probably be the one who ends up giving me grey hairs when he chooses a mate. He's been too easy to bring up so far. He has to have something up his sleeve to drive me insane."

He laughed at her resigned tone so full of love for her family. He was sure she was right too. What he'd seen of Kallum so far was pretty impressive. He was a strong Alpha male with a wide streak of compassion running through him.

But the man who had confronted him the day before when he was defending his sister's right to stay at the compound had been a different male entirely. That man had been stubborn and resolute. Backing down just wasn't an option for him as he defended Lily. He took what he considered to be his responsibilities seriously and wasn't afraid to go up against anyone if he felt he was right.

No, there was a lot more to Kallum Romanov than first met the eye, a power that bubbled under the surface just waiting to be unleashed. Mac was certain that when Kal finally let go of his tight self-control they would all be surprised by just what he was capable of, including his parents.

"You're handling this so much more reasonably than I expected," he commented, surprised at her acceptance of him when she didn't know a thing about him.

"That's because I'm the sane one in the family," Loretta joked, as she dished up the food onto waiting plates and put them on the table. She gave him a measuring look. "Don't be fooled by me, Mackenzie," she continued her expression serious. "I'm as protective of my family as Andrei is. If I thought for one moment that you were bad for my daughter I'd rip your throat out without a second's hesitation."

Mac had no doubts about that. He'd been around wolves long enough to be able to sense their strengths and weaknesses. He knew Loretta was a senior Beta in the pack and was just as much of a soldier as Lily. That she had a sunny personality didn't detract from the feral wolf nature she had deep inside. It just made her even more deadly because some people would be foolish enough to underestimate her. And he was no fool.

Giving her one of his rare smiles, he accepted the wolf into his suddenly growing family with barely a flicker of an eyelid. He knew he was going to adore this woman almost as much as he did his Lily. "Just as well you like me then," he quipped, drawing a wide smile.

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"Lord, save me from charismatic males who think one smile is enough to make a woman melt," she grumbled good-naturedly, her hand coming to rest lightly on his shoulder in a gesture of acceptance.

"Be good to my girl, Mac. That's all a mother can ask." She bent down and kissed his cheek lightly before turning towards the door. "Oh, and cut Andrei some slack too. This isn't easy for him."

The sound of Lily and Andrei approaching had his head turning too even as he worked on his stunned surprise that he'd managed to win over Loretta so quickly. He knew it would please Lily if he could gain approval from at least one of her parents.*www.novelworm.cm*

Mac's gaze zeroed in on his mate the second she entered the kitchen. Her eyes were red from crying and he had to fight to contain a growl of displeasure. She was smiling happily so that helped. He ignored Andrei completely which probably wasn't a wise move but he needed to make sure Lily was okay.

Her gaze connected with his and her smile brightened as she was drawn across the room as if she'd hated their separation as much as he had. Uncaring of their audience he was reaching for her pulling her down into his lap and searching her face intently.

"Is everything okay?" He used their private form of communication; glad they had it so they could maintain a level of privacy when around her family.

"Everything's fine, Mac. Dad was much more understanding than I gave him credit for. We're closer than ever now and he understands how important you are to me. Thank you for being as understanding and letting me do this my way. I know it wasn't easy for you." Lily rested her forehead against his as she spoke, proud of her mate as she was of her father. This meeting was going so much better than she'd expected it would.

"So Mackenzie, you're sleeping with my daughter."

Andrei's cool words brought a groan from said daughter and a muttered sigh from his mate.

"Dad!" Lily all but squeaked as Loretta groaned out, "Andrei!"

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