

Chapter 400

Mac's voice broke and he blinked back unshed tears as he tried to keep some level of control. "I can still see Sophia as if it happened yesterday. There are nights I lie awake in tears because the only memory I have left of my little girl is of her lying dead. I can't remember her smile or the sound of her laughter. I can't remember her scent or what it felt like to hold her in my arms. All that remains is her throat torn out, the blood and the awful stench of death."

Andrei slowly crossed the room fighting with the urge to rip something to shreds at just the thought of anything happening to his children. The raw pain in Mac's voice helped to keep him calm, helped to diffuse the need to turn feral and attack his friend. Logic told him that Mac wasn't threatening his children with his words but it was his nature to overreact when his family or pack appeared to be threatened. But he held his emotions in check and concentrated on what Mac was saying and the pain he was in.

Andrei couldn't understand how Mac had borne the level of pain and grief he'd had for fifteen hundred years and still remained sane. Only a strong male could have endured it. He had to reluctantly concede that Mac's pain was so deeply embedded, that the likelihood of him changing his mind on the topic was remote.

Lily was in for a world of hurt but she would stick with Mac to the end because she would put his happiness before her own. If having children would hurt her mate then she wouldn't have any. It would be that simple for her.

When he reached Mac's side, he laid a hand on his shoulder and squeezed gently. "I will never know your pain because no one will ever take a child of mine from me," he said quietly. "Try not to hurt her too much, Mac. Make sure she understands everything. Once she does, she will be content with her life but if she thinks you are rejecting her in some way she'll react negatively. Remember she is my child in every way."

It was the best he could do because his heart would always side with Lily. She was his blood and therefore his priority. He couldn't hurt Mac because that would hurt Lily and when all was said and done, this was between the two of them to work through.

He had to take a step back and allow his daughter to make her own decisions. She had chosen Mac as Loretta had chosen him. Both of them came with baggage that even a saint would struggle to cope with. But Lily was as strong as her mother. If Loretta could weather the storm with him, then Lily could cope with anything that Mac threw her way. He had to trust in her.

Mac shut down the memories fighting to overwhelm him. It was hard because the shock of realising he could now bring a child into the world again had caught him out unexpectedly. Usually he could control his emotions better because nothing ever blind sided him, but this...this was just so unthinkable, completely intolerable.

Mac shut down the memories fighting to overwhelm him. It was hard because the shock of realising he could now bring a child into the world again had caught him out unexpectedly. Usually he could control his emotions better because nothing ever blind sided him, but this...this was just so unthinkable, completely intolerable.

He dreaded having the same conversation with Lily. Andrei was right and he'd have to be careful how he discussed it with her so not to incite her wolf and cause another outburst like the one with Karn. She would be hurt and he would be the cause of her pain. The very thought of that caused his heart to ache and self-loathing to invade his soul.

But he couldn't have another child, he just couldn't do it. Lily had to understand that. She had to accept it because he would never change his mind. And he had to find a way to explain it to her and still retain his composure. Losing control as he'd just done with Andrei was unacceptable. He couldn't allow Lily to see him like this.

ww.n@Vεℓwδrm.C.m

When he turned to his friend, his expression was once more controlled, his inner pain carefully masked. "I'll talk to Lily when the time is right, Andrei. You won't say anything to her about my past." It wasn't a question.

He watched his friend's eyes narrow sharply and then the reluctant nod he gave. Mac was amazed at how calmly Andrei was taking it. Obviously, the years with Loretta had tempered his friend's wildness a lot because the old Andrei would have tried to tear him to pieces by now. Or maybe it was because he carried the wolf gene inside him.

Mac too carried that same gene but he didn't feel any differently than he always had. He did sense something deep inside but it was so muted it was hard to pick up most of the time. It was easy to imagine it wasn't there at all. Was it because Lily was only half-Were?

It was another thing he hadn't considered when he took her as his. All his instincts had been on claiming her, marking her so everyone knew she belonged to him. He'd tried to be logical about the situation but it had backfired and now he had to live with the consequences of his actions. Mac wasn't entirely sure what his genetic make-up now consisted of but he decided he'd worry about it later. There were more important matters that needed to be addressed, more painful ones for both him and Lily.

Lily's eyes kept drifting to the open doorway wondering what her father was talking to Mac about. She couldn't sense any strong emotions down either bond but that didn't mean they weren't deliberately keeping her clueless. Overprotective males were like that and hers were two of the very worse for it.

They wouldn't physically hurt each other, she was certain of that. They'd both know it would cause her pain so they would avoid it at all costs but that didn't mean they wouldn't fight verbally. She frowned slightly and her mother laughed.

"Try and trust them to behave honey. They can act like adults every now and then."

WW.©εveℒwδrm.coM

Lily sighed and shook her head. "I'll take your word for it Mom."

A knock on the front door had them both turning in that direction as it swung open and Rafe Hanlon strode into the house. Lily wilted immediately. In her worry about how the meeting would go between Mac and her father, she'd completely forgotten she'd have to deal with her Alpha too.

The stern expression on his face as he walked into the kitchen wasn't a good sign. Rafe was usually laid back and approachable but the look he shot her way was enough to tell her he was less than impressed with her at the moment. wWW.ᄡεveℒwδ(r)M.čσ(ᄡ)

"Lily; Loretta." His tone was laced with disapproval. "Where's Andrei and Mackenzie?" ww(w).nOvEℒwδrm.coM

Loretta was immediately on her feet unconsciously placing herself between her daughter and her Alpha as she went to greet him. "They're in the study, Rafe. Do you need to speak to them?" She could sense there was something on his mind which wasn't just related to Lily's reappearance in the pack.

Rafe nodded and his expression relaxed slightly and he managed a brief smile. "I do but I need a moment alone with Lily first. Can you give us five minutes, Loretta?"

"Rafe..."

He reached out and tousled her hair. "I'm not going to harm your chickie," he said with another brief smile. "Stop being such a mother hen. You know me better than that. But I do need to talk to her and then I need to speak to all of you."

Lily's ayas kapt drifting to tha opan doorway wondaring what har fathar was talking to Mac about. Sha couldn't sansa any strong amotions down aithar bond but that didn't maan thay waran't dalibarataly kaaping har clualass. Ovarprotactiva malas wara lika that and hars wara two of tha vary worsa for it.

Thay wouldn't physically hurt aach othar, sha was cartain of that. Thay'd both know it would causa har pain so thay would avoid it at all costs but that didn't maan thay wouldn't fight varbally. Sha frowned slightly and har mother laughad.

"Try and trust tham to bahava honay. They can act lika adults avary now and than."

Lily sighad and shook har haad. "I'll taka your word for it Mom."

A knock on tha front door had tham both turning in that diraction as it swung opan and Rafa Hanlon stroda into tha housa. Lily wiltad immediatally. In har worry about how tha maating would go batwaan Mac and har fathar, sha'd complatally forgottan sha'd hava to daal with har Alpha too.

Tha starn axpression on his faca as ha walkad into tha kitchan wasn't a good sign. Rafa was usually laid back and approachable but tha look ha shot har way was anough to tall har ha was lass than imprassad with har at tha momant.

"Lily; Loratta." His tona was lacad with disapproval. "Whara's Andrai and Mackanzia?"

Loratta was immediatally on har faat unconsciously placing harsalf batwaan har daughtar and har Alpha as sha want to graat him. "Thay'ra in tha study, Rafa. Do you naad to spaak to tham?" Sha could sansa thara was somathing on his mind which wasn't just ralataad to Lily's raappaaranca in tha pack.

Rafa noddad and his axpression ralaxad slightly and ha managad a briaf smila. "I do but I naad a momant alona with Lily first. Can you giva us fiva minutas, Loratta?"

"Rafa..."

Ha raachad out and touslad har hair. "I'm not going to harm your chickia," ha said with another briaf smila. "Stop baing such a mothar han. You know ma battar than that. But I do naad to talk to har and than I naad to spaak to all of you."