

Chapter 401

Loretta relaxed, shooting him a sheepish smile. She'd known him for so long now that she should have known better. He would never do anything to harm Lily but he was Alpha and he played no favourites with any of the pack. If they did wrong then they felt the weight of the Alpha's disapproval.

mate and new son-in-law.

were in turmoil about the recent news he'd received, serious news that meant his pack was threatened again. He needed to address that threat but it was more pressing to deal with his errant pack member first and all the issues her actions had brought.

disappearing act. He was surprised at her posture and even impressed. She stood to attention with her arms clasped behind her back and her eyes forward. There was a maturity to her expression he hadn't seen before. Lily looked every inch like a soldier, hell she looked like one of his Betas the way she stood there waiting for him to speak. It was hard not to feel a spurt of pride in her even if he did need to exert his authority as Alpha.

said. "The next time you disappear and mask my Alpha bond I'll take that as your declaration that you no longer wish to be part of this pack. I'll work with you to find another pack to join before we terminate the bond but I will terminate it. Are we clear on this?" *w w w . c o m e t n o r m . c o m*

Leave the pack...her family and friends? Just the thought of it brought panic rushing to the surface and her wolf howled instantly adopting a submissive position. She knew she deserved Rafe's censure but she hadn't dreamed he would consider her actions so serious he would propose something this drastic.

It was an effort to keep her emotions in check and she couldn't raise her eyes to meet his. "I understand, Alpha. It won't happen again, I promise."

She could feel his eyes burning into her as she kept her gaze fixed on his wide chest, a chest she had cuddled into many times when growing up. Rafe had always had time for her, always treated her as one of his own when she played with his children. Earning his disapproval was hard to swallow.

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It was an effort to maintain his tough stance. Rafe frowned as he stared down at Lily's bent head, his pride in her swelling as she didn't try to justify her actions but instead took ownership of her wrongdoing. Her time away from the pack, whilst worrying, had obviously been good for her. This Mackenzie person was obviously good for her.

"Glad to hear it," he finally said with a hint of dryness in his tone. "Oh, come here!"

The warmth suddenly blazing down the Alpha bond was unmistakable, as well as the affection in Rafe's words. Lily raised her head to meet his eyes and then surged forward with a cry of relief as her Alpha held his arms open to her and quickly gathered her into a bone-crushing hug.

"You worried us all, Liliana. You should have come to me, told me you needed help. That's what I'm here for." Rafe rested his cheek on the top of her head soothing his errant pack member. He couldn't help seeing the urgency. It was almost as bad as seeing Rhianne's urgency.

He knew he should be sterner with her, especially considering all he had recently learned but he couldn't do it. So he hugged her tightly and let her know how much he loved her as she clung on tightly.

"I'm sorry I let you down, Rafe. I promise I won't do it again." Lily's voice caught and she took a deep breath and bathed in his forgiveness, thankful that he was the man he was and not one of the harsher Alphas she'd heard about from other packs.

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"I'm sorry we let you down Lily," Rafe answered quietly. "I did, the triumvirate did...the whole pack have let the Vârcolac down by not seeing that we were stifling you. We've been educated now and we're working to improve things. Just come to me if there's a next time. I can't help if you hide from me."

She hugged him tighter, nodding against his chest as she worked to get her emotions under control. She could feel Mac's concern through their connection and knew he was coming because she

"Mac's on his way," she mumbled, taking a deep breath.

Rafe released his hold and smiled down at her. "The joy of being mated," he chuckled. "Having a moment's privacy becomes a luxury until you learn to work the mate bond. I trust I'll be allowed to retain my limbs for upsetting you?"

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Her scandalised expression had him laughing and it felt good to laugh even if only for a moment. The news he had to impart was not something he relished but he wanted to give Lily a moment with

Mac entered the kitchen followed closely by Loretta and Andrei. His gaze immediately went to his mate and he relaxed as he saw her smiling sheepishly up at the huge male who was the Alpha of

The mate part of him wanted to intercede whilst the leader part of him understood the need for the chain of command and to ensure that all under his command obeyed his orders. Rafe Hanlon had

His quick gaze told him that Lily was unharmed by their encounter so he dialled back the need to cause some bodily harm to the man beside her. He met the Alpha's gaze as he turned to inspect

him with a thoughtful expression on his face.

She flushed slightly and nodded her head wondering if she was going to get into trouble for that too.

Kate had a strange experience

Everyone stiffened in the room with the exception of Mac. He looked around the room and saw shock on their faces and Lily had even turned pale. It was too much for him and he strode to her

"When Loretta and I mated it created an Alpha bond with Rafe. Same for all the mixed matings. You should know this already." And her matings with a couple of rogues in his name on his back.

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