

Chapter 419

"This needs to be stopped now," Karn growled, a deep frown on his face as he watched the combatants. "Brandon, go get Mac." He didn't want to leave the area while two of his charges were intent on slicing each other to pieces.

"Let Kal help her," a soft voice said behind him and he turned to find himself facing the Armand-Hanlon Alpha's mate. Lacey was stunning with her silvery blonde hair and pale green eyes. Those eyes were fixated on the duelling pair who were spinning and slicing at incredible speed within the workout area.

"They're going to kill each other!" Karn's tone was rough though he'd moderated it slightly because of whom he was speaking to. Anyone else he'd have told to fuck off and most likely knocked them on their ass for interfering.

Brandon hesitated, his anxious gaze sliding from the match to Karn and then back again. The might of the Vârcolac was something of beauty to watch but it was hard not to be concerned for Lily. She was his best friend and though he knew her brother wouldn't hurt her beyond repair, the viciousness being displayed was unsettling.

"Lily needs to vent her frustrations," Lacey said, keeping her voice low. "Kal knows how to handle her and he won't hurt her badly. If it becomes too intense, I'll halt it."

Karn considered her words and his gut instinct to have Mac come and stop the madness he was watching through narrowed eyes. Lacey was their Alpha and knew them better than he did. Would they listen to her if she stopped their sparring match?**Ww.novelworm.com**

With a resigned sigh, he shook his head at Brandon letting him know he'd changed his instruction. No doubt Mac was probably already aware of what was transpiring in the practice yard anyway. If he was allowing it to continue then there must be a reason for it. Karn watched Kal launch an attack on Lily trying to shake off his concern, doubting any good would come from this.

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Mac sensed the wolves as he made his way through the trees putting as much distance between himself and the practice yard as possible. He couldn't stay and watch Lily work out her pain. Every time Kal landed a blow against his mate, he was overcome with the need to pound the Vârcolac into dust.

His head told him that was stupid, that Lily was more than capable of taking care of herself and was one of the best soldiers he'd ever come across. But since their mating, the need to protect her had started to dominate his thoughts more and more often.

Was this a sign that there was some effect of the wolf gene within him? He still didn't feel any different inside but on an emotional level he was starting to notice changes which were illogical. He had a much cooler head than his current emotional make-up.

Maybe it was because he'd talked about Sophia and Maria. He'd never shared his family with anyone quite the way he had with Lily. Demetri knew everything as he'd been there at the time, and Andrei and Alexei knew some of it. But Lily had been the first person he'd sat down and told of the event that had ended his world all those years ago.

He paused in his run, listening to the two wolves circle around him a few hundred yards away. He wanted to yell at them to go away but they were only abiding by the instructions both Rafe and he had given them. Protect the Praetorian compound. Ensure no harm came to the Vârcolac. How could he shout at them when they were keeping his mate safe?

He didn't need their protection and they knew it, which was why he was surprised that they were following him. Then he scented the air and understood. His head snapped around to the left as a large russet coloured wolf appeared through the trees.

He sighed as he watched the wolf approach him in the clearing. "You're dangerously close to being outside the protection of the compound, Liam."

The wolf sat down, rich golden brown eyes fixed on him. It surveyed him for a long moment and then the air shimmered and the redheaded Vârcolac appeared, straightening up from a crouch.

Mac found it surprising to see Liam dressed in jeans and a T-shirt, even though he knew the hybrids were not like other Weres and this was the norm for them. His whole life's experience consisted of his previous knowledge of ordinary Weres who did not have the ingrained ability to manipulate matter into clothing when shifting from wolf form.

Liam continued to regard him solemnly for another moment and then he turned to gaze over Mac's head into the forest. "I know why I'm running away, Mac. Why are you?"

Lily's turbulent emotions had been too much for Liam. He was better able to block emotions now, though nowhere near as good as he should be. Lily was so full of anger and pain inside, that even though she muted her bond; it was still too intense for him to stand so he'd tried distance to help him.

Whatever Mac was feeling, he was better at blocking his emotions, though Liam had to concede that Lily was past the maximum level of her control right now and this was why he was being inflicted with her pain. He turned his gaze back to the vampire and waited for his response.

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"I'm trying to fight the need to kick Kal's ass," Mac finally answered with a sigh. He paused and met the other male's gaze, seeing questions in his eyes. He sighed again. "And I'm trying to escape the fact that I'm the reason Lily's trying to pound her brother to dust right now."

He didn't know why he told the younger man that. He wasn't one to open up to most people and Liam was someone he knew even less than most. It was out of character for him to discuss something personal with a stranger, even if that stranger was one of the Vârcolac. He studied Liam's expression and saw no judgement there.

"Lily's always felt emotions deeply," Liam said with a small smile on his lips. "She's probably the person I feel closest to in my heart, bar Elle, and yet she's always been one of the hardest people for me to be around because of that fact. The thing with Lily is, though she feels emotions intensely and sometimes needs space to work them through; once she does, she is always forgiving. She doesn't know how to hate anything or anyone."

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"Some things are so hurtful that even the most generous of hearts find it hard to forgive." Even as he said the words, Mac flashed back to the understanding in Lily's eyes that morning, and knew that though she hurt over what she'd learned and the impact it had on her life, she would forgive him.

"And some hearts love so absolutely that there is no choice but to forgive," Liam countered, moving over to a fallen log and sitting down. "Lily hurts. Whatever it is that's causing this hurt is something pretty extreme from her reaction. But she's working through it and I can feel her love fighting to dominate the hurt. Whatever is between you...it isn't strong enough to damage her love, Mac. Nothing could do that."

Mac was surprised at the wisdom in Liam's words, the certainty in his tone. The younger man knew his mate far better than he did and he was privy to her emotions being the powerful empath that he was. If Liam said Lily was coping, then Mac had faith that she was. And yet, it still didn't assuage the guilt he felt inside for being the cause of her pain.