

## Chapter 435

"Elina, please!" Liam's mental voice broke, his body aching with the effort to get to the woman.  
"Please, Elle, please!"

She could not deny him. His distress was absolute and it had nothing to do with his injury. All his focus was on the woman who had tried to kill him, his goal only to save her life. It made no sense to Elina but if it was what Liam needed then she would protect her when he could not.

Reasa's vision swam, her body a mass of agony from the vampire's talons. She'd put up as much of a fight as she could but her blood loss was too great, her adversary a more skilled fighter than she. Through tears of pain, she saw his talon's descend towards her neck and knew this was the killing blow. She had tried and failed but at least she had tried.

Elina crashed into Karn, knocking him from his position straddling the vampire's body. He was so stunned at the unexpected assault that for a moment all he could do was stare at her in surprise. Then his rage took over and he sprang towards her. "What the fuck are you doing?"

She remained in wolf form but he knew she could answer if she chose to but she remained mute, her position in front of the female making it more than clear that she was protecting the assassin.  
"Shift, Elina, now!"*ŴŴŴ.noV©lwOrM.c@M*

The wolf bared its bloodied teeth, growling furiously, its hackles up and Karn's rage intensified. "She has to be put down. You know the penalty for an attack on the pack or the Vârcolac. She shot Liam and probably poisoned him. He's your cousin for fucks sake! You're supposed to protect him not the person who's tried to assassinate him."

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Privately Elina agreed with him but Liam's pleas were still echoing in her head. He wanted the woman saved so she would save the woman for now. Justice could be meted out later when wiser heads' prevailed.

The Praetorians ringed them, Lacey appearing at Liam's side and kneeling before him. She slipped on a proffered T-shirt to cover her nudity from shifting from wolf form, and surveyed the scene. Liam was recovering from a gunshot wound, the damaged area healing as she watched. A frown crossed her face and she glanced towards the wounded female vampire. "Was the bullet poisoned?" Silence greeted her words as everyone waited to hear the answer.

Reasa wheezed out a pained breath, laughter bubbling up from her throat. "Yes. The abomination will die. What blood are you going to transfuse it with, vampire or Were? Too much of either will have a negative effect. You can't save it as you did Pietro."

Elina growled turning on the vampire with hate in her eyes. Liam had wanted her to save the other woman but her taunts were a death sentence. She couldn't remain alive after what she'd done to her cousin.

"He heals," Lacey said, her voice quiet as Liam rose slowly to his feet, the air shimmering as the man appeared. He was still unsteady but he was feeling stronger by the moment.

Silence reined in the compound as the full import of Lacey's statement sank in. "The Vârcolac are immune?" Karn's stunned words broke the silence.

"It appears so," Liam answered, walking over to Elina and placing a soothing hand on her head. She whined softly and rubbed against him, bathing him in her scent and seeking comfort that he was indeed okay. He dropped down beside her and hugged her tightly, sending a private thought down their bond. "Thank you, Elle."

It was said with such emotion that she rubbed against him again even though she knew she had to make him see sense. "I have no idea why you wanted her life spared, Liam, but you must know that this is only a temporary reprieve. The triumvirate will not tolerate this attack on you. The pack won't, our parents won't. Her life has only been spared for a short time. Justice must be served."

"Then they must be made to see sense, Elle. She can't be harmed, not ever. If they want to kill her then they will have to go through me first."*Ŵww.noV©ë(!)wOrM.c@M*

Elina shifted form, staring into Liam's eyes. "Why protect her, Liam?" She asked the question aloud but he answered her privately.

"She's my mate."

It was the last thing she expected to hear and she could only stare at him shocked for another long moment before she threw her arms around him and hugged him tightly. "Oh, Liam," she whispered, tears gathering in her eyes. "I'll do my best to help but her crimes..."

She couldn't finish what she was saying. They were in an impossible position. If the woman wasn't punished, then word would get out and there would be more attacks against them. If the punishment Caleb had decreed so many years ago was enacted and she was put to death -- then they would likely lose Liam completely as he went rogue.

"What are we supposed to do with her?" Brandon asked, staring at the recovering vampire. He had wanted to go to Lily but his place had been at the compound. He wanted some resolution to what had happened at the compound so he could find out if his friend was okay.

Everyone looked to Karn who was glaring at Elina's back. "Put her in the holding cells in the basement. We can sort this mess out when Mac and the others get here." He strode over to Liam and Elina. "Are you sure there isn't any damage from the poison?"

"I feel stronger by the minute," the redheaded Vârcolac answered, his gaze watching the caramel-skinned woman with hate in her eyes as she looked back at him.

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"In that case, the next fucking time you put yourself in danger to protect my ass I'll make sure you rue the fucking day you do it! Are we clear on that? And what the fuck happened to Lily? Is she okay?"

Liam's eyes tracked his mate, watching her being bound with chains of steel and led away towards the house. "The poison would have killed you, Karn." He broke his gaze and turned to the irate vampire. "Kothi got to Lily in time. She's okay."

"You didn't know it wouldn't kill you!" Karn yelled furiously, his pale blue eyes icy cold despite his raised voice. Inwardly, he was breathing a sigh of relief but the fact two of the Vârcolac had almost lost their lives on his watch was fuelling his fury no end. No, make that three as Elina bloody Alexander thought she was some kind of superhero.

Liam chose to ignore him, his focus once more totally on the woman moving away from him. He had to go to her, had to talk to her and try to find out why she felt the way she did, why she couldn't see that he was her mate.

"Today has been a distressing day for all of us," Lacey interjected, her voice calm and soothing. "The threat has been neutralised, both Liam and Lily are fine despite their trials. Let's all calm down and take some time out until we can all get together and decide what our next course of action is going to be."

Karn wasn't finished, not by a long shot, but he knew he was in over his head at the moment. He needed to calm down so he could think rationally and give Mac time to return and deal with the wolves that appeared to be put on the planet just to drive him insane.