

## Chapter 438

Climbing into the car and heading off into the traffic, Caleb took a deep breath refusing to look at his mate. His voice was cold and detached when he spoke. "Here me now, Rhianna. When we reach the Praetorian compound, justice will be carried out. Do not get in my way on this or you will not like the consequences."

His words sent a chill of fear through Rhianna as she blinked back tears and stared straight ahead. The chasm between them was so wide she didn't know how to breach it. Caleb was intent on one course of action and she couldn't allow him to do what he intended. She would have to side against him and if she did...she had no idea what that would mean for them.

\*\*\*\*\*

Mackenzie tenderly set Lily to her feet in the bathroom of the retreat high up in the mountains. His heart was still struggling to resume a normal beat and he was loathe to release his precious bundle.

"Mac, I'm fine." Lily was feeling better, the nausea starting to recede. She knew she was probably a sight covered in blood, but all her injuries had healed and her wolf assured her their child was safe. She wanted to take the anxious expression from his face.

"I almost lost you!" Mac's hands shook as he cradled her face reverently, his fingers tracing each perfect feature he loved so much. His voice dropped to a whisper as he leaned his forehead against hers. "It was worse than coming home all those centuries ago, Lily. I didn't think anything could ever be worse than that, but it was." His voice broke and he felt tears well up as the horror of the day's events replayed in his mind. He couldn't lose his Lily...ever. It would destroy him.

"Mac..." Lily wrapped her arms tightly around him, holding him as he shook silently. His tears broke her heart and she wanted to fix this, but didn't know how. All she could do was hold him until he worked through the emotions of the past, and what had just transpired.

He was crushing her so tightly to his chest that had she been fragile she would have broken, but she was strong and could withstand the force of his hold. Lily held her mate and wept with him, not for herself, but for the pain he was experiencing. Pain she had caused.

**Ww.®oVéŃorm.com**

"I heard that," Mac finally said, raising his head and staring into her chocolate brown eyes so full of remorse it hurt his heart to witness it. He could see self-loathing in Lily's eyes and it wasn't an expression he ever wanted to see on her face again. "Don't, Lily. Kallum was right. If we'd both talked rather than try to guess how the other would react then none of this would have happened. This isn't one person's fault, it's just part of learning to know each other. We'll do better the next time."

Her expression clouded further, guilt predominant in her eyes. "I shouldn't have panicked. I should have stayed and talked with you, trusted in you. Instead, I ran and nearly killed our baby and myself. I could hear them, Mac, everyone screaming inside my head." Her voice dropped to a whisper. "I could hear you begging me to live, over and over again. Your voice...oh Mac...your voice." She broke off, unable to continue, more tears welling up and flowing down her cheeks.

It broke his heart to see her weep like that, to hear her voice full of disgust at herself. This wasn't his Lily, this wasn't his strong, feisty mate who'd rocked into his life like an explosion of dynamite and turned everything topsy-turvy. She had dragged him out of the pit of despair, healed his grief, and taught him to love again. He wanted his Lily back, her eyes full of joy, her spirit strong and boundless. He had to reach through her melancholy and he knew only one way to do that.**wŴŴ.ṡôveŴŕℜm.Com**

Mackenzie slowly dropped to his knees, wrapping his arms around the small of Lily's back and resting his cheek against her abdomen. He took in a deep breath, scenting the precious life they had conceived together, another beautiful daughter. He brought one hand around to rest on the gentle swell of her stomach.

"She has your scent," he breathed softly, wonder in his voice as the delicate bouquet of lilacs washed over him. He knew some of that related to Lily's own scent but he could tell the subtle difference that made up their child. His daughter. He was certain of that. His actions had the desired effect. Lily's sharp intake of breath sounded loudly in the bathroom, her hand trembling as it came to rest over his.

"Really, Mac? She's a girl?" Lily's voice quivered through her tears but there was the sweet sound of joy in her words, which made Mac's heart soar. He glanced up to see uncertainty on her face along with the first glimmer of hope.

"Oh yes, sugar. I'm about to have a mini version of you to help drive me even more insane than I already am." His tone was light and teasing, his fingers threading with hers to stroke against her body. "Who knew going crazy could be such a wonderful experience?"

Lily managed a small smile, her heart beating wildly at the unadorned love shining in Mac's eyes. She knew she was most probably more at fault than he was for the barely-averted disaster. She knew that Mac would do his level best to protect her from everything, including her own feelings of guilt. He was distracting her, refocusing her on what was important, the child they had created. The child that earlier that day Mackenzie had been so certain he didn't want.

"You really don't mind about the baby?" She couldn't keep the anxious note from her voice. Seeing the joy that spread across his face as he ran a hand gently over her stomach was enough to dispel any remaining concerns she had on that point. They still had a lot to discuss but she was now positive that Mac wanted their baby as much as she did.**www.nov(e)lwoℜm.coM**

He rose to his feet, cupping her cheek gently. "I will love our baby with everything in me, Liliana Rose. No one will hurt our child, ever. Not as long as I live." His grey gaze roamed over her blood-streaked face and he thought she'd never looked more beautiful. Under the dirt and blood, she was radiant in her beauty, his mate, so strong and proud, presenting him with the most treasured gift in the world.

He hadn't thought he could love her any more than he already did, but his heart swelled tightly as he stared into her eyes. "I know I've made mistakes, Lily. I know you feel to blame for everything but it took both of us to get to this point. You think all you've brought me is pain and you couldn't be more wrong, sugar. You've taught me to love again, you've given me a reason to greet each new day with a smile. You've helped heal a grief I've carried for too many centuries. Hell, you've even changed my eye colour."

**www.ñoveŴŴŔm.Cóm**

He laughed softly, stroking her cheek with his thumb. "I love you, my Lily, more than I've ever loved before. I dare say we will have other moments, but we will get through them together. You give me so much. You've gifted me your heart and the children I never dreamed I would ever have again. I will love you and cherish you and those children forever. If you will have me"