

## Chapter 547

Liam fled as she screamed the last words out, agony rushing through him as she screamed the words again. He stumbled in the hallway, falling to his knees as his wolf howled. Their mate hated them. She would never accept them. She couldn't have made it any clearer.

"Liam, breathe." Elina's cool voice echoed inside his head, swiftly joined by Kallum and Lily's, Dara and Cassia's, and finally Kothi.

"We have you, Liam. You are not alone. Talk to your wolf. Calm him."wWw.Ñ0vElwó0m.(c)0m

Kallum's strong presence pressed through his agony, and he took a shuddering breath, fighting to calm himself. It was so hard, almost impossible to rein in his wolf as it snarled for dominance every step of the way.

"She will accept us. One day she will, my wolf. We cannot give up hope or we will be lost forever. She is stubborn, but so are we. A wolf can be as wily as a cat when required. We must out wait our prey until she least expects it and then we will pounce."

The words soothed the animal and it slowly backed down. Playing to its ego worked and it stopped pacing; images of how they could outsmart their mate flowing through his mind. Liam breathed out slowly, checking his mental shields and finding them still in place. It had been a close call but he had managed to maintain control. The question was, would he be able to the next time Reasa turned on him?

Loving arms embraced him and he opened his eyes to see his mother kneeling before him. He blinked in surprise at her unexpected appearance. He'd thought she was at the community hall after their earlier conversation.

"I'm not such a bad mother that I would leave my child when he needs me the most." Ashleigh's soft words held a small amount of reproof in them though her voice was filled with the deep, abiding love she had for her son. "Liam, this isn't safe for you."

He opened his mouth to protest but she cut him off. "No, please let me finish before you interrupt me. I don't say this because of my feelings for Thereasa, but because of my love for you. Regardless of my personal feelings, I know that she has a long road ahead of her to adjust to everything that has happened. Your constant presence is not helping her to do that because she's focusing on her hatred of the Vârcolac. Thereasa has to come to terms with her humanity before she can come to terms with anything else. This is only hurting you and hurting her right now. Surely you can see that?

"I have to protect her, Mom." He could hear the pain in his voice, feel it rippling through him. He knew she could hear it too.

"You have to consider what she may need protecting from too, Liam. At the moment, you're focusing on her frailty as a human and the need to protect her physically from harm, but you're not protecting her emotionally. I know it's wrong for her to feel as she does about you, but that's the place she's at right now and that's what you need to be protecting her from. Only you can't do that because you are the problem."

Tears spilled over, flowing silently down his cheeks. He wanted to argue, wanted to deny the truth in his mother's words, but he couldn't.

"I know this is hard, Liam. Your father had to do the same thing for me when we first met. He had to put aside his needs for a very long time until I was in the right emotional place for us to be together. It hurt him, and yet he did this for me, and I love him dearly for it. You need to be strong like your father and bide your time. You know what I'm saying makes sense."w(w)W.nove1(w)o(r)m.com

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"I don't know if I can be that strong."

Framing his face in her hands, Ashleigh wiped at his wet cheeks, her heart breaking because of his misery. "Yes, you can because you know it's for the best. Give Reasa a little space and time. Allow the rest of us to protect her for you. Your father and I love you, the pack loves you, and we will do everything we can to help you."

Liam knew what it cost his mother to protect the woman who had tried to kill him. She had been honest about her feelings. He also knew how much she loved him and that she would do this for him because of that love, placing his feelings above her own. That was what real love was about and why he knew that he had to do the same. He had to let Reasa heal. He had to let her go.

"Don't let anyone hurt her, Mom."

"I have always protected your heart, son. I always will."

Hugging her son tightly, Ashleigh reached through her bond with Nors, seeking his strength and love to do what was required. She somehow had to put away her hatred for Thereasa and keep her safe. She had no idea how she was going to do that, when every fibre of her being wanted to rip the other woman to pieces.wW(w).0ôvElLW0Rm.CoM

"You should have more faith in yourself, love. You are stronger than you think. You always have been."

Nors' confident words soothed her a little, though she still doubted she could be that strong. "I hope so, Nors. I truly hope so."

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Thereasa heard the bedroom door opening again and sat up, turning to glare at Liam only to find a small blonde woman staring at her. For a moment she was so surprised, she just blinked back at the other woman, wondering who she was. She didn't have her heightened sense of smell any more so she couldn't even work out what species she was.