

Chapter 576

Pietro picked up his tea and leaned back in his chair, allowing the silence to stretch out. He waited for it to become uncomfortable, for Cassia to start fidgeting or try to strike up more conversation, but she merely sipped at her tea, a half smile on her face. His eyes tracked each perfect feature, her beauty making his heartbeat start to accelerate, his body unwillingly stirring to life. He held onto his self-control though, refusing to acknowledge his baser needs.

He was testing her. He hadn't set out to do it, but it was happening subconsciously. He was trying to find something to dislike about the woman in front of him, and was failing miserably. The longer she was in his presence, the more she appealed to him. It was disconcerting. Why her? Why was Cassia Romanov able to get under his skin?

"Did the hair sample help?" It was he who finally broke the silence.

"A bit," she answered, rising to rinse out her cup, holding her hand out to take his too.

Their fingers touched as he held it out to her, and suddenly blue eyes became locked with his, their intensity stunning. Pietro held his breath as shimmers of silver sparked around the edge of her irises, her wolf clearly close to the surface. A shiver travelled down his spine and the blood rushed to his groin as they both froze the moment their skin touched.

He wanted her so badly that it was all he could do to stay seated. In his head, he was wrapping her in his arms, their tongues duelling as he pressed his hungry erection into her tightly, rubbing up and down her lithe body. He could hear her breathy moans, feel his large hand enclosing her breast and squeezing the soft flesh firmly. He was kicking her legs apart, bending her over the table so he could cup that hot, needy part of her that ached to be touched. He was...

"Pietro, the mug?"

Cassia's cool words had him whistling out a harsh breath, pulling his hand back abruptly to try and shake the images from his head. What the fuck had he been thinking? Dear God, he had been two seconds away from acting out those images, from taking Cassia on the kitchen table. She was not the kind of woman a man took casually and even worse, she was Alexei's daughter and one of the Vârcolac. He had been assigned to protect her and the other hybrids, not imagining himself bedding one of them.

The sudden, intense need he felt coursing through his system shook up and he rose from the table, his movements abrupt as he strode towards the kitchen door. "I will take your words under advisement," he threw over his shoulder, referring back to what she'd been talking about. He paused in the doorway, turning to look back at the woman who was stirring feelings he didn't want to acknowledge. "The next time you want to come over, make an appointment, or at least call ahead to see if it's convenient."

Cassia watched him leave, soothing her wolf down who was prowling in agitation, urging her to follow the male and throw him to the ground. The instinctive urge was primal, hot need flowing through her, firing every nerve ending into life. When their fingers had touched...her wolf had made her decision. He was theirs: their male, their mate, their everything.

She had seen the answering awareness in Pietro's eyes. He'd been unable to hide the intense heat that had sprung up between them, the scent of his instant arousal plain to her enhanced senses. He had wanted her and for a fraction of a second, he had been tempted to take her there and then. That thought sent a shiver of delight through her body, and she knew if he'd stopped to check he would have scented her own arousal as well.

He was so beautiful, so inherently male, and so perfect for her. He would be hers, no matter how hard he fought against it. His parting words were his attempt to push her away. She wouldn't allow it though; Pietro de la Rios was her mate and it was only a matter of time before he succumbed to that fact.

Smiling, Cassia retrieved her bag and left the house, feeling unseen eyes on her the entire time. He could try to run but he was fighting a losing battle. However, it would be a glorious one, full of untold pleasure. She could wait a little longer; give him a little more time to heal.

"Is Pietro okay?" Liam's question startled her and she almost tripped as her head swung around to see him walking towards her with Elina at his side. Damn, she'd been so wrapped up thinking about the vampire in the house she hadn't even scented them close by.

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"He's very angry with Reasa." She answered honestly, because she could no more lie to one of her fellow Vârcolac than she could to her parents. Yes, it would no doubt concern her friend to know his mate was so widely hated, but he deserved to know the truth.

Liam glanced towards the house, his expression pensive. "That's understandable."

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There was resigned acceptance in his voice that tugged at her heart. He had been through so much and what should have been the most amazing moment of his life, finding his mate, was turning out to be one of the hardest things he'd had to face so far. Why was it always the most loved of them that had the hardest roads to travel? She wondered if that was why her wolf didn't want to rip out Reasa's throat for what she'd done to Pietro.

Cassia couldn't have stopped herself from hugging him if she'd tried; no one could withstand a sad Liam. "It will work itself out somehow. I'm not sure how, but I know it will. You have us; you have the pack. Together we will find a way."

Liam held her tightly, burying his face in her shoulder, taking the comfort she offered so freely. "Thank you for helping her, Cass, for relieving her pain," he whispered, his voice full of emotion, his arms bands of steel around her.

"I couldn't leave another soul in pain when there was something I could do to help and I will always do what is best for you, Liam." She felt some of the tension leave his big body as she tightened her embrace. She was glad she'd been able to reassure him that he had someone in his corner, supporting him.

It struck Cassia that despite all the support shown towards him, Liam didn't truly believe that he wasn't alone. It was something she would need to discuss with the other Vârcolac, and maybe try to speak with Nors and Ashleigh too.wWw.novê(1)woTm.(c)oM

As if thinking about his mother caused her to materialise, Ashleigh's soft words echoed on the evening air. "Liam, come inside."w(w)(w).novê/woRm.cOm

Cassia released him, giving him a reassuring smile as the cousins turned away and headed into the Eriksson home. Ashleigh stood in the doorway, patiently waiting to take over the task of bringing some peace to her son's misery.

Cassia had no idea how they would work out the enigma that was Thereasa and her mating to Liam, but she knew they had to find a way somehow, or his gentle soul may be lost to them forever. Sighing sadly, she resumed her way to the lab, continuing to feel unseen eyes tracking her movements. She could only hope that witnessing Liam's unhappiness would be a catalyst to Pietro coming to terms with things...maybe.