

## Chapter 610

Liam heard the words and felt a tremor run through his body. His mate was asking for his help, but what she was asking for terrified him. Up until this moment, everything had been fun and exciting. His agile mind grasped the concepts she explained easily, even if he had made a bit of a mess a little earlier. However, what Reasa was asking of him now...he didn't know if he could do it.

He knew precisely where his wolf was, that was a given. He had been in tune with his animal all his life and didn't even need to think twice about what door that part of his persona lived behind. He could also detect the miniscule part of himself that was human, now that its existence had been brought to his attention.

But his vampiric side...that was the part that terrified him the most. That side of him had hurt his aunt! It was full of rage and consumed by the need to destroy. Although his wolf also shared some of those basic urges when threatened, the intensity of them paled in comparison to what his inner monster was capable of.

"I'm afraid," he whispered, still feeling Reasa in his mind, and reaching out to her psychic presence with his own. "What if I can't control it? What if I hurt you?"

"You didn't the last time, Liam You may have not been aware of it, but you were able to exert some control over your vampire. Your speed at learning is exceptional. Twice the vampire has arisen, and twice you have learned from the experience. It's time to face it again with the new knowledge you have to guide you. It doesn't have to be right this very moment. We can start with the easier doors until you're more confident in your abilities. In fact, let's start with a few memories first."

Reasa's reassuring words helped and he grasped at the chance to put off the inevitable. Liam strode towards a pale yellow door and threw it wide open without hesitation...

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Girlish giggles echoed through the forest, and the wolf pup's head rose sharply from the damp earth, tilting to the side to listen. It gave an excited bark and raced off into the trees towards the sound, the breeze caressing its deep auburn pelt.

"Elle! Elle! Elle!" the wolf projected telepathically as it barked again and scampered ahead at full speed.

"You're not supposed to let me know you're coming, Liam," his cousin giggled, as she hung upside down from a low branch. Multi-coloured hair brushed the moss beneath the tree as she swung, her legs hooked around the branch the only thing that prevented her from falling.

The pup burst into the clearing, yapping excitedly and jumping up to lick the little girl's face, which sent her into another flood of giggling.

"Ugh, that's wet! Stop it, Liam."

Elina's laughter caused her to lose concentration when the wolf jumped at her again, her body swaying with the impact. She forgot to maintain her grip with her legs and shrieked loudly when she fell from the branch.

In a flash, the wolf pup vanished, to be replaced by a little boy a couple of years older. Elina landed on top of him, her face showing concern when his breath whooshed out and he made a funny noise.

"Are you okay? I'm sorry, I didn't mean to hurt you."

Liam grinned and rubbed his stomach before giving her a hug. "I'm fine. You're too teeny to really hurt me, and it was my fault you fell anyway." He had meant to reassure his cousin but from the expression on her face, his words had clearly had the opposite effect as she rose to her feet and planted her hands on her hips.

"I am not too teeny! Mother says I am as strong and fast as everyone else in this pack, and I'm not to let anyone tell me any different. That includes you, Liam Eriksson. You're family and family are supposed to stick together."

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"Jeez Louise, Elle! I didn't mean anything by it. I know you're super-fast and super-strong. You're better than all the other kids in the pack. You've got Eriksson blood and we're the best!"

Her expression lightened instantly and she smiled happily. "Yes we are! We're going to grow up and be Alphas like Rafe and Lacey."

Liam laughed at her determined expression, happy his cousin was smiling again. He loved seeing her smile. He would do anything to hear her laughter and often goofed around so he could. "I'm not so sure about being Alphas. Maybe we might make betas."

"Mother says I can be anything I want to be if I set my mind to it. I'll be Alpha if I want to be," Elina said grandly, her little nose tilting up in the air. "And who is Louise?"

Liam laughed, as he jumped up and grabbed her hand. "It's just an expression, like when I call you Elina the ballerina. Aaron Junior said it the other day and it made everyone laugh. I wanted to make you laugh."

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"You do make me laugh, Liam. You always make me laugh. You're the best cousin ever."

"Good, my job is done then." Liam pulled her hand and they began to jog out of the clearing. "Just so you know...if we're both Alphas we would have to be in different packs..."

"Okay...betas it is, then."

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The memory faded as Liam closed the door, a hint of moisture in his eyes as he relived that day playing with his cousin. She had been so happy as a child, with her infectious laughter, and her fierce determination to be the best in everything she did. It hurt him to experience the moment, knowing that his beautiful cousin was so different now.

"I was an only child and we lived in a secluded region. I never had anyone to play with when I was little. Thank you for sharing that memory with me."

Reasa's quiet words twisted his heart painfully. He wanted to reach out and soothe her, but knew it was much too soon and she wouldn't accept any solace from him just yet. He felt hopeful that she had chosen to share something of her own past with him. It was a beginning.

He moved to another door, another memory from his past. He took a deep breath and opened the dark blue door.

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The room was dark, the compound silent in the early hours of the morning. Someone was crying; someone was hurting so badly inside that it felt as if shards of glass were scraping along his chest, gouging deeply. The weeping continued, anguish so intense it was overwhelming, and all he could do was weep with her.

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He tried to reach out with his mind, tried to find a way inside—but he was too little and her mind was strong. "Don't cry," he sobbed softly. "Please don't cry. It will be okay. Everything will be okay, I promise."

Had she heard him? He didn't know but the sounds vanished swiftly and he was left alone in his own mind as if she'd never been there. Liam scrubbed at the tears on his face, rolled over in his bed, and gently rocked himself back asleep.

It was light when he opened his eyes again and he could hear Mommy making breakfast. He headed into the kitchen quietly, so quietly she didn't hear him. Looking at his mother, he saw she had a strange look on her face and the moment he saw her, he was flooded by unfamiliar emotions again.