

Chapter 626

Where he had seen a slight, she had been giving him the highest gift she could as a Were, the protection of one of her pack. Instead of being angry with her about it, he should have been thanking her for the honour. Living with the wolves, his attraction to the woman before him, it was all so new on top of everything he'd been through. He wasn't sure if he could trust his own judgement any more. Perhaps it was time to accept what Cassia was offering him...someone to lean on and learn from, as he navigated his slow healing process.

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"Thank you." He said the words quietly, but the emotion in his voice was heartfelt. This exquisite woman before him accepted him despite his scars, despite his erratic moods. She looked at him as a man and saw something of worth in him. Yes, she was a Vârcolac and as such, so much stronger than he was. But she didn't use that strength against him, as he'd imagined she was doing earlier.

Instead, she came to him, soft and vulnerable, leaning on him as she wept at her inability to find the solution to the danger that not only affected him, but every other vampire she cared for. She was strong and resilient and yet, with him, she was soft and passionate. She bared her soul to him and he couldn't believe that barely moments before he was thinking of walking away from her. He had to be all kinds of a fool.

Pietro's heart twisted inside him, stunned realisation roiling through him in a cascade of emotion. He was in love with Cassia Romanov! How it had happened...when it had happened...he didn't know but it was there as he drew his thumbs tenderly against her cheekbones, wiping away the last stray remnants of her tears. He had fallen in love...with a wolf of all things.

He remembered back to first meeting Loretta, when she had entered the Dive all sass and swaying hips and demanded to see Andrei. The natural enmity between their races had reared its ugly head and yet, he'd found himself oddly impressed with Loretta's bravery and the reaction she had on his volatile friend. He had wondered then if maybe one day he would find his own mate in a wolf but it had been a passing thought rather than any real expectation that he would.

Did Cassia see him as her mate? Her anguished words at failing to find the antidote to protect him did sound heartfelt. Should he ask her? What would he do if she said yes? Could he mate with her, join her pack, the one that Thereasa would join when she mated with Liam? He didn't think he could right now. Perhaps one day he could find some resolution to his hatred of the former vampire but at this moment in time it was still too raw, a festering wound that threatened to erupt into violence at any given moment.**wWw.n@vE(1)w@r.m.c@(m)**

No, he wouldn't ask the question of Cassia, not until he knew he could commit to her the way she needed him to. But he could still love her with all his heart. He could still be with her, holding her, stroking her soft skin with his hands and lips. He could be content with that for the moment.

Pietro had gone so still, a myriad of emotions crossing his face before he wiped his expression clear, his miss-matched eyes turning inscrutable. Cassia stared into those arresting eyes, wondering what it was that had caused him to shut away all evidence of what he was thinking. She found she couldn't look away from him, her mouth turning dry as she drank in his beauty.

His eyes fascinated her, both on a professional level as well as personally. She knew the medical term for his different coloured pupils was heterochromia. The condition was often caused by an extreme injury. She supposed there wasn't anything more extreme than having someone gouge an eye out. If the Amort hadn't been in his system, his normal coloured iris would have grown back. Instead, he was left with one dark obsidian iris that appeared to suck the entire surrounding light deep within.

Was it wrong that she loved that uniqueness about him? While she ached for the pain he had endured getting the injury, she was enthralled by the dark intensity she saw every time their eyes met. She loved every chiselled bone that shaped his face into a work of art. While he used his hair to hide the worst of the scarring on his face, she wanted to tie it back so she could drink in each jagged line, so she could trace each wound with her eyes and her hands and marvel at the courage those marks reflected.

Pietro saw his scars as a sign of failure. She saw them as a sign of strength. He had endured so much and he was still standing. He continued to show how fiercely overprotective he was. He retained that arrogance that only came from a male who was used to being at the top of the heap, someone whom others feared to cross. Cassia lived for the day that he would finally come to understand that the marks he'd earned in battle were a badge of honour as opposed to a sign of weakness. She would do everything in her power to help him come to know that.

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For now though, she was tired, both physically and emotionally. She hated crying. It was always such a wearying activity. She also hated showing that sign of weakness and yet, Pietro's earlier annoyance had waned in the face of her needing him. It was easy to show her softer side to him because she respected him, as did her wolf. He was their mate, and it was part of his role to stand strong for them when they had a moment of weakness and needed that strength. It was what mates did.

And that was why she felt like crying again. He had shut her out. "What?" The word sounded accusing, and she didn't mean it to. She just wasn't able to add any more disappointment to the existing feelings of failure she had.**Wwww.NoVe(w)ø(r)M.Com**

"Nothing." He smiled and it was a soft smile, tenderness crossing his face as he reached up and unclasped her hair. "You look exhausted. I should let you go home and rest but I don't want to be alone right now.

Cassia remained silent, lost in his eyes. His hands were gentle as they slowly pull her t-shirt over her head and unbuttoned her jeans. She placed a hand on his shoulder to brace herself, stepping out of the denim as he knelt before her. He rose silently, peeling his shirt off quickly, and then stripping his jeans from his body after kicking off his boots and socks.

Pietro stood before her in all his naked glory, his hungry eyes devouring her body. Her own gaze flickered over his beauty, her hands moving to unclip the front fastening of her bra.

"No."