

## Chapter 666

He was silent for a long time, staring down at the hardwood floor with unseeing eyes. "Then what do we do, Reasa, because I can't be without you?" he finally asked, turning haunted eyes to her. "You are my mate, the only woman on this planet that owns the other half of my soul."

He was so convinced of that, and the longer she was with him the more she was coming to believe it too. Liam had been so gentle with her, so caring and loving that she had slowly been falling under his spell even as she had fought him with every fibre of her being.

"I don't know," she whispered, sorrow filling her soul as she gazed back at him. "I don't think there is anything we can do, Liam. All I know is that if we take things any further, the fallout of that will be a thousand times worse than it will be if we don't."

www.nove(l)wo(r)m.ċOm

Reasa reached out and took his hand, staring as their fingers tangled together. "You are a good man, one of the best I have ever known. I don't want to be the instrument of your destruction anymore, Liam. Not as I was once convinced that I had to be." It was a huge admission for her and she knew he would be aware of that.

"We'll talk to Rafe and maybe Annie and Caleb," he answered, his tone subdued. "Perhaps they will have better answers for us. Just know this, Reasa...I will not give up on you. I will not give up on us. We are mates and we will find a way to be together."

His stubbornness was endearing but Reasa knew in her heart that there were no easy answers to their dilemma. She had told him she would tell him the truth, and she would do her best to keep that promise...but her thoughts were already turning to ways to leave the pack, to ways to leave Liam Eriksson before a deeper tragedy could befall the Armand-Hanlon Pack, one that was worse than her arrival.

\*\*\*\*\*

"Can I help you with something?" Dante eyed the couple who were just crossing over the border to Louis territory, his pale eyes intent as they swept quickly over them. In a fraction of a second he could tell that they were both Ancient, the male being the older of the two.

The female was very beautiful, her long black hair secured in a high ponytail. Her scent told him that she was a were shifter but not of the wolf variety...she was a cat. He'd come across very few cat-shifters in his time, so he was intrigued to see one, especially one that old. The male was pure vampire, his deep auburn hair loose about his shoulder, his surprising lavender eyes narrowed with suspicion.

"We want Michael." It was the vampire who answered, expectation in each word. It was clear he was used to instant obedience, and his companion glanced at him with a small half smile playing across her lips before she turned back to Dante.

"What my mate is trying to say is we're looking for a vampire called Michael. We believe he can be found in this area. This is Louis' territory?"

Dante nodded, there was little point in denying it as they clearly were aware of just where they were. "I think you should most likely speak to Louis personally," he answered, "though I would advise a little more of a cordial tone. He tends to get a little waspish if he isn't accorded the respect he feels he deserves."

"Louis had better have the answers I want otherwise feeling disrespected will be the least of his problems," the vampire retorted, his expression remaining bland despite the open threat in his words.

"Gard," the cat sighed, weary amusement lacing her tone. "You do know that you catch more flies with honey, don't you?" Shaking her head, she smiled at Dante. "He doesn't like being away from his sister for too long. He gets a little tetchy. I'm Rayne, and this is Gard...and you are...?"

"Dante, I am acting as Louis' second in command at the moment. We have been expecting you ever since the troubles in Edinburgh."

Both of them stilled for a moment, their expressions turning carefully neutral. "Best not to mention that," Rayne finally said quietly. "That's a very sore point with us so the least said about it the better. Can you please take us to Louis?"

He hesitated, wondering if it would be wise for them to see Louis and then he turned and headed towards the coven hideout. "Follow me..." Events had to play out as they were destined. Dante had learnt that the hard way.

They were at the smallholding deep within the forest in under half an hour. Dante had taken them the long route to ensure that Louis' spies would have enough time to alert the coven leader to their presence. By the time they arrived inside the large house that was currently the coven's main base, the seats around the makeshift throne were lined with coven members and Louis sat atop the dais, one leg thrown casually over the ornate arm of the throne.

"What have you brought me, Dante...trespassers?"

"This is Gard and Rayne. They have come looking for Michael."

"And what would you have with my coven member?" Louis' casual body language was a carefully constructed artifice. None of his coven were fooled by his stance and neither were his visitors.

www.noveLwoR(m).com

"We would have his head for almost killing one of ours," Gard answered, "and we want to know what he has told you about a certain individual who is now in our care."

There was hushed muttering around the room as Louis sat forward, fire dancing in his eyes. "How I punish my coven members is of no concern of those from across the ocean. You have my regrets about what happened to your vampire, but you also have the cause of that issue within your ranks. Neutralise her and I will resolve the Michael problem for you."

Lavender eyes glowed with displeasure, a low growl coming from Gard's lips. "You appear to be under the misapprehension that we are having a dialogue, Louis. This is not up for discussion or bargaining. Give us Michael and we will leave your coven alive."

"There are upwards of thirty-five vampires here, old one, and only two of you. Do not think your age evens the score. My coven hasn't survived this long and become this strong because we like each other. We are the most feared coven in Europe and you would be best to heed that fact." Venom dripped from each word, Louis' eyes darkening to almost feral as he spoke.

"I only need one to take down this coven though my mate gets a bit cross with me when I have all the fun," Gard countered, his voice so cold that some of the younger vampires present shifted nervously as the tension thickened in the room.

"Well yes I do, honey, but we're not getting very far with this train of discussion. Can I try?" Rayne gave him a sunny smile and that appeared to worry the younger vampires more than her mate's fury. It was clear that they were used to some truly dominant females in their coven.

When he nodded, she turned to Louis, her smile appearing innocent. "We have a message for you, Louis, from Freya Eriksson. She asked us to make you aware that Thereasa is her nephew's mate and therefore now a part of her family. Her exact words were, 'Tell Louis St Geraint, that if so much as one hair on Thereasa's head is harmed because of his actions, or inactions, that I will take a personal trip to Europe to have a little chat with him.' I believe that was verbatim, wasn't it, Gard?"

The silence in the room was deafening. For a long time no one moved or spoke, and then Louis let out a long, deep growl and his face darkened with fury.

www.no(v)Elw©rm.ċóm

"EVERYBODY OUT!"

©©(w).Ń(c)V©łwORmm.(c)cm