

## Chapter 676

www.noVéOW@Rm.com

Reasa nodded her agreement a split second before what Ashleigh had said fully penetrated her brain. Her heart sank, shock rocking through her body as the full import of what she'd just done registered. She had just admitted to Ashleigh that she was in love with Liam! Now that the thought was out there, she wasn't able to take it back and deny it. She couldn't avoid it, couldn't pretend it wasn't there. Somehow she had fallen in love with Liam Eriksson and she didn't know what to do about it.

How could she leave him now? Leaving was the only solution to the problem she had been able to come up with and she'd had to go and make it so much worse by falling in love with Liam? She had done nothing but bring irrevocable harm to the pack and their vampire friends. Louis was out to kill her, of that she had no doubt, which meant she would continue to bring harm to the very people who were now welcoming her into their lives.

She couldn't be responsible for that, she just couldn't. Liam would have to understand. He had to let her go and not come looking for her. It was the only way the pack would ever be truly safe.

The sound of Liam and his father coming downstairs shook her out of her reverie and she absent-mindedly answered a question about food that Ashleigh had just asked her. By the time the two males entered the kitchen, Reasa's expression was carefully neutral, no indication of that had just occurred visible to see.

She remained quiet as the family interacted, accepting the food placed in front of her and playing with it rather than eating. She felt sick to her stomach and nothing could have convinced her to eat anything. For the most part, they didn't appear to notice, and she almost let out a sigh of relief when the plates were cleared and Liam and his parents rose from the table.

"Just how bad are things with the younger pack members?" Liam was asking his father as they stood.

"Aaron has them out patrolling the south side of the compound. He's been tiring them out so they don't have too much time on their hands to think. The signs are that it's working already. Quite a few of them have calmed down." Nors held his son's gaze. "Cassia has mated though. She's returning to the pack later today with Pietro."

Liam frowned, concerned brown eyes turning to Reasa. The last time they had all been in the pack together Pietro had tried to kill her. Hopefully now the vampire has mated, some of Cassia's pack orientation may have transferred to Pietro.

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"I have to go meet with Rafe now to let him know how we got on at the Praetorian compound," he finally said with a half-smile gracing his lips. "As it's pretty quiet right now around here, why don't you stretch your legs a little and go for a walk around the compound, Reasa? It would probably be best not to head south though."

Thereasa couldn't believe what she was hearing. Not only was Liam giving her permission to wander around alone but also his parents weren't objecting. Could she really walk around unescorted? Would this be her opportunity to slip away unseen while their guard was lowered? Just the thought of disappearing made her want to weep but knowing the harm coming their way made her heart break even more. She couldn't allow Louis to hurt any member of this pack because of her.

"If that would be permissible, I would like to see more of the pack," she answered, keeping her voice carefully modulated not to show any sign of her tumultuous emotions.w@w.NoVeLwOr.M.Com

"Just don't go too far," Liam answered, his smile widening. "There are patrols around all the boundary lines so if you see any wolves out there, do what they indicate they want you to do."

His caution made sense, though she was going to do her best to avoid any wolves she came across. If luck was on her side she could slip passed them. Thanking Ashleigh for breakfast, Reasa kept her emotions locked down tight and headed outside with Liam, walking with him to the Alpha's house.

"I may be a while," he told her. "Despite the few hotheads around, my pack mates are pretty decent people. Enjoy your walk, and if you feel uncomfortable at all just head back to our place. You'll be fine there."

Now the moment was on her Reasa didn't want to leave. Staring up into Liam's smiling face her hand itched to reach up and touch him, to pull his head down and taste his lips once more. There was total trust in his eyes and she was about to break that trust. Even though she knew it was for the best, it didn't hurt any less. "I will not go far," she lied, holding her breath while she waited for him to acknowledge her words.

Liam nodded, heading into the Alpha's house, as Reasa turned towards the tree line. Her feet felt leaden but she took the first step, forcing herself to keep moving. There would likely be no better opportunity than this one and she had to keep going. She brushed a hand over her wet face, lowering her head and disappearing into the trees.

How far had she travelled already? Had she passed the boundary line? She'd been walking for close to half an hour, being careful to hide her tracks as best as she could. If the wolves came looking for her they would probably find her in the forest, but if she could make it to a road and hitch a lift into the city, then there was a good chance she could evade them.

A sound to the left startled Reasa, and she froze in her tracks. Something or someone was close by, and she hadn't seen any sign of them approaching. Could she outrun them? Had they even seen her? Perhaps if she stayed silent long enough they would leave? Any hope of that happening was dispelled when a male voice whispered close to her ear.

"You've made my job so much easier, Thereasa."w@w.noVê/VOËM.c(ç)≡

She screamed, but a hand clamped over her mouth, a thick arm snaking around her body to hold her pinned to a wide chest. The arm was naked, and as she struggled against him she realised he was completely naked which meant he was most likely a wolf as opposed to a vampire. It still made his next whisper so much more confusing...

"Michael sends his regards..."

Astonishment stilled her movements, dread washing over her. Michael? What was he doing aligning himself with wolves of all things? He detested all Weres as did the majority of European vampires. This man was certainly a Were. There was no reason for a vampire to run around a forest unclothed.

The moment of surprise passed, and her fear escalated. Michael excelled at being a vampire. His penchant for cruelty was almost as legendary as Louis', and he had no love for her. If her former coven leader had sent him then that was to be part of her punishment. He wanted her to die in the most excruciating manner possible.

Reasa started struggling again, kicking behind her to try to catch her captor off-guard. Her blows were ineffectual though. She was human now and so very weak.

The Were threw her to the ground, slapping her face as she tried to rise. His blow was hard but controlled. It was enough to cause her head to snap back against the bark of a tree, pain blossoming at the base of her skull. Crying out, she slumped to the ground in a wave of dizziness.

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