

## Chapter 369

Eline's mouth dropped open at his dismissive tone. She had to work hard to keep her emotions in check, something she hadn't had to do for a very long time. "Where Liam goes, I go," she managed to answer evenly, while battling the unfamiliar emotion of hate which was quickly forming towards the vampire in front of her. His arrogance was outrageous, the way he towered over her unacceptable.

"Not in my compound you don't, Missy," he shot back instantly, his eyes hard, and his smile never wavering as the delightful creature matched wits with him and tried to stare him down.

He knew despite her cold aloofness, that her emotions were whirling deep inside her. He could tell because Liam's stress levels were starting to escalate despite his expression never wavering. It was a little known fact that Kern shared one of the Várcolec's abilities. He could sense emotions, which was why he was so good at what he did, why he was Mec's second-in-command.

"You're part of the problem so you need to be taken out of the equation," he continued ruthlessly. "Now if that offends your sensibilities -- tough shit. You've helped cripple Liam so I'm not feeling particularly charitable towards you at the moment." *www.loveandwar.com*

Fury like nothing she'd never experienced washed over her. Green eyes began to glow as a loud hiss escaped Eline. "Who do you think you are?" She wasn't even aware that her voice had risen, that her cold façade had cracked and Liam was winning at her side.

"I've spent my entire life helping my cousin. I've been there for him every second of every day. Where the hell do you get off saying I've crippled him? You don't even know him and you think you can come in here and make snap judgements about people?"

Kern growled, facing down the furious women who were making his gut tighten in need as she literally crackled with power and rage now that her emotions had been released. She was fucking glorious and he knew one day he would have her. Not today because the timing sucked but one day soon he would have all that pent-up fire and passion in his bed. He would bathe in her and she would scream his name as they rolled in his sheets.

He dampened down the desire he felt, hid it from prying eyes and noses as he kept the smirk on his face, feasting on her.

"Do you want a fucking medal?" he berked. "What do you want me to put on it for you? Saint Eline -- Black Widow to all who love her? You may not eat your lovers but you know how to cut a man off at his bells with your brand of love."

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His words whipped across her flesh, harsh and stinging but he kept going. The truth often hurt but it was undeniable. "You've made Liam so dependent on you he's never had the opportunity to learn what he's needed to do to protect himself. Great fucking job there, Missy. Let's all give you a round of applause for your selfless act."

Dayton let out a furious roar as his daughter went chalk white, a harsh gasp escaping her as she took a step back from the raw fury burning in Kern's eyes. He was out of his chair in an instant ready to beat the vampire senseless.

Freye reached out and wrapped a hand calmly around his wrist, using her vampiric strength to halt her mate even though her own fury was bubbling deep inside her. She had made her daughter a promise twenty four years ago. She would keep that promise and so would her mate. *www.LoveandWar.com*

"Don't interfere, honey," she said levelly. "Eline is more than capable of taking care of herself and she won't thank you for it." She sounded reasonable though her eyes were almost bleeding to black belying the calm she was exuding.

Dayton shot her a disbelieving look, tugged at his wrist but she held firm. If he pulled hard enough she would release him but he could see that it was important to Freye that he allow their daughter to be strong even if it went against every protective instinct he had. He glanced at Eline but her gaze was on the vampire. She was completely oblivious to her parents' family drama.

"You'd better be right, Freye," he finally conceded unhappily, sitting down while still plotting as many ways to kick the shit out of Kern as he could think up.

Liam rose to his feet towering over Kern for a moment, his brown eyes thoughtful before turning to his cousin. He reached out and pulled her into his arms, for once being the one to soothe her.

"It's okay, Elle," he whispered stroking her hair gently. "Kern's right on some levels, just not all of them. He doesn't know you, doesn't understand what it has cost you to give so much of yourself to me. But I know and I will always be grateful for it even as I will always be ashamed for taking from you so selfishly."

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It was hard for Kern not to snort out loud, not to react to the tension in the room. He knew exactly what it had cost Eline all these years. His mouth may have said one thing but his mind was fully aware of the amount of damage suppressing her emotions had done to her.

It was as crucial to separate Eline from Liam as it was the other way around. Liam needed to learn to shield his abilities on his own but Eline needed to learn how to experience her emotions too. She was so close to breaking it was a wonder she hadn't cracked earlier.

Eline swallowed hard staring into Liam's face. She worked on her emotions, utilising years of painstaking discipline to bring down her defences and construct the necessary barriers to shield her cousin from her distress. She stepped back knowing what it cost him to touch her.

"I regret nothing, Liam and I never will," she finally answered, her cold eyes turning to look at Kern for a moment before she turned back to her cousin. "If you feel you need to go with the vampire then you must do what is best for you. Call me if you need me. And I'm so sorry for this."

"Eline?" Liam's confusion was nothing compared to Kern's when Eline stepped around her cousin to face him.

Liam felt the surge of violence and braced for it as Eline's fist connected with the vampire's face sending him flying clear across the room to crash against the wall. It obvious she hadn't contained her strength.

"That's my daughter," Freye sighed smugly into the silent room as Kern slid to the floor in a daze.

Eline stared at the male, cringing at the violence she'd committed. He had hurt her with his words and she'd wanted to hurt him back. She couldn't even blame it on her emotions taking control. She'd made a conscious decision before she hit him, otherwise she wouldn't have apologised to Liam first. What kind of person did that make her?

Ashamed of her actions, she crossed the room heading for the door as Kern struggled to his feet a wide grin on his face that contained nothing but delight. "Is that the best you can do, Missy?" he taunted as she walked past him, her expression a mask of serenity. "I'll look forward to the rematch."

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