

Chapter 567

Liam had such love and respect for the Beta who'd loved and lost, and found love once more with his aunt. He had given Freya a reason to live her life again, after years of being so wounded even her brother had begun to give up hope. How could he not love the Were who had brought happiness to his aunt's life? His smile was wide as he hugged him. "I think she'd have a few things to say if she thought I was, Day."

He turned to his cousin, giving a warm smile at her sardonic expression. "How was the visit to the grandparents?" Elina was always unsettled when surrounded by such open warmth from the Alexanders. They were very tactile and that was something she tried to avoid.[www.N@vèŁWorm.c@M](#)

"Grandmother thinks it would be a good idea if I stayed with them for a while. I politely declined, explaining I am needed here with the pack at the moment."

"Ma's right, honey," Dayton smiled. "Now that we know there is no threat to you from the poison, some time at the Hanlon pack would be a good thing. It would do you good to get away from all the shenanigans going on here."

"I'm not leaving Liam or the pack right now, Dad. We've already spoken about it. My place is here."

It was obvious Dayton wanted to press the point, but he held his peace and inclined his head in in acknowledgement. He smiled again at his nephew. "So, are you coming in or were you just enjoying the view?"[WŴW.noVeŁW@Rm.c@M](#)

His words had the desired effect, making Liam laugh. God, how he wanted to go inside their home, every fibre of his being wanted to... but for the first time in days, Reasa wasn't weeping. She was interacting with others and doing small basic things. If he went inside, she would close right back down again, turn inward and be in pain. He couldn't do that to her. "No, I'm going to take a walk, clear my head a little."

"I'll come with you," Elina said, giving her father a quick hug. "It would be better if Reasa becomes accustomed to others in stages. As I am Vârcolac, I should be the last stage of this family meeting."

Nodding, Dayton carried on into the house leaving the cousins alone. Elina's cool green eyes travelled over Liam's face quickly, before a faint smile touched her lips. "The weaving technique she showed you appears to be working well. I was concerned about you, being away for so long today."

Liam unconsciously adopted Dayton's previous gesture, looping a big arm across her shoulders as he forced his feet to walk away from his mate. "You don't have to take care of me anymore, Elle. Despite earlier, I'm doing fine. I just wasn't listening to wiser heads, and now I am. I am content for the moment. I can give Reasa the space she needs to adapt."

"She has a long road to travel, Liam. The shock to her system of what's been done to her...that will be a hard thing to come to terms with. On top of that, she's predisposed to hate us and that includes you. This isn't going to be easy and you will need all the help you can find."

"And you need to be living your own life and not using all of your energy trying to save mine." Liam dropped a kiss on the top of her head and pulled her through the trees towards the lake. For the first time in so long, he felt balanced enough to be able to concentrate on someone else rather than trying to keep everyone out of his head. It was time Elina had a moment to herself, to remember what it was like to laugh and enjoy life.

"Do you miss her, Elle, that little girl who once lived inside you and laughed all the time?"

Her reluctance was plain as she tugged back on his hand. "Liam..."

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Grinning at her, he moved at supernatural speed, picking her up and throwing her high into the air. His move was so unexpected she didn't have time to counter it, merely let out a startled cry as she sailed through the air and landed in the middle of the lake, sinking swiftly to the bottom. As she was swimming back up to the surface she was sucked back under by Liam's large body splashing beside her.

Spluttering, Elina broke the surface, pushing her wet hair out of her face as she turned cold eyes on her cousin. "Have you lost your mind?" Loud laughter filled the air, a rich deep baritone that sounded so free, so full of joy that for a moment she was mesmerised by the sheer beauty of it.

"No, this is called having fun." He continued to chuckle, splashing water in her face. "You remember what fun is, don't you, Elle? And smacking Karn clear across the room doesn't count." He splashed her again causing her to splutter once more.

"Stop it, Liam." There was the hint of a threat in her voice but he ignored her.

"Or what? You're going to beat my ass? You think you could, Elle? Just because you can take on a vamp doesn't mean you can take on me." The next wave of water he sent over his cousin was fast and unrelenting. He dived under the water and grabbed her legs, pulling her under while she was still shaking the water from her face.

Elina snapped. It was the only word she could apply to the sharp pull in her head, as she sucked in water and sank to the bottom of the lake again. Striking out, she caught Liam in the stomach, her blow hard as she pushed him away. Scrambling to the surface, she kicked out when he grabbed her leg to suck her back down. Was he trying to kill her?

The sound of his mirth filled the air and he was on her again, capturing her in his strong arms and rolling her over under the water. She wrestled hard with him, getting free and dunking his head under the water as he struggled against her tight hold. "See how you like it, idiot." She muttered the words through lips that threatened to tilt upwards as she watched him squirm.

Her cousin broke her hold and came at her fast, rising up out of the water with her balanced in his arms. "Nice try, Elle, but I'm always going to be stronger than you physically."

She was sailing through the air again, laughter bubbling out of her mouth, as she struck the water hard and began to sink. She had to close her mouth quickly, but was coming back up and searching for her cousin the instant she broke the surface. He was a few feet away from her, swimming away. "Don't even think about it." Elina dived under the water, using her speed to catch him quickly and tug him down. See how he liked it!

She smirked in delight as he sank, making her own bid for escape knowing he would come after her in a heartbeat. He may have superior strength because of his physique, but she had the superior speed and was more agile. She dodged her cousin's attempts to reach her and climbed soaking wet out of the lake, bending over to catch her breath as she giggled at his bedraggled state.

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