

Chapter 675

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Liam retrieved their packs from his father. "I'm going to head up to my room with our stuff. I take it there's no problem with Reasa staying with us again?" He threw the question out light-heartedly though his gaze was fixated on his mother's reaction.

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His parent shared a brief look and then his father smiled. "I'll give you a hand, son."

There was no mistaking the fact that he meant for them to leave the women alone for a while to have a 'talk'. Liam wasn't so sure if Reasa was up for that but his father's expression told him that he didn't really have a say in it. With a resigned sigh, he followed him out of the kitchen.

Reasa didn't know what to do when Liam left her alone with Ashleigh. For want of anything better to do she sat down at the breakfast table, tensing a bit when Ashleigh sat down across from her. The blonde Were eyed her speculatively for a moment before she gave her a half smile.

"There's no need to look so concerned, Thereasa. Wiser heads than mine have prevailed." Ashleigh paused, looking down at her joined hands resting on the tabletop before she looked back at the former vampire.

"I love Liam with all my heart," she began, that love blazing from her eyes. "His happiness is the most important thing to me and for a time, I wasn't able to see that too clearly. I was too busy being a mother reacting to her child being in harm's way that I didn't want to see in you what he saw. The only thing that registered with me was that you tried to kill him."

She paused, letting the words sink in. "I'm not going to lie to you, Thereasa. I am still working on that and it may take me a while to fully forgive you for hurting my son. However, I am willing to try to see past it."www.NovEL@er(M).Co@

Reasa knew it had to be hard for her to say that, and it was probably more than she deserved. She nodded her acceptance of Ashleigh's position. "If it is of any assistance, I do regret that action now, Ashleigh."

Brown eyes searched her face for a long moment, and then there was a softening to Were's expression. "I can see that," she conceded. "I think I even believed it before you headed to the Praetorian compound. I just wasn't ready to have this conversation with you. I needed some more time to work through the emotions I was going through."

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"You were a mother protecting your child," Reasa answered, her body still tense indicating how uncomfortable she was with the situation. "I respect and understand your position. If our circumstances were reversed, I would have reacted exactly as you did. You are a good mother to Liam."

Ashleigh laughed, but there was no humour in it. "No, I was a selfish mother, afraid of losing her son. The relief at knowing the Vârcolac were immune to your poison was quickly tempered by Liam claiming you as his mate. In my mind, you had failed to take my son away from me in one way, but were instead going to take him from me in another. No one knows the mating call of a Were better than I do. There is no stronger pull in the universe and Liam follows his wolf. That I rejected his claim and made your time living here untenable is not the act of a loving mother."

Reasa had expected her time at the Eriksson house to be more of the same when it came to Liam's mother, but this unexpected admission left her in confusion. There was a bitterness to Ashleigh's tone but it wasn't directed at her. Instead, it was directed inward and that wasn't what she'd expected to encounter at all.

Hesitantly, she reached out, placing her hand over Ashleigh's. She had done so instinctively and was further confused when the Were didn't pull away but instead turned her hands around to capture her's in a tight grasp.

"I do not find you at fault for your treatment of me, Ashleigh. I am aware of how much importance you hold in Liam's heart. It is hard not to as I have walked in his memories and seen the love his family have given him throughout his life."

Reasa blinked slowly, trying to find the words she was looking for. "I am not good at this kind of thing," she admitted, "but what I do know is Liam has a huge heart, full of so much love and forgiveness. I believe he receives that from you, his mother. Do not hold onto a past action that is but a mere fraction of a second in comparison to the wealth of moments where you have excelled yourself. You do yourself a disservice if you do."

She had never known she had such eloquence or such inclination towards forgiveness. Clearly, Liam was rubbing off on her because she was astounded to find that she meant everything that she said and that she truly did want to assuage the self-loathing she was seeing in the other woman's expression.

"I am ashamed, Thereasa," Ashleigh whispered, a lone tear falling as her grasp tightened. "Yes, you came here with ill intent but I allowed myself to be blinded by that fact and I failed to see how much you have grown in your time with us. I let hate dominate my heart and I have hurt my family by doing so. It has taken me a while but I am starting to accept that Liam can never be happy without you in his life."

Something twisted in Ashleigh's heart as she said the words; the knowledge that she was part way to forgiving and that it didn't make her a bad mother if she did. Liam had chosen this woman to be his life's mate, and now she was really seeing her for the first time, perhaps that wasn't as bad a choice as she'd once believed. "You are welcome in my home, Thereasa. For however long you wish to remain here."

Did miracles happen? Reasa had never believed in them before but sitting here with Liam's mother was a revelation that astounded her. Ashleigh was willing to welcome her into her home and into her family. Though she hadn't said the latter words, the implication was there. She swallowed hard to dislodge the lump that was suddenly clogging her throat. "I am grateful for your generosity, Ashleigh." She couldn't think of anything else to say.

The blonde Were scrubbed at her wet cheeks, rising from her seat as she did. "How about we start again and see how we get on? Make a fresh start for both of us? We both love Liam so we have a strong foundation of commonality."

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"I am ashamad, Tharaasa," Ashlaigh whisparad, a lona taar falling as har grasp tightanad. "Yas, you cama hara with ill intant but I allowad myself to ba blindad by that fact and I failad to saa how much you hava grown in your tima with us. I lat hata dominata my haart and I hava hurt my family by doing so. It has takan ma a whila but I am starting to accapt that Liam can navar ba happy without you in his lifa."

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