

Chapter 194

Everything was so fucked up.

Zeke drove Ava home, but he could see by the shell–shocked look on her face that she didn’t even know what was going on. He was still confused. When he’d felt himself fading, he’d thought for sure he was dying, and they were all screwed.

And then he’d woken up to realize they were.

Ava had been ready to give up at the mere thought that her father would be used against her. And now he was

That bastard had made his declarations, and then they’d all filed into the waiting car and had driven off to the guest houses. He’d had to hold Ava back from following. She looked so lost and broken. He could feel the sense of loss even though her father was still alive and well.

And he would stay that way as long as they played ball.

Shit.

Surely, they had enough information now? It was time to do this, whether they were ready or not.

The guards hadn't stopped them from getting into his car, and the ones outside his house didn't bat an eyelid when they parked up. Maybe the news had travelled now. They were members of the fucking Council.

Shadow growled in his head at the distasteful feeling those words caused.

He looked at his mate. She needed to snap out of this and prepare for war. It was why her father had told her he was okay even though they had done a number on him. Did that mean they had Mr. Patrick as well?

It would be up to them to save everyone.

"I think we need a drink," he said to her.

Ava turned her head to look at him as if she couldn't believe he was suggesting that. But she was in shock, and that was the best he could do. He had just the thing, too.

"Trust me," he whispered and got out of the car.

When he walked around to open the car door, he could see the guards were watching his every move. He had killed several of them today, but none of them seemed affected by that. None of them seemed angry or upset. They were just... lifeless. But they were better off than the monsters Hansson wanted to create. They couldn't allow any of those out into the world.

He helped Ava into the empty house and headed straight for the kitchen. He pulled out a nondescript bottle and a couple of glasses from one of the cabinets before he took Ava to the basement.

He poured them both a shot once they'd sat down.

"Drink up," he said.

Ava tipped the shot down before she coughed and spluttered.

"What the hell, Zeke?" she asked. "This burns; what is it?"

"A special mixture. Guaranteed to give wolves a buzz," he said before tipping his shot down

"This isn't what we need. Zeke," Ava growled.

"No, we need you to snap out of this and prepare to fight"

Ava looked away from his gaze.

"We are monsters, Ava. You have to embrace who you are because that's the only way we will save your father. He needs you to be the monster you were meant to be," he urged.

"But my wolf..."

"Have another shot of this and speak to her again. She knows what's at stake; she'll speak to you. I have faith in her. But you need to loosen up. Ava. Stop thinking of what might happen and who we might lose. You

need to think like your wolf. Understand each other. Become one. We don't have any more time left."

There could be no more excuses.

"But he expects us to give him his soldiers tomorrow."

"We will give him something else," he said as he poured another shot.

"Now, have another and then let's speak to your beautiful wolf. Most mentors always think you have to focus, but getting drunk works just the same."

Especially when trying to reason with wolves like theirs.

He looked pointedly at the glass she hadn't picked up, and Ava rolled her eyes and took it. They clinked their glasses, and then he downed his shot.

Ava spluttered and coughed again, but he knew she'd had more this time. This drink wasn't for amateurs, and it would have probably damaged her liver in one shot if she'd been human. But his baby was just like him, and it was time he showed her.

When they finally walked back up the stairs, he decided maybe a change of scenery was what she needed. Somewhere peaceful, like the lake.

He went to open the door but paused with his hand on the handle,

What the... How the hell had he missed this? He'd been so focused on his mate that he hadn't sensed the invasion. Did he know they were in there?

There was a soft knock from the other side that made him tense. Ava sucked in a breath, and then he saw the look on her face as if she could sense him on the other side, too.

"How did he know?" she whispered. "You said this room is protected."

The knock came again.

He couldn't trust these people. Allowing that vampire into his private space would be like confessing to Hansson directly. They were his minions, and they did their job. They'd said so themselves.

The knock came again, and it was Ava who opened the door. She didn't wait to discuss it with him first.

Andrei zoomed in and shut the door after himself.

The vampire only threw a cursory glance down the stairs before he looked at Ava.

"Do you know how a man like Hansson has Diego, Iulia and me falling all over ourselves to do what he wants?" Andrei said. "Because we tried to fight, and it didn't work. He killed everyone we've ever cared about."

"You warned us about that already." Zeke growled.

“He killed everyone except the ones we truly love,” Andrei said. “Those he kept for a special kind of hell.”

“Why are you here, councilor?” he growled again.

“Because I know the type of wolves you are, and I know you think this would be the end of the world. But look at Diego, he’s okay. We do a few jobs, and he leaves us alone most of the time. All you have to do is this one little thing, and you’ll get back to your studies and training. He’ll leave your families alone.”

Like he was expected to believe that all their advice was from the kindness of their hearts.

“This thing is bigger than just the two of you,” Andrei hissed. “You can’t take him down alone; you’re just children. Don’t fuck it up for everybody else who might have an actual shot.”

Well, hello.

He cocked his head as he looked the vampire in the eye.

So it wasn’t all peaches and cream in Camp Hansson.

“Who did he take from you?” Ava asked quietly.

“My brother,” Andrei said. “He’s got Diego’s little sister and Iulia’s mother. And if you defy him, he will have your father, too. He’ll trap him in his mind and I know you think I’m heartless, but it’s better if you

pick five people you don't give a shit about than wait until you lose everybody."

Andrei looked down the stairs again.

"I almost left because I didn't think you were here. Whoever set this up for you is good. Maybe you have strong connection and feel you can do this, but it's not your time yet. You'll have a shot in the future when you're stronger. And because of what you are, you may be our greatest asset. But for now, please, just fall in line."

Then he opened the door and took a moment to assess the situation before speeding out of the room.

He looked down at Ava and saw the look on her face. She had bought into all that bullshit.