

Changing Things Up

Chapter 13

Melina's POV

"I don't want anyone getting on the bad side of the Council because of me. We don't have to cancel it. We can reword it. So we have veto power over any of the jobs. There are ways to do this without alerting them that we're done being their guard dogs, they like to sic on their enemies," I quietly announced.

"That is a great idea. We always send the same contract. We have a month to complete this, and I believe we can slip it in without them being the wiser. Their disrespect for us is evident," Alexei stated.

"Another great idea, honey," my father told me.

He knew how heartbroken I was. He knew that my experience had changed me. Trevor's gall of acting like he loved me, genuinely wanted me, as I was rejecting him, was infuriating. His offer of wanting to mark me on the spot made me physically ill. I will never allow him to mark me. He sent men after me to kill me, and ended up killing our baby. How could I allow him to act like nothing happened between us?

I will never accept him as my mate. The lack of care and concern he had for our baby. I'd never be able to get past that. I touched my stomach and tried to ght my tears. I was nally safe enough to be able to grieve the loss fully. An innocent life was taken because of lies. Trevor was never willing to give me a chance. He allowed his hate to override our bond.

I remember the day we met. I'd been worried that Maksim and I would have to wait centuries before nding our mate, like our father and uncle had to wait for. I was shocked that I'd found my mate at twenty-one. I couldn't have been happier. I was on the team to come and work the job near Mt. Hood, Oregon. The job was initially for one pack. They had been getting attacked. It was a small job, but they lost ten pack members in just a few days. The vampires had expanded to additional packs, and deaths rose daily.

The local packs came together to pay us to come out and deal with their vampire issue. The vampires weren't giving them a break. Their small coven had twelve members, more than half of whom were brand-new edglings. They were the ones who had been causing the problems in the packs. Fledglings were more bloodthirsty than your average vampire. They were the reason that by the time we arrived three days later, almost thirty warriors had been killed.

Our team had a new rule for team members who had found their mates. It came into play when one of our newer team members was severely injured. That incident almost cost Ivan and his mate Bonnie their lives, as he went to help her and was attacked from behind. They both nearly died that day. After that happened, the new rule was implemented. Mated pairs didn't go to ght on the same team. They alternate. One parent stayed behind with their children. While the other worked. It was her rst job, and was supposed to be straightforward. That was how we were reminded never to anticipate a job would go easy.

Kira and Blake didn't do the same as we did. They worked very well together. They left their children with my parents to come and help us together. Kira was there to help heal Blake if he got hurt. He was there to protect her if she got hurt. It was widely known that they would rather die together than go on without their other half. While waiting for the guys to return from turning in the rental cars, Kira told me Blake had stayed behind to watch the children with my mother. She was so overcome with worry over what had happened to me. I felt terrible that I had caused all this, all because I wanted my mate.

We all had a gut feeling that this job we were on now would be tough. So, the team consisted of me, Maksim, Dmitry, Kira, Blake, Adrik, Ivan, Irina, Polina, and Nadia. Once the number of deaths increased so quickly, we knew we were dealing with edglings. Kira and Blake insisted on working together. They refused to be apart. We had to act soon, as time was of the essence with this job. The Fledglings were getting bolder with each attack.

We ew in the next morning and were thankful that this occurred in the middle of December. We had a longer time frame of nighttime hours to nd where they lived and deal with them. There is no reasoning with a edgling. Their need for blood consumes them. They had no control over their bloodlust. Even if their Sire, who created them, asked them to stop. They wouldn't be able to comply. They had to be stopped, and the person who turned them had to be stopped. It was wrong to have sired more than one vampire at a time. Whoever was behind it was trying to build their coven.

What they were doing was a serious offense. After dealing with the Sire's children, I'd already submitted a formal request to deal with the Sire. It was reckless behavior on their part. They could have wiped out the ve packs in this area if the Fledglings had continued to run unchecked. We had already been given the go-ahead and kill the entire group. My family has been running this team for a long time now, for over four hundred years. We've worked with a lot of supernatural creatures over that time. I knew we would deal with the problem, but I was glad our father had created a new protection item for us. It had come in handy, especially for this job.

A tight chain mail that started around our neck, covered our shoulders, and ran down both arms. Each one had been made specically for us, to our precise measurements. It allowed us to ght without worry, knowing that we were protected. We had freedom of movement we needed to have full range of motion. The edglings couldn't help their behavior. All newly turned vampires did the same thing. There could be no gaps in it. If a Fledgling could reach a vein, the chain mail wouldn't serve its purpose. The ght continued, but the chain mail had helped me and Polina. We would have been severely injured as we had both been jumped from behind. They tried to latch onto our throats before realizing they couldn't reach the vein. It was a mistake they quickly learned, but couldn't recover from. I wish I'd stayed home for that job. Then I would have never met Trevor.

It's my fault that my mother is overcome with worry. It's my fault that our coven and Black Adder will be at odds with the High Council, which will be a problem. I know it, and they know it too. Despite that, they still love and want to support me by doing this. No matter the line it will draw between our team and the Council. I knew I couldn't allow them not to continue with the contract. It would end badly. Like I said, I had a great deal of time to think while stuck in that stupid tree.

I was naïve to think Trevor would accept me. That he would be thankful to me and the team after we helped all their packs with the edglings. I saw his expression when he rst realized that I was his mate. It was apparent disgust, yet I brushed it off. I ignored his knee-jerk response because I wanted him to want me. I thought it would just take time. I built this grand love affair up in my head because I wanted it so badly. I knew I could wear him down by proving my love. I denied him nothing. Despite his thinking I didn't have one, I gave him my heart and soul. But I'm not just a vampire. I had Storm, and I considered her to be my soul.

My father and brother allowed me to cry. They knew how I was. Right now, I want to release the grief I felt. I know I will always mourn the loss of my child; it won't just be today. I will carry them with me, in my heart. They allowed me time to come to grips with what had happened in the last twenty-four hours. The most painful day I've ever experienced. The loss of both my baby and my mate was a hard loss. Admittedly, losing my baby was worse. As angry as I am with my mate, my love for him was still there, even after the rejection. It will fade, but this won't be something I get over quickly.

I had been looking down as I grieved for my child. I didn't want my family to see me in pain. I know in my heart that everyone on this plane was my family. Jaxon is willing to go against the Council for me, which is enough. I just can't let him do that for me. We will land in thirty minutes, and I will hit the ground running.

"Uncle Alexei, I saw the nod. You were able to get my money back, correct?" I asked.

"Yes, they have seven cents to their name. I already had Josepf do the honors. He put the two million in the account. He said it was child's play getting it back out of the account. He said to let him know if you wanted him to cause havoc with the Still Water's computer system," my uncle replied.

"No, he doesn't have to do that. I just wanted my money back. Trevor and Heidi have gotten enough goodwill already off my money. They won't need any help running the pack into the ground. She's incredibly lazy and doesn't want to work. Just because I stayed in my room to keep the peace, didn't mean I didn't get work done. I just didn't want to ght my own pack members. I stayed in our room and worked on my laptop. Don't worry, my laptop's useless to them. The circuit board will melt with three incorrect logins, rendering it useless, but I bought it and am willing to take the loss. It will take longer letting them drag the pack down, but then they won't have anyone else to blame for the pack's collapse," I replied.

"The only request I have is that Still Waters will never receive our assistance again. I will call and have an attorney specializing in this kind of contract come to Black Adder to assist us. We saved Alpha Brian during a job three years ago, and he said he owed us. His brother, Jaden, will be the one to help us. He excels in putting loopholes into contracts. I don't want them realizing we can deny any rescue until after the contracts are signed. I'm calling in the favor as soon as we head back to the pack," Maksim advised.

"That works, just don't go too far on my account. Still Waters will sink on its own, very soon. We don't have to step in to get that done. I don't want you ghting with the Council over me. I'm safe now. I'm home. I want the team to be safe, and putting these loopholes into the contract will keep us safe," I replied. My plan has already started. Trevor offering to mark me in front of so many will denitely set Heidi off. That, and me taking my funds back, makes it a recipe for disaster for Still Waters. They just don't know it yet.