

## Chapter 125

I sat in the restaurant that I planned on meeting the Vampire King. It was a beautiful restaurant and I had to take the trip to France for it. Originally I wanted to take the train but it would have been 18 hour drive and so I just took the 2 hour flight. It was in the middle of Paris and I hated that there were so many people around. While it meant we couldn't do anything, I had no doubt that Oran could snuff out every life in the restaurant.

I took a deep breath, running my hands through my hair. This morning before the flight left, I burst into the castle and asked my mom to cut it. She did and now all of it was above my ears for the first time in years. Zeke didn't even know that I did because I didn't have time to swing back to the house. It was just a last minute decision. Mom had done a phenomenal job as well.

Now, I was just waiting. I'd gotten to the restaurant fifteen minutes before our meeting time and the staff were nice enough to seat me. My French was terrible on a good day and I didn't even try today. Luckily, the waiter knew English and I was able to order a glass of wine. Everything still hurt. I'd taken an ice bath but I felt like a robot trying to move. Zeke had to help me this morning and asked if I needed some Olive Oil to grease my joints.

Rolling my eyes just thinking about it, I felt an immense presence behind me. I wondered if Oran was coming in as though I was about to out him. His power wasn't as much as my mother, but it was more than I felt from the tree that was in the center of Mom's castle. The point of this meeting was to not let it slip that I knew. We weren't

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going to play it like that. My eyes wandered up to one of the corners that I knew Pipsqueak had a camera but I knew there were probably at least twenty more in this room.

"Alpha King Vale."

I jumped as though his voice startled me. Standing up, I turned and smiled. "King Julius, thank you so much for meeting me."

We shook hands and he smiled as well, but I could see there was a hesitation in his eyes.

"No, thank you for coming out here. I know it's a bit of a trek from where you are."

I shook my head. "No, no, I'm happy to meet halfway. It's the least I could do. I already ordered my wine but I waited for any food until you got here. I was a bit early."

"That's perfectly fine." He sat down across from me and I felt him pull back his power.

The waiter came over and he spoke in fluent French that sounded amazing. The waiter smiled and nodded before heading off to fill his order. I took my glass and sipped it.

"I am jealous. My French is horrible. It's just one of the languages I haven't had the chance to learn."

He smiled. "I've had long enough time to practice. There are still time for you as well. I will say, I still struggle with writing Arabic. I can speak it but try and get to me to write anything...I might as well request a grade school child to write it for me."

I laughed. "I couldn't even imagine learning Arabic, but I

think the most unbelievable thing is that you struggle with writing it."

"We all have some humanity in us. No one is perfect. Not even a King."

"Oh, do I know that. My mom recently came back to visit for the summer. Every time I talk to her, I am reminded that I still have a lot to learn."

His eyes narrowed and I could see I had him on full guard. "Didn't you originally have a bounty out for her?"

I nodded. "I did. I knew she killed a High Councilor but I didn't know why until she came back and explained. She told me he was connected to the BloodHunter group. Imagine that, one of our own kind, on the side the BloodHunters. I was able to confirm it and it's so frustrating. She's gone through so much and now she just wants to relax." I smiled, swirling around the wine in my glass. "She deserves a vacation. It was a shock, when she described what kind of hell she had been through. Now though, I think our relationship is on the mend and she's getting time to spend with family."

"Well, I'm so glad you were able to work it out with your mother. Family is something that we should never take for granted. Sadly, living so long seems to drill that into you." He looked sad for a moment.

"I think our chosen family is just as important as our blood relatives. Even more so as vampires, I would assume. Morgan has chosen my mom and in all that, has gained the craziest family but I would think the smile he has every day he is over; he would consider it worth it. I'm sure you have people around you like that as well."



He smiled but it didn't reach his eyes. "Well, of course. You find people and they end up being with you forever."

How he said it and how detached he was, made it apparent that he was lying. The waiter came back with a bottle of champagne as well as two glasses. He took both our orders for food and then disappeared again. We sat chatting about random things going on in the world. I spoke about the difficulties of trying to get all the packs on the same page. In return, he discussed the difficulty of making sure that vampires didn't get too zealous in the main cities and let their presence be known.

As we ate, we continued our conversation and talked about the difficulties of being King. How neither of us had really wanted to position but we were pushed into it. It was far different process for the Vampires but apparently, if you were nominated, you didn't have the right to refuse. Morgan's feeling on the matter made more sense.

Whereas, I'd been born into this position. My dad had tried to refuse the position but it didn't end well for him. He also just let someone else be King who was terrible for our kind and made it so much harder than it needed to be bringing the packs together.

"Would you like some desserts, messieurs?" The waiter asked after clearing our table.

Normally, I would have said yes. I loved having the pastries but the thought of it made me queasy, knowing Mom was going to kick my ass tomorrow. I didn't need anything unhealthy in my body right now. Declining, Oran did as well. He spoke to the waiter in French whose eyes widened and then he hurried off.

"So, Alpha King Vale, what is it you wanted to specifically

“speak to me about?”

Taking a breath, I straightened my seat. “King Julius...” He was staring hard into me. “We have received multiple reports that many of your vampires are going against the treaty. Not just that my packs have been reporting issues but the Fey have also been having issues as well that your people are coming into their areas. They are feeding on protected territory, swiping children, claiming land as theirs and even trying to sell and entice packs into buying more Nova.”

There was a split second I could see surprise in his face but it was so brief that I wondered if I’d even seen it. He leaned back in his chair though, tapping his finger against the table.

“I haven’t received any such reports on my side.”

I grabbed my briefcase that I had kept next to my chair and produced the mountain of paperwork that we had worked on. Sliding it over to him, he took it and started to read through it quietly.

“These are all the accounts I’ve had to deal with from my packs. King Uriel of the Fey has also been dealing with these reports and I have collected those as well. He’s currently in talks with his own people otherwise I would have had him meet us as well but I figured we would be able to come to an understanding. We need to curb this kind of behavior. It goes against the peace we signed and the treaty we have been upholding.”

He was quiet for a long time, going through the paperwork. Taking a sip of my wine, I waited for him to say something. This was the pinnacle of our plan. What happened next was to see how we moved forward. I tried

not to hold my breath and I busied myself with sipping the wine.

"There are quite a few reports in here."

"There are. That's why I wanted to speak with you directly. If it was only a couple, I would chalk it up to some wild ones and specifically go after them myself. However, with this many, I needed to speak with you. Before anything could be misconstrued..." I interlocked my fingers and watched him.

He set down the pages and pushed them to the side. His finger tapped the stack of pages.

"What would you have me do?"

My eyebrow rose. "What do you mean? I need you to get your people on the same page. There will always be those who don't necessarily agree with the treaty but it was done with all of our subjects in mind. We as leaders need to ensure that our people come together and follow the rules we set out."

Oran, with the face of the Vampire King, pushed the documentation back at me. "I don't think I will. I think this treaty has been a mistake and we shouldn't need to adhere to rules that were provided by mutts who don't understand what it means to live a long time. That we don't need to conform just because you fear what we are able to do."

My eyes widened. "Julius, we spoke about this already. There were no issues with what was set up. We adjusted with the requests you had of us. Why are you changing your mind?"

His smirk made me want to punch him in the face but I



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had to remember that I was no match for him. Not right now. "Because Vale, we are better than you. We will always be better than you. Whatever you do is up to you. But this treaty does nothing for us and I refuse to uphold it any longer."

"Are you saying you're breaking the peace that we all agreed on?"

Standing up, he closed the buttons on his jacket and ran his hands through his hair. "That's exactly what I am saying. Screw your treaty. We will do whatever the hell we want. I'd like to see you come after us for it, little Alpha King."

My jaw dropped as I watched him leave.

"Farewell, little Alpha King. Go play with your little toy soldiers and leave the leadership to those of us who understand what it means to lead."

I was left sitting at the table, shocked as he walked out. After taking a minute to compose myself, I looked up at the camera I knew was there and nodded. We had got what we wanted, what we needed. Now, we would begin the operation to bring Oran down.

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