

## Chapter 134

I guess I shouldn't have been surprised by how long it took to set up camp for so many people. Especially with non-magical means. We also sent out scouts to the area trying to exactly pinpoint where Oran's troops started and where they were deciding to defend. They were definitely defending the castle but none of the scouts saw hint of the Vampire King himself. Nor did anyone see the kids. The High Council castle was huge though, and it made me worry just how many of their numbers were inside the castle.

Zeke and I set up our own tent with the help of Hector, who apparently was a master at putting up tents. He had his and Mom's up within twenty minutes. As well as the kids tent next to them. I looked at their closed tent entrance. The kids hadn't exited the tent in twenty minutes. Zeke said if they hit forty minutes that we should go in and rescue them. I told him he was on his own. I'd been on the receiving end of those 'talks'. Add in Grandpa and there was no way I was walking in there of my own will. I don't care how old I was, it was not happening.

"Alpha King, we have set up the perimeter and we have a full guard standing watch at three different layers."

I nodded at Julian. "Thank you." Looking up at the darkening sky, I sighed. "We will have to wait till the morning to send in a messenger. It's too late now. Make sure that everyone is fed and ready. I don't want those on watch first to be exhausted. Is that understood? Make sure we have everyone swapping out at a decent time."

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"Yes sir. Alpha Ezekiel has been checking the list and confirmed the switches. He's now walking through the camp and confirming which groups go to which cooking tents."

Smiling, I looked down at the map on the table in front of me. "Good. You can rejoin your group."

Julian left and I rubbed my face. Zeke was so good with this. His organization was meticulous and awe-inspiring. I could feel his nerves through our bond but there was also a level of determination that shoved all the nervous jitters out. There was also an underlying anger as well, one that he kept simmering. The longer we were here, the more it flared up. I knew it was because of the kids. If it were up to us, I think the two of us would have stormed the castle, even if we didn't stand a chance.

My eyes glanced over at my mom's tent. I wondered if she could just walk into there. If she removed all her runes, if she could just walk in there and destroy them all.

"I think the issue would be that no one would be spared. Everyone within at least a mile radius would be dead."

Surprised, I jumped as King Uriel walked up to my table, smiling. He leaned over the table, looking at the map and our little chess pieces placed on it. Opening his hand, I watched with fascination as small little pieces seemed to build themselves in his hands. There were five on them and he placed them in the forest next to the white pieces I had for our group.

"Each one represents one hundred, correct?"

"Yeah. But...I didn't know you could read minds."

He laughed, shaking his head. "I can't. What I can read is peoples faces. Yours was far too expressive for a moment."

"Is she really that much of a force? I mean, it seems kind of silly for Oran to create such an unstoppable force."

King Uriel narrowed his eyes for a moment and I could see his power flash for a moment in his eyes, almost like he had a wolf stepping forward. "She has yet to find the limit of her power. With what Oran has done, he's created an unstoppable force, yes, but she also can't control it."

"Well, now she can with the runes. Thanks to you." I smiled at him. "Right?"

The look he gave me didn't inspire confidence. Instead, it gave me a sinking feeling. Like there was so much more that I didn't understand. After this mess was over with and the kids were back safe, I would need to dive deeper into what was going on. Right now was not the time. I just had to trust in King Uriel and my mom. There was commotion next to us and all the kids filed out of Mom's tent, heads down.

"Uncle Uriel!"

Herr was the first to look up and their heads all snapped up before running over. He laughed as he hugged them, picking up Herr and Juniper. Mom and Hector came out with Hector massaging her shoulders. She gave me a smile and came over to the table.

"How we looking?"

"Zeke's set up everything as he's been walking around and we have a perimeter set. We'll send out a messenger in



the morning." I gestured to the board. "We have everything set up that we can see but the unknown is who is inside the castle. Otherwise, we are ready."

Hector leaned over, taking in the map and nodded. "Not bad. Not nearly as bad as I thought it would be. I think we can work with this."

I gave him a raised eyebrow. "You were skeptical before?"

He gave me a smile but didn't answer my question. I was about to ask but Zeke came out from between two other tents, looking exhausted but that determination still shined through on his face.

"Well, that wasn't fun but it's done." His eyes widened and he looked down at his clipboard. "Wait...I didn't set us up for any cooking tent. Shit."

Mom laughed. "Don't worry about it, Zeke. I got it covered. I'll make us dinner. The tent we have is the smaller version of the one we actually brought when we went to your old pack. It's got the full kitchen set and we have supplies to make a few meals. I'll need to jump back to the house if we end up staying for than a week though." She hummed, tapping her finger against her chin.

"We can feed you as well. Our group has plenty of food."

Every single one of the kids froze for a second. Gale chuckled awkwardly. "Let's...um...hope it doesn't go that long. I mean, we need to get the twins...we don't want to wait that long."

My confusion at everyone's reaction was only made worse by my mom and Hector looking away, trying to hold in their laughter. Zeke sighed and set the clipboard on the table. He was eyeing the map.



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"So, what are the scenarios tomorrow? Have we gone through them yet?"

"No. Not yet. The plan is to send a messenger in the morning requesting that the Vampire King turn himself over to our forces. With that, we won't hurt any of the people who have gathered under him."

Zeke frowned. "What about the kids? We should be requesting them to give back the kids, shouldn't we? I mean..." He looked around at our little group.

Hector crossed his arms over his chest. "I mean...without Oran and the fact that we have all the exits, including the secret ones, covered we don't necessarily need to ask for them to hand the kids over."

"But!"

"We would also be reminding them that they have the kids. They could try and use them against us." Hector added when Zeke cried out.

I sighed. "We are here. They know the only reason we are here is because of the kids. I don't think anyone is forgetting them. I am still leaning toward actually adding it because I know some of their men can't just be Oran's guys. Those are probably inside the castle. If we sow seeds of doubt, we might be able to turn some of the ones there."

Mom snorted. "Don't count on it. They are on Nova 2.0 I'm sure. There are no emotions running through them right now. They don't give a shit."

As she said it, she pulled out a dollar and handed it to Sammy, who shoved it into her pocket. The exchange



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broke the heaviness and everyone was either smirking or chuckling. Shaking my head, I took Zeke's hand and kissed it. He wasn't happy but there wouldn't be anything at this point I could say to help.

"Let's get dinner going. We can work out more of the specifics later. We have time. I think right now we need to eat and rest."

"Come on kids, you're all going to help me cook." Mom smiled and took Felicity's hand as she walked back to their tent.

King Uriel left the table, still holding the two kids as he disappeared into the tent behind Mom and the kids. Zeke was nearly vibrating next to me, his anger and frustration unable to find a good outlet. Wrapping my arms around him, I kissed his head.

"We will get them. Don't worry."

He grabbed my arms, his hands almost painfully gripping me. "I know we will, Vale. I'm just worried about the condition we will get them back in. I'm worried about those here with us. I'm worried about our family putting their lives on the line. I'm worried about everything."

"I know. I am too. I'm worried about getting this wrong. This is on my shoulders as King. This could not only define the entirety of my reign but also the lives of my family, my kids, my pack..." My chin rested on his shoulder and I closed my eyes. "But I can't think about that. I have to focus on what we can do now. I can't fall into that or I will be useless. I know it's hard, Zeke but I need you. I need you to be strength."

His head leaned against mine. "Alright. Alright. We save



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the kids the first. Protect our family first. Everything comes after that."

"Exactly."

"Shall we help Auri make dinner?"

I sighed. "Yeah, I guess we should save everyone for Hector's terrible Dad jokes while Mom cooks."

"What are you talking about? Hector's jokes are hilarious!"

"Oh you poor sheltered wolf."

Kissing him on the cheek, I decided it wasn't enough. Grabbing him, I held his head up by the chin and devoured his lips. His body molded against mine as we kissed and I broke away just before I said fuck it to dinner. He smiled and gave me an eyebrow raise. Chuckling, I took a deep breath and pulled him to my mom's tent.

"Come on. I'll have dessert later."



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