

Chapter 178

"Ashleigh Bryant." His voice contained no emotion as he regarded her intently.

"You know who I am," she answered softly, surprise clearly in her expression and her voice.

He nodded slowly. "You have David's eyes and his familial scent too." *wWw.Nð@eIWðrm.com*

Danger flashed across his mind, his barriers ratcheting up as he saw pain flicker across her face briefly at the mention of her brother. This was why the little blonde was the biggest threat to him. Her pain at losing her family would never truly leave her. She could empathise with him and vice versa. She had the power to slip through his barriers if he wasn't careful. (w)(@)(©).novèLWðRm.còm

A soft growl sounded from the vampire at her side but he ignored the other woman. Despite the growl he sensed no hostile intent though he kept a portion of his senses attuned to her. He would be foolish not to.

"Freya." It was a quiet plea, Ashleigh turning to look at her friend. At least he had a name for the vampire now though he didn't turn his head to acknowledge her. That name told him who she was, what she was in the hierarchy of the vampires. His alert status became more prominent. The vampire was more lethal than he had anticipated but it appeared David's sister had her under some form of control.

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He could feel his wolf starting to stir within him. He was closer to the surface than normal but then he usually was around about this time. The moon was almost full and he would have to meet his agreement with the beast within him. He loathed doing so but it was the price he had to pay to be free of his wolf the rest of the time.

Ashleigh had turned back to him and was watching him with a thoughtful expression on her face. He waited for her to speak, to explain why she was here. He had a rough idea.

"I've been wanting to come and meet you for a while," she finally said. "Things have been a bit hectic recently though."

He cut her off abruptly. "Aaron leaves me messages," he answered tersely. He didn't want to hear it, didn't need to be told what had been happening. He knew all about the matings. He knew Cedar was mated to a vampire and now had two daughters that were hybrids.

He knew the Hanlon Pack had split and another Pack had formed in the neighbouring city. He had known that instantly when it had happened because that was the day his link with Jared Hanlon had been severed and a new link had been formed. He'd never met his new Alpha and didn't want to. He was only glad that the man was intelligent enough to stay away from him, to allow him his freedom as Jared had.

Another low, warning growl sounded from the vampire as the blonde paled slightly and swallowed hard at his abruptness. He knew what she had been hoping for by coming to him. Surely she must have known that it was a futile gesture?

"I can't give you what you need, Ashleigh." He softened his tone because despite everything he didn't want to hurt her unnecessarily. She was David's little sister and just for that she deserved better than what he was giving her at the moment.

"Maybe I can give you what you need, Dayton?"

There it was, the soft tone and compassion all over her face. The tentative hand of friendship being held out, a silent plea for a connection. For a moment David's face came to mind. He knew his friend would have wanted him to be some kind of comfort to his sister.

"I don't need anything," he answered coldly, his voice freezing her to the spot as he rebuffed her. She was obviously a very caring woman. Showing any sign of softness would just mean she would keep coming back. He wanted to get through to her completely that she wasn't required here.

He did feel a moment's regret at his hardness when he saw the pain in her eyes at his rejection and heard the soft gasp that escaped her but he didn't soften this time, made himself irresolute. "You've wasted your time coming here."

He was suddenly flying backwards so quickly he barely had time to blink. The vampire pinned him to the wall, emerald fury in her eyes as she hissed loudly, her face barely an inch from his. His wolf howled, his hackles rose but he didn't fight back. He met her fury with a gaze that was totally devoid of emotion.

"Freya!" Ashleigh yelled, hurrying towards them, her voice full of panic. There had been no sign that she was going to react, the low growls previously being issued were normal for her sister-in-law. Her heart was in her throat as she tried to get between them. She was afraid the vampire would hurt him.

"One little bite and you're dead," Freya hissed as she stared into hard, blue eyes, ignoring Ashleigh completely so intent was she on the cold, unyielding man in her grasp. Her fangs had already elongated, the urge to nip at his throat making her mouth water.

She had tried to do as Ashleigh asked of her but the way the wolf had looked right through her as if she was nothing had set her on edge immediately. She wasn't accustomed to being so thoroughly dismissed as if she didn't exist. She was an Ancient and one of the most deadly predators to walk the planet. People respected her and they feared her too.

The way he spoke to Ashleigh was also intolerable. She could feel the distress radiating from her brother's mate even though she tried hard not to show it. Who did this wolf think he was to hurt her sister-in-law?

"Freya, release him." Ashleigh's tone was firmer, more demanding. "I don't want this."

Freya turned to regard her intently, a slow smile creeping across her face. "This is only partially about you, Ash," she drawled softly, meeting the other woman's gaze unflinchingly. Anger and something else she didn't understand was coursing through her body, making her tighten her grip on the powerful, male throat beneath her fingers.

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His skin felt good against her hand, his muscles hard and unyielding. He was obviously very strong for a wolf and she liked strength in her men. For a brief moment she didn't know whether she wanted to lick him or sink her fangs into the pounding pulse at the side of his neck.

Her gaze swung back to the man she had pinned by the throat. "I find myself inexplicably wanting to taste a little wolf blood personally." Her tone was curious as she leaned forward and scented him deeply, smelling the wind, pine trees and something undeniably male. There was not one trace of fear in his scent.

His face remained impassive, his eyes devoid of all emotion. She wasn't really going to bite him but she did want to play a little. Only her prey wasn't playing her game. The only person who was actually upset with her was Ashleigh.

She hissed at him again, retracting her fangs slowly. "Pity for you, dog. I don't do mercy kills." Her tone was full of disgust as she released him, backing away, her eyes still burning with annoyance but there was something else deep within them; interest.