

## Chapter 192

Dayton tidied up the remains of dinner as Rayne disappeared out of the gallery He didn't even bother objecting to her sudden departure. He was used to it. She might like her little picnic dinners but once she was sated she tended to vanish, leaving him with the debris. Over the years he had donated quite a few picnic hamper sets to various goodwill stores.

He stiffened suddenly and put the full hamper on the desk in the corner. As he turned to face the gallery door it opened, and the cause of his sudden tension framed the doorway.

He had caught the sweet scent of cherry blossom and knew instantly who it belonged to. As he stared at the vampire in his doorway he couldn't help wondering how someone so cold could have such a sweet scent. It just didn't match the woman before him. What the hell was she doing back in his gallery?

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Freya stared at the wolf, her cold gaze flicking quickly over the man who had been on her mind most of the day. She honestly couldn't work out what it was about him that irritated her so much. The simple fact that he was a dog should have been enough to relegate him to the ranks of those beneath her notice, but it didn't.

She tried to eye him objectively, taking his species out of the equation. He was very tall, standing at six foot three inches. She liked tall men because she was almost six feet tall herself. The need to look down at a man automatically rendered him inferior in her mind.

He had a wild, untamed look about him which reminded her of a vampire in its feral state -- a state she relished. So that, she guessed, was a point in his favour. He did lack the inherent beauty of her kind but that wasn't exactly a negative; his male beauty was that of a wolf, rugged, wild and very, very hard. His wide shoulders and thickly muscled arms and thighs spoke of barely restrained power.

He moved with the predatory grace of an animal; dangerous, deadly and merciless -- all the things she admired in a male and so very seldom found in the one package. But it was his eyes that drew her the most. They were cold, dark blue pools of nothing. No emotion lurked there, no life at all. He carried the coldness of a vampire in his soul. He would have been better suited to her way of life than the one he found himself part of.

And yet the art work on the wall surrounding them called him a liar. It screamed of emotion, though the feelings it portrayed were the darker ones. Pain, suffering, agony, they all lived in the dark colours, the vivid reds intersecting the muddy browns and deep blacks. Looking at Dayton's art was like looking into the window of his soul. And hers.

Maybe that was why she wasn't able to stop thinking about him. Maybe it was because he painted her soul with such precision, such attention to detail, that she just couldn't stay away. Maybe it was because she recognised that they were two of a kind.uwW.N©r#1©oRM.com

"I'm closed."

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His words brought a slight curve to her lips as she stepped into the room properly and closed the door behind her. "I'm not here to buy," she answered coolly though she did start wandering around the room as if she were browsing each piece with the intent to buy.

Dayton wondered if it was wise to turn his back on the vampire. He had no idea what she wanted. She didn't appear to be in any hurry to leave, either. He was under no illusions: if she wanted to play with him she could do so quite easily. He was a strong wolf but no match for a vampire of Ancient status. A newborn Youngling he might stand a chance against, but not Freya Eriksson.

Still, she wasn't into mercy kills so he didn't think she was here to take his life. Not that he would have minded if she had been. His wolf growled loudly at the thought and he was surprised to find that the human part of himself actually objected too. Whereas before he wouldn't have cared one way or another if he was about to die, today, for some reason, he found a little spark of fight deep within himself. A small part of him actually gave a damn! It was quite astounding.

"What do you want, Freya?" he ground out, turning his back on her to retrieve the picnic basket. He headed towards the back office leaving her to her own devices. He could scent her following him and he wanted to growl his annoyance because under the sweetness of cherry blossom he could smell another scent, a very womanly scent. One that spoke of the beginnings of female arousal.

There was no denying that Freya was exquisitely beautiful. He knew that a night in her bed would be an experience of a lifetime; after all, she'd had centuries to perfect her sexual prowess. But there was just one major sticking point: she left him completely cold. He had no desire to touch her skin, to taste her sweetness or to slide into her delicious body. It was nothing personal. He just didn't desire any woman. The only one he wanted was Faith and she was dead.uwW.noV£LwóRm.C©m

Freya ran her eyes slowly down Dayton's back as she tried to keep her expression carefully neutral. Something strange had happened when he said her name for the first time. A slight shiver had whispered down her spine. Did he know who she was or was he simply just observant and had remembered Ashleigh saying her name? Whichever it was she just knew that she liked hearing it from his lips. She wondered idly what it would sound like whispered in her ear as he claimed her body.

Her footsteps almost faltered at the errant thought and the first stirrings of sexual attraction fluttering in her stomach. This was why she was here? She wanted to bed a dog? It was a preposterous thought no matter what pretty package the wolf wore. She would have to temper her pleasure to avoid hurting him and that would leave her unsatisfied. She didn't do gentleness; she gave complete rein to her passion. That would surely kill the wolf if she were to go there.

A slow smile curved her lips as she followed him into the office. She could always play with him just a little, just enough to get him to react to her as a woman. Maybe that would wipe from her psyche the insult he had paid her by looking right through her; then she could go back to her own life, free from such a distraction.

"I asked you what you wanted," he reminded her, dropping the hamper onto his desk and turning to look at her with cold, flat eyes.