

Chapter 195

It brought him some feelings of trepidation at the thought of once again joining with his people but when, last night, he'd admitted to himself the hurt he had been doing to his family, a part of him had suddenly wanted to see them, to be with them. Aaron and Cedar were part of the Armand-Hanlon Pack. He could see his siblings if he went back, or rather, asked for permission to take his place in this new pack.

He had never met the Alpha but knew of him through Aaron, and he appeared to be a good Alpha. He wasn't Jared, wasn't someone he had known his entire life, but maybe that was a good thing. Maybe having an Alpha who had never known Faith would make this easier.

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"Day, are you okay?" Rayne asked quietly, a hint of concern in her voice and he took a deep breath slowly and then checked his mirrors. He pulled out into the light morning traffic.

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"We have an Ancient vampire who has decided we're her entertainment," he answered just as quietly. "We're too isolated on our own. We need pack protection. We're going to my Alpha to ask if we can have that protection."

Rayne let out a long whistle, her heart starting to kick up a quick beat. She had no idea what had happened after she'd left the gallery the night before. She'd considered hanging around to make sure Dayton was okay but had decided that this was one battle he had to fight on his own. Whatever had happened he was going back to his people. Finally he was reaching out to the pack for help.

She hadn't expected it to happen so fast. She had expected it to be a gradual thing but clearly something had occurred the night before which had shattered Dayton's defences in a way she'd never been able to. She felt a moment's guilt for having left him to fend for himself.

"This Ancient, did she hurt you?" she asked carefully. If Freya had hurt him she wasn't going to be very pleased with her. He looked okay; pissed off big time, but healthy enough.

A low growl emanated from his throat as he deftly turned the Jeep off the road and headed onto a dirt-packed forest road. "Yes."

It was the only answer he gave her and he appeared reluctant even to do that. She considered pressing him further but they were almost at the compound now and she was suddenly distracted by the wonderful scents that had teased so mercilessly when she had last been there.

She couldn't help looking into the trees to see if she could catch a glimpse of her vampire. He had warned her away from the pack unless invited. She was sure that this would be classed as an invitation but she was hoping she might see him again while she was here.

Rafe Hanlon slid himself carefully into his mate's body, growling softly as her wet heat wrapped around him and welcomed him home. Lacey's cry of pleasure was sweet music to his ears as he took her gently from behind, satisfying the burning need within them both as he moved inside her with long, sure strokes.

He never got tired of loving his exquisite mate, of joining with her like this. It was less frequent these days because of her very pregnant condition. He tried to temper his need for her but she was a determined woman when she wanted something. This morning she had most definitely decided she'd wanted him.

He'd come awake to her wet mouth surrounding his hard shaft, her tongue licking firmly up and down him. He'd have had to be a saint to resist her and he'd never once claimed to be a saint. Now they made slow, languorous love together, his hands stroking her heated flesh as he took her with a gentleness that belied his huge stature.

"God, I love you, Lacey," he groaned as he felt her passion start to peak and knew she would be flying soon. He was so close himself, so ready to lose himself to the sweet bliss only she could give him. He stroked into her a few times more, sending her tumbling into her pleasure and shuddering wildly as he joined her.

Cradling her tightly to his chest he wrapped his arms around her and kissed the side of her neck gently, luxuriating in the afterglow of their lovemaking. He chuckled lightly and shook his head in mock exasperation. "You need to stop doing that, baby," he said ruefully, his hand stroking over her very swollen stomach.

"I'm pregnant, Rafe, not sick," she snorted with amusement, turning awkwardly in his arms so she could face him on her side. "Mallen says there's nothing wrong with making love. It's not going to hurt the babies in any way."

He rolled his eyes and smiled. There was no arguing with his woman when she had her mind set on something. His hand stroked her stomach again and he marvelled at the life growing within her. They had waited so long before starting a family, until Lacey had finished her teaching qualification. Soon they would know the joy of being parents for the first time.

It had been hard on both of them watching all the new lives being born to the pack while they waited but it had been the right thing to do. Lacey had needed her independence; she had needed something that was just for her and nobody else. It was almost as if it was the last thing she needed to do to put away the horror she had been through at the hands of Richard Graves, when he had stripped her of everything she was as a person and turned her into a toy to be fought over.

Rafe didn't regret waiting. He would have waited forever for Lacey to be finally free of Graves and ready to fulfil the destiny that was hers, to be his mate, his love, the mother of his children and the strong Alpha Bitch of the Armand-Hanlon pack.

"You're perfect," he sighed softly, touching her cheek tenderly as she laughed at his compliment though a fierce love shone in her eyes.

"You're biased," she retorted, though she did lean in for a kiss, her laughter increasing as her stomach got in the way.

"Shower," he chuckled, sliding out of bed and heading into the en-suite to start the water running. He knew she would go back to sleep the moment his back was turned so he showered alone and quickly towelled himself dry.

He smiled lovingly when he re-entered the bedroom to find her fast asleep, her long silvery blonde hair fanning the dark pillows. She truly was perfection in his eyes, the one woman he could never be without. Covering her naked body with a sheet, he grabbed a pair of loose sweatpants and pulled a tight vest top over his powerfully built chest.

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