

Chapter 233

"So where are these boys of yours?" he asked giving into his need to extract his woman from her brother's embrace and hold her possessively to his side. He heard her slight sigh of exasperation though she laughed lightly at his silliness. He couldn't help it. He just didn't like seeing her in anyone else's arms, even if it was Rafe's.

"Lacey won't let them out of her sight," Rafe laughed. "I swear they're going to spend the first few years of their life thinking the whole world consists of our bedroom." His tone was light and teasing with a hint of over protectiveness in it. Caleb was sure it wasn't just Lacey who wasn't in a hurry to have their sons out of their sight.

He followed Rhianna and Rafe upstairs, pausing for a moment on the first floor to stare at one of the bedroom doors with a slightly puzzled expression on his face. He thought he could scent something different but it was faint and impossible to grasp. Shaking his head slightly he inhaled again and whatever it was he'd scented was gone. He continued upstairs to meet his new nephews.

Rayne felt her heart thump painfully hard in her chest as she watched the majestic vampire continue on his way upstairs. She had just left her room when Rafe's sister had arrived and something about the petite redhead had set her on edge. For the briefest of moments she had felt she knew the other woman but she'd never laid eyes on her before.

It had unsettled her enough to shadow herself but even then she hadn't felt completely safe. She'd blended into a dark alcove and peered out nervously as Rafe had greeted his family. When the male vampire had paused a few feet away from her she'd held her breath as he'd scented the air. She was sure he would turn his head enough and see her, positive that he could see right through her shadowing abilities as Gard could.[www.\(n\)ovel1@rM.com](#)

Then he had turned and continued on his way, leaving her knees shaking with fear as she watched him go. The same feeling of 'knowing' wafted from the male. She knew who he was though she had never met him. He was Caleb Cullen, the most powerful vampire in history, with the exception of Gard that was.

She was still fixated on him when he suddenly paused on the third landing and looked over the banister directly at her hidden spot. He was as beautiful as Gard, aristocratic in a Grecian manner, his eyes a deep golden brown, his matching hair flowing around him like a silky curtain. He was huge and imposing, lethallness and a hot sensuality oozing from his pores. But underneath all that she could sense something more, a hidden well of goodness so bright it could light up a night sky if revealed.

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Her heart thumped painfully again as he lingered on her hiding spot, convincing her that he was looking directly at her and then he turned away once more and continued on his way.

She almost flew from the house, trying to control her flight instincts so it didn't look like she was running away from something or someone. When she hit the boundary of the trees she shifted to panther form and then she really flew running so hard and fast away from the compound and the two vampires who scared the living daylights out of her.

She sensed Gard before he arrived at her side. He was not masking himself from her, letting her know that he was close so as not to make her anymore skittish than she already was. She didn't stop running, didn't shift back to human form, instead she used her full speed, picking up the pace and releasing her full abilities.

Gard matched the panther easily despite the fact she was running way faster than any Were should be able to run. There was a hint of wildness in her eyes, a touch of panic laced with fear that made him want to break the person who had instilled such terror in her soul.

His relief at having his sister home melted completely as he watched his panther leave the Alpha's home as if all the hordes of Hades were on her tail. He had no idea what had prompted her panic but he was after her in an instant, determined he was going to find out.

He could have halted her run, could have made her stand and face him but she needed the freedom of the wind against her fur to help alleviate her scattered emotions.

So he ran with her silently, letting her know he could not only keep up with her but that he would be there when she was ready to stop running and confront whatever it was that had frightened her so much.

He nudged her gently in the direction he wanted her to go in; knowing she would have to slow down eventually and he may as well have her somewhere that he ached to have her. She finally slowed and came to a standstill staring in confusion at her surroundings.

"This is my home away from home," he told her quietly, watching the panther's chest heave from the exertion of her full speed run. They were in a little clearing screened off by a large jagged rock which gave the appearance of there being no way in. He had skilfully manoeuvred her along the complicated pathway that concealed the cave entrance hidden behind the rock.

She shifted, her chest still heaving, a slight sheen of sweat glistening over her skin. "You live in a cave?" she panted out, confusion on her face.

Gard bit down a tortured groan. She was wearing that green basque again, the one she'd been wearing that night in her room when he'd first tasted her sweetness. Her heaving chest was accentuating her lush breasts even more, her damp skin an erotic dream come true. He wanted to start licking her all over and never stop. His body came to life instantly and he had to stifle down a deep growl.

"No, I live in a house most of the time," he answered carefully. "I just stay here when I want to remain close to the pack." He didn't admit that he hadn't been home properly since she had come to the compound, only long enough to gather essentials.

"I didn't think vampire's had lairs. Isn't that a little animalistic for you lot?" Her head tipped to the side a slight smile beginning to curve her lips as the wildness receded from her eyes. His revelation had tempted her cat's curiosity to come to the fore.

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"We can slum it when we need to," he laughed; softly urging her into the cave opening.

Rayne gasped in astonishment as she took in Gard's idea of slumming it. There was no getting away from the fact it was a cave but he obviously spent more time here than he'd led her to believe. How the hell had he managed to make a cave look like a proper home?

There was a huge fire pit in the main 'room' which was ablaze and giving off enough heat to make the place feel warm. The smoke drifted upwards and was caught in a simple hooded chimney system that whisked it to God knew where but it didn't fill the room and make the air unbreathable. Along one wall was a wide raised platform covered in huge cushions in brown and black. It appeared to be built into the rock, its purpose clearly that of a sofa.

Hidden behind what appeared to be purpose built screens covered with Japanese symbols, was another raised platform dominating the other 'room' with its sheer size. It was a bed of gigantic proportions but then he was a huge male. It was dressed in similar colours of brown and black, the bedding thick because the cave was cooler in here because of the screens blocking the heat.

She raised her eyebrows slightly, trying to ignore the shiver of pleasure that coursed through her. They were far away from the compound, hidden from prying eyes and keen hearing. The bed looked lusciously inviting. She continued on her tour though, ducking behind another screen to see a huge tub standing alone in the middle of the room. There was no sign of any plumbing but then she hadn't expected any, it was a cave.

Seeing her sardonic expression, Gard smiled slightly and walked to the back wall detaching an unobtrusive grey rubber pipe from a hook and hanging it over the tub. The instant he did so clear cold water began to fill the tub as he slotted in a plug before it could seep down the drainage area beneath it.

She was amused at the smug expression on his face. He was like a kid showing off and it was endearing to see. "And you heat the water how?" she queried as she watched the tub fill up quickly.[\(w\)@W.\(n\)ox@lwo@m.Com](#)

He paused for a moment as if contemplating a course of action. "Magic," he finally answered his eyes serious as they regarded her intently.