

Chapter 241

Caleb felt a huge rush of pride course through him as he watched the other man. He was in awe of just how much empathy Rafe had for wounded souls. Just like his sister. He hoped his assessment of Freya was right, that there was some hope for her, for everyone's sake. "She's pack," he finally agreed, trusting in Rafe to know the right thing to do and feeling relieved that he could hand her off to someone else.

He was just about to turn to the topic of the children and their abilities when the door to the house crashed open and a furious vampire suddenly appeared in the kitchen, red hair flowing wildly, lavender eyes burning with a fury he'd never seen before.

"Where is she?" Gard asked in a cold voice completely at odds with his wild appearance.

Rafe shifted instantly, the enormous brown wolf howling loudly as it sprang towards the interloper in the kitchen. Caleb had to move fast to get between the two of them as Gard automatically went defensive, talons at the ready to rip the wolf apart.

"Stop!"

The very feminine, very angry voice in the doorway had everyone freezing on the spot. Heads whipped around to stare at the woman standing there tensely. She was glaring at them with naked fury in her eyes.

"What the fuck do you think you're doing?" Rhianna demanded, her gaze firmly locked on Gard giving him the full weight of her displeasure.**www.novelworm.com**

Caleb's lips twitched in a little smile. He couldn't help it despite the tension in the room. His Annie was taking a backseat at the moment and in her place was Anakatrine in all her glorious splendour. His queen didn't surface very often but when she did she called to him in a way he couldn't describe.

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"And I don't know why you're grinning like an idiot," she rounded on Caleb, wiping the smile from his face. "We'll discuss the manner in which you just spoke to me later. Rafe, if you could please shift back and put some clothes on, I'd appreciate it. I'll wait for you three in the library."

"What the fuck..?" Rafe growled loudly as he reverted back to human form, staring at his sister's retreating back in astonishment. He was so shocked that he completely forgot for a moment that there was a strange, feral vampire in his kitchen, then his gaze hardened and he once more turned to the other vampire.

His entire body went rigid as he met a pair of lavender eyes that he knew so well but were in a face he'd never seen before. The shock of straight auburn hair was also a colour he recognised and he felt his heart crash hard in his chest as he stared at the man.

"I suggest we don't keep her waiting," Caleb interjected smoothly his eyes intent on Gard who was giving Rafe a decidedly unfriendly look. He could feel The Guardian's tension mixed in with jealousy. Between that and Rafe's growing aggression as he realised something was very wrong about the man before him, he knew things could quickly escalate out of hand.

He was thankful his Annie was ceding control to her other half at the moment. The decision on how to explain Gard to Rafe had just been taken out of her hands and what was about to come would not be pleasant for her. Holding onto a queen's strength would be all that would get her through this in one piece.**www.novelworm.com**

"Rafe, I can vouch for Gard," he said quietly. "He is no threat to the pack. I think we should all go to the library now where we can discuss this in privacy."

Rafe's thoughts were in turmoil as he crossed to the large hall cupboard and pulled out a set of sweats and a T-shirt and quickly pulled them on. He had adopted the custom of having spare clothes at the Alpha's home and the community centre from his time in the Hanlon pack. It came in handy for uncontrolled shifts, especially when his sister was around. He had no qualms about running around naked but it just felt wrong doing so in front of Annie.

Thinking of his sister brought a stab of fear deep within him. Once before he had looked at her and not recognised the woman he had brought up since the age of three. It had been five years ago, the night Lily had been born. He was chilled at seeing that same strange woman in his kitchen a few moments earlier. That had not been his Annie, his baby girl. And the strange vampire had her colouring, something that Rafe lacked.

A deep sense of foreboding ripped through him as he entered the library and closed the door quietly. Rhianna was standing with her back to the room, looking at the bookshelves as if she was hunting for something to read. Caleb was sitting on the edge of his desk, his gaze never leaving his mate. The stranger was sitting in one of the armchairs; his gaze also tracking the petite redhead's every movement.

"Annie?" It was more a question than saying her name. Rafe held himself still as she turned around slowly to look at him as he leaned against the door, afraid to come any further into the room.

He was relieved to see it was his sister looking back at him, her expression distraught as she silently begged him for forgiveness. He had no idea what she needed to be forgiven for but her expression terrified him. He wanted to go to her but he stayed where he was, waiting for her to explain.

"I'm sorry, Rafe," she finally said quietly never breaking her gaze with him. "I should have told you this a long time ago but I was frightened. I didn't know how you would react and I didn't want to hurt you in any way. I was a coward and now it's come to this." She waved her hand at the armchair and Rafe broke her gaze to look at vampire who returned his with one of pure animosity.

"Who is he?" He heard himself asking. He didn't care which one of them answered. He just wanted to know what the fuck was going on and what danger it posed for his pack.

"To answer that you need to hear about the history of the Vampires," Rhianna answered moving over to Caleb and allowing him to gather her against his chest. His arms banded around her like protective steel and she appeared to draw strength from him.

"Vampires were not always ruled by a Council, Rafe. Thousands of years ago they had a matriarchal hierarchy and were ruled by a vampire queen called Anakatrine. She had a brother who became her Guardian, who protected her as she grew into her powers and became old enough to rule her people. She had a mate in her King, his name was Callain. They were a triumvirate, guiding the vampire nation together. It was a good time, a peaceful time when Weres and Vampires existed in harmony."**www.Novelworm.com**

Rhianna swallowed hard and Caleb's arms tightened as he leaned down and pressed a gentle kiss at the side of her neck.