

## Chapter 272

He turned his gaze to his Alpha. "It would make more sense if I go on ahead while the pack organises itself. I can provide additional backup for Freya."

"Go." Rafe's tone was terse as he gave him permission. Two Ancients against three vampires were better odds and meant they had a good chance of Dayton remaining safe until they could get to him. He wasn't averse to using the best tools for the job, as he'd once had to remind Jared when he'd still been his Alpha.

Nors vanished in an instant and Rafe back turned to the waiting group. "Aaron, I need you to protect the compound. I know you want to help your brother but we set up our defence plan so it would ensure the pack's safety. If I fall then you become Alpha. I'm placing my family's lives in your hands. Do whatever is required to keep them safe."

Aaron didn't balk at his instructions even though he wanted to protect his brother. He knew the responsibility being placed on him was huge, that sometimes pack had to come before family. Rafe would do his best to bring Dayton home safely. He nodded to his Alpha once, touched Cedar's cheek gently and gave her a brief smile. Then he turned and headed back to the Alpha's house without a backward glance.

"Alexei said it would take him and Andrei about fifteen minutes to get here," Cedar told her Alpha. "That was a few minutes ago so they shouldn't be long." She'd called her mate at The Council headquarters as soon as the alert had gone out.

Rafe nodded. "Remember, three wolves to one vampire. Use the trees to hide your movements as much as possible. Don't make me have to come home minus any pack members today." His words were curt but there was a wealth of emotion underneath the surface. This was his first real challenge as Alpha and he didn't want to lose any people. He didn't want anyone's death on his conscience.

"Oh, remember to look up too," Loretta added. "Vampires are sneaky bastards and like to drop down from the trees." Despite the seriousness of the situation she couldn't help her lips curling slightly at the memory of learning that important lesson herself. She still hadn't paid Andrei back for that.

"Shift."

Twelve large wolves appeared beside the community centre at the Alpha's command. The largest of them growled low in its chest, fury in the sound as the Alpha streaked into the trees, the others a fraction of a second behind him.

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"Dayton, wolves don't climb trees, do they?"

He blinked slowly at Freya. She hadn't turned to face him but her body had stiffened noticeably. "Not as a general rule, that's more cat territory."

She glanced back then for a moment and the expression on her face chilled his blood. "Up, now." It was a hissed command and one that had him moving instantly. Wolves might not like to climb but the man had done so many times as he was growing up. The vampires had to be on the move.

"They're less likely to look up," she whispered, moving silently beside him as she followed him up the large tree. Her movements were economical and graceful. She was at home in the trees as Rayne was. "Stay as high as you can. I'm going to have to distract them."

He didn't like the sound of that. His wolf was growling deep inside him. "Freya."

She gave him a push higher until he was perched on a thick branch shielded by a dense canopy of leaves. She stood on the branch below and slightly to the right of him. It brought them eyelevel. Her black eyes didn't faze him. He knew it meant she was tapping into her beast and that made her lethal.

"This is my world, Dayton, it's what I know. You said sometimes a mate has to concede to the dominance of the other when the situation calls for it. This is just such a situation."

He wanted to protest, the Beta inside him clawing to get out and protect his mate, but he knew she was right as she deftly turned his words around on him. His grip on her nape was hard as he pulled her into a desperate kiss, his lips grinding ruthlessly against hers. "Don't you fucking dare leave me, Freya Eriksson."

Her expression softened, some of her feral nature slipping away as she touched his cheek lightly. "If I told you how many times someone's tried to kill me over the centuries the rest of your hair would turn silver, wolf," she smiled softly. "I have much more reason to live now than I ever did then. I will not leave you, Dayton. Not ever."

He believed her and it lessened his fear slightly. He kissed her again, softer this time, showing his vampire how much he loved her and how vital it was for her to return safely to him. She returned his kiss with one that soothed him a little more.

"Stay silent," she breathed against his mouth. "I'll be back as soon as I can."

With that, she was gone, moving at vampire speed from his tree into the next one. He managed to track her that far and then she just disappeared from his line of sight. He couldn't stop the fear rising up inside him despite her words. Feeling helpless when danger was close was not an experience he was used to dealing with but he had to trust that she knew what she was doing. They needed to buy time for the pack to arrive.

Freya swung effortlessly through the trees trying hard not to turn back towards her wolf. It was shocking to realise just how unnatural it felt leaving him alone. While she understood the concept of him being her mate, the actual reality of it was frightening. He was quite simply the most important thing in her world now. If she ever lost him it would kill her and she could now understand how he felt at losing Faith.**www.W.nOv©1©.v©m.Co(m)**

She didn't have time to examine the confusing emotions running through her though. The vampires had become impatient and were trying to track her wolf. It was time to take them out of the game so Dayton would be safe once more.**WwW.W.nOv©êLw©ŘM.©6M**

She came upon the first one from above. They were almost directly across from the tree her wolf was in and she wondered if they were in his line of sight. What she was about to do wasn't going to be pretty and she wasn't so sure she wanted him to see her like that.

Sure, he was a wolf and had his own feral side but when she truly let go and surrendered to the beast within her, she was nothing short of vicious. Would he change his mind about mating with her if he saw her like that?**(w)w.w.m©vêLw©rm.cOm**

There was no time to debate the issue. The vampire was starting to swing towards Dayton's direction and she silently dropped from the tree with her talons extended. She severed his vocal chords before he even realised she was above him. Landing on his back, she twisted her hands effortlessly.

It was almost an anti-climax when his head came away and she lowered his corpse to the ground. She wanted a fight, someone to lash out at her so she could vent the fury deep within her. Instead she was facing idiots who were so young and inexperienced it made it doubly embarrassing that she'd allowed them to get the drop on her in the first place.

Freya shook her head in disgust, moving instantly to slide back into the trees as she tracked her next prey. He was a large vampire, older than the one she'd just dispatched. He covered his position well, proving he had a bit more intelligence than the last one. He was still no match for an Ancient though.

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She tracked soundlessly, rolling to the right when he sensed her and swung his gun up instinctively. She wrenched the weapon from his hand as she came up behind him. Her talons buried in his lower back, severing his spine and causing his legs to give way. Her next blow crushed his windpipe temporarily so he couldn't cry out. "Didn't your mama ever tell you not to play with guns?" she hissed in his ear.

The hatred in his eyes made her smile. He knew he was bested and his life was over. She wanted to play with him a little more but knew there was a third out there that she had to take care of. Her talons bit deep, ruthlessly severing his head from his shoulders in a spray of blood. She managed to avoid most of it but some splashed against her already soaked top.

A familiar scent hit her and some of the tension eased from her body as she headed towards the last known position of the third vampire. She knew what she would find when she got there so she wasn't surprised to see the huge vampire just in the process of dropping the severed head of the third attacker to the ground.