

Chapter 288

Rhianna's face lit up with pleasure as she wiggled out of his arms and sat before him. "I have an idea, Caleb, but first we need to find out exactly what happened and just how deep within our people this rot is running."

He raised an eyebrow in query and her beautiful smile shone once more and she uttered two words to him which brought his own lips twitching in an equally wide smile.

"The Praetorians."

Caleb had forgotten about them, ignored most of their past lives because he'd wanted to hide from how their time there had ended. He should have known his Annie wouldn't hide from it, that she'd reach back in time and find a solution to their present day problems. It was just like her to be so courageous. She was every inch the queen she'd once been so very long ago.

"You constantly amaze me, sweet one," he breathed softly, bending his head to kiss her long and slow, teasing her lips apart so he could dip inside and taste her addictive sweetness. He pressed her back against the bed, the urge to feel her naked body against his more than he could stand.

"We'll continue this conversation a little later," he laughed huskily, already peeling his robe from her body so he could admire her lush curves.

"Caleb." It was a breathy half complaint quickly extinguished as he heard his woman's heart race wildly in her chest as she sucked in a deep breath.

"Bedroom is my department," he reminded her with a wicked smile, his tongue sliding down to her breast which he cupped loving and raised for his eager touch.

Rhianna moaned, arching into his caress as his hot mouth suckled against her tender flesh. She half laughed, half groaned as he took his task very seriously, intent on driving her wild in the shortest amount of time possible. She could have argued with him but decided not to. There was no point cutting off her nose to spite her face.

She surrendered to Caleb's touch, knowing there was time enough to discuss the options they had to protect the pack. Rafe had it covered at the moment. She had every faith in both of her brothers that she could spend this time with her wonderful vampire without the need to worry about anything bad happening.

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"Yes, Caleb," she sighed softly, holding his head to her body as he slowly loved her as only he could.

Rayne felt anxious as she sat beside Gard in Rafe's library. It was unusual for her to feel so tense but she couldn't quite shake the feeling. Rafe had summoned them early with no explanation of why he wanted to speak to them other than there would be others attending the meeting, noticeably Rhianna and Caleb. She hadn't seen them since the night she'd recovered her memories and she couldn't help wondering what her mate's sister would say once she discovered they'd mated.

It had been two days since the attack on Freya and Dayton and the compound was still on high alert even though there had been no sign of any further vampire incursions. The pack was still running daily sweeps of the area despite finding nothing in the surrounding forest.

The sound of people entering the Alpha's home caused her to stiffen slightly and Gard to look at her with a slight frown. She immediately tried to relax but knew she wasn't fooling him when his arm slipped around her shoulder and pulled her tightly to his side. He knew she was worried about his sister accepting her into their family and had tried to alleviate her unspoken concerns.

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The door to the library opened and Caleb entered followed closely by Rhianna. Behind her came another woman, tall with long brown hair and deep brown eyes. At her back was Demetri Bozic, his big body alert, his eyes flickering across the room quickly taking in who was present.

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Rhianna immediately flowed to Rafe's side, his arms coming around the little redhead instantly to scoop her up in a fierce hug. The closeness between the two of them filled the room instantly with warmth.

Rafe tightened his arms around his sister, knowing she still felt guilty for not coming sooner despite the fact they'd spoken a few times on the phone and he'd assured her everyone was fine. It was slightly amusing to realise they shared the same obsessive personality trait, the need to protect each other even though their lives had moved in such different directions.

He held her close as he turned to Gard and Rayne. "No need to introduce Caleb and Annie obviously and you've met Demetri briefly. The gorgeous woman at his side is his long suffering wife Mara." He laughed at Demetri's irritated snort before continuing.

"Mara, this is Annie's brother Gard and his mate Rayne." He concluded the introduction by kissing the top of his sister's head and giving her another tight squeeze.

Everyone smiled at Rayne and she felt her unease start to lower. There was no hint of reserve on their faces and Rafe's easy teasing of Demetri and completely relaxed demeanour helped to soothe her further. She relaxed into Gard's body earning herself a quick brush of his hot lips against the side of her neck.

"You can let me go now, Annie," Rafe laughed softly as Rayne's tension level calmed. "Before Caleb decides I need my ass kicked for stealing his woman from him."

That brought a laugh from Mara which Demetri echoed. "I wouldn't worry about Caleb, Rafe. He's getting soft in his old age. I steal his woman all the time and he hasn't managed to kick my ass yet."

Caleb's narrowed gaze swung to his friend, his lips quirking slightly. "Mara, if I asked you nicely to mute your mate bond for half an hour would you do so?" he asked drolly. "I see no reason for you to be punished for this idiot's lack of respect." His tone clearly indicated he was joking, that this was a long standing joke between two old friends.

"Would you beat a man for being an ass, Caleb?" the brunette countered sweetly, smiling at her mate as she did so. "The poor dear can't help it. He was born that way."

Caleb couldn't contain his laughter as Demetri glared down at his mate, mock indignation on his face. "The poor dear? Wife, I may have to take up some of this beating malarkey myself. You clearly don't know your proper place when it comes to your husband."

Mara rolled her eyes and patted him on the chest. "Well, if you haven't managed to teach me it yet, Demetri, I fear you have no chance of doing so. Though, I'm sure there has to be some vampire law somewhere that says you cannot assault a member of the Council. I will need to research that when I get to work."

Her mate laughed and gathered her into his arms dropping a hard kiss on her lips. "I'm certain there is nothing against a man decorating his wife's pretty little ass a nice shade of pink, Council member or not." His voice dropped low and very intimate and Mara groaned and pushed him away.

"Men! They have one track minds," she sighed haughtily though her eyes twinkled with laughter as Demetri pulled her back against his chest and feathered his lips slowly against the side of her neck.

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