

## Chapter 310

Mackenzie watched the woman step forward, his dark gaze analysing the way she appeared to flow across the ground. Toned muscles rippled with strength, her movements fluid and graceful. He felt need claw at his gut, hard and relentless as he imagined other situations a body that tantalising could move in. It was unwelcome and irritating because Ruminsky still had that almost-smile on her face, as if she were reading his mind.

He felt his irritation ratchet up and fought to contain it. He was a firm believer that fighting in anger led to a man's downfall, particularly when you were simply training. In a fight, you need to stay clear-headed at all times, to analyse your opponent's weaknesses and strike at them. Allowing emotions to get in the way led to mistakes that caused serious injuries, maybe even death.*ww©.nôve/ur(©)m.Co(m)*

So he pushed down his irritation and watched the brunette carefully, trying to work out if there were any little tell tale signs he could exploit while they sparred. He wasn't expecting to see much until they began sparring, but he'd be a fool not to begin his assessment immediately.

He turned away from her and let his gaze travel over the others. "Confidence in your abilities is commendable," he informed them, his voice low and cold. "Overconfidence is a death sentence. You've made it this far but you still have two hurdles to get through. The first will be hand-to-hand combat with me. The second will come after I am satisfied you're worthy to be here."

His gaze turned back to Ruminsky who was standing at attention, her deep brown eyes riveted to his face. There was a question in her gaze as if she itched to ask what the second thing was. He had no intention of telling any of them what their last hurdle would be before they became Praetorians. Some of them may fail this stage and secrecy was paramount.

"Follow me," he said, turning on his heel and striding around the large house towards the back.

Lily had to bite down the urge to sigh with pleasure as she watched Mac walk away. Her expression appeared impassive but her body was humming with excitement. Her greedy gaze took in his strong back and narrow waist, but it was his thick thighs and taut ass which caused her the most pain. Lord, could a man look any hotter? The urge to sink her teeth into his delectable flesh was almost overpowering.*Ŵww.©0ṼêⓈ(w)órMl.coṹṹ*

'Concentrate, Lily," she mentally shook herself. If she became distracted by thoughts of hot sweaty bodies writhing together she was seriously going to get her ass kicked by Mac and destroy any hope of joining the Praetorians. She had to contain her lustful thoughts until the time was more appropriate.

As if she had the first clue about what to do with him anyway. Oh, she knew the whole concept about sex and mating; hell, growing up in a Were compound was an eye-opening experience. Wolves were very sensual creatures and she'd gotten many an eyeful of some very interesting things once she was older.

She knew all about lust and how wild and untamed it was between mates. She just didn't have any first-hand experience because her father had kept all men at bay from the moment she was old enough to be interested in the opposite sex.

Not that she'd wanted any of her pack mates. Not after she'd seen Mac in the forest all those years ago. From that moment onwards he'd been all she'd thought about, her every fantasy. And she'd had lots of fantasies!*ŴWw.ÑovêŁwⓈ(r)m.coM*

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Despite her lack of experience, Lily was confident in her own abilities. She was half Were and half vampire. Both species were incredibly sensual creatures in their own right. Combined they had to be spectacular and she had no doubts she'd be a very fast learner in the bedroom.

"Whenever you're ready, Ruminsky!"

Mac's sharp words brought her out of her reverie and she realised she was still rooted to the spot ogling his backside like a teenager. She hid the flush which threatened to cross her cheeks and headed off after him, beginning one of her many mental exercises to focus her attention on what was to come.

Behind the large house, the trees had been felled to create a huge open area. The ground was rough and hard and it was clear this was where a lot of fighting occurred. Some tree trunks had been placed together to the side, creating a natural seating area. The others had followed the two of them and one of Mac's men signalled to the other candidates to sit.

The Praetorians placed themselves strategically close to the house and the candidates. They appeared relaxed but Lily wasn't fooled. These vampires were lethal. One wrong move by any of the new recruits and they would act without mercy.

Mackenzie stopped and turned to watch Ruminsky come to a halt a few feet in front of him. He was in control of his emotions once more, ignoring her womanly curves completely and sizing her up for her fighting abilities. The reports he'd had about her said she was fast. That point had been stressed, so he knew to be extra vigilant.

"We train in weapons as well as our natural abilities," he informed the entire group, although his gaze was locked with his opponent's. "You can use anything in that chest over there at any time."

Lily's gaze flicked to the chest that was being opened, having just been carried from the house by one of the Praetorians. She tried not to show her excitement. The Vârcolac had claws rather than the wicked talons vampires could produce. With that in mind, Gard had made sure they'd all been trained with knives and swords to protect themselves and keep vampires at arm's length. She excelled in both and she knew Mac would assume she would be a novice in that area like any typical vampire.

A blur of movement out of the corner of her eye was the only warning she received as she was distracted by the chest. She moved instinctively, dropping down rather than stepping to either side. She knew she didn't have time to avoid him completely and he would most likely expect her to back away.

She used Mac's forward momentum against him, punching up hard into his solar plexus and sending him flying over her head. She came up and spun around, her eyes never leaving him as he twisted agilely in the air and landed facing her, instantly at the ready.

A muscle twitched at the side of his mouth, the only indication he was impressed with the speed of her defensive move. "Never become distracted when facing an opponent," he said, giving her fellow recruits a running commentary as he began to circle to the left.

"Distraction means not only failing to protect your charges but also your impending death. You must always know where your enemy is as all times."

He nodded slightly at Lily and she felt a rush of pleasure wash through her. She'd impressed him, her mate, and it made her wolf howl with glee that their male respected their abilities. Another blur and a hand slammed painfully into her breast bone, sending her flying backwards.