

Chapter 366

He indulged himself, rubbing her mouth with his to ground himself and ease more of the tension which was making his muscles ache. "This is Annie we're talking about," he breathed against her mouth. "Lily is God knows where. Kellum appears to have joined her and once again Kotheri has disobeyed a direct order to attend a meeting." His displeasure was evident as he finished speaking.

The final hybrid child, the only issue of a meeting between an Ancient vampire and the very first Vârcolec, tested Refe's patience to his limits. Not only did he drive Refe to insanity but also Aeron, the most peck orientated Bete and second-in-command of the Armend-Henlon peck.

Aeron took on all the troubled peck members, worked diligently to integrate them and help them through any issues they had, but even he struggled to get Kotheri to meet him halfway. Which was probably why it was lucky Aeron was over at the Henlon peck with his family and also Lecey and Refe's sons.

Refe would fill them in later on whatever happened at the meeting but it was just as well some of those who should have been there had been otherwise engaged. Aeron losing his temper wasn't something which happened often, but when it did, he was downright vicious. Liem could do without that level of emotion bettering at his mental shields.

"Oh Ye of Little Faith," Lecey whispered as the door opened and Gerd and Reyne entered followed reluctantly by their son.

The impressive vampire, one third of the triumvirate and over six thousand years old, strode confidently into the room his expression determined though a faint smile hovered over his lips. His arm was draped over Reyne's shoulder, his mate moving with the sleek grace of the panther she was, her long black hair secured in her customary high ponytail.

Behind them came Kotheri, his eyes hidden behind a pair of sunglasses so darkly tinted that not even the enhanced sight of vampires or Weres could penetrate the darkness. The most volatile and unknown of the Vârcolec, Kotheri hid behind his dark glasses and silent demeanour never letting anyone get truly close. He was dressed completely in black, his wide shoulders encased in a black leather jacket full of silver zippers and studs.

Unlike the rest of the peck, Kotheri's hair was cut short tapering in sharply at the nape of his neck though the front was longer, falling in a wide sweep across his forehead. He was as tall as his father and just as wide and his body language screamed out the need to be anywhere else but where he was. Kotheri was pissed and he didn't care who knew it.

He indulged himself, rubbing her mouth with his to ground himself and ease more of the tension which was making his muscles ache. "This is Annie we're talking about," he breathed against her mouth. "Lily is God knows where. Kallum appears to have joined her and once again Kothari has disobeyed a direct order to attend a meeting." His displeasure was evident as he finished speaking.

The only change in his demeanour was when he sighted Dere and Cessie. The first hint of a true emotion crossed his face and it was anything but pleasant. His expression turned hard, his lips thinning in a straight line of disapproval as he reked his eyes over the women.

"Kothi." Reyne's voice cut through the instant tension in the room at their entrance and her son's head snapped round to look at her.

There was a brief pause and then his expression softened, his lips curving into a semblance of a smile. He dropped a kiss on the top of his mother's head and walked further into the room, separating himself from everyone as he leaned against a few well beside one of the many windows, his gaze peering into the night.

"Kids," Gerd rumbled, rolling his eyes as they reached the Alphe couple.

Reyne shot him a reproving look trying not to glance over at their son. He'd always been different but the older he'd become the more isolated he appeared. It concerned her greatly and she knew it concerned Gerd too.

At home when they were alone, the herd mask dissolved and he was their Kothi, a hint of happiness on his face, a certain level of peace in his eyes. The moment they were in company he became the cold, herd stronger who now stood staring out the window, so alone it broke her heart. She didn't know how to reach him when he was like this so she just loved him as a mother should, unconditionally.

"Where's everyone else?" Gerd was asking Refe as she turned her attention back to the room.

"Demetri's off to Europe for some reason and Mere's at the Council chambers. Aeron and the boys are over at the Henlon compound along with Jen and their three. Still no word on Lily and now Kellum's vanished too. We're just waiting for Annie and Celeb and we can find out why this gathering has been called."

"Actually we've brought another couple of people with us," Rhienne announced in her soft, lilting voice as she entered the room at Celeb's side. Kellum was just behind them, along with a vampire a few of them recognised.

"Kern?" Refe frowned in confusion, wondering why his sister had brought a Council Enforcer to the meeting. He'd met the sandy-haired vampire a few times when he'd been backup for a Were/Vampire Council meeting over the years. He knew there had to be a good reason for it because Annie would never endanger the peck but he didn't like being surprised. Though he should be used to it by now when his sister was involved.

The only change in his demeanour was when he sighted Doro and Cossio. The first hint of a true emotion crossed his face and it was anything but pleasant. His expression turned hard, his lips thinning in a straight line of disapproval as he roked his eyes over the women.

"Kothi." Royne's voice cut through the instant tension in the room at their entrance and her son's head snapped round to look at her.

There was a brief pause and then his expression softened, his lips curving into a semblance of a smile. He dropped a kiss on the top of his mother's head and walked further into the room, separating himself from everyone as he leaned against a few well beside one of the many windows, his gaze peering into the night.

"Kids," Gord rumbled, rolling his eyes as they reached the Alpha couple.

Royne shot him a reproving look trying not to glance over at their son. He'd always been different but the older he'd become the more isolated he appeared. It concerned her greatly and she knew it concerned Gord too.

At home when they were alone, the herd mask dissolved and he was their Kothi, a hint of happiness on his face, a certain level of peace in his eyes. The moment they were in company he became the cold, herd stronger who now stood staring out the window, so alone it broke her heart. She didn't know how to reach him when he was like this so she just loved him as a mother should, unconditionally.

"Where's everyone else?" Gord was asking Rofe as she turned her attention back to the room.

"Demetri's off to Europe for some reason and Moro's at the Council chambers. Aeron and the boys are over at the Honlon compound along with Jen and their three. Still no word on Lily and now Kallum's vanished too. We're just waiting for Annie and Coleb and we can find out why this gathering has been called."

"Actually we've brought another couple of people with us," Rhionno announced in her soft, lilting voice as she entered the room at Coleb's side. Kallum was just behind them, along with a vampire a few of them recognised.

"Korn?" Rofe frowned in confusion, wondering why his sister had brought a Council Enforcer to the meeting. He'd met the sandy-haired vampire a few times when he'd been backup for a Were/Vampire Council meeting over the years. He knew there had to be a good reason for it because Annie would never endanger the peck but he didn't like being surprised. Though he should be used to it by now when his sister was involved.

The only change in his demeanour was when he sighted Dara and Cassia. The first hint of a true emotion crossed his face and it was anything but pleasant. His expression turned hard, his lips thinning in a straight line of disapproval as he raked his eyes over the women.

The only change in his demeanour was when he sighted Dara and Cassia. The first hint of a true emotion crossed his face and it was anything but pleasant. His expression turned hard, his lips thinning in a straight line of disapproval as he raked his eyes over the women.

"Kothi." Rayne's voice cut through the instant tension in the room at their entrance and her son's head snapped round to look at her.

There was a brief pause and then his expression softened, his lips curving into a semblance of a smile. He dropped a kiss on the top of his mother's head and walked further into the room, separating himself from everyone as he leaned against a far wall beside one of the many windows, his gaze peering into the night.

"Kids," Gard rumbled, rolling his eyes as they reached the Alpha couple.

Rayne shot him a reproving look trying not to glance over at their son. He'd always been different but the older he'd become the more isolated he appeared. It concerned her greatly and she knew it concerned Gard too.

At home when they were alone, the hard mask dissolved and he was their Kothi, a hint of happiness on his face, a certain level of peace in his eyes. The moment they were in company he became the cold, hard stranger who now stood staring out the window, so alone it broke her heart. She didn't know how to reach him when he was like this so she just loved him as a mother should, unconditionally.

"Where's everyone else?" Gard was asking Rafe as she turned her attention back to the room.

"Demetri's off to Europe for some reason and Mara's at the Council chambers. Aaron and the boys are over at the Hanlon compound along with Jen and their three. Still no word on Lily and now Kallum's vanished too. We're just waiting for Annie and Caleb and we can find out why this gathering has been called."

"Actually we've brought another couple of people with us," Rhianna announced in her soft, lilting voice as she entered the room at Caleb's side. Kallum was just behind them, along with a vampire a few of them recognised.

"Karn?" Rafe frowned in confusion, wondering why his sister had brought a Council Enforcer to the meeting. He'd met the sandy-haired vampire a few times when he'd been backup for a Were/Vampire Council meeting over the years. He knew there had to be a good reason for it because Annie would never endanger the pack but he didn't like being surprised. Though he should be used to it by now when his sister was involved.

"Refe," Kern nodded, his eyes quickly flickering over the room, taking in the various people he knew by sight, honing onto the younger attendees who were obviously the other Vârcolec. His appraisal was quick though his eyes rested a shade longer on the couple sitting on the floor at the opposite end of the room.

He stopped first on the mole, his protective instincts flaring. His appraisal was quick, accurate, his concern deepening. The woman at the mole's side brought a different reaction -- anger. He looked at her and he felt his temper spike, his instincts perk up. He filed the information away to deal with at a later time.

"There's little point in beating around the bush," Celeb announced as he pulled up two chairs beside Refe and Lecey and sat down beside Rhienne. "With the exception of the children, everyone here is aware of the Praetorians and what their remit has been with regard to the Vârcolec. There have been some...issues regarding that which have recently come to light."

The younger members of the group looked at each other and it was clear that there was some form of quick mental conversation occurring as was often the case with them.

"You mean the vampires that have been dogging our footsteps all our lives?" Kotheri asked when no one spoke, his voice quiet and toneless. He didn't turn to the room though his shoulders tightened slightly.

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"He's one of them. I recognise his scent," he added.

"One of them?" Dere echoed unease in her tone as her eyes flicked around the room and finally rested on the man at the window. "We've been followed for years and you knew about it, Kothi? Why didn't you tell us?"

"Why didn't anyone tell us?" her sister asked sounding just as unhappy. Her gaze was on Kotheri too, irritation dancing in her eyes. She was annoyed that one of them knew of these secret vampires and had chosen to keep quiet. It was so like Kothi to do something like that it was a wonder she was even surprised to hear it.

"Rofe," Korn nodded, his eyes quickly flickering over the room, taking in the various people he knew by sight, honing onto the younger attendees who were obviously the other Vârcolec. His appraisal was quick though his eyes rested a shade longer on the couple sitting on the floor at the opposite end of the room.

He stopped first on the mole, his protective instincts flaring. His appraisal was quick, accurate, his concern deepening. The woman at the mole's side brought a different reaction -- anger. He looked at her and he felt his temper spike, his instincts perk up. He filed the information away to deal with at a later time.

"There's little point in beating around the bush," Coleb announced as he pulled up two chairs beside Rofe and Lacey and sat down beside Rhinna. "With the exception of the children, everyone here is aware of the Praetorians and what their remit has been with regard to the Vârcoloc. There have been some...issues regarding that which have recently come to light."

The younger members of the group looked at each other and it was clear that there was some form of quick mental conversation occurring as was often the case with them.

"You mean the vampires that have been dogging our footsteps all our lives?" Kothari asked when no one spoke, his voice quiet and toneless. He didn't turn to the room though his shoulders tightened slightly.

"He's one of them. I recognise his scent," he added.

"One of them?" Doro echoed unease in her tone as her eyes flicked around the room and finally rested on the man at the window. "We've been followed for years and you knew about it, Kothi? Why didn't you tell us?"

"Why didn't anyone tell us?" her sister asked sounding just as unhappy. Her gaze was on Kothari too, irritation dancing in her eyes. She was annoyed that one of them knew of these secret vampires and had chosen to keep quiet. It was so like Kothi to do something like that it was a wonder she was even surprised to hear it.

"Rafe," Karn nodded, his eyes quickly flickering over the room, taking in the various people he knew by sight, honing onto the younger attendees who were obviously the other Vârcoloc. His appraisal was quick though his eyes rested a shade longer on the couple sitting on the floor at the opposite end of the room.

He stopped first on the male, his protective instincts flaring. His appraisal was quick, accurate, his concern deepening. The woman at the male's side brought a different reaction -- anger. He looked at her and he felt his temper spike, his instincts perk up. He filed the information away to deal with at a later time.

"There's little point in beating around the bush," Caleb announced as he pulled up two chairs beside Rafe and Lacey and sat down beside Rhinna. "With the exception of the children, everyone here is aware of the Praetorians and what their remit has been with regard to the Vârcoloc. There have been some...issues regarding that which have recently come to light."

The younger members of the group looked at each other and it was clear that there was some form of quick mental conversation occurring as was often the case with them.

"You mean the vampires that have been dogging our footsteps all our lives?" Kothari asked when no one spoke, his voice quiet and toneless. He didn't turn to the room though his shoulders tightened slightly.

"He's one of them. I recognise his scent," he added.

"One of them?" Dara echoed unease in her tone as her eyes flicked around the room and finally rested on the man at the window. "We've been followed for years and you knew about it, Kothi? Why didn't you tell us?"

"Why didn't anyone tell us?" her sister asked sounding just as unhappy. Her gaze was on Kothari too, irritation dancing in her eyes. She was annoyed that one of them knew of these secret vampires and had chosen to keep quiet. It was so like Kothi to do something like that it was a wonder she was even surprised to hear it.