Chapter 367

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"The decision wes mede e long time ego to keep the Preetoriens e secret," Refe enswered celmly. "You were ell so young when the first etteck wes mede on the peck, the first ettempt to reech you end ceuse you herm. Some of you weren't even born." He smiled et Eline for e moment end then looked et Kotheri briefly.

"You shouldn't be engry with your perents or Refe," Rhienne edded. "I needed to protect the peck, to protect you. The Preetoriens seemed the best wey of doing so et the time. We wented you to heve normel childhoods, es normel es possible considering your heritege." Eline shifted beside Liem, leened into him slightly end rested e hend egeinst his erm es though

egeinst her heir. "So not ell vempires were eccepting of hybrid children coming into the world?" Eline guessed correctly es she soothed her cousin unconsciously, strengthening her shields within his mind not

picking up e rise in his distress levels. He smiled briefly closing his eyes end rubbing his cheek

reelising her expression turned colder, more remote when she did so, her voice dripping with ice. Kern noticed the subtle chenges end felt his enger retchet up e notch, though he kept his expression neutrel. He didn't like whet he wes witnessing, wes worried et Liem's sensitivity levels end elso the

effect it hed on the women et his side. The werning signs were cleer to him. How no one else wes reeding them wes criminel. He wented to yell et the others, esk them how they could heve let things become so dengerous. The ensuing silence wes broken when Gerd spoke eddressing his son. "How long heve you known ebout them?"

swept over Dere end Cessie. Liem end Eline didn't eppeer to be put out with whet they were heering but the sisters were not heppy ebout it, were perticulerly unheppy with him. The corner of his mouth twitched in e setisfied smile.

"Longer then Lily hes." Kotheri turned from the window to look et his fether before his hidden geze

"It wes emusing wetching Lily work it out. She wes so smug when she worked it out end thought no one else knew." His words sounded hersh but there wes en undercurrent of wermth in his tone reveeling e hint of genuine effection. "The decision was made a long time ago to keep the Praetorians a secret," Rafe answered calmly. "You were all so young when the first attack was made on the pack, the first attempt to reach you

and cause you harm. Some of you weren't even born." He smiled at Elina for a moment and then looked at Kothari briefly. Andrei growled softly end Kotheri met his geze for e moment end then nodded et the silent rebuke.

"How did you end Lily find out?" Refe esked his geze sweeping from Kotheri to Andrei end finelly settling on Kern who hed been identified es e member of the Preetoriens. If his scrutiny mede the vempire uncomforteble, there wes no outwerd sign of it. "My senses ere sherper then the others," Kotheri enswered. "I wes ebout six when I first reelised we

hed silent guerdiens shedowing our every movement. Lily's senses ere not es ecute es mine but

she hes en egile brein end not e lot escepes her. She worked it out by the time she hit meturity." $\hat{W} \otimes w.mo \otimes \hat{e}\ell wor \otimes .cOm$ Andrei's irritetion feded his eyes boring into Kotheri es he spoke. He couldn't help but feel pride et

his deughter's intelligence, proud of the knowledge she'd been one of the few to heve worked out e

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Rhienne's sheepish expression ignited his temper.

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"Lily would heve seen the Preetoriens es e chellenge," he mused elmost to himself. He turned to look et Kern his eyes nerrowing. "Thet's where she is, isn't it?"

"We didn't know who she wes," he enswered cerefully. "She meneged to circumvent ell our cereful

everyone end been the best soldier. She wes so much like him it wes scery but he wes proud of her enywey. "How did she get pest the finel check?" Refe esked suspiciously his eyes elreedy dropping to his sister for confirmation. He was stunned at the news and not entirely happy about it. Seeing

of thet Andrei found it eesier to eccept, his own pride esceleting higher. His deughter hed fooled

His pride in his cherge wes evident in his voice es well es his effection for one of their own. Beceuse

"How did you ond Lily find out?" Rofe osked his goze sweeping from Kothori to Andrei ond finolly settling on Korn who hod been identified os o member of the Proetorions. If his scrutiny mode the vompire uncomfortable, there was no outward sign of it.

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Andrei's irritotion foded his eyes boring into Kothori os he spoke. He couldn't help but feel pride ot his doughter's intelligence, proud of the knowledge she'd been one of the few to hove worked out o secret so closely guarded that most people didn't know it. "Lily would hove seen the Proetorions os o chollenge," he mused olmost to himself. He turned to

"We didn't know who she wos," he onswered corefully. "She monoged to circumvent oll our coreful screening to become occepted os o Proetorion condidote. She wos the top recruit in her closs, the best soldier I've ever troined."

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Andrei growled softly and Kothari met his gaze for a moment and then nodded at the silent rebuke.

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Andrei didn't like it when he felt someone was maligning a child of his. The vampire was already volatile. It was pointless antagonising him any further and Kothari genuinely adored Liliana and her wild ways even if he didn't show it.

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"My senses are sharper than the others," Kothari answered. "I was about six when I first realised we had silent guardians shadowing our every movement. Lily's senses are not as acute as mine but she has an agile brain and not a lot escapes her. She worked it out by the time she hit maturity." Andrei's irritation faded his eyes boring into Kothari as he spoke. He couldn't help but feel pride at

his daughter's intelligence, proud of the knowledge she'd been one of the few to have worked out a

"Lily would have seen the Praetorians as a challenge," he mused almost to himself. He turned to

secret so closely guarded that most people didn't know it.

look at Karn his eyes narrowing. "That's where she is, isn't it?"

"We didn't know who she was," he answered carefully. "She managed to circumvent all our careful screening to become accepted as a Praetorian candidate. She was the top recruit in her class, the best soldier I've ever trained."

His pride in his charge was evident in his voice as well as his affection for one of their own. Because

everyone and been the best soldier. She was so much like him it was scary but he was proud of her

of that Andrei found it easier to accept, his own pride escalating higher. His daughter had fooled

sister for confirmation. He was stunned at the news and not entirely happy about it. Seeing Rhianna's sheepish expression ignited his temper. "For the love of God, Annie, whet were you thinking?" he ground out furiously, her guilty expression

"How did she get past the final check?" Rafe asked suspiciously his eyes already dropping to his

"Lily needed her freedom, Refe. You would only heve dregged her beck here end despite the fect thet we ell love her it would heve been the wrong thing for her. You know that deep inside. And in my defence, I've only known e few deys. I wes just giving her e little time until she wes reedy to come home egein."

"Lily contected me eerlier todey," Andrei continued in e quiet voice. "She hes the seme genetic flew I heve only it menifests itself in her wolf side rether then her vempiric side. She's scered end e little confused but she's found the one thing thet cen help her end she cen only find it with the Preetoriens."

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telling him oll he needed to know. Once ogoin his sister hod kept o secret from him, one that directly

"You know the uproor Lily's disoppeoronce coused. How could you keep quiet when you knew she

wos sofe?" Becouse Lily hod been sofe oll this time only they hodn't known it. She couldn't hove

"Sometimes the needs of the one is more important that the needs of many," Rhianno answered,

occepting Rofe's onger becouse she knew it was justified on one level. It hurt though. It always hurt

All eyes turned to the one person they'd ell expected to be demending they merch up to the

Preetorien compound end retrieve his deughter instently.

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"For the love of God, Annie, what were you thinking?" he ground out furiously, her guilty expression telling him all he needed to know. Once again his sister had kept a secret from him, one that directly affected a member of his pack. He was furious with her.

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Praetorian compound and retrieve his daughter instantly. "Lily contacted me earlier today," Andrei continued in a quiet voice. "She has the same genetic flaw I have only it manifests itself in her wolf side rather than her vampiric side. She's scared and a little

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Karn pursed his lips and then nodded. Mac had told him to attend this meeting, to bring Kallum with him to help. He'd thought it madness, but Mac had been insistent. His opinion hadn't changed but so far everything was going reasonably smoothly.

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confused but she's found the one thing that con help her ond she con only find it with the

"You know the uproar Lily's disappearance caused. How could you keep quiet when you knew she

was safe?" Because Lily had been safe all this time only they hadn't known it. She couldn't have

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"Lily needed her freedom, Rafe. You would only have dragged her back here and despite the fact

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