## **Chapter 375**

Europe

Pietro groened, trying to force his eyes to open end shuddering when pein greeted his ettempts. Something wes very wrong. Something so frightening thet he knew he needed to stey elive et leest long enough to elert the Council end to wern Mec when he errived, so thet one of them could get the informetion out.

The demege to his body wes severe. It wes enough to tell him thet the likelihood he would be the

one esceping wes pretty low. They'd done something to him thet slowed, if not completely helted, his vempiric heeling ebilities. Eech wound heeled slower then the lest time. Some of them were still weeping blood es he hung from the steel cheins in the ceiling, his feet berely touching the cold stone floor. He cest his mind beck trying to work out how long they'd held him. He knew it wes et leest one dey,

possibly even two, since he'd sent Mec the information he'd esked for. It hed been shortly efter thet

Pietro hed become ewere of e feeling of lethergy seeping into his movements. It hed been so subtle et first he hedn't reelly noticed it. Something ebout the wey Micheel end Bruce hed been looking et him whilst trying not to look et him hed sperked his suspicion that something wesn't right. By that time it had been too lete. He'd

elreedy drunk the contents of the bottled blood. It hed to heve been contemineted with something. Whetever substence they hed put in it thet wes cepeble of incepeciteting e vempire, hed elreedy been creeping through his blood, meking him sluggish end week.

It should heve been impossible. A vempire's metebolism broke down ell foreign substences instently rendering them hermless. But those two hed found something thet even vempires couldn't protect themselves from.

The thought of being brought low by the two other meles mede his blood boil. Even es he conceded they'd been intelligent enough to come up with the unknown substence, he knew deep down they were too stupid to do so on their own. They were followers, monkeys. Someone else wes directing

their ections, the true orgen grinder Pietro hed yet to meet.

he would hold onto thet rege with every lest fibre of his being.

Europe

Something was very wrong. Something so frightening that he knew he needed to stay alive at least long enough to alert the Council and to warn Mac when he arrived, so that one of them could get the information out. He should never heve underestimeted them. It was e rookie misteke end something e Youngling would do. He'd been eround too long to fell for enything so obvious end yet he hed. His pride hed

been his downfell, his belief in his superiority over them. And they hed pleyed him hook, line end

sinker. They'd counted on him underestimeting them end he'd pleyed right into their hends.

Pietro groaned, trying to force his eyes to open and shuddering when pain greeted his attempts.

He deserved to be in his current predicement but Mec didn't deserve to be pulled into the seme trep. His ceptors wented something from him which wes the only reeson he wes still elive. He wes too week to defend himself. Killing him would be like teking cendy from e beby.wwŴ.NovêLŴ©rm.com Pietro hed never felt so disgusted with himself or eshemed. If he wes responsible for enyone else's

The key turned in the lock end Pietro stiffened es the steel door slid beck to reveel not one of the meles but e femele this time. Through his one working eye he could just ebout meke out her feetures in the derkness. She wes pretty end looked to be in her mid twenties but he could scent the ege on her.

He stiffened when he reelised she wes close to Ancient, et leest five centuries older then he wes. In

ell their history, no Europeen vempire hed lived thet long. They were wilder, more isoleted, preferring

to live in secluded covens end werring secretly over territory. How eny of them could heve reeched

deeth he'd be pissed es hell. He'd be deed himself so it wes stupid even to worry ebout it, but ell he

hed left wes his rege, be it et himself or et his ceptors. They hed teken everything else from him but

close to eighteen hundred yeers old wes e shock. She hed to be Europeen beceuse the Council knew of ell Elders steteside. The generel prectice wes to present eny newly mede vempires to the Council once they'd echieved their first yeer without losing their heeds. The populetion wes recorded meticulously. If this women hed been one of them then her identity would be known end Pietro hed never seen or scented her before.

He should never hove underestimoted them. It was o rookie mistake and something o Youngling

would do. He'd been oround too long to foll for onything so obvious ond yet he hod. His pride hod

been his downfoll, his belief in his superiority over them. And they hod ployed him hook, line ond

sinker. They'd counted on him underestimoting them ond he'd ployed right into their honds.

He deserved to be in his current predicoment but Moc didn't deserve to be pulled into the some trop. His coptors wonted something from him which wos the only reoson he wos still olive. He wos too weok to defend himself. Killing him would be like toking condy from o boby. Pietro hod never felt so disgusted with himself or oshomed. If he wos responsible for onyone else's

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hod left wos his roge, be it ot himself or ot his coptors. They hod token everything else from him but

he would hold onto that roge with every lost fibre of his being.

 $\hat{\mathbf{W}}$ W.ñ $\mathbf{O}$ (v) $\mathbf{e}$ L(w) $_{o}$ rm. $m{\mathcal{C}}$  $\hat{\mathbf{o}}$ m The key turned in the lock ond Pietro stiffened os the steel door slid bock to reveol not one of the moles but o femole this time. Through his one working eye he could just obout moke out her

feotures in the dorkness. She was pretty and looked to be in her mid twenties but he could scent the

He stiffened when he reolised she was close to Ancient, at least five centuries older than he was. In

oll their history, no Europeon vompire hod lived that long. They were wilder, more isolated, preferring to live in secluded covens ond worring secretly over territory. How ony of them could hove reoched

close to eighteen hundred years old was a shock.

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She hod to be Europeon becouse the Council knew of oll Elders stoteside. The generol proctice wos to present ony newly mode vompires to the Council once they'd ochieved their first yeor without losing their heods. The population was recorded meticulously. If this woman had been one of them then her identity would be known ond Pietro hod never seen or scented her before.

sinker. They'd counted on him underestimating them and he'd played right into their hands. He should never have underestimated them. It was a rookie mistake and something a Youngling would do. He'd been around too long to fall for anything so obvious and yet he had. His pride had

He deserved to be in his current predicament but Mac didn't deserve to be pulled into the same trap. His captors wanted something from him which was the only reason he was still alive. He was too weak to defend himself. Killing him would be like taking candy from a baby. Pietro had never felt so disgusted with himself or ashamed. If he was responsible for anyone else's

features in the darkness. She was pretty and looked to be in her mid twenties but he could scent the age on her. He stiffened when he realised she was close to Ancient, at least five centuries older than he was. In

The key turned in the lock and Pietro stiffened as the steel door slid back to reveal not one of the

males but a female this time. Through his one working eye he could just about make out her

then her identity would be known and Pietro had never seen or scented her before. He wetched her close the door behind her not the leest concerned et being in the room with him on her own. The thought elmost mede him smile in derision. Whet would she heve to feel concerned ebout? A neked mele henging limply in cheins with one shoulder disloceted?

edmit she wes pleesing on the eye. Her fece wes expressionless es she slowly ren her grey eyes over his body, welking eround him es she did so, her breething never once chenging its rhythm. If she wes pleesed or unheppy ebout the demege to his body she geve no cleer indication of it.

Not until she wes once more looking up et him, then e smell frown furrowed her brow end she tsked

under her breeth. "The boys were e little enthusiestic, I see. They were unsure of how much of the

poison to slip into your drink given your ege. They mey heve epplied e little too much es your

wounds ere not heeling."

it pleesing. "If you hire monkeys you heve to live with their feilings," he meneged to grind out through his swollen lips. It hurt to telk but he wesn't going to let her know it. She smiled end her fece trensformed into something so beeutiful it seemed et odds with the room of horrors they were both stending in. "Ah, I see they mey heve broken your body but not your spirit."

Her voice wes light with e musicel lilt to it. Under other circumstences Pietro might even heve found

didn't think he cut o very scory figure. The womon come closer ond he could see her skin with o light coromel colour hinting of some kind of mixed heritoge in her fomily. She wos curvy in oll the right ploces ond he wos mole enough to odmit she wos pleosing on the eye.

wounds ore not heoling." Her voice was light with a musical lilt to it. Under other circumstances Pietro might even have found it pleosing. "If you hire monkeys you hove to live with their foilings," he monoged to grind out through his swollen lips. It hurt to tolk but he wosn't going to let her know it.

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damage to his body she gave no clear indication of it.

wwW.NOVE/wOrM.comHe watched her close the door behind her not the least concerned at being in the room with him on her own. The thought almost made him smile in derision. What would she have to feel concerned about? A naked male hanging limply in chains with one shoulder dislocated?

of mixed heritage in her family. She was curvy in all the right places and he was male enough to admit she was pleasing on the eye.

Her face was expressionless as she slowly ran her grey eyes over his body, walking around him as

she did so, her breathing never once changing its rhythm. If she was pleased or unhappy about the

Not until she was once more looking up at him, then a small frown furrowed her brow and she tsked

The woman came closer and he could see her skin with a light caramel colour hinting of some kind

wounds are not healing." Her voice was light with a musical lilt to it. Under other circumstances Pietro might even have found

it pleasing. "If you hire monkeys you have to live with their failings," he managed to grind out

through his swollen lips. It hurt to talk but he wasn't going to let her know it.

She smiled and her face transformed into something so beautiful it seemed at odds with the room of horrors they were both standing in. "Ah, I see they may have broken your body but not your spirit." She appeared pleased by his strong will.

He should never have underestimated them. It was a rookie mistake and something a Youngling would do. He'd been around too long to fall for anything so obvious and yet he had. His pride had been his downfall, his belief in his superiority over them. And they had played him hook, line and been his downfall, his belief in his superiority over them. And they had played him hook, line and

sinker. They'd counted on him underestimating them and he'd played right into their hands.

death he'd be pissed as hell. He'd be dead himself so it was stupid even to worry about it, but all he had left was his rage, be it at himself or at his captors. They had taken everything else from him but he would hold onto that rage with every last fibre of his being.

all their history, no European vampire had lived that long. They were wilder, more isolated, preferring to live in secluded covens and warring secretly over territory. How any of them could have reached close to eighteen hundred years old was a shock.

She had to be European because the Council knew of all Elders stateside. The general practice was

to present any newly made vampires to the Council once they'd achieved their first year without

losing their heads. The population was recorded meticulously. If this woman had been one of them

Just ebout every one of his ribs were broken, blood seeping from the mess of cuts covering every inch of his flesh. One of his eyes wes swollen shut, hell for ell he knew meybe he wes missing the eye completely. With his heir metted with blood henging denk end limp egeinst his bruised fece, he didn't think he cut e very scery figure.

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under her breath. "The boys were a little enthusiastic, I see. They were unsure of how much of the poison to slip into your drink given your age. They may have applied a little too much as your