

Chapter 382

Demetri turned from watching the blood gush from his friend's torn throat. Ordinarily the wound would have been healing by now but the poison lacing Pietro's body kept the wound raw, allowing the tainted blood to flow unhindered.

Grabbing one of the empty bottles beside the bed, he used his vampiric speed to clean it out in the bathroom sink while Joshua was still outside with the humans. He returned to the bedroom, his gut wrenching painfully as he collected a sample of Pietro's blood and ensured it was left somewhere safe for retrieval later.

He pulled out his cell phone and hit the first speed dial number. "Stay with me," he whispered as the call was answered. He wasn't sure if he was talking to the man on the bed or the person on the other end of the call. All he was sure of was the coldness seeping into his bones as his humanity slowly ebbed away.

"Please carry on without me. This is an emergency call."

Mara's sweet voice echoed in his ear as she excused herself from most probably a Council meeting. He listened as her footsteps echoed over the marble floor he could picture as if he were there. The small amount of steps she took told him she'd entered one of the quiet rooms just off the main Council chambers, a place she could speak in complete privacy.*Ww.movelxRM.com*

"Talk to me, baby. Tell me what's wrong."

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A long tortured sound escaped him. "Pietro's dying. His body is ravaged with poison. His only hope is for me to bleed him out and try and replenish him with untainted blood. I have to use humans and I'm afraid I won't be able to retain enough reason not to kill them to save him. I need you."

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His wife's pained gasped sounded in his ear. He was too far away to sense much from their mate bond but he knew she was hurting. She adored Pietro, loved his quirky sense of humour. His death would be a blow to her if he couldn't save him.

"You listen to me, Demetri Bozic. I don't want to hear any of that defeatist crap from you. You damned well can maintain control and you will. I'll be right here with you every step of the way. Do whatever it takes to save Pietro."

She had her Council voice on, that no nonsense tone she adopted when she was serious about something. It cut through the blackness surrounding him and brought a faint smile to his lips. His woman was something else and she was all his. Her confidence in him helped to clear his head and he gave himself a mental shake.

"Well, you know how I hate to disappoint a lady," he sighed. "Guess I'll have to do as I'm ordered."

"I should be recording this call. Demetri Bozic actually doing something he's told for once." Mara's teasing tone was full of love, so much warmth that reached out to wrap itself around her husband. "I know you doubt yourself sometimes but I have faith in you, baby. I'll always have faith in you. You can do this. Just let me know what I can do to help."

Straightening his shoulders he turned back to the bed, saw the flow of blood trickling slowly now. Pietro's eyes were closed, what was left of his skin that hadn't rotted, so pale it was almost translucent.

"I'm going to hand the phone off to Joshua in a minute. If he judges the need he'll place it to my ear. Just talk to me when he does that, ground me and remind me what I'll lose if I surrender to the darkness."

"Always, Demetri," Mara whispered softly, maintaining the warmth and love in her tone so he knew he wasn't alone. She was frightened for Pietro and terrified for her husband. He was so far away with none of his safety lines available to touch him, to hold him close when the monster came calling. A phone link was the best they could do. It had to be enough.

Demetri strode out of the bedroom walking straight into Joshua and the five humans. He reached out instantly with his mind, ensnaring the humans and using his abilities to place them in a light trance. It was the first time he'd attempted to do this in a group environment and he was surprised at how easy it was.

He handed the phone to Joshua. "My wife is on the other end," he informed him. "If the humans' lives are in danger tell her I need her and then put the phone to my ear. Don't speak directly to me; don't attempt to interfere in anything I'm doing. Just hold the phone out to me."

He waited for the other vampire to signal his understanding and then ushered them all into the room. He scrutinized the humans carefully, trying to view them as people and not food. There were three males and two females, all healthy looking with pink cheeks and tantalising blood flowing just beneath their skin.

He separated the strongest looking male from the group and led him over to the bed.*W@w.novelWOR(m).Com*

"This won't hurt," he said in a deep soothing voice watching the man shiver as his compulsion washed over him. He turned his gaze to Pietro, barely able to see the rise and fall of his chest. He was too weak to feed so Demetri would have to orchestrate everything for the moment.

He gently opened the vampire's mouth forcing his mind to be calm as a piece of rotten flesh from his friend's chin came away in his hand.

"Lean over," he coaxed the human, his talons elongating as he helped the man line up his throat with Pietro's mouth. "You're with a pretty woman, my friend, walking along a beach holding her hand. The sun is glinting in her hair, laughter dancing in her eyes as she's looking up at you..."

His talon sliced the human's throat even as the man's eyes glowed with happiness, imagining himself in the environment Demetri had conceived. Hot, fresh blood pumped out splashing into Pietro's mouth and beginning to leak out of the corners.

"Swallow, Pietro. I know you're tired. I can feel your pain. But you have to feed so swallow. You said you would do this. You know why you cannot fail. Take what is offered to you."

Pietro heard a voice from far away. It pulled him away from the edge of darkness he was rushing towards. He didn't want to go back, knew he would feel the burning agony if he did but the voice speaking to him was insistent, refusing to be denied.

It could only be Demetri. The man was arrogant and stubborn and refused to fail at anything. He'd often wondered if Alexei and Andrei had gotten their own stubbornness from hanging around the Ancient so long or if they were all just such similar personalities they'd naturally banded together.

He swallowed, his throat raw and painful, the hot blood oozing into his body seeking to replenish what was lost. Everywhere ached, there wasn't one piece of his body which didn't burn with an agony so unbearable he was ready to give up and return to the waiting darkness.

More blood choked him and he swallowed again, cursing Demetri for tormenting him, hating him for being so demanding. If he was ready to give up then why wouldn't Demetri? He'd done his job. He'd alerted the others to the danger. Wasn't he entitled to rest now?

"Lady, your husband needs you," Joshua breathed softly into the phone before he held it out to Demetri's ear. He didn't touch him, tried not to even breathe close to the other vampire.

He had crossed over almost instantly once he'd shed the first human's blood. Demetri's eyes were black, his fangs out, and his talons wicked and sharp as they clutched the dying human tightly.

The man had lost a lot of blood, his expression still pleasant though the healthy pallor of his skin was gone. Another few minutes and he'd be past the point of return. They would have to consider Siring him if Demetri didn't stop.

"Do you remember the first time we met, baby?" Mara asked with a small sigh. "You scared the life out of me in my kitchen. I tried not to show it but I was terrified at the time. Still didn't stop me admiring you though. You looked so gorgeous, so impossibly beautiful that I had to acknowledge it even when I was sure you were going to kill me. I've never told you this before. I didn't want to feed your male ego."