

Chapter 460

The stunned disbelief that crossed Alexei's face would have been comical if the situation wasn't so grave. A loud growl escaped him in response to what he viewed as his brother's betrayal and his gaze turned to his mate, who was looking so torn that some of the rage he was experiencing evaporated as he caught her expression. "Cedar, surely you can't be considering this? She's our daughter!"

"I know, and I want to keep her here with us too, Alexei, but it's not that simple," his mate countered, her voice trembling with the wealth of conflicting emotions coursing through her. "Dara is Vârcolac, and we are only now coming to learn just a fraction of what that means. She is stronger, faster, and has abilities that far surpass all of us here in this room, with the exception of Cassia and Kallum. She is not a helpless child to be protected anymore, my love. We need to see that and believe it because that is the truth."

As her mate took two steps back, Cedar reached out a hand in silent plea for him to hear her out. "Kothari needs us, Alexei, and we are powerless to help him. Gard and Rayne left him in our care and we have somehow failed him through no real fault of our own. Do we sacrifice Kothari so that our daughter remains overprotected here in the pack? When Gard and Rayne come home will you be the one to look them in the eyes and tell them that they have lost their son because we were too afraid to allow our daughter to help him?"

As his expression turned confused, she took a step towards him, holding his eyes with an intentness that refused to allow him to look away. "Would you accept anyone standing before you telling you that you have lost your child because they were not brave enough to give her a chance at being saved?"

Alexei looked away, fury infusing him as the truth of what Cedar said fought to overwhelm him. Would he ever forgive someone in those circumstances? Never! He would hold them accountable for the rest of his existence; blame them forever for the loss of his child. Could he do the same to Gard and Rayne? Could he look them in the eyes and tell them that his child was more important than theirs was and they would just have to accept that?

Turning to Dara, he stared at his youngest child, seeing a plea deep within her eyes as she met his gaze resolutely. She was so strong and beautiful, and he couldn't be more proud of her than he already was. Where Cassia had veered towards science and healing, Dara has always been more inclined toward physical combat and pack security. She was a soldier through and through, and he had always known that one day she would elevate in the ranks to Beta level.

He was only now realising that his children had grown up when he didn't appear to have been looking. Cassia was recently mated with Pietro, and it would only be a matter of time before Dara would find her mate. It felt a bit churlish to be relieved that she was adamant that it wouldn't be Kothari. He loved the boy just as he much as he did the rest of their pack but he didn't want the headache of having him as a son-in-law. Not that he wouldn't have accepted him if he had been Dara's mate. He knew the deep abiding love that came with mating with the other half of your soul. He would never do anything to stand in the way of that.*www.moveWow.com*

Dara wanted to do this. Her protective nature probably demanded it of her. If she truly believed that she was Kothari's one hope of ever coming home, then to deny her the opportunity to be herself could lead her to hating him forever. Could he live with her hate if it meant keeping her safe? Could he live with not only her disappointment in him, but also Cedar's and Cassia's, not to mention his Alphas'? Andrei would understand, despite his agreeing with Dara's decision. Kallum was oddly silent on the matter, standing off to the side a little as if he were viewing the discussion from the outside.

Turning to the Vârcolac, he raised an eyebrow. "You don't have anything to say about this? It's not like you to be so silent on Vârcolac matters."*www.NoveNovel.com*

"You have to find peace with this in your own mind, Alexei," Kallum answered, his expression solemn. "This is a family matter as well as a pack one. If you require my opinion, then I will gladly give it to you. Do I believe Dara is capable of this task, hell yes! Do I think she should go alone to Europe, not particularly; however, I can see the weight to her argument. Right now, Kothari has only two beliefs in his world. One is that he will find his parents and bring them home safely. The other is that Dara is his mate, whether that be fact or not."

When Alexei opened his mouth to speak again, the younger man held up his hand. "Please, let me finish, Alexei, this is important. There is one thing here that no one else has touched on, which is crucial to any kind of success at finding Kothi and bringing him home. None of us can sense him. Whatever has happened within his mind, he has somehow managed to project a false sense of calmness along all his psychic bonds. He didn't cut us off to alert us like Lily did once. He fed us all a great big lie that all was well with him. "

Everyone gasped aloud, with the exception of Dara who was nodding her head. It was she Kallum was now looking at, his expression shrewd as he watched her intently. "You can... you sense him, can't you, Dara? You knew something was wrong and that's why you went to check on Kothi."

Everyone turned to look at her once more as she gave a tentative nod. "It's very faint, and I have to search really hard down our Vârcolac link, but there is what appears to be the tiniest beacon of light far off in the distance. Every time I closed my eyes last night, I kept seeing that light. I think Kothi may have been reaching out to me, trying to alert me from wherever he has gone within his mind. I think that the closer I get to Kothi's physical location, that light will grow and I should be able to track him."*www.NoVèlNovel.com*

If what Dara said was true, then it would appear that she was the only one who would stand any chance of tracking Kothari in Europe. It was the final piece of information to put an end to the debate on whether or not Alexei was prepared to allow her to go. He couldn't stop her, not without hurting his family, his pack, and most of all Kothari. He had been part of the pack long enough to feel the same pull of loyalty to each and every member as he felt for Andrei.

Conceding defeat, Alexei strode forward, engulfing Dara in a hug so tight it was a wonder she didn't complain that he was hurting her. He had to let go, he had to believe in her strength and wisdom to do what was right, but she was his baby, his little girl that he had never dreamed possible for most of his life. "I know I must let go, Dara, but I don't know how to. If anything happened to you...I swear I would commit murder if even one hair on your head was touched."

"Dad, you know I can protect myself. If I remained shadowed the entire time I was in Europe, no one would be any the wiser. I know that's not feasible as I will need to interact with people once there, but I have that added protection." It felt strange to be reassuring her father when, until now, it has always been the other way around. Nevertheless, Dara had to make him see her abilities so he could be at peace with her decision. She could tell the exact moment that he accepted it by the resigned expression that flitted across his face.

"You really need to do this, don't you, honey?"

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