

## Chapter 468

Her mate appeared mollified by her words and gave her a lingering kiss before he nodded farewell to Aaron and head out, leaving Rhianna alone with the blond wolf.

"We haven't spent any time together in a long time either, Aaron," Rhianna smiled, threading her arm through his. "How about I visit with you and Jen for a bit after you ask Mackenzie if he could come down to the pack?"

The wolf burst out laughing, his cerulean blue eyes twinkling with amusement. "I love how you make everything sound so perfectly innocent, Annie, even when you're moving chess pieces across a board. It will be our pleasure to have you visit with us while you await Mac."

She gave him another small smile, allowing him to escort her from the study. If only he knew that she was terrified of being left alone right now. The earlier grief that had numbed her soul the night before was still there, ready to overwhelm her if she wasn't fully occupied. She needed company around her now, as they began what would likely be the long wait for some news of what was happening in Europe. Still, she wasn't upset that he thought she was up to something. There was nothing wrong with keeping other people guessing.

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"Another urgent Council meeting? This is becoming tiresome." Sasha's softly spoken words were cold, her deep blue eyes bordering on black as she frowned down the opposite end of the ornate dais.

The Vampire Council was in session, and for once, the brooding presence of Demetri Bozic wasn't in attendance. His wife and mate, Mara, was safely tucked away between the Romanov twins as was customary at the other end of the large table. Emily was braced between Mara and Stephan, with Cristoph, William, and Corinne taking the next three seats as was the usual makeup of the less intractable members.

Following more traditional rules, the Council still sat in order of allegiance, the six closest to the left hand side of the dais looking outward, being those aligned with the Were Pack alliance. The remaining members were more conservative, less tolerant of the alliance with the wolves. Sasha was always in the latter half of the dais...today she was at the very end of the long table.

"The Council demanded to be informed immediately of anything further happening with regards the Amort poison. Now you want to complain when we accede to your demands?" It was Alexei who spoke, his tone cold and derogatory. His thoughts were still on his daughter who has been gone for a few hours now. He didn't have any patience to deal with Sasha and her cronies.

"The wolves have found a cure?" William asked, his green eyes turning to look to his left. His wide shoulders tilted ever so slightly away from Sasha, making it more than obvious that he didn't care for the white-haired woman very much.

"My daughter found the cure," Alexei answered, pride turning his tone smug. "The antidote is being synthesised at the moment, so we need to inform the others of the threat and set up some form of clinic so that those who require the antidote can receive it."

He shot a withering glance in Sasha's direction. "I take it you will be one of the first to be inoculated?"

Her eyes darkened and fury crossed her beautiful face, however, it was Claude who spoke, flicking a long reddish-blond strand of hair behind his shoulder. "Naturally it is only sensible that ALL Council members receive this inoculation. How are we to lead our people if we do not do so by example?"

"Which translates into you're all shit scared of dying," Andrei muttered, his smile containing no humour. "You don't want to have anything to do with the wolves but when it comes to having your asses being saved, suddenly they're your new best friends."

"Squabbling among ourselves isn't very productive," Mara sighed, rolling her shoulders to try to release some of her tenseness. Having Demetri present at these meetings was often a nightmare, however today she would have killed to have him lurking in the background. The tension was so high, she wasn't sure that an actual physical fight wouldn't break out. Alexei and Andrei were spoiling for one, and only Demetri or Caleb could keep them in check when their beasts were so close to the surface.

Trying to diffuse the situation, she smiled at William and looked to his companion, Corrine. The other woman's expression was more curious that anything else, and that boded well. "We need a liaison with the wolves, someone to direct the setting up of the clinic and keeping a record of who is inoculated. Corinne, would you be willing to do that?"

For the barest fraction of a second, green eyes slid to the male at her side who stared straight ahead, and then Corrine nodded her head. "I would have thought one of you would have preferred to oversee such an undertaking," she answered. "Though, I have no issue with performing the task, if required."

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"Our time will be taken up with other tasks," Alexei replied. "Last night the European vampires attacked the Armand-Hanlon pack and tried to kill two of our members. We are needed there until such times the threat has been neutralised."

"They what?" Stephan growled, fury blazoning from his hazel eyes. "Just who the fuck are these upstarts that they come onto our home territory and think they can attack us?"

"They attacked a wolf pack, Stephan," Piers snorted, refusing to be intimidated by the low growl that escaped Andrei's lips at his words. "Yes, you have cast your allegiance with the wolves, Andrei, and Caleb has given his edict to the Council that they are not to be harmed. This attack is from no vampire aligned to this Council, and while none of our kind here will break Caleb's edict, that does not mean that we will simply rush to protect the wolves from other attacks."

Andrei rose slowly, a flash of fury glinting from his eyes before all emotion suddenly vanished from his expression.

"Alexei..." Mara whispered, her breath catching as the one she called to in a bid to try to subdue his brother was rising with an equally terrifying expression on his face.

"...And nor would we ask you to..."

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