

Chapter 471

"Who is Dante?"

Dara's question hung on the air, and for a moment, Joshua could only stare at her in shock. His heart had already been kicking up a beat the more she divulged, but it was nothing in comparison to the dread he felt at hearing her question. How in hell had she managed to dig that deep? He hadn't felt a thing, not one whisper that she had breached his inner most shields. The sheer strength to do that...dear God, it was astronomical.

"Dante is a friend," he finally answered, feeling his unease lighten a bit at her expression. It was more curious than condemning, as if she was satisfied with whatever she'd found in the deepest recesses of his mind.

"Why do you hide him then?"

Again, there was only curiosity in her tone, and Joshua relaxed a bit more. "Keeping secrets is often the only way we can remain safe here. Dante...well he tends to be a loner for the most part and doesn't give his friendship easily. There are many who distrust him among our kind because he is not aligned with any covens. If they were aware of my friendship with him, it could negatively impact both myself and my coven."

Dara nodded slowly. She could understand that logic to a certain degree...Kothi mirrored a lot of similar traits, which made him one of the least understood of their pack, though he was loved despite that. Europe was a completely different place though, and any form of uniqueness probably was less likely to be tolerated.

"He sounds intriguing. Perhaps our paths will cross while I'm here."

Dara rose and rolled her head to release some of the tension in her neck. She'd never gone so deep in someone's mind before, it had drained her both mentally and physically, more than she had anticipated. She would need to discuss that with Kallum when she was back home, but for now she would just have to be more prudent about how and when she used her skill. Thankfully, Joshua had been a friend, and therefore there was no real danger to this weariness she was feeling. With someone else, it could be a completely different scenario.

"So, you've been in my mind now. Do you want to tell me who you are and what's going on here?"

Joshua's words broke through her thoughts and she turned to look at him. Curiosity was the prevalent emotion in his eyes, but she could see he was tense and trying to hide it. What must it be like having to live his entire life expecting everyone to betray him? She couldn't imagine it and it made her feel sad that this was the norm for those who lived in Europe, when she had known only the complete opposite. Someone had to fix this...one day when all this mess was over. Someone had to fix this, and she was going to let Annie and Caleb know that as soon as she got back home.

For now, she had to get back to the matter at hand. Too much time was passing, time where Kothi was getting further and further away. There was no one else she could count on to come up with strategies and ways forward. It was all down to her, and while there was a part inside her that questioned whether or not she could do this, Dara knew she had no choice and she had to fall back on every single bit of training she'd ever received growing up.

Smiling she headed back to the sofa and sat down. "My name is Dara Romanov, and I am one of the Vârcolac. You may have heard of my father and uncle, Alexei and Andrei Romanov?"

"We're not that out of touch over here," Joshua remarked with a hint of amusement in his voice though it was clear he was startled by the news. "That's why you were so pleased that I mistook you for a Youngling."

She nodded. "Given how antagonistic vampires over here are to Weres, I figured it would be best to be as unthreatening as possible in my dealings with others. Changing a scent is second nature for us Vârcolac. We were taught it at an early age for when we had to leave pack lands, so no one would be able to track our real scents. I haven't had to do it for a long time, so I am pleased it worked as expected."

Joshua nodded, his expression turning thoughtful. "Why would Caleb let you come here alone? I know you all have a unique skillset. What you just did inside my head scares the fucking crap out of me. Even taking all of that into consideration, Caleb is far too rigid to allow one of the Vârcolac to travel to Europe alone. Especially after Gard and Rayne disappeared."

She gave him a half smile. "You're right, he wouldn't have, but he didn't really get the opportunity to object. Events overtook us and we had to act immediately. I would have been on the plane before he became aware of what was happening."

Dara paused, weighing up how much she was comfortable telling the vampire before her. She liked Joshua. He was exactly what he appeared, a loyal friend to Caleb, and by default, to those the Ancient took under his protection.*wW.NoveℓW(s)Oм.©óм*

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Making up her mind, she let out a sigh and met his gaze, her expression turning clouded. "There is another Vârcolac on European soil and I don't mean Rayne. He is lost and afraid, and he is so damaged that we fear for what will happen here in your world, Joshua. He is lethal and he is invisible. He has only one goal in his mind and he will scythe through whoever, and however many it takes to reach that goal. There is a monster walking among you and none of you can see him. I am here to track him and try to convince him to come home."

"The Justice Seeker..." he whispered, dread sending a shiver down his spine. "He's here already? We thought we had more time..."

Dara made a choked sound, confusion crossing her face at the fear she saw on Joshua's. How could they know about Kothari? It didn't make sense. "The what? I don't understand what you mean. You've seen him? When? What direction did he go in?" If they'd seen him then she had to get moving, had to start tracking...

Joshua shook his head, his hand clenching in a fist to stop from reaching for his phone to call Dante. He needed more information and Dara had that knowledge. The question was, how much should he reveal to her? He knew she could probably dig deeper into his mind and find the information, but she'd appeared satisfied with finding Dante that she hadn't gone any deeper. There was still the possibility he could keep Mila's identity a secret, but did he really need to? Dante would feel betrayed if revealed her existence to anyone. He would never trust him again...

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"Just tell me what you feel comfortable with, Joshua."

Dara's quiet words made him feel ashamed that she had trusted him and he wasn't returning that trust. "It's not that I don't want to tell you, Dara, it's just...it's not my story to tell."*WwW.NoVeℓw@(r)м.com*

"I understand. Believe me, I was in two minds about telling you about Kothari, so I do understand. However, I do need to know what you mean by Justice Seeker. It's important to my mission."