

Chapter 501

He continued to frown at her, though his expression was less irate. "Are we just puppets to your whims, Anakatrine? Was no one safe from your machinations?"

Her expression grew clouded, regret shining from lavender eyes that were so like Rhianna's but subtly different too. "I had to do what was necessary. Do you think I liked keeping my mate and my guardian in the dark about what was to come? Do you think it was easy knowing that I could only save one of them, and having to choose which one? Our history, the very existence of every vampire and every Were was mine to protect, Caleb. I had to do what was best in the short time that I had to guide events before I died. So, yes, my machinations were necessary, even as they broke my heart a thousand times over."

He had to be made to understand, though the recent revelations that someone had managed to infiltrate his inner defences would have put him more on edge than before. That was to be expected and she would have to concede to Rhianna's abilities to soothe her mate and help him reconcile with that fact. When his expression cleared a bit further, the Vampire Queen contained the relieved sigh that threatened to escape.

"I know I can't ever begin to understand what you, Callain and Gard went through, Anakatrine, especially the decisions you had to make personally, but this is our time now. This is my mate, my people, my family and friends that I am responsible for. We can't afford to be left in the dark any longer no matter how well intentioned you are. We need to know everything if we have any hope of combatting the threat to all we love."

She moved off the bed, and slowly paced the room. "Why do you think I gave you the histories to read? You asked Annie why I waited so long to tell you this information. I had to because I was waiting for you, Caleb."

His eyebrow rose, surprise dancing across his features. "Me?" It was evident this was the last thing he'd expected her to say.

Moving back to the bed the Vampire Queen sat at the bottom facing him. "Yes, you, silly vampire," she said in a tone laced with exasperation though she wore a fond smile. "Do you think I could have accomplished everything without having Callain 100% behind me, Caleb? A queen is nothing without an equally strong king at her side. Annie not only needed to show you how to embrace your humanity again, but she also had to have time to bring you closer to the Weres, to see the wonder of what we once were. That was never going to happen overnight."

Caleb could see her point and nodded his head for her to continue.

"You accepted Gard relatively easily but you fought hard against my presence and especially against Callain. We know now that you might have had somehelp with that, though both Callain and I are reasonably certain that our enemy is oblivious to the fact we've been reborn. Still, you needed to fully accept us before you would ever be ready for this additional knowledge. If it had come to you too soon then there was the risk that everything we fought and died for would have come to nothing. That risk was too high. One I just couldn't take a chance on."

"I would have followed Annie into fire," he growled, though it was clear he wasn't totally disagreeing with Anakatrine.

"Yes, you would have, but you needed to be prepared to follow the Weres, Annie, and the entire Genesis Society descendants into that very same fire. You always held a little part of yourself back, even when you fought for what was right. Annie needed 100% not 99.9% to complete her transformation."

Caleb stared at the woman before him, confusion warring with fear. What the hell was she talking about now? What other secrets was the Vampire Queen hiding. "Transformation? Anakatrine, what the hell do you mean? What's wrong with Annie?" If she'd done anything to hurt his mate he would move heaven and earth to excise her completely.

His vehemence appeared to amuse the Vampire Queen, as she gave a soft laugh, lavender eyes twinkling. "Oh, how I miss seeing that truly ferocious expression on my mate's face. Annie certainly chose well in you, dear Caleb. Be at ease, my friend, I haven't done anything to harm your sweet mate. If you think about it for a moment, taking into account the history of Genesis Society, you will work it out yourself."

If she thought to appease his concerns, she only served to increase his confusion. Caleb knew he was being ridiculous even considering that Anakatrine would harm his Annie in any way, and yet she spoke about transformations and giving 100%...it didn't make any se...Caleb gasped out aloud, his golden brown eyes going round with shock.

"I see you've managed to work it out." The Vampire Queen smiled once again. "I think this is a conversation best had between you and your mate. Annie will know what to do for now. I will still be here to draw on when needed but this next part of the game lies with you two. I will leave one word of caution though. Time is beginning to run out. I feel that we are rushing towards the conclusion of this hidden war. There is much that I can no longer See, but be warned, there are some events to come that will crush the very life from your souls. Find my beautiful Guardian, Caleb, fore you will need him at the very end. Without him, we stand the very real chance of failing. Bring my brother home."

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With that Anakatrine vanished, and with the slight change in posture Caleb could see his mate was once more back in dominance. She stared at him for a moment, as if reorienting herself, and then her eyes filled with tears and she threw herself into his arms. "Caleb...oh, Caleb!"

He held onto her, rocking her soothingly as she took in the full magnitude of what Anakatrine had laid open to them both. Stroking a hand gently through her riot of red curls, he kissed the top of her head, as overcome with emotions as she was.*wɹW.ñðvɛɹwðrM.Còm*

"Do you think I could have accomplished everything without having Callain 100% behind me, Caleb? A queen is nothing without an equally strong king at her side..."

"...Annie needed 100% not 99.9% to complete her transformation..."

Anakatrine had uttered those words only a few short moments before.

"My Queen," he whispered in awe.

"I thought...I thought she was just a part of me, Caleb," Rhianna gulped out through her tears. "I had no idea...I never dreamed that I was changing...that I was becoming..."

"The next Vampire Queen." He finished the sentence for her, acknowledging that in saying the words, he had to concede that he would become the next Vampire King, that it wasn't just a concept others believed in but would become an actual fact.

Why had he just presumed that when all this was over things would just go back to the way they used to be for them? Was it because he hadn't wanted things to change or had their unseen enemy wanted to keep them isolated, separate, so that they couldn't come together in a strong enough unit to find them? Whatever the reason, it was now clear that they didn't just host the souls of the last Vampire Queen and her King...they were transforming into the next line of Vampire royalty.

"Now I understand what happened to me when we were apart," Rhianna finally said, pulling back so she could see his expression. "Caleb, uhm, I don't quite know how to say this without it being a complete shock to you, so I am just going to come right out with it. I had a monthly cycle when I was in Toronto with Gard." His puzzled expression almost made her laugh but she managed to contain it.

"Monthly cycle?" he repeated, trying to fathom what she meant by that. The only thing he could think of that happened monthly was that some wolf packs liked to shift and run on the first night of the full moon. However, his mate wasn't a wolf so she couldn't mean that.

"You know...a woman's monthly cycle? The one they get when they hit puberty."*(w)Ww.novElw(c)r™.com*

Caleb didn't think anything could have shocked him more than finding out his mate was the next Vampire Queen...but if he was now understanding her correctly...then she'd just told him that her reproductive cycle had restarted out of the blue.

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