

## Chapter 514

"We will stop here for a rest."

Agony's declaration whispered through the trees surrounding them, and Natalia knew she was the reason they were pausing for a rest. The vampires and Vârcolac could have carried on for days without stopping, but she was only human, and despite being extremely fit due to being raised in a wolf pack, there was a limit to her stamina, and she was almost at breaking point.

She didn't view it as a weakness though. Some might have, seeing physical power as being strong. Natalia had learned over her reasonably short life that strength came in many different forms, so she wasn't offended that the others paused for her benefit only. She saw the stop as a chance to talk with Mila. She'd been noticing some subtle changes in her gifts as they made their way up the huge Carpathian Mountains and the Seer was probably the best person to talk to about it as she shared a similar gift.

"Mila, can we have a moment to talk please?"(w)ww.NôvélWoRm.cOm

The stunning dark-haired vampire turned sightless eyes to her and smiled gently. "Of course, Tali. Come, we can talk just over here."

Natalia was still amazed that the blind woman moved so gracefully. If someone didn't know about her visual impairment, they would never be able to tell that the vampire saw in such an usual manner. Natalia guessed that Mila was using the wind rustling the leaves and shrubbery as a means to take a snapshot of her surroundings and plot her course over to a fallen log a little way away from the clearing the others were now scrutinising.WWW.NovélWoRm.cOm©

"Is something wrong, Tali?"

"Not wrong," she answered in a lowered tone. They were far enough away that most of the others couldn't hear them talk even with their enhanced hearing. She wasn't so sure that Agony and Dara couldn't hear but she needed to discuss her thoughts with Mila too much to worry about them overhearing.

"It's just...I know some gifts allow others to see auras around people. I heard about it once a while ago, but I don't know too much about it."

Mila's expressive face showed surprise and her gaze quickly turned in Dante's direction. How she knew where he had moved to in the clearing, Tali didn't know, but her new friend always seemed to know exactly where Dante was.

"Yes, some can see auras surrounding others," Mila finally answered after a subtle nod from the male vampire. "Dante is one such person. He saw Kothari's red aura even when he was masked to everyone. That's how he knew he had infiltrated the coven. If you need to know about auras perhaps Dante would be the best person to ask?"

Natalia hesitated for a second and then nodded her agreement. The dark-haired male appeared beside them almost instantly. She fought to hide a smile that threatened to escape her. He really didn't like being away from Mila at all. She was surprised that they were not already mated. Perhaps one day she would discover that held the two of them apart, when it was so clear to see that they loved each other. Today wasn't that day though, she needed information about her gifts.

"How can I help you, Tali?" Dante spoke in a calm, sincere tone that screamed out she could trust him. Oddly enough, she did trust both Mila and Dante even though she barely knew them.

"Mila said you see auras as a colour?"

He nodded. "You're aura is pale mauve, Mila's is sunflower yellow. Kothari is red and Dara is sky blue. I could go on listing everyone, but I think the ones I've already listed explains what I see."

Natalia frowned, confusion colouring her expression. "Since we arrived here I've started to notice...I don't know how best to explain it, it's sort of like shadows around everyone. However, they're not coloured as you've just described. Everyone was sort of a shimmering silver...not all over and all the time...just every now and then when they tilt their head expressively. I thought maybe I was seeing auras, but it doesn't sound like what you see, Dante."

He agreed, looking at Mila for her thoughts.

"I've never heard of anything like that before," the vampire said, her own expression perplexed. "It's definitely not aura viewing. At a guess, I would say it sounds more like you're seeing some kind of mental energy surrounding people. Why haven't you said anything and what made you mention it now Tali?"

Natalia sighed, took her glasses off, and began cleaning them. "At first I thought I was imagining it, then when I realised that I wasn't I started to look more closely at everyone. I probably wouldn't have mentioned it for a while yet but then I noticed someone's shadow had changed."

Dante was immediately alert, shifting his position slightly so that both Mila and Tali were obstructed from view by the rest of the group. "What do you mean changed?"

Natalia slipped her glasses back on. "The blonde female vampire in Louis' group doesn't have a silvery shadow any more. It's turned black and it's there all of the time."

It didn't seem possible that Dante could become any more alert, and yet his body stiffened further, and his voice was barely audible the next time he spoke. "Don't mention what you've just told us to anyone else until I've had a chance to check it out. If you notice anyone else change to black, let me know immediately."

His gaze shifted to Mila "Take Tali back to the others and keep her as close to Agony as possible without it looking suspicious. I need to talk to Dara."

"Dante?"

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He ran a hand down Mila's cheek bending in close to her ear. "I need to check something out. I don't know if I'm right or not but as soon as I know, you will know. Just look after Tali for now. She may have just become the most important member of this mission." Without another word, he turned away and headed over to find Dara.

Mila watched him go and then uttered a soft sigh. "Come on, Tali. I've learned to trust Dante's strange feelings over the years. Let's get back to the others. I'm sure we'll find out what this is all about soon enough."

Natalia wasn't sure what was going on, but she wasn't as adverse to the idea of staying close to Agony as she should have been. What that meant she didn't really know. Her inbuilt radar appeared to have become accustomed to having him close. She followed Mila towards where he had last been seen, surprised to find that he wasn't in the clearing anymore.

Mila appeared to be watching Dante as he spoke to Dara so Natalia walked a little way into the trees to see if she could find Agony. She sensed that she was going in the right direction, her once erratic abilities becoming more honed the longer she was around the Vârcolac. It was as if their presence had somehow enhanced and sharpened her abilities. While the changes were a bit disconcerting, they also gave her a sense of being strong enough to compete with all the lethal beings surrounding her. Perhaps Mila had been right when she said that Natalia was needed for the success of the mission. Dante seemed very interested in her new ability to sense shadows around the others. Maybe there were more new abilities that would become known?Www.NovélWoRm.cOm

As she mused about the changes, her thoughts turned to her mother. It was hard not to focus on what was happening stateside, if Agony's alpha could save her from going rogue. The whole trip Natalia had been fighting the sense of hopelessness that threatened to overwhelm her every time she thought of her mother, and she couldn't even bear to think of her father. When she thought of him, the pain was a deep ache inside. She knew it would be worse if her mother went rogue and had to be put down. She couldn't even contemplate the anguish losing her mother would cause.

No, Natalia had to keep hoping that some miraculous feat would happen, and everything would be okay. She knew it was probably wishful thinking, but she couldn't give up that small hope. If she did...then she had no idea what would become of her. She would have no parents and no real home. She didn't even know if her Alpha would allow her to stay with the pack without her parents, she was just a human after all. Her mother had to be saved, and this crazy mission had to succeed. If she kept willing it then it had to happen. Everything was going to be okay...it had to be.

A flash of movement up ahead drew Natalia out of her reverie, and she realised that she'd walked much further from the clearing than she had meant to. A small shiver ran down her spine, her gaze travelling her surroundings. Could she have been any more stupid wandering off on her own in dangerous territory? Who knew who or what was out there on the tall, imposing mountainside? They were on the trail of Agony's abducted parents for goodness sake. Stupid, stupid, stupid! Natalia couldn't believe how reckless she'd been.