



## Chapter 520

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Demetri switched off his phone not bothering to hide his disquiet. The news Rafe had just imparted was cause for concern so it was churlish not to let the others know there had been a development.

"What?" Nors asked.

They had just alighted the train at Braşov, and though they were a couple of days behind Dara and Kothi, they hadn't been particularly concerned about it as they could move much faster than the others as they didn't have to cater to a human in their group. Still, the news Rafe had imparted now had Demetri feeling a sense of urgency that hadn't been there before.

Sighing, he ran a hand through his black hair. "Dara checked in with Rafe. It appears our enemy knows they're on their way to find Gard and Rayne. One of the vampires with them was mentally compromised. It appears that the human girl has developed an ability like aura viewing, but not quite the same. She can see when someone's mind has been compromised. The group dealt with the issue, and they've implemented a check and balance protocol to make sure there is no further incursions, however, this changes the way we need to do things."

"If we contact Dara and let her know we're here and the enemy is able to take over someone else then he will know we are coming." Freya summed up the position quickly, drawing a nod from Demetri.

"Exactly. I had planned on letting Dara know we were backing them up but now it doesn't seem like a viable option. We need to be completely hidden from whoever is out there causing all this trouble."

"Rafe didn't tell them we were coming?" Freya asked.

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"He opted for caution after hearing about the vampire, and I agree with that course of action," the other Ancient answered, his dark green gaze automatically travelling to the mountain range in the distance. The sense of urgency he felt was making him antsy, and he didn't like feeling antsy.

"Who was compromised? It wasn't Louis was it?" Joshua asked, a frown wrinkling his brow. He had a reasonably friendly relationship with the coven leader. He kept his coven in check for the most part and that helped promote a healthy balance between the covens in Europe. It would be unfortunate if anything were to happen to the other vampire.

Demetri shook his head. "It was a female member of his coven. He wasn't happy about the solution to the problem that Kothi and Dara took, and things became tense for a moment, but it appears they're all back on the same page again."

Freya snorted, rolling her eyes. "Louis is stubborn as a mule, but he isn't stupid enough to go up against the Vârcolac. He has a strong sense of self preservation."

Her mate turned to look at her, curiosity in his eyes though he didn't ask the question he clearly wanted to ask. Dayton knew she had some history with the European vampire, but she'd never really elaborated on it.

"You know I used to be part of his coven many years ago," Freya admitted. "We parted ways when he realised that I wasn't the type to take orders from anyone, even the coven leader. I could say we split amicably, but that would be a lie. He threatened to set his entire coven on me if I ever darkened his door again. When I finished laughing, I told him I go where I please and he could bring it on. We sort of left it there."

Nors' head snapped around to stare at his sister. "I thought you said he had a strong sense of self preservation," he laughed. He'd spent many centuries keeping his volatile sister in check. He knew just how foolish it was to threaten her.

"I swung around his neck of the woods a few years later and popped in to say hi," Freya replied, a wicked smile on her beautiful face. "As you can all see, I am still alive and well, and so is Louis. I'd say that proves that he does."

Her brother laughed again, shaking his head. "I'm so glad you're no longer my problem, sister mine. Dayton, you're a much stronger male than I am."

"If we can get back on with the task at hand," Demetri interrupted dryly. "We should employ the same defence techniques the others are using and build mental safeguards. We will check each other as we go along to make sure there are no incursions into our minds. I think it's unlikely whoever is out there knows we're coming but it makes sense to err on the side of caution."

He waited for everyone to nod their agreement and continued. "We'll do a quick reconnoitre around the city and then head up into the mountains. We can move much faster than Dara's group so we should be able to catch up with them quickly. Any objections?" He wasn't really expecting any but asked all the same. Sometimes it was good leadership letting others think they actually had a say in the matter, even if there was no way in hell he was going to let this mission go any way but his.

When he received no objections, they quickly set their mental safeguards and then headed off down the street. Demetri was an excellent tracker and knew that they wouldn't have any issues picking up Dara's trail up the mountains. Dayton was particularly attuned to his niece's scent and was equally as skilled a tracker being a wolf. They would catch up with others quickly, and then maybe they would finally find out just who it was that thought it was smart to mess with the Stateside vampires and packs.

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"Sarayne?"

The name whispered through her mind, breaking through the fogginess that was slowly dissipating. She recognised the voice, but it took her mind a few seconds to register who it belonged to. She was aware it was someone important to her, some vital to her existence. However, she couldn't form the name that she needed, the name that meant the world to her.

"Sarayne?"

A sob threatened to escape, but she swallowed it down, conscious of the fact that she couldn't let her captors know she was awake.

"Gard, I'm here," she sent back telepathically, hoping that there wasn't anyone around who was able to monitor their link. This was the first time she'd been able to communicate with her mate since they'd been taken captive. The relief she felt knowing he was safe and close was nearly overwhelming. "From what I can tell we're in a cave somewhere in the Carpathian Mountains.

Whatever drug they have been giving us appears to be losing its potency as I've come around a few times before they've come to dose us again. This is the first time I've been able to sense you awake though. Have you been awake before now?"

A mental sigh of relief breezed through her mind, followed by a wave of love that wrapped her up in the feel of strong arms. Gard's presence comforted her in a way no other could, his words, reassuring as they washed over her.

"Yes, love, but it's the first time I've gotten a response from you. I could sense you next to me, so I knew you were there. I just couldn't get any reaction when I called out to you. It's good to know that the drugs are wearing off both of us at the same rate. Have you tried moving at all?"

She wanted to laugh out aloud but forced herself to remain still. "I've been deliberately not moving just in case we were in sight of our captors. I didn't want to give away the fact that their drug is failing on them. They might hit us with something more potent."

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It was a valid concern; one Gard had clearly thought of when he was awake on his own. It was also something that he wouldn't have feared testing.

"I don't think we are being watched," he replied, confidence in his mental tone. "I've been flexing my leg muscles each time I wake and there hasn't been any indication that it's been noticed."

Taking a chance, Rayne flexed her legs, stifling a moan of delight at finally being able to move even if it was just a small gesture. She did it again and then stiffened as another memory returned from the last time she was awake.

"Agony," she whispered, fear filling her mind and seeping into her mate who stiffened beside her. "He's here, Gard. I sensed him the last time I was awake. Our son has given over control to his feral side and come looking for us. I told him to run, but I was dosed again and don't know if he heard me."

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