

Chapter 522

"The drug potency has almost failed," she mentally projected to Agony. "If it's been less than half an hour since they last dosed us and we're awake already then we should be able to assist in our rescue. Thank goodness we're so ancient that we can survive without nourishment for longer than others. Our captors will probably expect us to be weak due to lack of food."

"What about the wolf they've just brought in?" Gard asked. "They said he was part of the human girl's pack. We can't leave him behind." It went against everything in him to leave a captive behind even if he didn't personally know the wolf.

Agony interjected, his tone becoming alert. "They brought a wolf and said he was part of a human girl's pack? They must be talking about Natalia. Why else would they bother with a wolf unless it was something to do with her?"

The way he said the girl's name piqued both his parents' interest. They'd never heard him speak a girl's name with that tone before, not even Dara, and he was particularly close to her. Rayne wanted to ask but knew it wasn't the time.

"From what they said, it appears someone they call the Master wanted the wolf as a hostage. He's pretty banged up though from what we heard. He may not be able to make it out of here on his own." Gard answered.

There was a long pause, as if Agony was conflicted on what to do. Finally, he replied, his mental sigh troubled. "Stay with the wolf. If he is part of Natalia's pack, then we need to keep him safe. She's already lost too much in the past few days. I won't have her losing anyone else she cares about."

The vehemence of his tone increased his parents' interest. It was clear that this Natalia was very important to their son. So important that he was willing for them to remain in a dangerous situation to help a strange wolf. It was so out of character that Rayne was struggling to get her head around it.  
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"Who is this girl, Agony? Why is she and her pack so important to you? I thought you would be telling us to do everything we could to get out of here as soon as possible."

Another mental sigh sounded through their heads, and Agony's tone was almost resigned when he spoke again. "We don't have time to go into that right now, Mother. Your captors had the upper hand only because of the potency of their drug. Now you're becoming immune to that, I know you can take care of yourselves when we attack them. Please, protect the wolf if you can. Not at the expense of your lives, of course, but for now if you can protect him it will keep me free to take care of the rest of them when we get there."

"We will do all we can, son," Gard answered, risking reaching out to take Rayne's hand once more, and giving it a tight squeeze. If the wolf and girl was important enough to their son that he would ask them to stay where they were, then they would do their best to help him.

"We're going to loosen up our limbs a bit. I think we can make some movements. If all goes well, I will give the wolf some blood to help him heal faster. It might be better if we don't communicate too much until you're ready to launch the attack, just in case there is some way this Master person can detect it. I don't think there is, but it doesn't hurt to be cautious."

They could feel Agony's agreement, also that his mental touch was less troubled, as if talking with them and knowing they weren't so helpless anymore was easing some of his stress. "We will be there as soon as we can. Stay safe."

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Rayne felt a strong sense of loss as their son broke off contact and they were once again alone in the cave, but there was hope too, knowing that soon they would be free from captivity, and hopefully on their way home with everyone safe.

"It will work out, Rayne," Gard soothed her, squeezing her hand again. "Our captors likely won't be back for a few hours judging from their conversation. Let's work our muscles back into action so that we'll be ready for whatever is to come. I'll look at the wolf too and see if there is any way we can help him. Now is the time for us to prepare for going home. We're done being the victims in this situation. Let's get a plan together so we can react when needed."

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Stretching out her senses, Rayne tested the air around them until she was satisfied that none of their captors were in the cave, then she turned her head slowly to look at her mate and smiled. "I love you," she whispered quietly, her throat dry from having been without water for so long.

"I love you too, Sarayne," he whispered back, his eyes shining with the love he held in his heart.

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Agony slowly opened his eyes, scanning the tree line for his companions. He'd fallen to the back of the trail as he'd spoken to his parents, signalling to Dara to take the lead, but not providing a reason for wanting her to do so. He had every intention of filling her in once he knew what was happening but hadn't wanted to break the mental connection to his parents long enough to tell her this telepathically. It was a testament to how much his fellow Vârcolac trusted in him that she'd taken the lead with only a mildly questioning raise of her eyebrow.

He could sense the group wasn't that far ahead of him, and quickly upped his pace. Natalia was in her customary place beside Mila and Dante, and he heard a smattering of conversation about Seer abilities as he passed them. Mila was taking every opportunity to answer the girl's questions about her abilities and hopefully teach Natalia how to enhance and train her own. Ordinarily Agony would have been slow to trust a stranger with something or someone he cared about, but the blind Seer gave him no cause for concern. Neither did her constant shadow, the enigmatic vampire Dante.