

Chapter 541

Cassia tried to contain her impatience and listen to Freya, but now she had a chance of finding an alternative means of unlocking the poison's components, she was itching to get the required sample to see if she could analyse it and produce an antidote. "I get it, Freya, I really do. Pietro needs to come to terms with not being as invincible as he thought he was. I hardly think asking for a few strands of hair is going to psychologically damage him."

The vampire took a deep breath and struggled to contain the irritation that was starting to well up inside her. Cassia was young and excitable, and her need to find the antidote was admirable, but she could hear that the girl was merely saying the words by rote with no real understanding of the meaning behind them.

"Listen to me child. Pietro has lost much of what he used to be. He carries his scars both physically and emotionally and is therefore unpredictable. It is best if he is allowed the space he requires and only those he trusts most come close to him. I say this for your benefit as much as his."

It was the most passionate Cassia had ever heard Freya speak. The Vârcolac processed the words carefully, sensing an underlying concern in the vampire's tone. That Freya cared for both her and Pietro was a sign of the slow changes in the other woman. She had walked a long road to become part of the pack and maybe still had a bit to travel, but she kept trying and that was a sign of the strength the Ancient possessed.

"Freya, I know you can probably relate on some level to Pietro's seclusion but surely you've learned that becoming introverted, hiding from those who can help you is not a good thing? I promise I won't do or say anything to make Pietro feel compromised but maybe it's time someone new came into his world so he can start moving towards healing?"

Freya could see she wasn't going to disabuse Cassia from her course of action. Maybe what she said was true. Maybe Pietro hiding away wasn't a good thing after all. When it came to compassionate thought, Freya knew she wasn't the best person to analyse a situation. She removed the hand she'd placed on Cassia's arm, silently conceding to the Vârcolac.

Cassia hurried over to her uncle's house, the vampire's words still resounding in her head. She had to admit she was curious about Pietro, they all were. It was hard not to be when the man had left for Europe before some of them had been born. This unknown vampire had risked everything to try to determine what the threat was to the Vârcolac, and he had suffered immensely for that dedication. It was only natural the hybrid children would be curious about the male.

She found her feet moving faster the closer she got to the house and tried to slow down her pace. She was trying to ignore the faint niggle in the back of her head, something that had been pressing at her since she was first handed the blood sample of the man within the two story building. Her need to protect those she loved was already strong, but from the moment the sample had reached her, that need had been elevated to a higher level. It was only now as she was approaching the front door of Andrei's home that realisation was setting in.

Why was she suddenly feeling so antsy? Why was the need to find a cure suddenly so much more important to her? And why hadn't she noticed it until now? It was as if the knowledge had been buried until she made her decision to collect the hair sample.

Cassia rapped on the door, her head cocking to the side as she scented within. Loretta and Andrei didn't appear to be home so she twisted the doorknob and entered. She was part of their family and they wouldn't mind her intrusion. The pack was pretty relaxed as a whole and it was only the fact Weres were so uninhibited when it came to their sexuality that most people knocked before entering.

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The door swung open just as a tall dark-haired vampire was descending the last of the stairs from the upper floor. The first thing Cassia noticed were his eyes, one the most amazing shade of hazel, the other as dark as a moonless night. Her gaze shifted infinitesimally, tracing the scar running from the corner of his right eye, down the curve of his cheek to end at his jaw, marring a strong face full of a male beauty that astounded her.

As her eyes wandered over his face, she realised that she was holding her breath and that deep within, her wolf was sitting to attention, perusing the male before them as keenly as she was. The black T-shirt he wore tucked into dark blue jeans left some of the scarring on his neck visible and she knew where it disappeared to, beneath the cloth, was a place so sacred to a wolf it was a crime for it to be damaged in any way.

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Cassia's wolf threw her head back and gave one long baleful howl, startling her so much that she let out her breath and swallowed back the sudden need to cry for the male in front of her.

"Enjoying the freak show?"

Pietro's cold words were like ice water flowing over her, allowing Cassia to gather her composure more as she blinked slowly at him. "I need some of your hair."*wWw.n0vElw@rM.Com*

Cassia would have dragged the words back if she could. Judging from the dark scowl twisting his face, Pietro was none too pleased at the request or her presence in the house. It had been the first thing that had come to mind as she'd tried to settle her wolf who was reacting unpredictably to the vampire. It was as if the animal was both furious for the vampire and furious at the vampire at the same time. Her reaction made no sense and until it did, she was going to be on edge around Pietro de la Rios.

"I'm sorry, I don't mean to be abrupt or invade your space. I'm Cassia Alexander and I've been working on your blood trying to find an antidote to the poison. The sample has degraded too much to be useful so I need some strands of hair to test for the toxin." She managed to inject as much authority into her voice so he would see her as just another health professional like Mallen and not a threat.

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