

Chapter 578

Pulling back, a slow smile crossed his face as he played with one long strand of multi-coloured hair. "You need to kick its ass, honey." He winked at her, the anger melting away to be replaced by the playful side of him, which made him one of the most loved and respected Betas in the pack. "Come on."

Tugging at her hand, he pulled her from the room, ducking his head into Reasa's room. "You okay to stay for a while longer, Mallen?"

Seated at the side of the bed where Reasa lay sleeping, the doctor looked up from the journal he was writing in and nodded in agreement. "Have fun."

"Dayton?"

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He was stripping off his clothes in the kitchen, all six feet plus of glorious muscles and sinew as he opened the door leading out to the back yard, and into the forest beyond. He threw his head back and laughed at the lustful expression on Freya's face as her eyes tracked downwards to linger where he was already standing proud for her eager scrutiny.

"Want some?" he teased, his long dark hair falling forward as he took his cock in his hands and stroked it slowly. "Patience is a virtue, honey. You're faster than I am, so I need a slow count to one hundred. If you can track me and find me, then this cock is yours to do with as you please."

Feral eyes met his, pulsing a deep green as lust and need washed over her. "You had better start running then, wolf."

His mate's tone was cool and deadly, the predator within clearly close to the surface. His wolf perked up, perused the vampire looking back at them, and remembered another time when she had taken them on a rock beside the riverbed, glorious in her beauty, rampant in her strength and dominance. She had matched skills with it and been found worthy.*ŴŴw.nOVé/Woɪm.(c)©M*

Dayton shifted to wolf form, long shaggy black fur covering his powerful body, a lone streak of silver falling over one eye. A loud howl filled the room and then the wolf turned and sprinted out into the forest.*ʊ(w)©.(n)óvɛlʊvɪm.c©m*

"One..."

"We're late."

"Come on, this was the first time we could get all the Council members together," Demetri countered, reaching for Mara's hand and twining their fingers together as they walked up the steps into the huge glass building that hid the real purpose of its existence.

To the humans surrounding it, it looked like any other huge conglomerate building, full of glass and steel. Beneath the huge monolithic structure was the heart of the Northern American vampire nation, the Council chambers where decisions were made that impacted the entire vampire race. Their European counterparts didn't think any of these decisions related to them, but they would soon find out that, now they had the attention of the Council; change was coming whether they wanted it or not.

"Anyway, it wasn't my fault you bent over to pick up your shoes," Demetri laughed, holding the glass door open for his wife. "You know what happens when you bend over, woman."

Mara tossed her long brown hair over her shoulder, looking back to smile at him with a saucy wink. "Well, of course I do, lover. Why do you think I bent over?"

He threw his head back and bellowed out a laugh, before throwing an arm over her shoulder. His glance roamed over the reception area, and he discreetly nodded to the front desk staff, acknowledging the female vampire receptionist and four security guards close by.

"So, you're the reason why we're later than planned," he continued as they moved over to a door on the left hand wall and he waited for Mara to peer into the retinal scanner first, and then place her thumb on the print scanner. When she received two green lights, she tapped in a long code on the key panel and the door opened, permitting her entry.

Demetri waited for the door to close behind her; the enhanced security that was now in place only allowed one person to enter at a time. In the past, Caleb had circumvented the security surrounding the Council chamber to allow the Weres access, but it had proven so easy, that afterwards, newer, stricter measures had been implemented.

Even though Demetri was authorised to enter unchallenged, if he'd attempted to walk through the door after Mara, his body would have been impaled by over a hundred blades fitted sideways in the wall. They were placed strategically to ensure that no matter what height anyone was, a blade would pierce their neck and hold them immobile until released. Any attempt to continue forward or backwards would just about decapitate the intruder on the spot. Demetri liked his head just where it was.

Caleb had also ensured that no one person knew how to disable the security system. The password to shut it down was split into four segments; each part passed to an anonymous vampire, with Caleb and Annie being the only two who knew the hidden identities of the password keepers. As if that wasn't paranoid enough, Caleb had also tasked one of the subsidiary companies he owned with Demetri to develop a battery that outlasted anything the humans could manufacture. He had over a dozen backups in place, just in case someone managed to circumvent the security around the electricity supply and cut it off. No one could access the Council Chambers unless they passed through all of the security protocols in place.

Demetri quickly scanned his iris and thumbprint before typing in his personal code and stepping through the doorway. It was always a difficult choice for him when they entered the building. Either he allowed Mara to precede him and risk her safety from what may be waiting behind the door, or he went first and chanced that nothing dangerous followed them in from the street. He had a little more faith that his own people would be less inclined to harm his mate. They knew what the consequences of such an action would be.

He'd been apart from Mara for less than ten seconds, but he was still tense as he surveyed the corridor before them. They were alone though, and his wife's patient expression made his lips twitch. She didn't need to roll her eyes to show her exasperation with his over-protectiveness, she was quite capable of indicating it in spite of her neutral expression.

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"Indulge me," he growled, gathering her to his side as they began the journey down the marble steps leading to the Council chambers.

"Oh, I do, husband," Mara responded dryly, her tone laced with amusement as she let him escort her. He was never going to change, and she didn't want him to. She'd have no one to pit her wits against if he suddenly rolled over and became a teddy bear. She did so enjoy having to stay one step ahead of her man.

The large, floor to ceiling double doors to the Council chambers stood open at the end of the wide corridor, waiting for the final member of the Council to arrive. As they walked down the passageway, Mara tried to anticipate who would be the one to object the loudest to Demetri's presence. She was sure one of the members would, but it would be to no avail. If her husband chose to be there, no one could stop him.

As they entered the huge room, the eleven members who stood around the dais at the far end all turned to look at them as the doors closed automatically behind them. Alexei and Andrei appeared unsurprised to see Demetri, but then, they were aware of what was to come at the meeting. Strangely, it was Stephan whose lips straightened in a line of displeasure as they approached. This was a closed meeting of the Council, and therefore the rows of dark wood benches shaped around the room in a wide semi-circle were devoid of any audience. Mara and Demetri's shoes echoed on the black and grey streaked white marble floor as they reached the dais.

"Demetri, this meeting is for Council members only," Stephan announced, his tone cool, his hazel eyes narrowed with his displeasure. His wavy black hair was slicked back for once, aptly styled with some gel to keep it from falling across his face.

"I am here to represent the Ancient Council by Caleb's command."