

Chapter 601

"You did well, Michael. I am very pleased with this turn of events. Do as the woman has bidden you."

The voice inside his head was filled with pride, a soothing warmth that made the vampire sit a little straighter in the hard backed chair as the emotions washed over him. It meant everything to him to please his master. His pleasure washed away all other abuses he may have suffered or would come to suffer in his life.

"Should I tell Louis about the call, Master? He is very angry with Thereasa. He will likely send a team over there to assassinate her."

"Yes, he may just do that." There was indulgence in the tone, that bordered on amusement. "It is no matter if he does. I think it highly unlikely he will succeed and it will be good opportunity to test their defences. Ensure that you are in any party he may send over, Michael. I will need your eyes and ears."

More pride flowed down the mental link, causing euphoria to envelop the weaker mind. Michael's mental voice oozed zeal; an obedience so complete the other persona had to dial back the emotions it projected to avoid rendering the vampire useless. ©(w)w.nô(v)ëlWóRm.com

The results were instantaneous, disappointment cutting through some of the euphoria. "Master, have I disappointed you in some way?"

"On the contrary, Michael, I am particularly pleased with everything that you have achieved. You have endured much in my name. Continue as you are, and I may allow you another taste of that which you crave."

"Yes, my Master. I will ensure I am your eyes and ears over there. Might I taste before I leave?

There was so much hope in the words, so much yearning, the stronger mind felt a moment's disgust. He quickly dampened it to avoid detection. "We will discuss it when you return, Michael. Now, do as I bade."

The other presence vanished, leaving the vampire alone with his thoughts. Michael took a deep breath and turned his head to the side, stretching out with his enhanced senses. He was still alone in the office gym, and the enshrouding silence from the other rooms told him no one from the coven was near.

It was early morning and the others had yet to surface. He had chosen the time specifically to contact him, relieved to be afforded some time to discuss Thereasa's call before Louis returned from his trip. His leader was due back this morning and Michael was sure he would be able to justify his lack of contact with the volatile French vampire. He could blame it on security concerns...at least, he hoped so.

Louis was a law unto himself most of the time, unpredictable in the extremes. His fury at Reasa's betrayal was a cold burning rage that had everyone treading on eggshells. He had punished Michael on his return, even though he'd carried out the orders he'd been given by both Reasa and his coven leader. Still, it hadn't been enough to dampen Louis' wrath at the fiasco in Edinburgh.

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Memories of excruciating agony clouded Michael's thoughts, and he had to bite his lip not to issue a hiss as his most painful lesson sifted through his mind. He pictured red-hot coals, stoked in the furnace until they glowed white; a deep incision slashed down his torso, into which the coals were placed before he was allowed to heal. Oh, how he had screamed as his internal organs burned from the coals; he had healed, regardless, and the process had been repeated so many times that his babbling became incoherent.

All the while Louis had sat on his makeshift throne atop the dais in his audience chamber. The rest of the coven were seated on opposite benches, eagerly watching the punishment being meted out. Michael saw the cold hazel eyes of his leader, felt them boring into him as he lay spread-eagled, naked on the cold tiled floor. He had been bound as uncontrolled screams had been ripped from him, his wrists a bloodied mess as the inquisitor had plied his trade.

"Where is she?"

It had been the only question asked, and it was the one question he had no answer to. His inability to offer up an acceptable response didn't stop it being repeated as his insides melted down from the flames within.

An intense hatred for Thereasa burned in Michael's soul as the memories continued to play out like a broken records. It was her fault he'd been tortured, her fault he had been punished for the fiasco that had happened. He was glad he might be chosen for the mission Louis would most certainly order. He would hunt the traitor down; when he got his hands on her, she would scream...longer, and far louder than he had ever screamed. By the time he was finished with Thereasa, she would yearn for death!

"Now that is an interesting expression, Michael. Pray tell me...just who is it that engenders such hatred in you?"

The colour leached from the younger male's face at the sound of the voice behind him.

"Louis! I did not hear you arrive home." Michael's voice shook slightly and he had to swallow hard before he turned around. His coven leader was leaning casually against the wall beside the French doors that led out into the garden.

Louis was one of the closest things the European covens had to an Ancient. No one still living knew his real age. They just knew that if anyone stood a chance of reaching the illustrious two thousand year mark, it would be the barely tame vampire that was waiting for his question to be answered.

His hazel eyes displayed a weary patience; his black, wavy hair brushed the collar of his leather jacket in its inimitable, haphazard style. He looked to be in his late twenties, but his eyes told another story. The hard angles of his face held an austere beauty, the slash of his lips a harbinger to the cruelty that could be summoned at the drop of a hat. Everything about Louis St. Geraint spoke of power, a power that he did nothing to conceal.

His expression hardened further as he struggled to hide his escalating irritation. "I asked you a question, vampire."

His cold tone had Michael swallowing hard again. "Please forgive me, Louis," he stammered. "I was startled at your arrival. I received a telephone call yesterday...from Thereasa. I was thinking of her when you arrived."Ŵ(w)(w).nôVēfWŌ(r)M.covm

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The other vampire moved so quickly Michael had no chance to protect himself. Not that he would have been foolish enough to try to, he would never have dreamt of attacking Louis. Michael may have been prepared enough that he could have mitigated some of the damage. As it was, both arms snapped painfully and his spine shattered as Louis pounded him into the opposite wall.

"You didn't think this was something I needed to know immediately?