

Chapter 650

"I'd better get back before I'm missed," he said with a resigned sigh, standing and drawing Mila up with him. "I've heard some news. The Council have sent their investigators and they've arrived already. I need to be close to Louis to try to steer him in the right direction when he learns of this."

"I'll let you know what, if anything, I find out," she answered, leaning against him as he wrapped her in his arms. "Be safe, dear Dante."

"I promise," he whispered into her hair. "No foolhardiness...remember."

"Be gone with you," Mila laughed, shaking her head at his protectiveness, though her tone was warm with affection.

Dante memorised that image of her standing there, before he turned and made his way out of the cave. Things were about to get busy and that image would have to last him for a while, until he could sneak away and come back to her.

"Ugh, he smells so wrong!"

"I'll be right there!" Gard moved at supernatural speed through the woodland, using his mate bond to track Rayne's location. It didn't take him long to find her though he was surprised how far she had travelled from the cottage.

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"What made you look this far out?" His puzzlement was clear as he waited for his mate to shift back to her human form.

"I was wondering what Andrei or Alexei would do in the same circumstance," Rayne answered, rising to her feet and brushing her long hair over her shoulder. "I figured they would have used the trees initially, vampires are very sneaky that way." She shot him a smile, letting him know she classed him in that statement.

It brought an answering smile to his lips. "I had the same idea but scented nothing where I was."

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"Michael travelled in this direction, using the trees for quite a while before he finally dropped down to the ground. He probably went on foot from here because he was nearing that road a mile or so that way." Rayne pointed off to the north and Gard heard the quiet hum of passing vehicles in that direction.www(w).(n)oVELworM.com

His attention turned back to his mate and he frowned, remembering her words. "What do you mean he smells wrong?"

Her expression changed, a distasteful pout crossing her face. "It's hard to explain it. My panther just didn't like his scent at all. The only way she could communicate it to me was wrong."

Gard had no choice but to accept what she said. He could pick up a mild vampiric scent but he had to concede that her Were ability when it came to scent was that bit more enhanced. Was this wrongness Rayne picked up insanity? He had heard before of some Weres being able to detect madness as a distinct scent. Opting to mull it over he pulled his mate into his arms and kissed her soundly. Whatever it was, they had picked up Michael's scent and now they needed to let Joshua know that they would be parting company with him to follow that scent.

"You wait here," he finally said when he'd finished ravishing her lips. "I'll let Joshua know we're heading off on our own."

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Pietro sighed and squared his shoulders before pulling open the apartment door. It had taken him a while to work up the courage to head downstairs to the bar, longer than he had expected it to. He tried to convince himself it was because he wanted to put off being in public as long as possible but he had to admit that his conflicted emotions to do with Cassia were the main problem.

Despite Andrei's insistence that he work the previous night, Pietro had taken the time to settle into the upstairs apartment and try to deal with his anger at the blonde wolf who refused to get out of his head. Everywhere he looked he expected to see her, every sound he heard made him think of Cassia. He could scent her on his skin. He could still here the mournful wolf howl that had shattered his heart.

Was she okay? His concern wouldn't abate no matter how hard he tried to put her out of his mind. He had asked Andrei and been told to fuck off in no uncertain terms. His friend's expression had been so cold that for a moment Pietro had thought Andrei might possibly lash out, however he had merely turned away and disappeared into his basement office without a further word. Pietro couldn't really blame him, Cassia was his niece after all. Still, his friend could have at least let him know she was okay.

Sighing again, Pietro headed downstairs. There was little point in putting off the inevitable. He was about to be the main attraction in a freak show and nothing was going to prevent that. Striding into the bar area, he felt a sense of homecoming as he watched the wait staff finishing off the last minute cleaning projects before the doors opened for the night's revelry. He hadn't held court at the Dive in over twenty-five years and yet, this was his domain, this was what he knew.

One of the Youngling vampires stopped to stare at the scars on his face and he growled low in his throat. "Something I can help you with?"

She scurried off without a word and for a moment he felt some satisfaction but that quickly waned. He might still be able to scare Younglings but he was sure once word got out, he'd be subject to the scrutiny of every Elder vampire who wanted to view the freak show. He guessed he would have to deal with that as and when it happened.

Moving over to the bar, he settled himself behind it as the doors opened. It was time to see if he could still cut it among his peers.

Pietro blinked in surprise as his first customer of the night arrived at the bar and sat herself down on one of the barstools. He looked around for her companion but he was nowhere in sight.

"Annie?"

"Pietro?"