

Chapter 655

His Annie was trembling when he finally came down from the heady heights they had soared, and he soothed her brow with tiny kisses. With a final tasting of her trembling lips, Caleb lay on his side behind her, spooning her body against his, stroking a hand over the curve of her hip as their breathing began to calm down.

"I love you, Annie." Snuggling his face into the side of her neck, Caleb closed his eyes and allowed sleep to claim him.

Rhianna lay in the protection of her mate's embrace, listening to the gentle rhythm of his heartbeat that told her he had fallen asleep. She was sleepy too, but something was keeping her awake; something that teased at her subconscious mind.

Being careful not to wake Caleb, she raised herself up on one elbow, letting her eyes wander around the bedroom slowly; trying to find what it was that was nagging at her brain. Her gaze flitted over her dressing table, alighting on the old leather-bound book that was resting where she had left it.

Masking Lavender, the second book Anakatrine had selected from her library, a book that hadn't been examined as thoroughly as the other because it hadn't appeared to be as crucial. She had read some of it, and been stunned at what it contained. The knowledge within belonged only to those of royal blood, and Rhianna hadn't translated it to English just in case it fell into the wrong hands.

Caleb hadn't asked to read the book, he appeared to have completely forgotten about it. The only other person who could have read the text was Gard and she had no idea if he had even seen it let alone read it. Was she the only one to know what it contained? Should she mention it to her mate?

Caleb had said he would never keep a secret from her. If she didn't tell him what she'd learned would that mean she was keeping a secret from him? The knowledge within the book couldn't truly relate to them, could it? They weren't really Anakatrine and Callain, they were but vessels for their spirits.
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No, now was not the time to be diverted by things that would likely never come to pass. There was so much else at stake at the moment, and they needed all their attention to be focused squarely on Europe where the real danger lay.

Lying back down, Rhianna snuggled into Caleb's chest, sighing with pleasure as he gathered her close in his sleep. "I love you, Caleb," she whispered, closing her eyes and allowing her tired mind to finally drift off to sleep.

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"Mallen...oh my goodness...it works." The words whispered out of Cassia's mouth but everyone in the lab heard her, all heads turning to look at the blond wolf who was staring down a microscope.

"Let me see." Mallen strode across the lab, his expression hopeful as she stepped aside to let him view the results. "Your lymphocytes are working." The words breathed out quietly, hushed awe filling the room. "Your B-cells are creating antibodies to the toxin."

Mallen looked up again, a wide grin crossing his face as excitement filled him. "I don't know why you thought of using a sample of your bone marrow as opposed to just your blood, Cassia, but it's worked."

Relief like nothing she'd ever experienced before flooded through Cassia. The first attempt at just using her blood hadn't achieved the desired results and they'd all been bitterly disappointed. She'd had Mallen extract a little bone marrow and retested. That was where antibodies were made, and it seemed the logical choice. To find it had worked...Cassia was so overcome that tears flowed freely down her cheeks.

She couldn't account for how Pietro had become stronger though. He had only taken blood from her, not any bone marrow. Was it a mate thing? Would she ever know the answer to that? For the moment, she didn't care. They had finally found something that could counteract the toxin in Amort. It would take a while to harvest enough bone marrow from the Vârcolac to make sufficient antidote, but they would soon be able to inoculate every vampire against the poison.

"We have to tell Rafe," Cassia announced, laughing through the tears still streaming down her face.

The doctor smiled at her, his grin as big as Cassia's. "You do it, honey. It was your idea and you've worked your butt off to get here. We'll start working on a suspension to deliver the antidote."

Giving him a quick hug, Cassia ran out of the lab, slamming through the front door of the Alpha's home and nearly knocking Lacey over as she was coming downstairs.

"Oh, I'm sorry, Lacey!" Cassia was immediately contrite, placing steadying arms out to ensure her Alpha didn't crash to floor. "Is Rafe awake? I need to speak to him urgently."

"He's eating breakfast, I believe." Lacey laughed at the exuberant expression on the younger woman's face. She didn't ask any questions, merely escorted her into the dining room where her mate was tucking into bacon and eggs.

Rafe glanced up with a raised eyebrow as they entered, quietly placing his fork and knife down beside his plate.

"We did it," Cassia announced with the biggest smile. "We have an antidote, Rafe!"

"You're certain?" Rafe rose from his seat to stride over to them.

Cassia nodded, trying to regain her composure and not giggle like a schoolgirl. "The Vârcolac have antibodies in their bone marrow. We harvested a little of mine and tested it against the toxin. My B-cells immediately began multiplying to attack the poison. The process was still ongoing when I left, but Mallen agrees that it is a viable antidote. If any other vampires become infected as badly as Pietro, we can use our antibodies directly to cure them."

"Cassia, that's fantastic news!" Rafe gathered her up in a warm hug, grinning at Lacey who had started to cry. "Come here," he growled softly, pulling his mate into a group hug.
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"Oh Rafe...Annie and Caleb will be so happy." Lacey fought to stop crying, relief in every word.

"Mallen is currently synthesising a suspension we can use to create a vaccination too, so that we can effectively inoculate the entire vampire race here," Cassia continued, stepping back and smiling as she looked at her Alphas. "In theory...that will mean that even if they are infected by Amort, their own bodies should be able to fight the poison."

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