

Chapter 667

The vampires scattered at his roar, panic and fear filling the room as they filed out of every exit possible leaving only Dante remaining. Louis' enraged gaze connected with Dante and he pointed one long taloned finger at him. "Call Michael. Find out where he is and then give them his location."

Gard shot Rayne a puzzled expression, raising an eyebrow in query. "I definitely need to spend more time with Freya to find out just what all the fuss is about. I don't like knowing that she's scarier than I am."

Louis walked down the steps of the dais, coming to stand before them, his eyes never leaving Gard's face. "I fear no one, old one, but I do respect those who have helped build this coven into what it now is. Freya Eriksson has earned my trust and the right to ask me for a boon. You haven't."

"Then what do we need to do to earn that right, Louis?" Rayne asked, drawing his attention from her mate. "Freya is part of our pack. Your packs may be different over here but where we come from pack is family. Doesn't that count for something?"
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Again, silence reigned and then Louis smiled, the first genuine glimmer of humour crossing his face. "Oh, I like you," he laughed, some of the tension leaving his big frame. He thumbbed a gesture at Gard, appearing unable to stop taunting the Ancient. "He's lucky to have a mate such as you."

"Can I kill him?"

Rayne laughed, relieved at the more relaxed tone from her mate. "No, dear, we still have some questions that need answered. It would go some way towards better relations if Louis were to agree to answer them with no direct threat of impending death. Try to play nice."

"What questions?" Louis' interest appeared piqued, or perhaps he really did react better to females than males. Some people did relate better to the opposite sex and there was enough age in the coven leader that he could be one of them.
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"I'm particularly interested in why there is so much interest in what's going on Stateside. The European covens haven't been the least interested in us before. Why now?"

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"That's something I've been pondering for a long time," Dante commented, entering the conversation for the first time. His gaze was fixed on Louis as if waiting for permission to continue.

The coven leader finally relaxed more, nodding his head at his second in command. "Dante isn't a permanent member of my coven. If you're looking for answers he is likely the best person to speak to." The coven leader walked over to one of the tables that had chairs in a grouping of four. The others followed him and sat, Gard and Rayne's gaze now on Dante.

Dante was a little concerned about the level of scrutiny he was under and unclear on how much he should divulge in front of Louis. So far, the coven leader appeared receptive to at least Rayne's charms. The message from this Freya woman had wrought an interesting change in his friend's demeanour towards their visitors too.

He took a deep breath and decided to play it by ear. "As Louis has mentioned, I am not aligned with any one coven here. As such, I have been free to travel all over Europe for the last quarter of a century. As I've travelled, I noticed a strange anomaly among the covens, something so unusual that it piqued my interest. The covens were suddenly speaking with a common tongue. They were all turning their gaze across the ocean; they were all muttering about the mixed matings, and how dangerous the hybrid births were."

He paused for effect, letting the words sink in. "Now, that may not appear strange to you but believe me, for us, it's a loud warning bell being rung. I searched everywhere, listened intently to what was being said, but could detect no sign of where this interest originated. The only thing I could determine was the covens were starting to work together."

"You believe there is a central point to this change in behaviour?" It was Louis who asked the question, his gaze intent as he stared at his second in command.

"Louis, you know our people as well as I do. If there is a central or originating point..."

"Then whoever is at that centre is stronger than all of the covens here put together," Louis completed the sentence.

Gard and Rayne shared a glance as Louis growled in displeasure. "Why didn't you tell me this earlier, Dante?"

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The nomadic vampire met his angry gaze without flinching. "Until now I wasn't certain that you weren't that central point. You said it yourself, Louis. Yours is the strongest coven in Europe. You were the one who sent Thereasa after de la Rios in Edinburgh. You were the one who was heavy handed with the Amort toxin."

The coven leader jumped up, his chair crashing to the ground as he leaned on the table, fury dancing across his face. "It was supposed to be a simple information gathering exercise. The vampire wasn't supposed to be nearly killed. I didn't anticipate that members of my coven that I had trained personally would suddenly start acting so recklessly and out of character."

"Then why give them the poison, St Geraint?" Gard thundered, rising to tower over the irate vampire. "Why did you even formulate a toxin that could kill your own kind if not to gain dominance stateside as well as here?"

For a moment Rayne thought the coven leader was going to be foolish enough to attack her mate, but whatever murderous thoughts were crossing his mind, Louis held himself in check, the muscle jumping in the side of his jaw the only outward indication of the strength of will that took.