

## Chapter 668

He ignored Gard's questions, turning to look back at Dante. "Where did you start hearing the first whispers of commonality, Dante? Wherever that was, that is likely going to be closest to the nest of whatever viper we have among us."

"Romania."

Gard stiffened, his expression turning thoughtful as he gazed off into the distance. "You're sure?" he finally asked.

"Yes," Dante answered, watching the redheaded vampire extend a hand towards his mate.

Rayne took it without question, allowing him to pull her up to her feet. "You suspect something?" she queried, her expression expectant.

"I think it's time we went home," her mate replied, giving her a pensive smile.

"But...we haven't learnt anything, Gard." Rayne's confusion was clear for everyone to see.

"Not that home, Sarayne..." He left the rest of the words unsaid, knowing she would work out what he meant

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Realisation slowly dawned across her face and a shiver ran through her slender frame as her gaze locked with his. "I haven't been there since I was still a child. Are you sure about this?"

"I'm sure. It's the only logical place to look. If the first whispers came from Romania, then we have to go there and find out just who is behind all this."

"Do you want to clue the rest of us in on this?" Dante asked, a feeling of foreboding beginning to build as the couple continued to have eyes only for each other.

"There are some things it is best not to know," Gard answered, though he was staring at Louis as he spoke. There was more than distrust in his eyes. He was making it abundantly clear that he didn't want to divulge any more information to the coven leader.

"You look at me as if I am somehow the cause of all of this. I am just as much a pawn in this game that is being orchestrated by whoever is in charge."

"Tell that to Pietro de la Rios," Gard growled, his eyes narrowing with displeasure. "Tell that to all the other vampires who may have fallen victim to your poison." Looping an arm over Rayne's shoulder, Gard turned away, heading out of the coven's headquarters.

"How enlightening to see that with age comes narrow-mindedness," Louis spat out, fury lacing every word. "Amort isn't my poison, Gard. It isn't even the making of vampires. It was invented by our Were population here. They made it to exterminate our race..."

Pietro closed and locked the main doors to the Dive, knowing he couldn't put off the inevitable any longer. Cassia was upstairs in his apartment, where she had been all night since he'd returned to the nightclub.

He'd stayed away for as long as he could, finally returning when he received a particularly blunt voicemail message from Andrei telling him to get his ass back to work. Now he had to go upstairs and talk to his wolf, even though he had no idea what he was going to say.

What could he say? She had announced that he was her mate and for Cassia, that was the end of any discussion. She was more wolf than vampire, and she followed her animal genealogy. That was what made her so pack orientated. That was why she'd had no choice but to protect Reasa that day. He was finally beginning to understand that a wolf pack wasn't that different from a vampire coven, and his wolf had claimed him as hers.

Sighing, he headed upstairs, still stunned by Cassia's revelation but he supposed that explained many things. Like why he had been ready to rip Fox apart for daring to think he had any kind of claim over Cassia; why he had been so unaccountably drawn to the blonde wolf from the moment he had first laid eyes on her. He had been willing to risk Alexei's wrath to be with her, not to mention Andrei's, and that wasn't something he did lightly.

Cassia was his mate.

He ran the words through his mind, testing them out, examining the emotional appeal to them. They brought forth such strong feelings of belonging, and of ownership, only that wasn't the correct word. No, he didn't own Cassia; he belonged to her, as she belonged to him.WŴ(w).navElworm.com

She belonged to him.

Pietro let himself into his apartment, his gaze travelling over the living area and finding it empty. He knew she was still there...he could scent her in the apartment. A quick check inside the small kitchenette showed it was empty too though there were clean dishes on the draining board.

Crossing to the refrigerator, he opened it, not really surprised to see the food inside it. Cassia must have gone out at some point. She must have taken the back stairs down to the basement exit, which meant Andrei had given her the code to let herself back in. For a moment he wanted to throttle his friend. Andrei was having too much fun at his expense with this one, but then, he had enjoyed himself when Loretta claimed his friend so he supposed he couldn't really complain.

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That only left one place she could be and he inhaled deeply before he silently opened the bedroom door. Cassia was curled up on top of the bed, the bedspread half covering her lower body. She was still dressed though it appeared that she'd been asleep for a while. Her curls were tumbled across her face, one arm supporting her head as she slept. She looked so adorable he wanted to cross the room and climb in beside her. He wanted to lose himself in her arms and pretend that they didn't have to deal with all the issues complicating everything.

He couldn't though, he knew that. They had to talk and that meant waking her. Crossing the room quietly, he sat down on the side of the bed, unable to resist the urge to brush her silky curls away from her face. Cassia murmured in her sleep, rolling onto her back as her eyes fluttered opened. "Pietro."

"You shouldn't be here, Cassia. You should be home safe at the compound." He watched the sleepiness leave her face, a small frown marring her forehead.

"I should be wherever you are," she answered, moving to sit up until they were bare inches apart. "I meant what I said earlier, Pietro. You are my mate."

He hadn't expected anything less than the total conviction in her expression. If only it were that simple, though. Pietro couldn't deny the way his heart sped up at the thought of being mated with her, at how much he longed to know that sense of belonging that only true mates experienced. Yet, how could he make her understand just how difficult this was for him? Yes, she was empathic enough to understand, but she didn't appear to see that the issues they faced weren't that easy to overcome.

"Cass...even if that's true; you have to know how impossible this situation is."wwW.т©vêŁW0rM.Coм