

Chapter 725

"My name's Pippa," the child finally answered, her tears drying and her breathing calming now that she knew she wasn't about to be removed from her current location.

Natalia took a moment to lean her face into the gentle hand her mother placed on her cheek, closing her eyes briefly as her Mama accepted her decision. Then she rose and took the little girl's hand. "Let's go start packing, Pippa."

She gave her mother a brief smile, knowing that her actions freed her up to organise the evacuation of the children. Natalia knew her mother was terrified for her and wished she would leave too, but they were also pack, and that meant the good of the whole must often be placed before the good of the individual. Whatever was going to happen would happen, and she only hoped that if it turned out to be the worst, then she could be as strong and brave as the little girl blindly following her into the tent.

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Agony entered the clearing, his head almost swimming with the heady scent of his parents still lingering in the air. They had been here, walked this same path, and just maybe, he might find the answers he was seeking to their disappearance. He was shadowed and silent in his movements, passing by the handful of vampires outside of the main entrance to the coven.

While he ignored them for the most part, he mentally catalogued their number, sex and age, dismissing them as any kind of threat. He could easily take them if required. Hell, he wouldn't even break a sweat taking their heads. They were nothing, no obstacle to one such as he. Even Dara wouldn't break a sweat taking them out, though she would be less likely to do so.

Her intoxicating scent was coming closer, her mind seeking a way to connect with his as she did, but it was easy to keep her out. She was trying to reach Kothari, and as long as she remained unaware or emotionally detached enough from Agony, she was no threat to getting inside his head. However, a little part of him admired her determination. He could understand why Kothari had become so infatuated with her.

Stifling a sigh, Agony gave himself a mental shake, filing Dara's impending company to the recesses of his mind. He didn't have a whole lot of time to do what he'd come to do before she got in his way, so he had to step up a gear and get further ahead of her again. Striding into the house that was the coven's base, he almost laughed out aloud when he saw the ornate throne dominating the hallway that covered the entire ground level. So, this coven leader thought he was some kind of King, did he? There was only one vampire King and that was Callain. It was going to be so much fun educating the upstart who thought he ruled here.

There were close to thirty vampires within the building, two of them standing atop the dais that housed the throne. They could have been mistaken for brothers by some their colouring was so similar, but Agony doubted they were closely related despite their comparable age. There were very few vampiric siblings in existence, despite the fact that two such pairs were part of the Armand-Hanlon pack. In truth, there were likely only a couple more sibling groups out there from the old days.

No, these two were not brothers but there was a level of trust between them that was stronger than most he'd witnessed since arriving on European soil. He filed that away under the label 'important' and considered what he wanted his next course of action to be. He could unshadow and scare the crap out of everyone, but that would likely be met with instant violence and he needed answers more than an invigorating workout right now.

Now that he was here, Agony was considering the possibility that announcing his presence in stages might have been the better course of action for what he wanted to achieve, and he wasn't happy that his thinking might have been so off base. That would only make his goal that little more difficult to accomplish.

One of the men on the dais turned his head to survey the room as Agony watched them and considered his options. He caught the slight tensing of the male's tall frame and the way his gaze lingered a fraction of a second longer than necessary on his hidden location before it swept on. Could he see him? That should be impossible. No one other than the other Vârcolac, the Triumvirate or their Alphas or parents could see the hybrids when they were shadowed. If this male could, then he would need to be taken out. He was too much of a threat, not only to himself, but to Dara too.

The male was talking quietly with the other now, his words so low Agony doubted any in the room would have been able to make them out. The other male stiffened and shook his head, and then listened some more. Agony remained motionless, deciding to watch what would happen, his curiosity piqued by what was turning out to be a heated disagreement between the two men. Finally, the other male moved, sitting down upon the throne and barking out two harsh words. "Everyone out!"

Dante knew he was there, the Justice Seeker. He couldn't see him exactly, not in the true definition of sight, but he was certain that Kothari was in the coven. When he'd run his eyes over the hallway a few moments earlier, he had detected a faint, shimmering red haze squarely in the middle of the room. His mind's eye had registered it, not fully understanding what it was, but knowing it was something out of place.

As he'd forced his gaze to move on, his agile mind had worked to catalogue what that haze could possibly be, and the only thing he could come up with was it had to be the Vârcolac. Kothari must have had a way to bend light around himself, to become invisible to most. It was the only explanation that made any sense, and explained why Dante wasn't completely immune to whatever it was the boy could do. Only Mila knew that he could detect coloured auras around everyone he met. Not even Joshua was aware that he had that ability. He couldn't physically see Kothari, but he could detect his aura which was a deep, dark red whirling around chaotically.

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As Dante considered the likely implications of what would happen when the Vârcolac revealed himself in their midst, he came up with only one possible outcome, a complete bloodbath. They would lose one of the strongest covens that could help defeat whatever or whoever was out there trying to decimate the vampire nation.wWW.novel@oRm.Cem

He couldn't allow that to happen. They hadn't worked so hard to piece everything together and become prepared, to have it all go to hell because a boy was having a tantrum because he couldn't find his parents. No matter how powerful that boy was. Dante had to find a way to defuse the situation before it even ignited, and the only way to do that was to get Louis to agree to letting him take the lead, which wasn't going to be easy.

"Don't react to anything I say, don't even turn around," he whispered, keeping his voice low so his words would remain inaudible. "Just listen to me, Louis, and trust me when I say that you need to do what I say with no questions asked. Gard and Rayne's son is in our midst right now, and he has crossed over. No one here can see him, but trust me when I tell you he is here and he will decimate this coven if you react with anything that even comes close to being threatening towards him."wW@.ndV@()w@rm.com

"What the fuck?" Louis growled out, though he kept his tone low, and didn't turn around which showed that he'd picked up the urgency in Dante's voice and hadn't ruled his words out of hand. "How could anyone get in here undetected, and what is one vampire against an entire coven anyway? He's no threat to us."

"He's not a vampire, Louis. He's Vârcolac...and he's feral. In his sane state he could wipe out half of this coven...I don't even want to begin to imagine what he'll do in his feral state. If you have ever trusted me, let me deal with this my way. I can reason with him, convince him that we know nothing of his parents' disappearance. We can all come out of this alive if you allow me to take the lead." Dante could see the rage and denial begin to cross the coven leader's face, and he felt the first tendrils of real fear that he'd experienced in countless centuries. If he couldn't get Louis to see sense, there was a good chance he would die this day, and there would be no one to take care of Mila.

"This is my coven!"

"And you made me second in command for a reason, Louis! Do not let arrogance and fury lead you into losing everything you've built up your entire life, and quite possibly your very life too. Listen to me this once, I beg of you. Please listen to me, and send everyone away right now." For a long moment, Dante was certain his friend was going to ignore him, and then he moved to his throne and barked out the order to send everyone away.