

Chapter 749

Everything was enveloped in darkness. It was sneaky, enveloping all of the light, all of the memories, and all sense of time. How much time had she spent here? Did it last for a day, a week, or perhaps a month? She didn't believe it to be any longer. The idea of light was still fresh in her mind, but she was reasonably confident that it would have faded if darkness had been her only experience for the previous year or more. That is what sensory deprivation did to a person. It muddled up space and time. It so confused your thinking that you lost all sense of who you were and which way was up or down.

She knew her name was on the tip of her tongue. She could reach for it but it would only slip away again as it had so many times before. The creature would arrive and there would be the barest of sensation at her right side and then oblivion would creep back in. So, this time she didn't reach for her name. The crushing disappointment of almost getting there only to have it snatched cruelly away again would be too much to bear.

Something did feel different this time though. The clarity was stronger, and she was sure that she could sense a presence to her left side. Someone was with her, someone lay close and he was important to her. He! She was aware of his gender and his presence. That hadn't happened before. Perhaps she was becoming immune to whatever drug was being administered or maybe something had happened to their abductor and he couldn't come back to knock them out again.

Whatever it was it gave her the first tendril of hope that she could remember having. She reached with her mind, stretched as hard as she could, trying to force the clarity to come quicker. Her name...rain. It was raining? Why did the weather play on her mind when she was so close to remembering? Her name was almost in her grasp, she almost had it...rain. No, not rain, but Rayne. Her name was Rayne! Sarayne, and the warmth that was starting to become more pronounced to her side could be no other than Gard, her mate.

"Gard! Gard! Wake up. Hear me!"

The mental shout she sent towards the presence was nothing more than the faintest of whispers. She was far too weak for her telepathy to work, and just because she was becoming more aware, that didn't mean that her mate was. Silence greeted her, and the tiny spark of hope that had started to blossom began to fade. What did it matter that she knew who she was, and remembered Gard? If he was deep in the drugged oblivion that had surrounded them for so long, there was nothing she could do to escape. Even if she could move and was fully lucid, she would never leave her mate behind. As he would never leave her behind if their roles were reversed.

The only thing Rayne could do was wait, and hope that their abductor did not return. If he stayed away long enough then maybe Gard would shake off the drugs too and they could escape together. It was a tempting thought, one that fanned the tiny flames of hope once more. If she called to Gard every so often perhaps he would hear her. Maybe they would soon be free.

The shuffling sound of approaching footsteps sent a shaft of dread right through Rayne. No! He was coming back, he was going to drug her again, and they would forever be held in this captivity.

"Gard! Please wake up! Gard!"

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Something flickered, a gentle fluttering against the surface of her mind.

"Gard?"

The presence was there and it was male and so very familiar. However, it wasn't her mate. It didn't have the same scent and colours that wrapped her up in his love. This presence was dark, and it was brooding. It was midnight shades and deep dark caramelised cinnamon. Moreover, it was love...so much love and loss that her heart broke and she knew she had to stop a telltale tear from leaking from her closed lids.

Oh God no! Not him! They had everything else that she loved, but they couldn't have him...they couldn't!

"Run!" She screamed the word out with every ounce of mental power that was available to her, even as the sharp sting of a needle told her that her time was up. "Run, Kothi, run...please son!"

There was no answering call, but the presence was still there, alert, angry, and oh so feral as it slowly began to fade away as the darkness thickened. Rayne's heart slowed, memory evaporating as the drugs took hold, but her mother's love fought on, gave her a final moment of lucidity. "Agony...oh Agony...run my child."

She couldn't fight it any more, couldn't hold onto the spark that tried to keep her centred in the conscious world. Rayne let go, sank down into the abyss once more as the softest of voices danced inside her mind..."Mother..."

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The wave of nausea crashed over Natalia so strongly that she couldn't halt the groan that ripped from her throat as cramp clenched inside her abdomen. She was vaguely aware of Dara speaking her name, however her eyes swung to the dark cloud in the seat opposite her, her breath catching at the rigid body language of the male before her. "No..." she croaked the word out, even knowing it was too late.

Agony rose like a spectre of death, fangs elongating and dark black talons curling from his fingertips.

"Get everyone out of the carriage." The voice was panicked but authoritative, Dara issuing instructions, even as she moved closer to the impending danger. She didn't look to see if Dante and the others followed her instructions, though Natalia could hear the others in their party moving quickly away from them.

It was a small blessing that there were hardly any humans in the train compartment. Something about their presence had seemed to warn them off when they entered the carriage and most had moved to other ones, a handful of the braver ones staying at the bottom end away from the group of wolves, hybrids and vampires.

Natalia couldn't drag her gaze away from the death in front of her...because that's what Agony was in that moment, the true embodiment of death. "Kothari...Kothari listen to me. You need to take control. You need to stop him." How she knew that was what was needed was beyond her, she just said the first thing that crossed her mind, that felt right.

Long talons lashed out, ending a millimetre from her face, halted by a smaller hand. The hand wasn't gripping the wrist tightly though. It was clear Dara had reacted instinctually to protect her, but despite the feral state Agony was in, he had reined in his movement, as if conscious somewhere that he could hurt her badly if he didn't.

"Mother," hissed out of his snarling lips. "Mother!"

It was the last thing Natalia had expected him to say, and it appeared it was to Dara too, though she recovered more quickly from her surprise.

"Agony, I know something has happened that is distressing you, but you need to stand down, before you end up derailing this fucking train." Dara snapped the words out, giving a gentle push against the wrist that rested in her hand. There was an audible sigh of relief as he didn't fight the movement, his shaded eyes turning to stare at her before he swung back towards Natalia.

"He can't help her," he spat out, fury lacing his tone. "You call for a boy who cowers in grief, when I am the only one who can save her."

Natalia fought not to shrink back against his rage, knowing from pack life that it would be viewed as a sign of weakness and none of them could afford to be perceived as weak when Agony was so close to losing control. He appeared to be ignoring Dara for the most part, concentrating on Natalia, so she tried to keep his attention while the others made sure everyone else was safe.

"Well at least he wouldn't out the entire paranormal world and potentially kill us all including every human on this train because he was having a temper tantrum."

She was ready to pass out from the nausea and fear that was threatening to overwhelm her, but she pushed on, knowing that there was only a small window open to get through to him. "You brought me here to warn you of impending danger, Agony. If you don't sit down and behave I am going to throw up all over your pretty black clothes, you're making me so ill."

For a moment, she thought she'd pushed him too far, and then he slowly sat down, some of the menace easing from his body language. It was only as he sat that the nausea began to die down, and Natalia relaxed a little, her gaze going to Dara's concerned face. "It's okay."**Www.(n)(e)vE~~L~~wO**Rm.c©m

Dara didn't appear too sure, and say down beside Agony, her arm brushing against his in a gesture that was so clearly pack related. She was seeking to soothe him as she would a pack member, though Natalia doubted that Agony would succumb to pack when he was this wound up.**W©w.NQv©llw©rm.C©mm**

"What happened, Agony? Is Rayne okay? Were you able to contact your parents?" Dara asked, quietly, as the rest of their team slowly returned, each sitting down nearby but no one interjecting into the conversation.

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He watched the others sit, his expression blank, and then he sucked in a deep breath, held it for a few seconds, and slowly exhaled. "She was there for a moment, but was very weak in mental contact. She called to Kothari...told him to run. Then she told me to run, as if I would even consider it."

A ghost of a smile flashed across Dara's lips at his derisive tone, as if she couldn't help being amused despite the tense situation, and then her expression turned thoughtful. "Don't you see that this is good news, Agony? We're clearly headed in the right direction, and there has been contact with Rayne even if it has been brief. Yes, there is strong danger ahead if she told you to run, but we've known that all along, and we can be prepared for it. This isn't a bad thing that has happened, but a good thing. We are getting closer with each passing moment."

Dara's words appeared to have the effect that she'd been working for, as Agony relaxed further, his brow furrowing in a thoughtful frown. "We need to plan for when we arrive at Braşov. I am sure I will be able to pick up my parents scent there when we arrive. It is getting harder to maintain control, Dara. The closer I get to them, the harder it will be to maintain any sliver of civility. I will destroy all who have laid hands on my parents. I suggest you work out what you need to do to keep collateral damage to a minimum."