

Chapter 750

Natalia had no doubt in her mind that what he meant as collateral damage was the people travelling with him. That should have terrified her, but for some strange reason she felt calm. Perhaps Agony was not as far gone as he believed he was. On the other hand, perhaps it just meant that no matter what happened in the future, there was no direct threat to her own life. That didn't mean that the others would come out of everything unscathed, and that was a worrying thought.

"There will be no collateral damage," Dara said firmly, a sternness crossing her pretty features that Natalia had never seen before. "We are all here for the same reason and you will not go AWOL again, Agony. You might not like being pack but you damned well are pack. We work together as a team and that's what makes us stronger. Yes, we will plan, but we will plan to make sure that we bring home Gard and Rayne together...all of us. So, you better get that into your thick skull or I will call Rafe right now and tell him to send over Demetri and Kal to deal with your sorry ass. Am I making myself clear?"

Natalia didn't know what to expect, but she certainly hadn't expected laughter. Agony actually threw his head back and barked out a loud laugh, startling everyone who had been imagining a more volatile response.

"You think I am afraid of Demetri? Yes, he is impressive, but I could kick his ass with one hand tied behind my back."

"Maybe you think you could, Agony, but I am sure Kothari remembers the story of what Demetri and the Romanovs did to a coven that pissed Demetri off," Dara retorted. "I'd like to see you try to take on Kal, though. Now that would be an interesting match to watch."

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In reply, Agony closed his eyes and rested his head against the seat, his body language making it clear that the conversation was over. Novellw@rm.coM

"I take it we have an agreement?" Dara pressed.

"Fine...draw up your little plan. I will point out the flaws when you've finished."

It was the best she was going to get, so she stood up and moved back to the other side of the carriage. Pulling out her phone, she dialled Rafe, and quickly filled him in with the latest developments and their estimated time of arrival at Braşov.

Natalia's curiosity was piqued, and she tuned out the others, keeping her gaze on Agony. "Who is Kal?"

For a moment she thought he wouldn't answer her, but then he sat forward, leaning his arms on the table between them.

"There are 7 of us...those you call Vârcolac or hybrids. Lily and Kallum Romanov, Cassia and Dara Romanov, Liam Eriksson, Elina Alexander, and me... Agony."

His sudden chattiness was surprising however, she couldn't resist interjecting. "Don't you mean Kothari?"

He let out a long sigh, as if he regretted his decision to answer her, but then he continued. "Whatever...those are the 7 Vârcolac born of the recent matings between vampires and shifters. My mother Sarayne is Vârcolac, though her animal is a black panther. When she mated with my father, I took her animal, as the others have taken the wolf as their animal from their parents' matings. We are pack and Rafe is our Alpha, though this generation of Vârcolac are something more, we have our own internal hierarchy, though it isn't a true pack. Kal talks the most sense out of the Vârcolac so we tend to heed his words when he speaks."

It was the first real conversation between them, and Natalia was fascinated by what she was learning. "Why didn't Kal come to get you then, when you came to Europe? Wouldn't it have made more sense to send him rather than Dara? You argue with her all the time, and sometimes I doubt that you will listen to her even when she is talking sense."

"He stood no chance of tracking me. I hid my scent and masked all my pack bonds when I left. We Vârcolac can become invisible to most when we want to."

That didn't make sense because Dara had clearly found him. Her expression must have given something away because he sighed again and she could imagine his eyes rolling behind the dark shades with which he screened them.

"I let Dara find me."

Now that did sort of make sense, but not a lot. She was confused and couldn't understand the distinction between Kal and Dara. "Why?"

He could easily have ignored her question but after a long pause he chose to answer. "Kothari has always had a special bond with her. He needed that connection to remain sane, to keep him anchored, when our parents vanished. In addition, Dara is not as fragile as she may appear and is a formidable beta. Do not be fooled by my apparent lack of confidence in her abilities. I wouldn't even choose Kal over Dara to fight at my side because no one in our pack understands me quite as she does. It isn't always about who is the strongest, Natalia. Often, it is about who you trust the most to have your back."

Natalia was aware that Agony was being more open with her than he probably was with most people and she was afraid to say anything more in case she broke the fragile spell between them. However, she couldn't contain her curiosity. "Is Dara Kothari's mate?"

Agony rose up, his lips tightening in a straight line. "Stupid human," he muttered, striding down the train carriage to sit half way down as if he couldn't bear to be in the same area as her. Novellw@rm.coM

His abrupt departure was puzzling, and Natalia glanced at Dara in confusion. She knew the older woman had likely been listening to their conversation.

"Leave it," Dara said, a small sigh escaping her. "Kothari thought so for some time but realised recently that he was wrong. He's still touchy about it."

Natalia nodded, sitting back to think over everything she had learned. Kothari and Dara had a close bond but were not mates. For some reason she felt a sense of relief about that though she couldn't understand why. It wasn't as if she was interested in the hybrid. The mere thought of it was just ludicrous. He had been going to kill her mother for goodness sake. Okay her Ma had been in the process of going rogue and would have murdered innocent humans if she had been able to, but that was beside the point...wasn't it?

It didn't take away from the fact that Agony believed he was separate from Kothari, and was prone to turn into a homicidal maniac when pissed off. No woman in her right mind would be interested in a man like that, especially not a human girl like her who was nothing special. No, she was not interested in the infuriating male who was sulking a handful of seats away from her. The information she was getting from him was just helping her understand her current predicament and where her mother was now headed to Stateside to keep her safe until she could join her. Novellw@rm.coM

Natalia closed her eyes and let the gentle lull of the rocking train seep inside her soul. They had another hour before they reached their destination, and things turned hectic again. It was probably best if she tried to take a light nap until they got there and discovered whatever was waiting for them. Forcing Agony out of her mind, she drifted off, shutting out the feeling that concealed eyes were boring into the back of her head.

"They went this way."

Agony could scent his parents even though it was a while since they had passed through Braşov. The scent was very faint but it pointed in the general direction they had taken. He knew that once they passed into the mountains looming in the distance tracking them wouldn't be as easy as he hoped, but for now, he knew which direction they needed to go.

Turning to view the others it was all he could do not to let out a loud sigh. They were clumped together like a tourist party, their appearance, and numbers, unusual enough that human heads were turning in their direction. "Do we have to look so obvious?"

Louis nodded at the group of vampires he'd brought with them, and they immediately dropped behind the main group, blending in a little better with the people milling along the sidewalk.

"You go ahead. We'll follow close behind," Dante said, hooking Mila's arm through his and raising an eyebrow at Louis.

"Fine." The dark-haired coven leader nodded his agreement to remain with them, though it was clear that he wasn't that impressed with not being in the main group. He was used to being in charge so it was hardly surprising that taking a back seat didn't sit well with him.

"So which way do we go, Agony?" Now that they were on Romanian soil, Dara wanted to try to find Gard and Rayne as soon as possible. It was unsettling knowing they were so close to something dangerous which they knew nothing about.

"Can I ask a question before we do anything?" Natalia interrupted, her tone pensive. "If Rayne is Vârcolac, and was captured here, what's to say that the same thing isn't going to happen to us?"

As it was a valid question for a human to pose Agony wasn't too irritated by it. He looked down at the girl who he considered inferior as a species, but surprisingly insightful as a person. "Lack of surprise, Natalia. Even though they are two of the most powerful individuals ever to have lived, my parents were not prepared to come across someone who was more powerful than they were. However, we now understand that whoever is out there is not just clever and resourceful, but also powerful. We have a better chance of successfully fending off the powerful attack because we are expecting it.