

Chapter 71

Daisy

We find Lina exactly where we left her: tied up to one of the walls in the pack dungeons. After telling her why we need her help, she laughs out loud. "Going to the vampire castle is a dumb idea, even for you, Daisy. Taria would kill you within seconds, so I'm not going to tell you where the castle is located."

My eyes narrow. "Caleb could find out by reading your mind."

"But you won't go that far, sister," her voice is just as sharp as her gaze. "Xavier can handle himself, and he won't be fooled by his parents. You, on the other hand, will die if you go there in your shape and state."

I'm tempted to snap at her, but Isabella places a hand on my shoulder as if to tell me, "I got this," before glaring down at Lina like a god ready to pass down its judgment. "Don't you want to save your mate?" she asks. "If you help us find the vampire castle, we could save him."

“It’s too late!” Lina yells, but her voice isn’t angry; it’s broken and sad. “Oscar...he...he is already gone! I felt it through the bond, his death. Our bond just...it just snapped to let me know he passed.” Her sudden confession plunges the room into a silence so dark and thick you could slice through it with a knife.

Each of us is lost within our thoughts, the cold, harsh reality of Lina’s words slowly seeping into our minds.

“Are you sure?” Isabella finally breaks the silence, her voice low and cautious. She appears calm on the surface, but her eyes shimmer with worry and grief for the vampire Lina never got to spend the rest of her life with.

Lina simply nods, fresh tears spilling from her eyes as she mourns silently for her lost mate. Her face is a mask of sorrow etched permanently with grief. Watching her, my heart clenches. Her face is the exact image of the pain I would feel if Xavier died on me... With my naked feet touching the cold floor, I bring out the key to open my sister’s prison cell.

She watches me in silence. flinching when I reach out to touch her. But she calms down when I stroke her skin, my eyes looking deeply into hers. “Please show us the way to the vampire castle, Lina. Xavier might be strong, but I’m worried about him, and I couldn’t stand it if he died.”

Lina’s bottom lip wobbles. She must be thinking of her own mate before she finally sighs. “Okay, I will show you the way

there, but only because I don't want you to face the same pain as me," tears drip down on the floor, and her voice breaks before she continues, "Losing your mate is...a pain too immense to bear. It's like losing a part of your own soul." She swipes at her tears, jaw set in a tight line.

Isabella and I share a look, understanding dancing in our eyes. Losing Xavier...no, I can't bear the thought. Suddenly, Lina's sacrifice, her willingness to help us despite everything that has happened, strikes me as profoundly brave. It takes incredible strength to face the pain head-on and move past it for the sake of another.

"Thank you, Lina," my voice is stronger than I feel. I'm so worried about Xavier that my hands are shaking as I free my sister from her chains. "With your help. I'm positive we can save Xavier."

"And maybe the moon goddess will forgive you if she sees you helping us," Isabella adds. "Your plan was to kill your own pack member to save your mate, and the moon goddess probably didn't like that. But if she sees you helping us, maybe she will allow you to find a second chance mate."

"I don't want a second chance, mate," Lina mutters as she stands up. The thought is beautiful, but...I just want Oscar. He was such a sweet man and didn't deserve to be murdered just because his mate wasn't another vampire." I grip her hand, squeezing it. "Then let's hope he is reborn and comes back to

you.” She snorts. “I would be an old woman before he was old enough to be with me, Daisy.”

I giggle at that. “True, but what if he would be reborn in another dimension where time passes quicker?”

“Don’t give me false hope. That won’t ever happen. Oscar is gone, but Xavier is still alive. Now shape- shift into your winged wolf so we can go.”

I blink in surprise. “Why does it sound as if I’m going to be your taxi?”

“Because you are,” Isabella cuts in. “Your white wolf is the only one with wings, and your wolf has also grown absolutely massive since you became an Alpha-you can easily carry us.”

“That’s true...” I mumble. “Should we tell anyone that we are leaving?”

Isabella laughs, “Do you think they would allow their Alpha to go on a mission like this? It’s basically a suicide mission to try and save Xavier.”

“And yet you’re going?” I ask in disbelief.

“Yes,” Isabella lifts her pert nose into the air. “If it’s just us three, we can be stealthy and fast.”

“Agreed,” Lina says. “I know the vampire castle like the back of my hand. Oscar and I used to sneak around a lot in the beginning before we were found out. So yeah...I know where the secret passageways are, the traps they’ve set up, and the guard’s patrol hours.”

Her words fill me with a strange sense of comfort. Having Lina on our side, with her intimate knowledge of the castle, increases our chances of getting Xavier out alive. “Alright. I believe in us,” I say before letting my body change its shape once more. My transformation is swift and free of pain. Once I’m standing there like the wolf version of Pegasus, my sisters gasp in unison as they take me in.

“By the moon goddess, you’re beautiful...” Lina whispers, her voice choked with awe.

“Yeah, yeah...” Isabella rolls her eyes and grabs my fur before hoisting herself onto my back. “You have time to compliment her later. Right now, we need to focus on the mission,” she says as she offers her hand to Lina.

Lina, hesitant for a moment, takes Isabella’s hand and clambers onto my back. She gently strokes my fur, her touch comforting in the midst of our trepidation. “Alright,” she says. “We’re ready to go.”

I don't waste a single second. My sisters feel light on my back, and with my eyes locked on the door, I sprint out into the darkness. Hopefully, Xavier is still okay...