

## Sage

Zane POV

The city disgusted me. The streets were riddled with crime, lth, and drugs, as those in power prayed off the weak.

If it hadn't been for inheriting that cursed casino, I would have never even considered this place. My plan was to sell the casino immediately after we inspected it and then make a quick exit.

Despite my personal dislike for it, we were obligated to visit a vampire nightclub in order to appease the potential buyer, Vampire Lord Ezra.

We were immediately directed to a private booth upon entering.

The establishment was led to capacity with a multitude of vampires and werewolves who had questionable reputations. They were all indulging in the consumption of alcoholic beverages laced with drugs while simultaneously being entranced by bewitched music that ensured their perpetual state of bliss.

As soon as we took our seats, a strong desire to leave overwhelmed me, but everything changed when I spotted a solitary human girl occupying the adjacent booth.

Why the hell was a human in a nightclub like this? It wasn't uncommon to see them accompanying a vampire as a feeder or with a werewolf for a bit of fun, but this one was alone and in her own private booth.

As I watched the lowlife vampire sit down with her, I experienced an inexplicable urge to prevent him from getting too close. The intense desire to protect a stranger compelled my loyal wolf, Jax, to relentlessly scratch at the surface, begging for his release to rip the vampire apart.

"Calm the f\*\*k down," I instructed my wolf as I remained seated with my beta and guards.

"You can't let that scum touch her," Jax growled in my head.

"Why do you care so much for a human? She is not our mate; otherwise, I would have sensed it." I snapped at him.

"She means something to us. I don't know what yet, but I can feel it," Jax howled.

Despite my wolf's wishes, I chose to remain seated until the sound of a bottle smashing on the table startled me, prompting me to swiftly jump out of my seat and remove the troublemaker from her booth.

The moment my eyes connected with hers, I understood my wolf. The human couldn't be older than 20. With her multi-colored hair, dark makeup, slender body, and purple eyes, she stood out as someone unlike anything I had seen before. She had an undeniable beauty and an air of mystery about her.

My wolf's anxiety seemed to subside a bit after she agreed to accompany us to our booth. That was the case, at least, until her hand touched mine. I felt an electrifying sensation as she made contact with me, causing a pleasant tingling to spread throughout my entire body, but it abruptly stopped when she ended the connection. Her hasty departure strongly suggests that she also experienced the same feeling.

I had to chase after her; she did not smell like my mate, yet the connection I felt was the same one would feel from a mate. Who was she?

"Leave her be. She is just a human." Alex, my beta, scoffed as I stood up.

"I can't. I'll be back," I responded.

When I saw the vampire hunched on the ground, I was momentarily taken aback by the sight. The feeling of regret consumed me as I realized that I should have chased after her right away when she abruptly left without uttering a single word. I needed to know who this human was.

"Best to leave that one alone." The vampire who had sleuthing over her laughed.

"Advice you obviously don't follow." I snarled.

"Sage and I go way back. I've known that pesky girl since she was a child. I'm just messing with her." He responded as he stood back up straight.

"Interesting way of messing with someone, so you are her friend?" I asked.

The vampire laughed. "That girl has no friends, just enemies. Sage hates everyone, but a word to the wise. She hates your kind the most."

"Tell me everything you know about her," I demanded.

"Why the hell would I do that?" He sneered.

"It's the only way you will walk away with your life," I responded as I allowed my claws to extend and pin him to the wall.

"Fine, I rst spotted Sage at an illegal ght club when she was just a child. From a young age, the girl developed the ability to stand up for herself. Ezra took an interest in her. In all my years, I have never witnessed the vampire lord showing such fascination towards a human without transforming them. However, he explicitly stated that Sage was untouchable, which only intensified her allure. With no family or friends to rely on, the girl's work involves collaborating with multiple lords and occasionally crossing paths with wolves. The humans despise her, so you typically won't nd her around them; they all know she is loyal to the supernatural, although she claims loyalty to no one. The girl may look like a fragile little human, but she is strong and can easily survive these streets alone," the vampire scum explained.

"Is she Ezra's mate? I have heard no such rumor of him favoring a human." I snarled.

"No, but it's clear he holds something over her since she has been frequenting his club." The vampire explained as I released him.

"One last thing. Do you know where she lives?" I asked.

"Ask Ezra. He is her landlord." The vampire responded as he took off.

Turning back into the club, I returned to my table and instructed my beta and guards to follow me to Ezra's oce so I could get the information on Sage's address.

"W's address.

"What's gotten into you, Zane? It is unlike you to take such an interest in a human." Alex asked.

"Jax senses something with her, and I need to know what it is," I responded as we reached the vampire lord's oce in the club.

Upon entering Ezra's oce, I was warmly welcomed by his guard, while my beta and additional guards patiently waited outside.

"Did you nd the booth to your liking?" Ezra asked.

"Very much so, but I was hoping for information on one of your patrons. The human girl, Sage," I informed him.

"Whatever Sage did, I will make sure we handle it for you," Ezra responded.

"I actually would like contact information for her," I responded.

"Took a liking to her? I can arrange a private room with Sage, but it will cost you," Ezra responded as he stroked his phone.

Was this really what she did for them? My stomach churned at the thought of others calling for her.

"Fine, I'll pay." I snarled, just wanting a moment alone with Sage so Jax would calm down.

Ezra picked up his phone and walked to the corner of his oce while requesting Sage's return.

"Sage is on her way back; I will have my guards show you to one of our luxury suites so you can get comfortable. She will join you once she arrives," he said with a sadistic smile.

Once I had gotten comfortable in the suite, I proceeded to instruct my guards and Beta to make their way back to the table in the club and patiently wait for me until I returned.

Similar to the rest of the club, the room I was given was incredibly grotesque, boasting a massive bed adorned with a wall covered in pleasure toys, as well as a bottle of champagne.

My original intention was to engage in a conversation with her, but I anticipate that upon her arrival, she may mistakenly think that I have recruited her for alternative purposes.

"I'm not one of your f\*\*\*\*g whores, Ezra." A voice whispered in the hallway, just loud enough that my wolf-hearing could pick up.

"For once, do what you are told," Ezra responded as I sensed them approaching the door.

I was taken by surprise when a loud bang echoed through the hallway, causing me to abruptly rise from my seat, and simultaneously, I heard her voice resurface.

"Did you seriously just f\*\*\*\*g drug me, Ezra?" She yelled in the hallway as I opened the door to the suite.

Fortunately, at that very moment, she happened to be standing just outside the door, which provided me with the opportunity to swiftly bring her inside and securely lock the door behind us.

"What the hell?" Sage snapped as I let go of her.

"What did he do to you?" I demanded through gritted teeth.

"Why the f\*\*k would you care? You're the one who wanted me," Sage responded as she faltered a little on her feet.

"I only wanted to talk with you," I responded as she glared at me, her pupils fully dilated.

"Then talk." She huffed as she sat down in one chair, and I took a moment to observe her fully.

"I smell her blood," Jax growled in my head as I took in her bloody knuckles.

"You did not agree to this meeting, did you?" I asked.

"No, but I'm sure you are well aware of that," she mumbled. Whatever drug they gave her, it was kicking in fast and that was only pissing Jax off more.

Compelled by my wolf and driven by a desperate need to examine for further injuries, I moved closer to her, my eyes remaining xed on her.

"I thought you wanted to talk, not undress me with your eyes." She laughed.

"Your hurt, show me," I demanded.

"Why do you care? Answer that and then I'll show you?" She responded.

"I'm worried about you," I sighed.

"That's the rst time someone has spoken that line to me," she threw her head back in a laugh.

"Will you show me now?" I asked.

Sage lifted the side of her shirt to show a significantly deep stab wound on her side and then pulled her shirt down again.

"How the f\*\*k are you still sitting with that?" I snarled as I moved closer.

"I said you could look. No way in hell are you touching me." She snapped.

"You need a hospital and I'm taking you to one right now," I ordered as I mind-linked my beta to meet me in the room.

"No hospitals. I'll be ne. Now talk so I can get on with my night." She demanded.

"She is masking her scent. I can smell the potion on her." Jax informed me in my head.

"How old are you?" I asked.

"No idea, nineteen maybe." She responded.

"Why don't you know?" I asked.

"If you have nothing important to talk about, I'm leaving, I did not come here to discuss my past with a wolf." She sneered and then tried to stand, but fell towards me.

"Damn it, Ezra," she hissed as I caught her, causing the same warming sensation to ll my body.

My concern grew significantly when I noticed that Sage had become completely limp, prompting me to carefully place her back on the bed. When I pulled her shirt slightly up over the stab again, I was amazed to see that it was already healing.

"You aren't human, are you? I said out loud as I picked her up again and met my beta in the hall.

"What do you plan on doing with her?" Alex asked.

"She is coming with us until whatever drug they gave her wears off," I responded.

It was evident that Sage was concealing something, and my determination to uncover the truth was unwavering.