

## CHAPTER 153

### Winter POV

It's utter chaos and mayhem. I can hear screams from behind me, the sound of running footsteps as people attempt to flee from the building. But what catches my eye is the cages or cells, located in the far back. The sound of children crying penetrates my ears and I run, in wolf form towards them, taking out one hunter in my way, easily tearing through his neck and letting his body drop to the floor. I can see Kai fighting in the background as I get there, and soon enough, the children and other occupants of the cages are free. Two children smell off, like vampires and they greet a vampire male let free, calling out 'daddy' which melts my heart. The other children, two of them stay there, looking miserable, dirt on their pale faces, blonde hair disheveled and matted.

The little girl is crying softly, hugging the other one. Both look to be roughly the same age, about four years old. Her plait is almost nonexistent, so many hairs have come out of it, and the young boy is clutching her tightly, not wanting to let her go. I go towards them, but they flinch and look back at me with terrified looks on their faces. I frown. I'd shifted to human form, but they were still afraid of me. The fighting appears to be diminishing and I glance over my shoulder, seeing Langdon, Damien and Drake appearing. The little children suddenly brighten, to my shock as they too look up and see my brothers.

"Twins" the little girl breathes out, her eyes wide, blue eyes sparkling as she glances at the other boy, whom I've surmised is her brother "look, just like our daddy was."

I blanch. "Where is your daddy?" I ask quietly.

She turns to me, her lips trembling "he was with us, but the lady took him away and he never came back" she sniffled, "the lady looked like you" she finished.

Oh god. Had mother been involved with this father of theirs and his death? Because I have no doubt that she would have killed him, or experimented on him until he was gone.

"What about your mother?" I ask gently as my brother's approach. Kai comes up and kneels next to me, listening intently to the conversation.

"Died trying to stop them taking us."

My god. I could hear the pain in his voice.

"Hi" Damien says nervously. Him, Drake and Langdon must have all shifted outside before coming in. I can smell blood on them and wrinkle my nose as I gesture towards the children.

"Hello" the little girl says, taking hold of a startled Drake's hand "I'm Milly, what's your name?"

Drake gives her a friendly smile "I'm Drake and this is Damien, and my mate Langdon" he says introducing them all together. She gives him a beaming smile and throws herself into his arms. Drake's arms wrap around her tightly as she snuggles into him. "You're a twin like my daddy was" she tells him. He stays silent, embracing her and picking her up off the ground as she clings to him like a koala bear.

"That's my brother, Jinx" Milly whispers, pointing at the little boy who is approaching a rather apprehensive Langdon.

The little boy gives Langdon the most brilliant smile and then launches himself at Langdon who only just catches him in time.

"I like you" he says, giggling and holding onto the man who looks absolutely terrified.

"Ahem" coughs Langdon "I like you too" he says unsurely, glancing over at myself and Kai "but where are your parents."

I frantically mouth the words 'they're dead' and Langdon's face droops. He holds onto the boy tightly while Damien hovers nearby, scanning the room.

"The doors" I say turning to Kai "have they all been inspected and investigated?"

He gives a small nod. "There's no one else in the building. These are all that's left. The rooms have basic medical equipment in them and more cages. There's also, according to King Axel, what appears to be a mass grave outside. They've been doing this for a long time it seems. I can't believe we never cottoned onto it."

If I could get my hands on my mother for doing this, I would torture her a hundred times over for what she's done. My heart goes out to the kids. A vampire male, clad in a suit of all things and looking very disheveled, but handsome, I have to admit it, even I swooned a little, approaches us, a bit of blood in the corner of his mouth.

"I wish to thank you for freeing me" he says to Kai, extending his hand, his other men, or the ones captured with him in the cage, coming up behind him, including the father with two children "normally we would

not communicate with you, but I sense that you are a hybrid and half vampire. Not only that, but it's time our species learnt to speak with one another, to prevent this ever happening again" he adds.

That, I'm in full agreement of. The sounds of fighting cease outside and the rest of the men, come filing in, in human form, breathing heavily, fully exerted.

"I agree" Kai says roughly, motioning towards a tired looking King Axel, "I would like you to meet our King, King Axel" he says.

King Axel holds out his hand to the vampire who grasps it. "I am Prince Jasper of the Vampires" he says with a grin, "it is a pleasure to meet you all."

We nod. King Axel looks impressed as he slowly pulls his hand away. "I would love to discuss a treaty with your people, if you would be so willing" he says slowly.

Prince Jasper gives a firm nod. "I would very much like that" he murmurs "you must however, visit me at the castle, along with these friends of yours that saved me." He glances over at Kai specifically "we must thank you properly. My people will be very appreciative" he adds "I have been gone for some months now and no doubt they must think I'm dead."

All around us shifters are sitting on the floor or leaning against walls, waiting for further instructions.

"How did you get taken?" I asked and the vampire turns to me, a wry smile on his face.

"I was travelling the country, meeting the leaders of the packs, when I was taken before I could get to one. I was shot with a dart while ahem, taking a bathroom break" he admits, the tips of his ears turning red. Kai is stifling

his laughter. I just feel bad for him. That was a horrible way to be taken down. When you're at your most vulnerable.

Sabriel is snickering in my mind. I can picture it in my mind Winter, oh that's hilarious. I wonder if his pants were down when they shot him.

That's not nice Sabriel, it could happen to anyone.

Yeah, but it's funny, admit it. A vampire prince, taking a bathroom break, is shot by hunters. My god, it's like a terrible tale to warn people about. Be careful about doing your business in the woods, a hunter might shoot you.

Sabriel

I wonder if he was peeing or doing number twos. Lol, my stomach hurts from laughing so much.

Sabriel, that's not very friendly of you.

Oh hush. Best friends laugh at each other. I'm sure if this had happened to a shifter he'd be laughing his ass off. It's a joke. She snorts and then begins to laugh in my mind, loudly, and I'm forced to put a block up, so that I don't end up doing the same. The poor man is embarrassed enough already.

"We would like to help you clean up this mess" Prince Jasper continues, cheeks slightly flushed as he gestures at the building. "What exactly were you planning to do?"

This time I speak up, my voice firm. "Burn it down to the ground. I don't want anything from this place. It needs to go."

King Axel nods and then speaks up, "Everyone is to get to the safe point outside and wait, except for those who are coming back with what we need."

I turn to Damien, Drake and Langdon, two of whom are still holding sobbing children. "Get them to safety."

"We can help" Langdon begins to say but I cut him off, shaking my head, "these children need you right now. Milly and Jinx trust you, so don't give them to anyone else. Besides, Kai and I are capable of doing this, along with King Axel."

"I will also help" Prince Jasper says, 'the rest of you go outside with the shifters' he adds, eyeing the father and kids meaningfully. The vampire nods and grabs his children, racing them outside. Within minutes, the building is completely clear besides a few of us, gasoline in all of our hands.

"It needs to be spread throughout the entire building" King Axel instructs "the more the better. Let this hellhole burn to the ground, and everything it contains with it."

Kai and I begin to spread out the gasoline, while Jasper and King Axel go into the other rooms and do the same. It's not very hard, but we're careful, tedious, wanting the building to burn to a crisp. There are all sorts of things that might still remain, including the cells, but all the useful equipment, computers, tranquilizers etc. would be gone. Not to mention it would be inhabitable for them to use ever again. A lot of hunters had died today, as well as some scientists, and their bodies would burn alongside it. A warning to future hunters, that we wouldn't stand for this, nor would we show any mercy towards them.

Burn, baby burn.

Damnit Sabriel, you've just put that song in my head.

It's a good song, you should thank me. I've heard your taste of music, it's terrible.

It's not that bad, you're exaggerating.

Actually, calling it terrible was being polite. You suck at choosing music. I dread you putting music on.

You're mean.

I'm truthful. Which is also the same as being mean sometimes, but sometimes the truth hurts. This is one of those times.

Sabriel, I'm going to kill you one of these days.

No, you won't, you love me too much.

Damnit. Should have left the block up. I shake my head in resignation and join Kai, dropping the gasoline tin on the ground as King Axel and Prince Jasper rejoin us.

"All done, every single room" Prince Jasper says with some satisfaction "nothing will be left once it starts."

King Axel nods.

I sigh. "Let's go" I motion towards everyone, digging in my pocket for the matches I'd been given "before I burn your asses as well."

We trudge outside. It's nighttime now, we've been fighting for hours and I was tired, incredibly tired. I lift my head to the sky and breathe deeply, as the others begin to walk away. It was all over; we'd saved a few lives and beaten the hunters. My mother was gone, forever, as was my father. I can hear the children in the distance and the other shifters. Prince Jasper suddenly appears back to my side.

"Come to my castle" he urges "instead of back to the pack. Let us show you our hospitality and thank you. Besides, it saves you travelling back and forth" he adds and I laugh.

"Alright" I grin, before grabbing a match from the small box and showing it to him "but first let's deal with business."

I light the match and then throw it towards the building, turning and running for my life, Prince Jasper beside me, Kai on the other, King Axel already well gone. We reach the other shifters as we hear a loud boom and feel the ground beneath our feet quaking. The building is a light, flames everywhere.

We stay, watching, observing, as the rest of the shifters and vampires go home. We make sure it burns right down to the ground, leaving behind charred remains, before we move. King Axel, Kai, Prince Jasper and myself then begin the journey to his castle, where he will no doubt be warmly welcomed home from a loving family that has been missing him for months. I find myself excited to see what it's like, to be in a vampire pack and castle. Would it differ from how werewolves run their packs, or are we more similar to them than we ever imagined? I was about to find out.