

Chapter 28

“Know what?” Noleen asks, coming up the steps and stopping behind me.

“That you and Michelle are on patrol after dinner at the front gate,” I chuckle, and she groans.

“Really? Can’t I go with Lacy? Michelle never shuts up! The girl could talk the legs off a donkey!” Noleen whines and I chuckle, getting up to help with dinner.

Everyone set out on patrol after dinner while I helped my mother and a few of the women clean up. Throughout dinner, I am distracted by what Sondra told me and the bond tugging frantically, craving our Axton. Even Lexa seems to be in a depressed mood.

My brief excitement at finally being home on my territory has dimmed quickly, but it also has me worried. Sondra is still hiding something, and we still have the issue of who the strigoi is or are. We aren’t even sure if it is one or a lair of them. Taking the trash to the bin, I toss the huge black bag in while my mother stacks the chairs back in the shed.

A few women stand around the bonfire, their children are roasting marshmallows while they stand around and chat. Walking back to my mother, I hear my phone ring and stop. Pulling it from my pocket, I glance at it. I see Axton’s name pop up on the screen in a video call and I can’t help the stupid grin that splits onto my face.

My mother glances at me, and I hold up the phone. “Take it. I will finish cleaning up.” She waves me away, and I turn to head for the house.

Answering it, I walk back inside, knowing he probably wants to see the boys. “Is everything alright out there?” He asks as I climb the steps, heading for my room.

“Yep, the girls are running patrols, and the boys are asleep,” I tell him.

“Did you have a chance to speak to Sondra?” He asks, and I hold a finger to my lips. He nods once, and I head to my room, slipping inside, trying not to let the door creak and wake the boys and close the door.

I quickly wander over to the boys' crib and turn the camera around so he can see them. Facing it back the other way, he is smiling. "I already miss them, and you hogging my damn bed." He laughs.

"You'll see them Friday. I will make the appeal to the council once I get off the phone with you. If it goes through, maybe you can come out here beforehand." I tell him, sitting on the end of my bed, and he nods his head.

"Or maybe you come over tomorrow?" He asks, and I roll my eyes.

"I just got home! Besides, I don't want people getting the wrong idea, thinking we are suddenly together."

"We are! You're just too stubborn to admit it. Don't make out that you don't miss me. You forget I can feel you!" He says cockily.

"It's the bond!"

"Sure, it is?" He winks at me.

"You're a fool, and tomorrow I will be busy. I have to dig up some dirt on my father. He already appealed to the council to have the title changed. Marco dropped the paperwork off last night." I tell him.

"Did he handle it, or do you want me to ring Marco?"

"No, he took care of it, but it just means I now have no choice but to challenge him or find a way for him to stand down. I really don't want to have to make him submit." I sigh. Lexa also worries, old fears tainting the idea and instilling fear.

"Do it from here, then. You'll have access to the council files off my computer, and I can help."

"It's not that simple. I have looked into my father's past before. There is nothing dating from before I was born."

"I can ask Marco or you could get his help?" Axton offers.

"No, I'm pretty sure Sondra has already, so whatever was covered up, I think it was before everything went digital."

"So, you already checked the basements at the council?"

“No, that is why I want to come in, see if there are any old articles. Something about him at all. I checked the council data when I was at your place.” I tell him.

“That’s what you were doing before you left?” He asks, and I chew my lip. That wasn’t what I was originally doing; I was looking into how Axton killed his father, but found nothing.

“Yeah,” I murmur.

“Why do I feel like you’re lying to me?” He asks.

“I can check your search history. You know that, right?”

“Might as well tell him, Elena.” Lexa sighs. Either way, he would find out.

“I was trying to find out about your father’s death at first,” I admit. Axton presses his lip in a line.

“I’m sorry,” I tell him and he nods.

“Not like I haven’t looked into your files. It’s fine. So do I need to worry about being blackmailed again?” He laughs.

“Oh, I have plenty of blackmail material. I don’t need the council data for that.” I snicker.

“I knew some men kept little black books but didn’t think you were one and, on your phone, of all places.” I laugh.

“That doesn’t bother you?” He questions.

“No, they predate me, and I noticed you haven’t slipped an entry into it since you met me,” I tell him.

“Yeah, I won’t lie. I did try, but Khan is a stubborn asshole. Even when you were gone, he made sure I stayed away from women.” My chest pinches, but at least he admitted it and he thought I ran off with Jake, so I can’t really blame him for trying.

“I don’t think I would have gone through with it, anyway. Women repulse me now I’ve met you, so thanks for that. Though I take better care of my hands now, the calluses were getting ridiculous.” He snickers.