

## Chapter 43

“You fucking idiot, that is not Osiris! Or Officer Tuck! That is the fucking strigoi, and you let him slip right past you!” Marco shouts right as his fist collides with the desk.

The Officer looks at the screen. His face pales, and his eyes widen as he shakes his head in what even he knows is denial. “No, that is Osiris! I saw him with my own two eyes.” Flint says, and I almost facepalm myself.

Marco turns in his chair to look at the Officer. “Are you really that stupid? Do you honestly think Osiris came all the way to the police station to take a shit just to leave right afterward? Have you not remembered anything about strigoi? We only just went over this last week after the last attack! Or are you truly that much of an imbecile?” Marco snarls at him. If he were human, I’m sure his face would burn bright red in the display of rage.

Marco rewinds the footage, only this time, we follow Officer Tuck, who goes down and speaks to Alpha Derrick about being transferred to the council chambers in the city. He then talks to the two officers guarding him and finds out the route and time the council enforcers are arriving. There would be no need for anyone working here to need to know the route or the time they were leaving.

“How is that possible?” Flint asks, staring at the screen in shock.

“Because strigoi can shapeshift, you fucking idiot! You couldn’t even recognize the change in your own damn Alpha! How did you even get this job if you can’t tell the difference by his aura alone, moron?” The tension in the office rises, and Marco’s clearly at the end of his rope. I can’t blame him, and I don’t think I would attempt to save the fool if Marco decided to eat him.

“How was I supposed to know? I have never met a damn strigoi before!” Flint argues.

“You just did; in fact, you had a good ole fucking laugh with one! You know your damn Alpha. You should have realized by his mannerisms, even his damn signature!” Marco points at the writing in the logbook.

Flint shakes his head and tries to come up with an excuse, but it is clear that it isn't Alpha Osiris; they don't even walk the same, but it leaves the question of who else it could be. We scan the rest of the surveillance footage, but he just disappears once outside the doors.

"You couldn't tell by his scent?" Marco demands. I've been told up close that they have a very cloying scent of decaying flesh. This makes sense since, to become strigoi, a vampire has to feed off the dead. It is why feeding off the dead is illegal for vampires. They feed off the dead too much, it sends them crazed, rabid. It's also how they inherit these extra abilities.

A vampire feeding off the dead eventually kills them, and they come back as something more sinister. Back when I was younger, my grandfather told me stories of when vampires and werewolves were at war with each other, that some vampires purposefully became strigoi to gain an extra advantage, which ended up being a later problem in and of itself.

Those additional abilities make it so much harder to identify a strigoi and kill them. They are faster than a typical vampire and stronger. They can even compel/glamor other vampires and even werewolves. Marco only has the ability to compel me while I am in human form, but it's said that strigoi can compel the wolf's side too, which makes them harder to kill.

Unfortunately, population numbers grew out of control, and the human governments had to work with the supernatural council to eradicate them; it's also when the alliance started with humans and the supernatural.

"No, he was wearing a heap of aftershave, and it smelled cheap, too. Which I thought was a little odd, but he looked exactly like Osiris. How the heck was I to know?" his brows pinch, and he mutters something too soft for me to hear.

"Although, he was in an excellent mood, which is odd, especially after everything that happened earlier at the borders between you two," Flint says, pinching his lip between his thumb and forefinger.

Marco growls in frustration. "Get out!" Marco snaps.

Officer Flint jumps, glances at me, then he rushes from the room, shutting the door behind him.

"Fools, the lot of them!" Marco snarls. He rubs his temples and sighs.

“So, what now?” I ask him, and Marco leans back in his chair. He tosses his arms up in the air.

“I have no clue. We are still no closer to figuring out who it is; for all we know, it may be the idiot we were just talking to!” Marco exhales.

“Nah, he smells alive,” I tell him with a laugh.

“Well, with any luck, he killed Alpha Derrick; that would be one less headache to deal with!” Marco states, and I chew my lip, trying to think.

“What are you thinking?” Marco asks, and I look at him to find him watching me.

“Nothing much, trying to figure out why they would go after Derrick.”

“No idea. Maybe Derrick is in on it.” Marco clicks his tongue before leaning forward and typing on the laptop.

“What if it was to frame him? Throw us off their scent. Maybe we are closer than we think, and Derrick would be the perfect scapegoat?” I tell him, and Marco seems to think for a second.

“But why? It makes no sense,” I shrug. We don’t have enough information to come to that conclusion yet.

“Go back to Elena, knowing that strigoi is out there, and so is Derrick. I rather you out there than here. An emergency alpha meeting will take place in the morning, and I’ll send out the message. For now, I’ll deal with this; you go back to Sondra and watch over my mate and my sons.” I tell him, getting up from my seat.

“Are you sure?” Marco asks, and I shrug. It’s not like we could do much. Everyone is already out looking for Derrick, and now we are just sitting here guessing who it could be.

“I’ll drop you home and then leave. Call me if you need me.” Marco says, pulling his keys from his pocket.