

Chapter 75

Axton

I jerk awake, my heart pounding in my chest and drenched in sweat. Peering up at the ceiling, I try to figure out what woke me. Was it just a nightmare? I can't remember the dream if it was. Something feels wrong. My body is on alert, my senses heightened, and overcome with a sense of fear and dread. I can feel the adrenaline pumping through my veins.

The room is dark and silent, broken only by my panting breaths.

“Elena...” I mumble, feeling her side of the bed. As I feel around for her body sleeping next to me, I find her side cold, as if she hadn't been there at all.

Fear creeps through my veins, and I sit up, looking toward the bathroom, but no lights are on either. I slowly sit up in bed, taking care not to make any sudden movements. Straining my ears, I listen for any sound that might indicate the cause of my unease. I can hear my heart beating in my chest and my breathing rhythm, but nothing else.

I reach for my lamp and switch it on. My eyes dart around the room. I jump out of bed, looking frantically around the room for any sign of her, while feeling for her through the bond. As I tug on the bond, Khan awakens.

“What is it?” Khan asks me. It takes a second for him to realize we can't feel Elena. It's almost like she is asleep, but we can usually feel her, sense her dreams, something. But we got nothing.

“Why can't I feel her or Lexa?” Khan panics.

“Maybe she is asleep in the boys' room?” I offer.

Stumbling blindly towards the boys' bedroom door, I poke my head in to find them both sleeping soundly. When I turn around, my eyes are drawn to the bedroom door. Seeing it open, I knew it was closed when we headed to bed. Fear courses through every fiber of my being, and I grab whatever clothes are closest and rush out of the

room, heading toward Luke's room. Shoving his door open, he jerks awake and rubs his eyes.

“What?” he grumbles, while my eyes scan his room for any sign of her. My heart sinks when I realize that she's not there, and I look back at him in despair.

“Axton?” Luke mumbles, staring at me. Luke's face was filled with confusion, his eyes still heavy with sleep. He is wearing a pair of bright blue pajamas, and his hair was ruffled from the sudden awakening.

“It's probably nothing. Go back to sleep,” I tell him before shutting his door.

Racing out of the house, I'm hit with cold air that feels like a slap in the face. I look for her in every direction, but nothing—no trace of her. As I step around the side of the house, the heavy air with dense fog made it difficult to see more than a few feet ahead. The fog dampening the sound of my breathing. Even the moon shines weakly through the haze, casting an eerie glow on the front yard. I stand still, listening carefully for any sound that may indicate where Elena is, when I notice her car is gone.

Panic builds within me; all I can think about is finding her. Pulling on our bond, I concentrate on reaching out to her. I search for any sign that will tell me where she went.

But even as my bond stretches, it reaches the end of its tether. Khan also feels for any sense of direction. He reaches farther than ever before, but there's still nothing to be found. She's gone, and deep down, I know I have to find her before it's too late...

As I open the mind-link, I feel for Eli. Forcing myself into his head. He groans, waking up.

“What is it, Alpha?” He groans, half asleep.

“Have you seen or heard from Elena?” I ask him, which has him suddenly wide awake.

“What, no... Why?”

“She's missing, and I can't feel her. Send Michelle to watch the boys and Luke. I need to find her. Something is wrong; I can feel it.” I tell him, and I hear him opening the mind-link to our warriors to send out a search party while I race back inside.

Grabbing the house phone, I dial her number, but it goes straight to voicemail.

I try not to panic as I wait for Michelle to arrive, running through scenarios in my head of what could have happened and why she is gone. But no matter how much I think, nothing is coming to me, only white noise in my mind. Finally, Michelle comes bursting through the door. The moment she does, I snatch my keys and phone off the table and run for my car. I race down the steps, and only when I reach the final step do, I suddenly feel her. My mind-link opens quickly, and I reach out to her.

“Elena?” I call out to her.

“Axton,” she murmurs, her voice barely audible.

“Where are you, babe?” I ask, knowing something is wrong. The pain hits me like a tidal wave, my head throbbing to its beat; I can feel her disorientation and confusion as if it were my own.

“Elena, stay awake. Where are you?” I ask firmer. Khan presses beneath my skin. “She's east of us,” Khan tells me.

“It's Cane...”

“What's Cane?” I ask her, trying to keep her awake, so I can feel which direction she is in.

“He's the strigoi.... He....” she mumbles through the link, and my brows pinch when I feel her fading again. I lose focus on the bond when pain courses through the front of my face and the side of my head.

“Listen to my voice, Elena,” I command her. “Keep your eyes open and stay awake.”

Knowing we didn't have any more time, I rush to the car, throw my door open and start it up. The engine roars to life under me as I push hard on the accelerator and take off. I reverse into the mailbox as I pull out of the driveway.

“Elena?!” I yell when I get one word before, she cuts out completely. “... Chambers.”

“Elena?”

I call out to her, trying to focus on the road and the mind-link.

“Elena?” The bond dies once again, and I lose her, but we have one direction.

“Chambers?” I mutter under my breath.

“Marco sent the papers she filed for to her filing box,” Khan tells me.

“The council chambers,” I gasp, forcing the mind-link open before telling my warriors to head to the council chambers. Pressing the button on my phone, I ring Marco telling him to get back here before I hear fighting, and I know he will kill anyone in his way to get back to us.

Hanging up, trusting he’ll find a way to get back here, I ring the one person I don’t want to, Osiris.

“This better be important to wake me at such an ungodly fucking hour!” he answers after a few rings.

“I need your help. He got Elena.” I hear movement as I race through the streets, taking a corner far too sharp, and the car slides out, the back-end smashing into a telephone pole.

“Who has her?” he asks.

“Cane... Cane is the strigoi!”