

Chapter 77

Axton

Trying Alpha Thomas and Soyer again, but neither answered. Giving up, I growl, pulling into the council chamber's huge iron gates. "She's here; I can feel her," Khan tells me. I nod because I feel she is close also.

My stomach sinks as I pull into the parking lot next to her car. I stare at the huge council building. The night was foggy and dark, illuminated only by the faint yellow light of the moon peeking through the thick clouds. Lightning in the distance, just breaking through the fog, makes everything look white with each flash. The smell of rain in the air raises goosebumps. We will get a huge storm, that I am certain of. The feel of the surrounding air is charged, not like when I first left; it was chilly, and now the air is warmer and thicker.

In the distance, I can see pack members carrying flashlights, fanning out, and searching the area for Elena. The council building looms before me, a large, imposing structure made of dark stone walls. Its windows were high and barred. Climbing out of the car, I hear a loud engine. This makes me turn toward the gates in time to see the lights of cars entering the gates. One of them is Osiris' car pulling in. Of all my rivals, I didn't think he'd show up. He parks his car beside mine, and I watch as he steps out. He looks around, surveying the area, and then strides toward me.

"Sorry, I got here as fast as I could. I drove by Soyer's place to see if he was home. Neither his nor his wife's car were there." Osiris tells me, and I nod, looking up at the building.

"Come on," I tell him, knowing our men were waiting for one of us to let them in. Jogging to the front door, I unlock it and rush in to turn off the alarm, but it's already off. Osiris tries the lights, but they don't turn on. Osiris turns to one of his men. "Find the circuit breaker. Get these lights back on." Osiris orders as our men start rushing inside to search the building.

"And you're sure she is still here?" Osiris asks, and I nod.

“The bond, I can feel her, but she isn't conscious,” I tell him as Eli rushes in, just in jeans, his chest bare, and his hair poking in every direction.

“Anything?” he asks, and I shake my head.

“Slater found Soyer's car around the back with Alpha Cane's. On the street, they found Luna Amy's car.”

Osiris calls his men to the foyer, handing out orders and telling them which sections and floors to check.

“We'll check the filing rooms and this level,” Osiris tells them as they break off into groups. My pack is out searching the surrounding buildings and outside.

We searched every room of the council chambers before moving down a corridor toward the archive room. It is the only room that has been checked on this floor. Yet, I am certain she is here. She feels close. Stepping into the dusty room, the power still isn't on, making it difficult to see.

The archive room is large and from floor to ceiling with towering shelves of musty books and old documents. This room is covered with dust, and the windows are shuttered and barred. The room almost appeared lost and forgotten in its condition. You can tell no one has been down here in a while, at least not since technology came in.

“You check that side; I'll take the back,” I tell Osiris, and we split off.

As I make my way through the shelves, I take in the dusty old books and documents. Most of them are yellowed with age. Some are ancient manuscripts written in languages I couldn't even begin to identify. I pass by a shelf filled with artifacts from long-forgotten packs, and a few shelves of old maps and globes. As I walk down the narrow shelf corridor, I feel for the bond. “I didn't think you would show up,” I say to Osiris, turning to look at him.

“Why wouldn't I?” Osiris asks me.

“Because it's me,” I answer honestly.

“We may not see eye to eye, Axton, but that does not have anything to do with your ability to run this city. I know firsthand how challenging it is and admit it is a lot to take on.”

“Is this your way of apologizing?” I ask.

“Nah, my reasons are more selfish than that,” he tells me, and I stop.

“Huh?”

“My father is still missing, or have you forgotten?” he asks me when I turn to the next aisle, only to run into him.

“I haven't forgotten,” I tell him.

“You just believe what everyone else believes, that I killed him,” I shrug because that is what I believe. Osiris nods once and then peer around. “Did you?” I ask him, and he sighs heavily.

“My old man and I may not have gotten along, but he was a terrific father. I was just a terrible son, but we fixed all that. We sorted everything out,” he shrugs. I side-eye him, not believing him.

“Besides, I thought you were the strigoi, so I guess we're even.” Osiris tells me, and I stop.

“You seriously thought I was a strigoi?” I ask, a little shocked. I thought he was trying to turn the city against me, not that he actually believed the nonsense he spouted.

“Well, you're always hanging with that bloodsucker.”

“Marco,” I correct, and he nods.

“Yeah, and it made sense why this strigoi was never seen or caught. You could have easily covered it up. That is why I went after your seat on the council.”

“Is that why you also went after Elena?”

“Nah, that was just to get under your skin. Not that I would have minded had she taken me up on the offer,” I growl at him, and he puts his hands up in mock surrender and laughs.

“What, she's fucking hot,” he shrugs, and Khan presses forward, not liking how he speaks of her. We reach the doors to the corridor when, finally, the lights flicker on.

“Finally!” Osiris says, tossing his hands up in the air.

“So why did you come back? Your father went missing the moment you showed up here. Kind of makes you look guilty,” I admit.