

## Chapter 78

“He called me back. He wanted me to give evidence against Derrick. Only when I got here, he was already missing.”

“Because you reported him missing.” I state.

“Look, I know it looks suspicious, but I didn’t kill him,” Osiris says, and I can hear underlying anger in his tone.

“Wait, what evidence did you have to give against Derrick?”

“My father wanted him off the council. He found out about his true identity, who he used to be. I told my father to let it be and that I’d handle it. He refused. Said he had evidence that Derrick and Thomas were dealing and trafficking women again with Alpha Lyle,” I stop.

“Alpha Lyle? As in Cane’s father?” Osiris nods. I hold up a finger, trying to piece this puzzle together.

“Now I know you’re lying. Elena found the bank statements....”

“With my name on them, yeah.” Osiris digs in his back pocket. He produces his phone, unlocks it, and presses a few things on the screen. He then turns the phone around to show me. Supernatural council ID. “I was undercover and have been for three years, but I don’t work directly with the supernatural council; I work with the human government agencies. It’s why I have been gone so long.”

“So that is what you meant when you said I wasn’t the only one with friends in the council,” I exhale.

“Exactly,”

“Well, if you’re in the supernatural council, why do you hate Marco so much?” I ask.

“Do you have any idea the links to the underworld he has? His brother was a crime boss, not just in the supernatural world but also in the human cities. He covered up for

him. I investigated him in my first year. However, nothing would stick until my boss pulled me from the case and said I was stirring up trouble, but that is part of the reason I started looking into Derrick. Derrick worked for him; he used to be in the Winter Ridge pack before his father banished him for selling his pack members. Only when he left did his father realize how much money he was bringing the pack and that his son was getting them out of debt.”

“Winter Ridge pack?”

“You know, the pack that was killed by their mates. After Derrick left, his father almost declared bankruptcy, so he started dealing drugs for Floyd. When that wasn’t enough, he started selling the women, who in turn sold them off to—”

“My father,” I finish for him. Wait, killed by their mates? Elena did mention briefly that Noleen recognized Derrick before she died.... I just thought she was one of the women sold. Well, clearly, she was.

“Wait, what happened to the women?” I ask.

“No idea. They were never caught. But I gather that they fled when they learned that the Alpha was planning to sell some children. From the evidence, I have seen those poor women were passed around the pack even by their mates, practically tortured. I guess one day they just snapped.”

“Elena’s pack,” Khan tells me, and I nod to him.

“Our pack.”

“I looked into you too when I found out that you moved to this city; I warned my father away from you. He said you weren’t like your father, different. I didn’t believe him. So, I did some digging and found out Marco covered up that you killed your father. It wasn’t until I moved here that I got the full story of what happened to your mother, so I don’t blame you. He deserved it.”

“Wait! You knew all this and still thought I was strigoi?” I ask incredulously.

“Just because I said I understood why you did it doesn’t mean I liked you.” he laughs.

“And why don’t you like me again?” I ask.

“Because you were getting in the way of my investigation against Derrick. Both of you were constantly in the media, drawing more attention to the city I was currently investigating, so I stepped in.”

“He was blackmailing me! I had no beef with him. He started it,” I tell him, and Osiris looks away.

“Yeah, well, I didn’t know the full story then.”

My brows furrow, confused, before my eyes widen. “It was you.... You sent Derrick the photos?” I ask as the sudden revelation hits me. Osiris looks away.

“Aren’t we looking for Elena?” he asks, and I know I am right.

“We can multitask.” I growl at him.

“Yes, I found an old phone when investigating your father’s link to Derrick and came across Marco’s link to them. I then had someone make a copy of his swipe card and broke into his office. That is where I found the phone. I then sent the photos to Derrick, hoping it would get you kicked out of the city.” Shaking my head, I can’t believe this shit.

“Yet you’ve been all buddy-buddy with Thomas, Derrick, and Cane since you got here.”

“Gotta keep up appearances, haven’t you heard the term? Keep your friends close, your enemies closer,” Osiris asks, and I glance at him.

“Be glad I wasn’t trying to be your best friend, Axton. Because that would have meant you were my enemy,” he tells me as he checks the bathrooms. I check the men’s, finding them empty. Coming out, Osiris is stepping out of the women’s.

“Empty,” I tell him.

“Where to next? She isn’t here. My men haven’t found anyone upstairs either.”

“No, she has to be close.”

“What about the tunnels?” asks Osiris.

“Maybe she found a way down there.” My stomach sinks as I remember they were sealed off years ago after a fire broke out in them back when I first moved here.

“Sealed off, if she can just stay awake long enough for me to feel her location,” I tell him.

“Can always check anyway. Might as well be thorough.” Osiris shrugs.

We all descended into the basement together and followed its winding corridors until we reached two massive gates blocking access to the tunnels beneath the council.

Having searched this floor, we regroup with our pack members in the main foyer.

Osiris quickly hops into action and takes over. I am thankful because I can barely think straight, and worry about my mate consumes my mind. He orders three of his men to check Alpha Canes packhouse for me, while sending the rest out to check neighboring businesses and houses.

I send half of mine to close off all city access points and lock the place down. As our packs take off as ordered, Osiris, Eli, and I turn back to our original mission and head toward the security personnel area to check out the basement.

As we turn to leave, we hear Alpha Thomas yell out to us from behind. “Any luck finding her?” he asks while jogging over quickly.

“Nothing yet,” Osiris explains. “But Axton is certain she is here.” He glances over at me with a knowing look.

“I came as soon as I heard your voicemail,” Thomas tells us, and I can't help but feel a little confused since I hadn't sent any such message. Khan speaks up, then.

“Osiris probably left a voicemail for Thomas,” Khan tells me.