

Chapter 81

I hear his bones cracking as he slips free and starts undoing the restraints on his legs when the sound of footsteps returning reaches me.

Soyer looks at me in panic, and I race back to my seat again. Osiris is dumped on the ground this time, and I hold my breath, watching Axton's face near my feet when Soyer talks.

“Water, please.” Soyer chokes out. Cane mutters something and wanders off, and I hear rustling before lifting my head slightly when I feel a flicker of something through the bond. My eyes drift back to Axton to find him looking at me. His eyes are pitch black, and I know Khan is forward with him. “When I say to, you fucking run,” he minds links, and I realize he is just pretending to be knocked out.

“Do you hear me?” My eyes widen as I peer down at him.

“I'm not leaving you,” I reply.

“Yes, you are. You run and don't come back, promise me.” I shake my head when I hear Cane.

“Wait...what have...” I hear Cane begin to say when Soyer tackles him, and they fall and hit the ground at the same time. Axton lurches to his feet when Soyer is thrown off. Soyer's body slams against the wall with startling force and speed before he hits the ground. Cane gets to his feet, and just before Axton reaches him, Cane spins with inhuman speed and kicks him. Axton's body flies past me down the tunnel, and Cane roars. Stomping past me, he heads for Axton, and I grab the crowbar leaning against the chair and come up behind him.

The crowbar slices through his flesh like butter, and the sound of metal-piercing flesh echoes through the air as I drive it into his back. The entirety of Cane's body goes rigid. Then slowly, he turns to face me. In the distance, I see Axton getting up, but my attention is fixed on Cane, whose eyes are locked on mine. The crowbar — now coated in blood — punctured straight through him, but he doesn't seem to care. With an almost feral snarl, he pulls the crowbar out of his body and flings it aside.

I back up, feeling the intensity of his gaze upon me like a physical weight. His eyes bore into mine, and his lips curl back into a snarl as he stalks toward me and goes to grab me when I am shoved out of the way from behind.

I land next to Soyer's mate and see Osiris is the one that shoved me, and Axton is once again attacking Alpha Cane. Axton and Cane both lunge at each other with a ferocity that rivals wild animals. Axton delivers a swift kick to Cane's chest, sending him flying back, and Cane retaliates when he gets up, blocking Axton's next blow before returning a punch that sends Axton to the ground. Cane then grabs the crowbar and swings it at Axton, but Osiris pushes Cane, making him miss his target. Everything happening with blurring speed in such tight confines makes everyone almost impossible to track.

Axton then lunges at Cane, tackling him to the ground and pummeling him with his fists. The two of them fight fiercely, with neither gaining the upper hand. The fight is brutal, with both men grunting and hissing as they exchange blows while Osiris is trying to get back to his feet, looking rather dazed.

The walls of the tunnel copping a beating in the tight space, when Axton is flung against another wall like a rag-doll. I can see why strigoi are so feared. They are unmatched rivals. Something not meant for this world. My scream is deafening when I see Axton crawling to get to his feet.

My scream rings out loudly, echoing off the walls, when I see Cane pick up the crowbar to deliver a lethal blow. However, Soyer suddenly blocks it with his shoulder, throwing his body over Axton's head. I hear a sickening crack that would have been Axton's head had Soyer not used his body to shield him.

Soyer screams in agony, and Axton shoves him away just as Cane brings the crowbar down. However, this time, Axton's hand grabs it mid-swing. Pain slivers up my arm through the bond, but Axton doesn't let go.

Instead, he swipes Cane's feet out from under him just as Osiris shakes himself off and gets to his feet. Looking around, I grab a screwdriver off the counter just as Cane backhands Osiris into a wall. The air leaves his lungs in a loud wheeze, and I run forward, stabbing the screwdriver into Cane's neck repeatedly just as Axton is pulled to his feet by his grip on the crowbar when Cane stands.

His face twists in fury as Cane grabs my hand that is holding the screwdriver when I stab him again, and he squeezes. I feel my hand break and scream, losing my grip on the screwdriver when Cane swings his arm down and back, catching me under the

ribs. I go flying back and hit the wall, which knocks the air out of me. Groaning, I lift my head in time to see Axton headbutt him, making Cane let go of the crowbar.

Cane stumbles back toward me, and I barely move in time as he falls over Soyer's mate's body on the ground. Axton lands on top of him, and I scramble to my feet, wheezing to catch my breath.

Cane and Axton land heavily on the ground while I try to get to the crowbar when Axton lifts his head to look at me.

“Run!” he commands, his eyes blazing, and I feel his aura blast me when he suddenly shifts. Khan’s size obscures half the place. Werewolves are not made to fight in such tight confines. The command freezes me on the spot, sweat beads on my neck, not wanting to leave my mate. When Khan starts mauling Cane, his teeth tear into his neck. The next second, Khan's furious voice booms in my head.

“Run!” he screams the command through the link, and unable to fight it, I take off running when I hear footsteps racing toward me.

My eyes widen when I see pack members barreling into the tunnels, having located us. I point the way I just came when I hear a feral snarl, and Marco shoves past Thomas, who has finally arrived to assist. “It's Cane,” I rasp out, and Marco nods, shoving past me and disappearing from where I just came.

“Elena, get out of here!” Alpha Thomas yells at me. Yet as I continue to run, I find I can’t catch my breath and stagger when I near the tunnel exit into the basement. I clutch the wall, and my vision blurs as I peer through the bars to see Eli’s lifeless body heaped on the floor.

Gasping, the pain makes my lungs burn. Tilting my head in the direction I came from, Khan’s command keeps trying to force me out of the tunnels. I stagger, using the wall to hold myself up as pain drags through my chest with each breath. My vision dulls and blurs.

My breathing comes in short pants, each breath agonizing as pain replaces the adrenaline, and I clutch my chest. Only when I do, I feel something protruding from it. Dazedly, I glance down and blink at what I’m seeing.

The screwdriver is embedded in my chest between my ribs, my hoodie completely drenched with my blood, making it stick to me like a second skin. My fingers wrap around the handle, intending to rip it out when I fall forward and collapse when I’m unable to catch my breath.