

## Chapter 82

Axton

Adrenaline surges through my veins as we get knocked aside with a heavy punch. Elena makes a run for it as chaos erupts. Alpha Cane moves with lightning speed, delivering a sidekick that sends us flying toward the counter. I'm forced to dodge falling objects as my heart races in my chest, and we're forced to shift back.

Cane grabs the back of my neck before I even have a chance to get up, slamming my face into the concrete once, twice. However, I am ripped back the third time when Cane is hit. Lifting my gaze, I see Osiris with the crowbar. Breathless, he staggers, catching himself on the wall. The crowbar slips from his fingers, and I reach out to grab it and spin around to use it. Cane shakes his head, black blood streaming down the side of his face, and he growls, revealing his sharp jagged teeth.

Clambering to my feet, I see two of him, my vision doubles. His face twists, and he swings at me, his claws raking down my chest. I see the blow too late, only being able to step back. Blood spews from my chest when I trip over Osiris behind me, landing on my ass. My head bounces off the cement floor, and I stare dazedly at the concrete ceiling, the blue fluorescent light flickering when Cane steps over me.

Running can just be heard in the distance, shouting, and Cane looks in the direction the voices are coming from before sneering and glaring back down at me.

"Give up, Cane. There is no escape from this. The place is surrounded," I rasp out between pained breaths.

"You're right, there's not, but if there is no escape for me, then there is no escape for you either." Cane sneers, reaching for me when I hear slow clapping. Cane pauses, he lifts his head, and I turn my head to see Marco strolling into the tunnel like he is merely taking a walk in the park. Pack members rush up behind him when Marco raises his hand, forcing them to halt.

“Wait, this tunnel is barely ten feet wide. What do you think this is, a game of Tetris? Twister?” Marco snarls as my warriors stop behind him. Cane growls, rising to his feet, his claws slipping from his fingertips as he stares down his new opponent.

“Seriously! Look at the size of him and me. This isn’t the human centipede. Nobody needs to be tasting nobody’s ass today. So back it up a little and give me some room to work with—” Marco looks at Cane and makes a funny face. Cane steps over me with a growl escaping him as he moves to face Marco.

“Well... If it isn’t Gloom and Doom himself. Don’t you think it’s overkill? Nobody likes Dracula these days,” Marco comments with a smirk. “They prefer vamps that glitter and fart fairy dust.” Cane did not appreciate the jab and growls back at him. Marco steps closer, seemingly unfazed, which makes me concerned because Cane has done nothing but rag-doll us down here. But then again, Marco is a vampire, and an old one at that.

“So serious question.... Do you sparkle in the sunlight or just go poof and burst into flames?” Marco asks, and Cane growls.

“I’m just asking because you look like you just crawled out of a crypt,” Marco teases. I blink at him, wondering what he is doing... Marco places his hands in the air in mock surrender, a cunning smile on his lips.

“Now, don’t take this the wrong way. I’m sure you have no trouble with the ladies, but just a little advice. Most like their vamps with a touch less deathly pallor, but who knows, maybe it’ll become the new trend. You could call it ‘Undead Chic’,” Marco shrugs.

What in the world is he doing?

It takes me a second to figure out why he is fucking around in such a dire situation when I see Osiris helping Soyer get his mate out of the way, who's been trampled; God knows how many times. Marco is merely playing distraction, biding them time.

Cane’s eyes glow red with fury, and he growls menacingly. “You think you’re funny, Marco? Let’s see if your jokes provide enough entertainment while I rip your throat out,” Cane spits.

A grin spread across Marco’s face. “Ah, such eloquent words,” Marco retorts. “Let’s see if you can back them up.” With that, Marco lunges at him, aiming a punch at Cane’s face with striking speed, making him stagger back.

Marco and Cane trade powerful blows with astounding strength and agility. As I crawl toward Soyer and help him stand, it's an all-out war. My men rush in to grab his mate and Osiris. When Marco is kicked, his body flies past me and into the concrete wall, cracking it under the force. I gasp, waiting for him to fall, but Marco lands on his feet. He growls, his eyes blazing as he runs at Cane, both clashing violently, and Soyer and I just get out of the way. We turn back to witness a violent display.

Despite Cane's agility and strigoi reflexes, Marco is just as quick, but he knows how to use his speed and strength to his advantage and soon has his arm locked around Cane's neck. Blood splatters across the tunnel as Marco tightens his grip and his legs lock around Cane's waist.

Marco gets one hand free and pulls down on Cane's jaw. The sickening tearing sound is grotesque when Marco sinks his claws through the bottom of Cane's mouth and then twists sharply, ripping his bottom jaw off. Cane screams and thrashes, bucking in his hold, while Marco grits his teeth, twisting Cane's head before ripping it off and spraying me and Soyer in blood. He then collapses on his back, breathing heavily, while my vision turns funny. The bond suddenly falls silent.

Marco rolls Cane's body off him and sits up, pointing at two pack members. "Burn it, barbecue. Just don't eat it," he says, rising and clutching his knees. He looks over at me.

"I thought the fucker had me for a second," Marco breathes when one of the warriors comes running toward us. Osiris stumbles over to me when some pack members take Soyer's wife, and he grabs Soyer's other arm.

"Still think I'm strigoi?" I chuckle before coughing. Blood sprays across my hand, and I wipe my mouth, shaking the searing pain the cough causes off. We are making our way back when I hear Marco's voice.

"What is it?" Marco demands, looking at one of Osiris' men, who is staring at the only unbroken screen on the wall. Marco gets up, and I can tell he just fed Soyer's mate some of his blood, his fingers dripping off it as he rises to his feet. We stop, and Marco taps the TV screen. "Where is this place?" he demands. My brows furrow, and Osiris tilts his head before I look at him.

"I'll check," he mumbles, and I continue half-dragging Soyer when I hear Osiris speak.

“Dad?” I stop, turning slightly, wondering if I heard right, when one of my pack members starts screaming out. “Alpha! Alpha!” I see it’s Slater when he barges through—a bewildered look on his face.

“It’s Elena...” His words sent my blood cold, and I let Soyer go, shoving him at Thomas, who catches him before chasing after Slater. A little further down the tunnel—My heart nearly stops when I spot her face down on the concrete. I quickly roll her over, tapping her face. I get no response when I notice the screwdriver stabbed in her chest.

“No, no, no!” I panic. Her face is pale as a ghost.

“Get help!” I scream, lifting her up gently, barely noticing the warm liquid that trickles through her shirt onto my hands.

I run with her in my arms, tears streaming down my face as I mentally beg for her to hold on. Suddenly, the bond weakens, and so do my legs as they give out from under me. Khan howls in my head as I clutch her, tears trekking down my face as I feel her slipping away from me, the bond fracturing, splintering like shards of glass cutting through my soul, fading away with her.

“Where is he? Where did he run off with her?” I hear Marco’s voice boom in the tunnel. My mind blanks when suddenly she is ripped out of my arms. Marco yanks the screwdriver out, and I lunge at him.

“What are you doing?” I yell at him, pressing my hands down on her wound, trying to stem the bleeding, when I notice she has stopped breathing, her heart beating so faint, pausing and sputtering between beats.

“Choose... either she lives or dies,” Marco tells me, and I stare at him, confused.

“Choose, Axton!” Marco yells at me, snapping me out of my head.

“Save her,” I beg.

“I can’t promise what she’ll come back as. My blood could heal her or change her,” he tells me. She would hate me if she comes back a vampire, but I can live with her hating me if it means she lives.

“I just got my family back. I am not about to lose them all over again,” I tell him. Marco nods, biting his wrist and holding it over her mouth when suddenly her heart stops.

“Fuck! No, you need to ingest, Elena! You can’t stop now!” Marco screams at her.