

Chapter 84

“You returned?” Elder Stiles croaks out. Elder Stiles is gaunt and skinny, his skin pale and dirty. He looks weak and frail, and his eyes are filled with sadness and despair. He wears tattered dirty clothes, and his hair is disheveled. It is clear that he has been through a lot of suffering. “Of course I did,” Osiris said, reaching out to touch his arm. “I’m here, dad.”

Elder Stiles looks up at me with tears in his eyes. “I thought I’d never see you again,” he murmurs, his voice full of emotion. “I should have listened. I should have let you handle it.” I could see the sadness written on his face and the relief in Osiris’ eyes. Marco gets the cage unlocked, and Osiris rips it open. He drags his father out, hugging him tightly. “We need a medic down here!” Osiris shouts.

Elder Stiles held on to his son, his face covered in tears, murmuring his apologies. Marco had already called for a medic, and soon we were surrounded by medical personnel helping those in cages and tending to Elder Stiles. We follow them back to the hospital. Thomas also jumps in with us, telling his Beta to take his car.

Climbing into the passenger seat, Marco starts the car when Thomas speaks. “What a mess. I still can’t wrap my head around that Cane was the strigoi all along and that not one of us noticed,” he grumbles. I am still trying to wrap my head around it, too. “It’s hard to believe that someone we trusted could be so deceitful,” Marco says, shaking his head in disbelief.

“And that is precisely why it is so shocking. You considered him a friend. No one wants to believe their friend is a monster. No one wants to live with the ‘what if’s’, what if we could have done something sooner? What would have changed if we had?” Thomas nods in agreement, while I wonder if his words also refer to Sondra.

“No one would have seen this coming,” Soyer adds. He’s right. We all thought Cane was some neglected son, an alcoholic. It turns out he was just a great actor.

“I don’t believe he meant to be bad,” Soyer states, and I look over at him. He shrugs. “He turned crazy. I hate him for what he did to ---” he breathes. “For what he did to Amy,” he choked.

“But I know he didn't intend this. He told me himself.”

“Told you what?” I ask, and Marco also glances at him in the mirror.

“About the accident, he was in the car with his father and Peter. They died on impact. He was trapped with their dead bodies for three days. His legs were pinned beneath the dash. He said he was dying and needed blood. He fed off their dead bodies for three days.”

“Yes, living blood heals us quickly, but drinking from someone dead turns us strigoi,” Marco explains.

“Cane said he didn't know until he couldn't control it anymore.”

“There's still no excuse,” I tell him.

“No, you're right. It's no excuse, but it kind of helps to know he didn't want to be a monster. I remember him as a child. The kid was scared of his own shadow.” Soyer laughs.

“Then he became the thing that haunted them...” he trails off.

“I overheard that Stiles caught him in the act, trying to get blood from the blood bank. He then ordered Stiles to turn rogue and abandon his pack. It severed the pack link, making everyone think he was dead,” Marco tells me, and I nod, having overheard the same thing.

“I still don't get why Cane came back in the first place,” I mutter, but it is Thomas who answers that one.

“Alpha Lyle was dying, and so was Peter. Peter had liver cancer and was given three months to live. Lyle, a year, not that he cared for much after he lost his mate.”

“Luna Grace?”

“Yeah, you don't remember?” he asks, and Soyer nudges him, and I shake my head.

“He wasn't here then.”

“Oh, right, she killed herself when Lyle killed her sister. Told Lyle, she hopes he feels as dead inside as she does,” Thomas shrugs. My eyebrows raise, having not expected that answer.

Pulling up at the hospital, we climb out and head to the third floor. The hospital was bustling with activity, people coming in and out of the revolving doors, the sound of beeping machines, and shuffling feet echoing around us. The smell of disinfectant hangs heavily in the air, and the sterile white walls make the fluorescent lights burn brighter. As we make our way up to the wards, the smell of antiseptic grows stronger. The walls look even brighter and more sterile when alarm bells go off, and nurses rush toward Soyer's mate's room.

“Amy?” Soyer gasps, racing toward her room. We all chase him, and I stop at the door when I see Soyer trying to calm his mate down, who has escaped her handcuffs. Amy was frantic. Her face is streaked with tears as she shakes her head, her eyes pleading with Soyer. “I can't do this. I won't become a monster like him,” she sobs, her body trembling as she clutches the nurse, whose eyes are wide and petrified.

Marco enters, but Soyer holds his hand up, giving him a pleading look. Amy is in hysterics, her body shaking uncontrollably and tears spilling down her face. She holds a nurse hostage. Her grip tightens around the scalpel pointed at the nurse's throat. Her eyes are wild with fear, desperation, and anger, pleading with Soyer.

“You can't make me!” Amy screams at him. The nurse trembles, her eyes wide with fear, and her breathing is erratic. When Marco steps further into the room, Amy spins, watching him, but Soyer speaks.

“Amy, baby, let the nurse go. You don't want to hurt her,” Soyer pleads, and Marco moves, but Soyer puts himself between his mate and him.

“Please, she fucking scared!” Soyer begs Marco. Marco backs off, and Soyer's hand reaches out for Amy, the tremble in his hands obvious when I see motion out of the corner of my eye. Turning my head, I see Luke peering out wide-eyed, and I point back to the room, telling him to go back inside. Luke does as I ask when I hear Soyer pleading with his mate.

“Amy, I can help you. Please let the nurse go. I know you don't want to hurt her.” Soyer says, his hand reaching for the nurse.

“Why would you even want to touch me after what you saw that monster do? After what he did?” Amy screams at him.

“You're still mine; nothing anyone does will ever change that. I'm here, and I'm not going anywhere.” Amy shakes her head.

“You deserve someone better. Someone untainted. I won't ruin your life!” Amy screams at him. She shoves the nurse away. The nurse screams, and Soyer moves, snatching the scalpel blade before she plunges it into her neck.

“You are my life!” he screams, clutching her neck. He presses his forehead against her. “You dare to take your life, but you take mine first. I won't live without you!” He tells her, his blood streaking down his arm, spilling onto the floor.

“No life is worth living without you. You're the only thing worth living for,” he tells her, and she breaks down, shaking her head. Soyer pries the scalpel from her hand, tossing it aside and clutching her to him. He holds her tightly, rocking her back and forth as she cries into his shoulder. He whispers comforting words, and seeing he doesn't need help, we back away when he grunts. He takes a step back, his hand clutching her hair.

“That's my girl,” he says, and I realize she's feeding off him. He clutches her hair, and Marco moves in case he must intervene. Soyer shakes his head, letting us know he can handle her, and we pull the door shut.

Moving toward Elena's room, Michelle peers out the door. “Is she okay?”

“She'll be fine,” I tell her, stepping past her to check on my mate. Luke has fallen asleep in a chair. Eli is passed out on the couch, both my boys lying on his chest.

“Any change?” I ask Michelle.

“No, but the doctor just went off to get her lab results,” Michelle tells me as I sweep Elena's hair from her beautiful face. Moments later, the doctor comes in with a clipboard in hand, wearing a white lab coat.

“Anything?” I ask, and he nods slowly.

“It appears Marco's blood healed her lung and the graze on her heart.” He tells us, and I nod, knowing that. “When you started CPR, you kept her heart pumping for long enough, but now we're faced with another problem.”

“Elena's body is in shock. Her body is trying to reject his blood.”

“So, what does that mean?” I ask.

“It's perfectly normal, Alpha. Her body recognizes something foreign is in her system, so it has shut down to protect itself. We've seen it before. Its natural bodily instinct is to stop his blood from reaching the placenta and altering DNA.” I blink at him.

“Placenta?” I ask, thinking I misheard, and Michelle's hands cup her mouth in shock.

“Yes, Alpha. Luna is pregnant.” I shake my head.

“No, we have baby boys?” the doctor's brows furrowed.

“Well, yes. But that doesn't mean she can't fall pregnant. In fact, she is actually more fertile after a successful pregnancy,” Doc explains. Marco clamps a hand on my shoulder, and I am grateful because I don't know if I want to faint in shock or jump with joy.

“We'll schedule an ultrasound in a few days. For now, we want to keep an eye on her levels.” Doc explains before walking out.