


CHAPTER 141

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141 Ava: Determined to Find Her 141 Ava: Determined to Find Her Lucas enters like a tornado, the doors slamming a gale-force breeze into my room. His hair is a mess, his amber eyes focused on me as he looks me over, categorizing every detail of my appearance. One IV in my arm—again, the hospital gown, the bed. All of it. I must pass muster, because about halfway through the room, his steps slow and his shoulders relax. “Ava.” “Lucas.” I hold my hands out when it’s clear he isn’t sure how to greet me, after our last parting. He gives Selene a dark stare before sitting next to my legs and grabbing my hands, leaning forward to kiss my forehead. “Are you okay?” It’s funny—aside from feeling upset with myself and worried over Lisa, I hadn’t processed any other emotions about the invasion. Now, with him here, tears fill my eyes and my shoulders shake as I remember the fear. How I was 18:14 1/7 < 141 Ava: Determined to Find Her positive I’d die by vampire. How gutted I feel with Lisa gone. The death of Teddy. Of Bren. The entire experience of the party. All of it. Without any warning whatsoever, I burst into ugly tears, and Lucas gathers me close, holding me against his chest with soft murmurs and reassurances that I don’t really hear. Cry it out, Selene says in a gentle caress of my mind. I can feel her slipping away, probably to curl up on the couch now that Lucas is here. I’m not entirely certain what makes me cry more. I’m not even sure if it’s just today, or if it’s all the years before today that’s bringing me to tears. It’s everything and nothing in particular, every wound my soul has borne. It’s agony and relief, endurance and exhaustion. I cry. 18:14 217 141 Ava: Determined to Find Her And cry. And cry. Through it all, Lucas rocks me against him, whispering soft nothings in my ear and running his hands over my hair, assuring me he’ll do everything in his power to find Lisa. I. He tells me I’m sorry he is, how he should have kept me safer. How it’s his fault for being gone, for allowing such a tragedy to happen. None of this is his fault to bear. Even so, he takes it on. When I’m spent, my eyes are swollen and ache with every blink. My head pounds with the furious rhythm of dehydration. My throat is shredded from—and I cringe to remember this—my wails, as if I were a grief-stricken heroine on some sappy television drama Selene likes to watch. A nurse came in at some point and hooked up a bag of fluids at Lucas’ quiet request. “Are you better now?” Lucas asks after a long period of 18:14 3/7 141 Ava: Determined to Find Her silence as I rest against him. My head nods against his shoulder, but otherwise, I don’t move. I’m limp against him, too worn out to even pretend at dignity. His lips brush against my forehead and I sigh, cuddling a little closer. “I want to help you find Lisa.” His entire body enses beneath me, but he relaxes after a moment, still stroking my hair gently. “If Jericho thinks you’re ready, I will allow it.” He’s not saying no outright or arguing with me, and that lifts my heart. “Thank you.” “I won’t put you into danger unless you’re ready, Ava. But I won’t stop you if you can handle it.” But you need to be ready, Selene interjects. Nodding against his chest, I murmur, “I get it. Thank you.” I know, I tell Selene somberly. I won’t risk Lisa’s life just to make myself feel better. I’ll be ready. Even if it means I have to endure more training to get the permission I need. I’ll do anything, if it 18:14 4/7 141 Ava: Determined to Find Her means I can bring Lisa home. God, I have no idea what I’m going to tell her parents. Lucas sighs, the sound heavy and forlorn against my hair. We sit like this for a while, his cheek resting on the top of my head, his arms a comforting cage around my exhausted body. The silence stretches, but it’s not uncomfortable. It’s a moment of respite. A pause in this tragedy. Eventually, he speaks, his voice a low murmur that rumbles through his chest and into my bones. “The death toll is fifteen, with twenty more in the hospital.” Fifteen lives lost. Twenty more hanging in the balance. My heart clenches, a fresh wave of sorrow crashing over me. Those numbers represent packmates, friends, family. People who were laughing and dancing mere hours ago, now gone or fighting for their lives. “Multiple wolves have been sent home safely,” he continues, his tone measured but strained. “Only two vampire bodies have been recovered.” A shiver runs through me at the grim report, at the implications of those numbers. So much destruction, so much pain inflicted. and for what? What did the 18:14 5/7 141 Ava: Determined to Find Her vampires hope to gain from this attack?” I tilt my head back, meeting Lucas’ amber eyes. They’re shadowed with worry and something else, something darker that I can’t quite name. “What comes next?” I ask, my voice barely above a whisper. His jawwww.NovelWorld.com

Updates... clenches, a muscle ticking beneath the stubble-covered skin. There’s a darkness in his face I’ve never seen before, something that sends a chill through my bones. “We find them,” he says, the grim finality in his words a vow. “We find the ones responsible and erase every existence from this world.” There’s a steel in his voice, an unwavering determination that both comforts and terrifies me. As if sensing my spiraling thoughts, Lucas presses a kiss to my forehead, his lips a brand of comfort against my skin. “Don’t lose hope,” he murmurs, his breath warm against my hairline. “We’re stronger together, remember that.” I nod, swallowing past the lump in my throat. “What do you need me to do?” I ask, my voice steadier now, fueled by a growing determination. 141 Ava: Determined to Find Her Lucas pulls back slightly, his gaze searching mine. “Rest,” he says, his tone gentle but firm. “Heal until Jericho gives the all-clear.” Comment 6 View All > R Leave the first comment for this chapter. Vote 8 1 Fandom Swipe left to continue > 

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