

Arch-Enemies

Chapter 3: Leana

Our trip to the council has been weird. First, we were made to wait for nearly an hour, then Alpha Wyatt, the only councilmember in attendance basically dismissed our concern that vampires and werewolves were working together. If anything, he looked excited about the thought that someone was going against the Guardians.

I put in my notice to take over for my mother, knowing it will take a couple of months for the paperwork to process. This gives me time to get to Araphyra with Lily, make sure all is well before returning back here and taking my mother's place on the council.

I call Rich that night and fill him in on the weird interaction with Alpha Wyatt.

"Do you need any help?" he asks me.

"No. Lily and I are leaving tomorrow, but we have to pass through King Urien's lands."

"King Urien has always been a friend to the Guardians, and he used to sit on the council. Now it's his son until he grandson takes over," he says.

"Yes, Councilman Lance is his name. I believe the son's name is Drake, but I haven't met him," I say.

"Have you called Dad yet?" he asks me.

"Not yet," I tell him.

"Soon, Leana. I told him you left, but he's expecting your call."

"Okay, Rich. I'll call him when we get to Araphyra."

"Two days Lea. No matter where you are, call him in two days. And I want a call tomorrow night. I want to know that you're safe when you get to King Urien's lands."

"Yes, Alpha," I say sarcastically, making him chuckle.

"Love you, Lea."

"Love you, too," I say before hanging up.

The next morning, we head to King Urien's lands, but neither of us is feeling comfortable being on vampire lands at the moment. King Urien has been a friend to the Guardians

since before I was born, but things change and it feels unsafe to be on vampire lands right now, especially when we don't know who is betraying us.

When we arrive at vampire borders, we are met by humans. Both Lily and I are surprised, King Urien has never had humans guarding his borders before. It's not exactly a smart move, keeping humans close to vampires.

The group of humans walks up to us with their guns drawn and aimed at us.

"We're here to speak to King Urien." I tell them.

I watch as the leader turns and looks at the group around him.

"You ain't one of them," another man says.

"No, we aren't. But that doesn't mean that we don't know who and what they are." Lily says.

"I'll have to call."

"Please let King Urien know that we are simply looking to cross his lands. We do not wish to take him away from his important business."

"King Urien is...."

"Shut up, Cole." The leader says before the other one, Cole, could finish his sentence.

I watch as the leader pulls out a phone and dials a number. I hear a snarl when the phone is picked up and the leader noticeably pales.

"Sir, there are two women here asking to pass through your lands."

"Their names?" I hear the vampire on the phone ask.

He looks up at us about to ask, when I answer.

"Guardian Leana Holstin and Guardian Lily Forte request King Urien's permission to cross his territory." I say, knowing the vampire will hear.

We hear a hiss on the other end before the vampire tells us to wait.

The leader looks at us. "He says..."

"We heard him." Lily says.

A couple minutes later we hear the sound of a fast-moving vampire, headed our way. Lily and I both turn to look in the direction he's coming. When he arrives, he is wearing a cloak with dark glasses on. The humans bow to him.

I see Lily looking around and I follow her gaze, seeing the security cameras in place. That makes sense, since the humans wouldn't be much protection. But, it also means that the vampires have been watching us since we got here, but still they waited for the human to contact them before acknowledging our presence. This feels an awful lot like what we just experienced at the council.

"This way, Guardians." The vampire says, without introducing himself.

"We do not wish to interrupt King Urien. We are merely looking to pass through his borders," I say.

The vampire turns and smiles at us. The smile is anything but pleasant. "Trust me, you won't be bothering King Urien."

He begins moving quickly, not giving us a chance to argue further. It's only about 15 minutes before the vampire's castle comes into view. Even in the light of day, it's a creepy castle, something out of the horror movies that Cayd is so fond of. The stone structure is covered with moss and vines. The place is dark and ominous, like the sun refuses to shine on it. This castle looks anything but inviting to creatures who love the sun and the outdoors, namely werewolves.

As we arrive, the front door of the castle opens. Lily and I look up. There are cameras everywhere. When we enter the castle, the doors close behind us with a resounding bang. Lily and I look at each other, and the hair goes up on my neck. Kella begins growling low inside my head. Something is very wrong.

Our vampire escort pulls his hood from his head and the glasses from his eyes. He continues to walk down a long hallway. If I weren't a werewolf, the cold seeping from the walls would be almost unbearable. This is the first time I've ever been inside a vampire's castle and it makes me sick to think that my mother survived in a place like this for seven years.

We arrive at what can only be described as a throne room. The room is full of vampires, some of them are feeding on willing humans, others look busy catering to others. I'm guessing the ranked members of the vampire clan are the ones being catered to and their version of omegas are the ones providing them with whatever they ask for. My nose twitches and Kella makes a sneezing sound in my head. The smell of vampires is strong and burns my nose. It's like being outside when the temperatures drop below zero degrees, and the air is so cold it burns your nose, mouth and lungs.

When I look at the throne, it's not King Urien sitting in the chair, but his son, Lance. He's feeding on a naked female who is straddling his lap. I may never have been here before,

but I've met King Urien and he's never given me the creepy vibes that his son is giving me right now.

"Your highness." Our escort says, bowing to the man. His eyes open and they are glowing red. He pulls his teeth out of the woman's neck, smacking her ass hard enough to leave a mark. "Get up." He says to her.

She gets up on wobbly feet, turning to step off the dais. Her eyes are glazed over, and she passes by us without looking in our eyes.

"Elder Lance." I say loudly, getting everyone's attention.

He wipes the corner of his mouth with his thumb before licking the blood off. Then he turns his attention to us.

"Guardians. To what do we owe the pleasure?" He gestures to the room of vampires who are all watching us intently.

Kella pushes forward, ready to shift and fight if needed. I can feel that Hera, Lily's wolf, has also pushed forward.

"We seek an audience with King Urien." I say, Kella's deeper voice blending with mine. I know that King Urien did not agree with his son's ways and intended to bypass him as the next King, making his grandson, Drake, the King. So the fact that he is here, sitting on the throne and King Urien is no where to be found is very bad.

Lance stands, walking slowly toward us. "Well, that will be problematic." He says, keeping his red eyes on us.

"Is he not in attendance?" I ask, standing my ground. I will not be intimidated by this vampire or anyone.

Lance begins laughing. When he does, the other vampires begin laughing as well, as if his laughter requires them to laugh as well.

"No, my father is not in attendance."

"Do you know when he will return, Elder Lance." I ask, trying to figure out what is going on. Maybe this is some freak tennage style party while King Urien is away.

"My father is dead. And you will address me as King Lance when you're in my castle."

Well, shit.

"How did he die?" I ask, Lily letting me take the lead in asking questions.

“It was time for him to retire. He and I disagreed on too many things. He wasn’t willing to change his ways, so I killed him and took my rightful place as king.”

Basically, he knew he was going to be passed over so he did what any deviant child would do, he killed his father and took his title.

He comes to stand in front of us. When he hits our Guardian aura, he’s stopped in his tracks.

“Is there a problem, Guardians?” he asks, as if Guardians visiting a feeding room is a common occurrence.

“I’m afraid I’m not feeling very welcome in your castle, King Lance. My wolf is feeling threatened and when she does, she takes a protective stance. I’m sure you understand,” Lily says to him.

“We’ll have to change that. I wouldn’t want you to leave here feeling as if I was not a good host. Especially since this is the first time I’ve had an opportunity to have Guardians in my castle. It’s not often that one comes to visit.”

Yeah, since we know how much they desire our blood. It’s never good to be in a den of vampires.

“We weren’t planning to stay, King Lance. We merely wanted permission to cross your lands.” I say.

He steeple his hands in front of his face, tapping his forefingers together. “Hmmm, this seems like a perfect opportunity for me to show you how much our alliance means to me. Surely you wouldn’t deny me the opportunity of hosting two important Guardians in my castle. At least for one night.”

He claps his hands, looking at the vampires in the room. “Let’s have a party in the Guardians’ honor. Tonight!” He turns back to us. “Then, tomorrow, you may pass through my lands.”

He claps his hands again. “Giovanni, show our guests to their rooms.” He says, not giving us an opportunity to deny his request.

"One room." I say firmly. If we’re going to be attacked tonight, Lily and I have a better chance of survival if we are together. “And I’m afraid we don’t have any clothing suitable for a party.”

King Lance turns, and I can see he wants to protest us being in one room, but something in Kella’s eyes makes him stand down.

“Of course. Make sure they are given a large room, one suitable for honored guests, Giovanni.” He turns back to us. “I’ll have clothes for this evening’s party sent to your room.”

With that, we are escorted out of the throne room and to a large bedroom complete with ensuite and a large walk-in closet. Lily immediately goes to the window and looks out.

Lily turns to me. “If we need to, we can run, but it won’t be easy. We’re up high.”

“What do you think is going on?” I ask her. Maybe I’m too close to see things clearly.

“I’m not sure, but I’m wondering if we’ve found one half of our vampire werewolf problem,” she says.

“He killed his own father.” I say, still in disbelief at the level of treachery and it makes me wonder where his son is. Did Lance kill him too? Or did he assist in betraying his grandfather?

“I don’t think that’s unusual in the vampire world. They are more violent than even the werewolves. But I want to make sure that my mother and father know that we’re here and that something is off.” she says, pulling out her phone. I reach for my phone, intending to call Rich, when Lily lifts her phone in the air.

“Who doesn’t have wifi or cell towers nearby?” she asks as we both realize that we are truly cut off from our families.