FOUR | ASSASSINATION

Aires

"Are you sure you want to do this, Ari? As someone who killed his own father as a form of vindication for my mother, I know how that s**t haunts you. It was years ago, and I still think about that day. Is that what you want?" Oso asked me.

"I don't know because I don't know what you've gone through. But what I do know is that that man will soon take his last breath, and I'm going to be there when he does."

"What if he has an explanation for what he did? You don't want to listen to his side of things?"

"I'll listen. But there isn't much he can say to justify the way my mother was treated. Or the way she had to struggle to feed me and keep a roof over our heads. Nothing could ever make me do that to my babies or Henry, so how could my father take that road?" I asked.

"Alright. Years ago, I learned that once you've set your mind to something, there is no changing it, so what's your plan? Can I help in any way?"

"My mother gave me some basic information about my father. Could you see if you can narrow down his last known locations using any of this?" I asked, passing Tyson a sticky note. It held his name, birth date, place of birth, and a few physical descriptions.

"1982? Are you shitting me? Your father is three hundred and fly-eight years old?"

"He's a vampire; he's undead. Is this helpful?" I asked.

"Chill out; the man can't help what his parents named him. Give me a few hours, and I'll see what I can dig up."

Tyson then turned towards his computer and began furiously typing into it. "Are you trying to get rid of me, Oso?" I asked.

"Yes. I thought that was obvious, but if not, get out Aires. I can't work with you standing over my shoulder."

"You're an asshole. I don't see how Taylor puts up with you," I said with a small smile.

"Because she's my queen, and she lives for me, and I live for her. Now get out," he laughed.

As usual, I mumbled under my breath, but I left him in his ooo to do what he needed to do. I still had to talk to the ladies about caring for Isabella and Isaiah while Henry and I were away, and that was going to take some convincing. When I arrived at the packhouse, I found everyone sitting out by the pool, sunbathing with tropical-looking drinks in hand.

"Come and sit with us! Taylor has some hot gossip from the northern campus," Morgan smiled when she saw me. My girls knew I could never turn down good gossip, so I put my drama aside for a moment and took a seat.

"How is it that you always get the good stuff before everyone else?" I asked as I took Morgan's drink from her hand and took a sip.

"I have three sisters-in-law up there. My phone is constantly ringing and buzzing with them, telling me what's going on. I love it," Taylor smiled. "Sol Apparently, this old guy named Mr. Wilkerson was caught in bed with a shewolf less than half his age. Mrs. Wilkerson caught them in the act, and now she wants to challenge the girl to a gr8!"

"Wait! How old are they?" Morgan asked.

"The Wilkerson's are in their sixties; the mistress is twenty-two. Gio and Luca are losing their minds."

The four of us laughed and speculated, and for the briefest of moments, I was able to forget about my problems and just enjoy time with my friends. But I was on a mission, and I couldn't let myself become distracted, not so easily.

"Chicas, I need a favor. And it's a big one," I said, breaking up the laughter and dampening the mood a bit.

"You know we'd do anything for you. What is it?"

"I need you to look after my babies. For three weeks," I added.

"Three weeks? But why? Where are you going?" Aasa asked.

"It's a long story, and I promise I'll tell you all another time, but I have to go no someone. Henry will be coming with me."

"Seriously? This has to be a big deal if you got Henry to agree to take three weeks away from training the pack. Are you alright, sweetheart?" Morgan asked.

"Not totally, but I will be once I do what I need to do. So, will you look after them?" I asked.

"Of course we will, for as long as you need us to; you don't even have to ask."

The fact that they would do this for me, even when I wasn't ready to tell them what was going on, touched my soul. No one had ever cared for me this much before I'd come here; it made me want to cry.

"Oso said that Henry turned me into a p***y, but I think you girls had a part in that too," I said with a sne.

"Tyson said that to you?! What is wrong with that man?!" Taylor shot up and said. The disgust on her face was hilarious, and I then realized that I'd just gotten my oldest friend into some deep s**t. He was a big boy, though, so he could nd his way out of it.

"He's doing some research for me right now, so could you hold off on killing him until after he's done?" I asked.

"I make no promises. That husband of mine can be so rude sometimes."

"I've been telling you that s**t since we were kids, but you never listened to me. Now you're married with kids, marked, and stuck with his ass forever. I tried to warn you," Morgan stated.

"Shut it, woman. Now's not the time for 'I told you so's.' Glad later. Is there anything we can do to help? Whatever this is, just know you're not alone." Taylor took my hand and said.

"Just spoil my babies for me until I get back. Knowing that they are safe and being well taken care of will give me the strength to get this done and get back home."

***

Henry

I'm sorry to disturb your meeting, Alpha, but I just need a minute of your time," I said, poking my head into Alpha Black's ooo.

"We're done for the day; we actually just rished up, so you're not disturbing anything. What can I do for you, Henry?"

Mr. Kostov, Beta Thomas, and Gamma Stone were beginning to get up to leave and offer us some privacy when I asked them to stay.

"Would you gentlemen mind sticking around for a few minutes longer? I promise I won't take long," I said to the room.

"Henry, you're probably my most loyal pack member. even more so than Kade," the Alpha said with a laugh. "So just relax and tell us what's going on."

"I take offense to that, especially since it will be my job to turn this place if you sign off before your time. You should really treat me nicer. Tell me you love me sometimes, I'd really appreciate that," Beta Thomas replied.

"No one cares about your feelings right now, Kade. can it," Gamma Stone said, making the other guys laugh. I'd grown up with the Alpha, Beta, and Gamma, and even though we shared some of the same memories and experiences, I never allowed myself to form a friendship with them. Especially not anything as close as they had with each other. But I respected them all immensely as leaders and proudly placed my life on the line to save theirs.

"I need to take some time away from the pack, both Aires and I," I rally said.

"A vacation? Do you mean your honeymoon? I already approved all the time you needed for that," Alpha Black stated.

"Yes, Alpha. I understand the honeymoon has been approved, and we appreciate you offering the use of your jet as well. But this request is for tomorrow; we should be gone for a few weeks."

I held my breath as I awaited his answer. If my Alpha refused to grant me leave, I'd have to allow my Sunseer to face this nightmare all by herself. The thought made me ill.

"Could you tell us why? We just restructured the tiers; it's going to take at least two weeks for everyone to get the hang of their new positions. Can this wait?" Beta Thomas asked.

"No, Beta. I'm sorry, but it can't. Orin can easily manage the new tiers, and we also have Mr. Frederick, who agreed to help if my leave was approved," I replied.

"Alright. That sounds ne. Orin and Tyson are more than capable. But we'd still like to know what's happened so suddenly to put you both away." Alpha Black leaned forward and stated.

"Yes, Alpha. It's about Aires Father. She wants to rid him, and she wants to kill him."

***

I felt like I'd slightly betrayed my Sunseer by telling her story and not allowing her time to tell it herself, but I knew that something that was said to the core members of my pack in confidence would not leave the cornes of the Alpha's ooo. Once they knew what was happening and how adamant Aires was about hunting her father down, I was given the Alpha's blessing to take the three weeks away. If we found that more time was needed, he only asked that I give him enough warning to ensure training and patrol rotations continued to run smoothly.

***

By the time I'd made it back home, Aires had already packed bags for both the kids and had begun working on her own.

"I won't have time to make dinner tonight, Mr Amor. But we can order something," she said as I walked into our bedroom.

"I can handle dinner. How was your day? You didn't respond to my messages," I said, referring to the four unreturned texts I'd sent after my meeting with the Alpha.

"It was stressful. But Oso came through for me and found us a great starting point for the hunt. I should be able to rid my father with minimal issues. He also found this." Aires passed me a black and white photograph of a man who was clearly a vamp. Even though the photo was void of color, there was no mistaking how pale his skin was; and it was as if I could see the red of his eyes. It was strange and creepy.

"This is him?" I asked.

"That's Wesley. Mama cornnet it for me a little while ago. He looks so evil. I still don't understand how he was able to get her into his web without compelling her," she said.

"He looks evil because you currently aren't his biggest fan, baby. To anyone else, he's a normal guy. A creepy-ass vampire guy, but you get what I'm saying," I added.

"Yes, Mr Amor, I get what you're saying. So, are we all set to go? I'm sorry about your messages; I was talking to Mama them packing. You know I'd never purposely ignore you."

"I know, Sunseer. And yes, the Alpha has approved our leave for three weeks. Were there any problems with the kids?"

"None. The girls agreed to care for them with no questions asked. I love those ladies almost as much as I love you," Aires looked up at me and smiled.

"I'm so happy to hear that I'm still your number one."

"You'll always be my number one; they'll never be another for me."