

451 A Wave

Eve 1

"Vampires or at least vampire adjacents will not be adversely affected by the bloodmoon's radiation."

"And according to Jonathan Blackwell, the historian, the bloodmoon might even amplify his abilities," I added.

Hades nodded. "Hopefully, it will be the same with a hybrid like me. But since I am immune, for months our scientists have gone to work trying to derive a marker, similar to Eve's Fenrir's marker. When isolated, a vaccine serum can be concocted. Over the years, I have undergone extensive sessions of bloodletting to allow our laboratories to study and analyze my blood, we have a reservoir of blood,"

"Black vampire blood, always extracted at the height of flux activity in Hades," Kael supplied. "So it has more Vampire cells than Lycan."

Gallinti clapped his hands, in relief murmuring a prayer just as the door opened, letting in a small woman with glasses in a lab coat. A woman I recognized with a tablet in her hand, but by the



way her shoulders hunched and she shakily adjusted her glasses, my hope began to dwindle.

She greeted the room and stepped forward. She swallowed before she spoke. "I have learned of our new deadline. And I will say now, that creating a vaccine from the Alpha's blood is... not what we originally hoped."

Dr. Maya adjusted her glasses nervously, her tablet trembling slightly in her hands. "Let me explain the problem simply. Luna Eve has something called Fenrir's Marker in her blood—it's like a special tag that the gods put there to make her immune. We can isolate that marker and use it to create vaccines."

"But the Alpha doesn't have a marker," she continued. "His immunity doesn't come from having something special in his blood. He's immune because he's part vampire. Vampires simply aren't affected by the Blood Moon—it's their nature."

Gallinti leaned forward. "So why can't we just use his vampire blood directly?"

"Because injecting people with raw vampire blood would turn them into vampires," Dr. Maya said bluntly. "And vampire-werewolf hybrids

would be completely unstable. We'd have a different disaster on our hands." 3

I felt the blood drain from my face as I understood the implications.

"So what's the neutralization process?" Hades asked.

"We're trying to keep the immunity part while removing the 'turning people into vampires' part," Dr. Maya explained. "But they're deeply connected. The vampire blood fights against our attempts to neutralize it. Each pint takes three days of careful processing to make it safe, and even then, we can only process small amounts at a time."

"How much do we have?" Kael asked.

"Eight pints that are safe to use," she replied. "Maybe twelve pints total by the Blood Moon. Enough for essential personnel, but nowhere near enough for thousands of civilians."

Sweat slicked my palm even as Hades stroked it. "So you are saying that despite those excessive pints of blood, they are basically going to make things worse."

"Exactly what I am saying. If we had more time,

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like even ten months, it would have been enough," she lamented.

A chill slithered up my spine paralyzing me.

No...

When I looked at Hades again, his lips were pursed tight with agitation. I could see him flipping through possible solutions in his head.

Silas sighed, frustration and fright fraying the edges of his words. "We are back where we started."

Gallinti mirrored his reaction, the color that had just returned to his face draining.

"We have to get Ellen back here," I blurred. "We need more time and if she could pull the bloodmoon closer, she should be able to push it back to give us more time. Three months and I should be able to donate enough blood for the vaccines for everyone." My chest had constricted to the point that breathing had become a conscious effort. I gripped the edge of the round table, knuckles paling. 3

I should stay calm because we had a pack to save and troops of gammas to lead into war. But what was a pack without the civilians? Even if we



saved some, Obsidian will never be the same.

I didn't realize that I had stood until Hades' voice pulled me out of the panic fueled reverie.

I turned to Hades, wishing and hoping that he had another plan up his sleeve. He had prepared for decades for this war but when our eyes met, his were downcast, despair swimming in his orbs. "It is logistically impossible. We barely escaped once and knowing Darius..."

"He won't let us slip away a second time. And if during this mission any one of us is captured it will be suicide. We have a heck of a lot to manage here, entering Silverpine pack would be walking into a mine field and if by some horrific circumstance we are followed back to the Underspine, we will be compromising not only our ally within those borders but if Ellen were to get recaptured..."

"Everything will go up in smoke," Kael said, his voice hard at the crossroads we found ourselves. "And you didn't see her, Eve. She's not the sister you remember. Used until her body broke. A shell. Her mind slips mid-sentence. Her aging barely reverses. She won't save us now." 1

My chest caved in, breath shallow, the pressure

on my lungs grew more unbearable.

"Eve, please sit," Hades beseeched.

My knees buckled and I allowed him to pull me down onto the leather that felt entirely too hot.

Maya remained standing with her head down, her frame unsteady.

"There must be something we can do," I muttered more to myself than to anyone else but my voice carried in the tense silence.

"We have thousands of pints of blood but the preparation is the issue. There is no time..."

"Maybe it isn't..." The still unfamiliar voice of Thea stopped my spiraling thoughts in its tracks.

All eyes went to her and I watched her swallow thickly.

My already bated breath caught when her eyes met mine. "What if we have been approaching this problem in a way too conventional for the unorthodox circumstance. We are treating the Lunar Cataclysm like a disease instead of what it actually is," with every word, her eyes grew clearer again.

Maya spoke first. "What would you call the Lunar



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Cataclysm then?" Her tone made it clear she was dubious of what Thea had to say.

"A wave," She replied without flinching. 1

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