

Chapter 226

Dayton sat shell shocked, disbelief coursing through him. He couldn't believe he'd lost control the way he had, that he'd actually thrown the knife at her. He couldn't believe that he was still alive; that she hadn't retaliated and taken his life as he'd tried to take hers. But the thing he couldn't believe the most was, how at the very last moment, a fraction of a second before the knife had left his hand, he'd changed the angle of his throw.

He was proficient with knives, an expert even. His aim had been true even if slightly weak from his injuries. The knife was destined to bury itself deep in her throat, incapacitating her long enough to allow him to get a sharper one so he could detach her lovely head from her shoulders. And at the last moment he'd change his angle, enough to merely wound her without leaving her helpless. It was staggering.

The hate he felt inside him twisted, turned around on itself until it was no longer focused on the vampire, but was directed at him. He'd almost killed Freya and what really was her crime? She had kissed him, shown some attraction to him and said a few uncomplimentary things about Faith. Hardly actions deserving the death he imagined for her.

Those things had hurt him, wounded him deeply but to try and kill her? It was unconscionable. He was better than that, a former Beta who would have laid down his life to protect any member of his pack. He didn't recognise the man he had been a moment ago.

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Yes, Freya had hurt him but she had also saved his life, cared for him when he couldn't do so himself, cooked him food when she didn't eat, anticipated his every need in her own warped way. Rayne's words came back to him, his friend's appeal on behalf of the vampire.

He knew now that Rayne could feel other's emotions, that it had been his pain which had first attracted her to him. She had sensed the same pain in the vampire, had been amazed that Freya could hide it so well behind her serene mask. He hadn't wanted to listen to it, hadn't wanted to admit that maybe the vampire did hurt inside, maybe she did understand some of how he felt.
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A pair of anguish filled green eyes filled his memory, raw pain in her voice as she damned him to hell. His gut twisted hard and he sucked in a deep breath, turning to look into those same green eyes which were still tinged with a fine circle of red.

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"Your knife," Freya remarked calmly, handing him a clean one so he could finish his breakfast, not that he could stomach another bite.

"Finish it," she said in the same calm tone. "You need to be out of here by tomorrow morning at the latest. You need to regain your strength as quickly as possible." She walked back to her chair and sat down again as if nothing untoward had just happened.

"Why the deadline?" he finally asked quietly, forcing himself to eat some more, knowing she was right, that he did need to regain his strength quickly.

"You're interrupting my plans," she answered almost absentmindedly, turning a page in her hand to read the next one. "I have other things to do than care for a wolf who was too stupid to notice a trap."

There was more to it than that. He didn't know how he knew but he did. His wolf was stirring with agitation, unhappy with his actions. Dayton bit into a slice of toast and took a sip of coffee to wash it down.

"You're wrong," he said quietly, pushing his plate away, unable to eat any more. His words and sudden movement had Freya meeting his gaze again with a raised eyebrow.

"About what?"

Taking a deep breath, Dayton let it out slowly, swallowing hard. "About Faith," he said so quietly it was almost a whisper. "She would have kicked my ass if she could see me right now." His lips quirked slightly; a hint of warmth entering his eyes.

"She had a temper that was so hot everyone ducked out of the way when she blew, me faster than anyone else because it was usually my fault." A true smile crossed his face, his expression softening completely. "She hated being looked after and I was a Beta. It was my role to protect everyone and she was the one person I wanted to protect the most. It drove her insane sometimes."

"She sounds as if she was pretty feisty," Freya answered in a carefully neutral tone. "A strong mate for you."

"She was. The best mate ever. She loved life, dived into every new experience without a care in the world. When she laughed my heart sang with joy, when she yelled my heart sang with joy, when we loved I stopped being a single person and joined with her completely, two people living in one soul for the barest fraction of a moment. She was my life."

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"And yet you hate her with every fibre of your being."

Her statement stunned him.

Denial ripped through him, his mouth opening automatically to protest but nothing came out. He stared at Freya, her words echoing around the room, crashing over him in a wave of raw agony. A choked sound ripped out of him, clawing its way out of his very soul.

"She left me!" The words were issued on a raw, primal scream of anguish, guilt and harshness in the air as he admitted the one thing he'd hidden from himself for over fifty years.

Freya watched him crumble, watched the sheer horror on his face as he gave voice to the truth he had hidden from himself for so long. Something cracked deep within her, something splintered as she watched a proud wolf disintegrate before her very eyes. Pain like nothing she had ever experienced before welled up inside her as her wolf bowed his beautiful head and began to sob such awful tears of anguish.

She sat rooted to the spot, unable to move or offer him any comfort. He didn't want it from her anyway. She would only add to his anguish if she placed her hands on him at that moment. Instead of going to him she forced her limbs to move, retrieved the dishes silently from the table and took them into the kitchen.

Leaning against the wall, hidden from the man in the other room, she closed her eyes tightly and wept silent tears with him, her heart breaking at his anguish. To love was to suffer, to feel nothing but pain and misery.