

To ruin an Omega

Chapter 278: Sanguine divination

VALENTINE

What could I possibly say? Sorry you had to see your parents attempt murder before noon?

"I don't want to know." Wilhelm held up his hand. His voice came out flat. "I just wanted to tell you that I'm back and I bring gifts from Madeline."

I looked at my wife. She was still standing by the table with her hands slowly lowering. Her magic had drained from the room but her eyes still burned with that rage. That demand for answers I couldn't give her.

"Forgive me, my love."

I moved fast. The spell left my lips before she could counter or defend herself. Her eyes went wide for just a second before they rolled back. Her knees buckled.

I caught her with magic before she could hit the floor and lifted her gently before guiding her back into her chair. My hands shook as I reached out and touched her face, tracing the line of her jaw with my thumb.

"It'll be fine."

The words felt like a lie even as I said them.

I turned back to Wilhelm. He was watching me with an expression I'd never seen on his face before. Something between disgust and pity.

"Why can't she know?" He adjusted the bag on his shoulder. "It took forever for you to open up to me. But you did. I'm sure mother would understand."

"And that is where you are wrong."

I stood up and wiped the blood from my neck with the back of my hand. Madeline was the talented healer. I was shit at it. Nonetheless, it was a spell I had to know. The wounds started healing the second I said them. The small pricks would be gone in a day.

"Fleshcraft was a specialty of my bloodline." The words tasted like copper in my mouth. "The reason why we are mostly feared and revered is because of the atrocities our family line committed."

Wilhelm said nothing. He just stood there and waited for me to finish.

"Your mother believed in me to be different." I looked at her unconscious form slumped in the chair. "You know now that I wasn't. And I... I can't let her know. So she needs to stay in the dark."

The silence stretched between us. I could hear the clock ticking on the wall. The drip of coffee from the pot onto the burner.

"And it will bring me peace knowing that... should we fail." I forced myself to look at my son. "That your mother not be implicated at all."

Wilhelm scoffed. Actually scoffed at me the same way his mother had just minutes before.

"What about us?"

"Well, you are my blood." I said it like it was simple. Like it explained everything. "This is your fight as much as it is mine."

"That is fucking bullshit." Wilhelm's voice rose. "If you cared about her or even me and Mads, you wouldn't have engaged in something like that. But no use crying over split eggs."

He opened the bag and pulled out a vial. It was inside a sanitizer bottle. Smart. Concealed in plain sight.

"Here it is."

I took it from him and held it up to the light. The blood inside was dark. Almost black. Somehow still fresh enough that it hadn't started to separate yet.

"Great." I pocketed the vial. "Let's take it to my lab. The faster we give Aldric a distraction, the faster we can raid that estate of his and figure out what the fuck he is hiding."

I left the dining room without looking back at my wife. I couldn't. If I looked at her again I might lose my nerve and wake her up and tell her everything and watch her face change when she realized what kind of monster she'd married.

Wilhelm followed me down the hall. Down the stairs. Through the door I kept locked with three different spells and a physical deadbolt. Into the place I'd never let anyone see.

My lab.

Wilhelm stopped in the doorway. His eyes went wide as he took in the space. The shelves lined with jars and vials and things preserved in fluids that hadn't seen sunlight in decades. The table in the center with its restraints and drainage channels. The symbols carved into the floor that glowed faintly with residual magic.

"You never allowed anyone in here."

"It stays that way." I moved to the table and set the vial down.

Wilhelm stepped inside slowly. Like he was entering a shrine. Or a tomb.

"Was the fleshcraft performed here?"

I uncorked the vial and brought it to my nose. The scent hit me immediately. Gamey. Female. Young.

"Your mother is very nosy." I set the vial down and reached for a clean beaker. "That would be just dumb on my part."

I glanced at Wilhelm. He had a look on his face. The same one he got when he was a boy and trying to puzzle out whether I was telling the truth.

"Oh." The realization settled in my gut like a stone. "And it has been many many years. I don't do that stupid shit anymore."

Wilhelm nodded but he didn't look convinced.

"But a crime is a crime." I poured some of the blood into the beaker. "No matter how long ago it was committed. As long as Aldric has that leash on us, we aren't safe."

I reached for my ingredients. Nightshade extract. Powdered moonstone. A pinch of salt harvested from a dried lake bed in the old country. I mixed them carefully and added three drops of the blood.

The concoction turned a murky brown. I covered the top with my palm and started to speak in the old language. The words felt heavy in my mouth. Ancient. They rolled off my tongue and filled the room with power.

I finished the incantation and waited.

Nothing happened.

"What now?" Wilhelm leaned forward.

"That is odd." I frowned at the beaker. "What is she? I thought you said she was an Omega."

"She is. It was hot topic for a while. Everyone knows this."

He was right. I did know that. But it didn't make sense considering nothing fun was happening with the beaker.

"That cannot make sense." I picked up the beaker and swirled it gently. "Why is her blood resisting magic then?"

"Beats me." Wilhelm shrugged. "You're the professional."

"Interesting." A smile tugged at my lips despite myself. "Now I'm actually curious."

I set the beaker down and held out my hand to my son.

"Take my hand, Will. There is power in two."

Wilhelm did as he was told. His palm was warm against mine. I felt his magic there beneath the surface. Young but growing stronger every day.

I chanted the spell again. This time I pushed harder and demanded the answers instead of asking the universe nicely.

Bewitching a person's chi was easy enough.

"What are you? Who are you? Where do you descend from?"

I took the blood and poured it onto a white sheet on the table. It pooled there for a moment. Then it started to move.

The blood writhed like something alive. It twisted and turned and began to write.

Death.

The letters formed slowly. Deliberately. Then the blood pooled again and wrote it a second time.

Death.

"What the fuck." Wilhelm's hand tightened on mine.

The blood started to write a third thing. The letters took shape one at a time.

Heir.

I laughed. I couldn't help it. The sound came out of me unbidden and slightly unhinged.

"I do like a little game."

I turned to Wilhelm and let go of his hand.

"It's either this girl has a powerful witch on her side or she is a goddamn liar about her identity."

"So what now?"

"If magic isn't enough, I'll do a little alchemy."

Wilhelm took a step back. "Is that smart? Her blood literally promises death twice."

"And you forget your father is a supreme of a powerful coven." I reached for my alchemical supplies. "I got this."

I started mixing new compounds together. Mercury and sulfur. Ground bone and powdered silver. I added them to the blood one at a time while keeping some of the blood back. A fail safe in case things went wrong.

I couldn't show it but I was very uncomfortable. Magical resistance and a promise of doom??? Fuck that.

I mixed my potions and then started to cast a new spell. I felt resistance again immediately. Like trying to push through a wall of water. I strengthened my magic and pinned it down, forcing my will against whatever was trying to keep me out.

I felt a give. Just a little. Like a door cracking open.

I smiled and turned to Wilhelm.

"See?"

"How does an Omega have magical resistance?"

"I'm tempted to think she is a hybrid." I turned back to the mixture. "Perhaps that is why Aldric suddenly had interest in her."

I finished the spell and watched as the bottle began to glow a soft green. Perfect.

"Now I just check with a sanguine diviner."

I reached for the stick on the shelf behind me. It was old. Carved from ash wood and marked with symbols for different supernatural species. I'd used it a thousand times over the years to identify what I was working with.

I placed it in the glowing liquid and watched.

All the markers got stained almost immediately. Werewolf. Vampire. Witch. Everything.

"Is that even possible?"

Wilhelm's voice sounded far away. I stared at the stick in my hand. At the impossible pattern of stains running up and down its length.

"Hekate." The word came out as barely a whisper. "She is a created child."

"Whaaattt? What... does... that mean?"

I opened my mouth to answer, breath already drawn in, when the green liquid in the vial bleached right in front of me. One blink it was green, the next it was bone white, and the sight hit my chest before it reached my head.

Heat snapped against my face as the vial burst into white hot flames.