

CHAPTER 145

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“TV?” Lucas asks, and I nod. ♥ “Selene likes anything on the Shifter Network.” His hand freezes with the remote pointing at the TV. “Your dog watches TV?” he asks carefully, with a hint of laughter in his words. Like he doesn’t want to offend me with his amusement. “She’s a basic bitch,” I say cheerfully, ignoring Selene’s mental growl. Lucas looks at Selene, then me, then back to the TV, obediently turning it to the right channel. One of her shows is playing, like it always is. I don’t watch it much, but I’m pretty sure there’s always a drama online, even if it’s a rerun. Almost always. Sometimes it’s a talk show. She sounds so disgusted by that, I have to bite my lip to keep from laughing. Lucas, meanwhile, is staring at the TV. He’s tuned into the middle of a shifting scene, a CGI moment of a male human’s clothes bursting at the 148 AVA Cole’s Stre scams as he transforms into a wolf, complete with the sound of cracking bones and snapping flesh. “That,” he says, “is disgusting. Shifting is beautiful, and they’ve turned it into a horror show.” “That’s only the tip of the iceberg,” I mutter, staring at Selene, who’s ignoring our comments. I love this episode, she sighs. He’s going to find her in the forest and she falls in love... Of course, she can’t do anything about it. She’s still dating that human kid from math class. “Why didn’t he take his clothes off before shifting?” Lucas mutters, completely distracted. “It doesn’t look like there’s an emergency. Just destroyed his clothes for no reason. That isn’t logical. What’s he going to do when he shifts back? Just walk around naked? He’s too old to be shifting uncontrolled.” It isn’t like naked shifters are a rare sight in any pack, but my lips quirk at his offended questions. “Have you never watched any of these shows?” “Never,” he confirms, his eyebrows coming together as he continues to watch the scene. “He’s small.” 145 AUS Start to s The wolf on screen is some sort of wolf–dog hybrid, and much smaller than shifters. Selene agrees. He is very small. I look at her, the fifty–pound husky with a wolf inside, but manage to keep my mental mouth shut. Lucas settles against the couch, wrapping one arm around me as he continues to watch the train wreck on TV, where the wolf shifter stalks some human girl in the woods. She turns at the sound of a twig snapping, and Lucas snaps, “That’s a beginner’s mistake!” He’s a terrible hunter, Selene agrees again. And a few moments later, Lucas has his arm up in the air. “Why would he show himself to a teenage human like that? You never know when they’re going to report you for violations against Human Survival Rights. You can’t stalk a human and expect not to be reported.” It’s a fated connection, Selene sighs. Funny how she adores the fated connections in movies, but continues to give Lucas a cold shoulder. I’ve never put that together before. I’ll have to ask her about that. “Are you sure your dog likes this trash?” he asks, finally turning from the screen to look at me. I point in Selene’s direction. She’s on the floor, tail up. ears perked, completely zoned in on her show. He shakes his head. “I know you love her, but your dog is unusual.” My lips twitch. “Yeah. Just a bit.” Lucas’s warmth envelops me as I curl up against him, my eyelids growing heavy. The mindless chatter from the TV blends with his occasional commentary, punctuated by Selene’s mental interjections. It’s an odd sort of lullaby, but it soothes me nonetheless. Just a little peace. Just a little rest. This much is okay, right? He’s always there to save her from her bullies, Selene sighs, her voice dreamy in my mind. It’s so romantic. Lucas snorts. “Shifting on human school grounds is asking for punishment from his alpha. No wolf shifter would be able to get away with this.” TAK A Biomate drive I can’t help but smile at their banter, even as my thoughts drift to Lisa. The ache in my chest intensifies. Is she okay? Has she eaten? Is she hurt? The questions swirl in my mind, an endless loop of fear and uncertainty. Suddenly, Lucas stiffens beside me. His muscles tense, his breath catching in his throat. I blink, the haze of sleep and worry dissipating as I realize he’s been mind–linked with another wolf. My heart races. News about Lisa? He remains still, his golden eyes unfocused. Seconds stretch into minutes, each one an eternity. Finally, he looks down at me, his expression apologetic. “No update yet,” he says softly, his hand brushing a stray lock of hair from my face. “But I have to check on a lead with Kellan. Are you going to be okay alone?” Disappointment crashes over me, but I push it aside, latching onto the glimmer of hope in his words. “A lead? What kind of lead?” Lucas hesitates, his jaw clenching. When he speaks again, his voice is low, almost reluctant. “We’re checking into an Inracistorod citu near the 17-20 Blackwood pack lands. We think your family might be hiding there” My breath catches in my throat, a chill running through me despite Lucas’s warmth. “My family? Why would they be hiding?” Lucas sighs, his arm tightening around me. “I suspect the vampire attack might have something to do with Alpha Renard©@w.n0vELwOr.m.c(o)m

Updates... and your father.” The words hit me like a punch to the gut. Alpha Renard. My father. The two men who have caused me nothing but pain and misery. The thought of them being involved in Lisa’s abduction makes bile rise in my throat. “That can’t be.” If so many innocents were murdered because of their desire for power... My stomach churns. Lucas shakes his head. “We don’t know for sure, but it’s too much of a coincidence.” He watches me carefully. “Your mother’s been in a coma since the night we rescued you. I wanted to withdraw all life–saving care, but Clayton intervened in the end. 145 Ava Selone’s Shows Said she might be useful.” I nod. I remember. “She’s awake.”

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