



TRADING
IN
BLOOD

BLOOD SERIES 5

BREA ALEPOÚ

TRADING IN BLOOD

Blood Series

Book 5

BREA ALEPOÚ

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Dedication

I can't believe I made it to the end of this series. It still blows my mind. Rheland's story has been a long time coming. I hope you enjoy the bloody oddly sweet romance.

Warning and Triggers

This book contains loss of family, grief, suicidal thoughts, drug abuse, vulgar language, group scene, blood play, and is for mature audience only. All characters are over the age of 18.

Please take heed of the warning.

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There was a different cover previously it is now been updated nothing new have been added to the story.

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CHAPTER ONE



Warm blood slid and coated Rheland's tongue as he swallowed a mouthful. There was nothing like it. Not even sex could compare to the taste of blood while the thirst rode him hard. The man in his arms had given up trying to push him away; his arms now hung loosely at his sides.

The pitter-patter of his heartbeat was growing faint the longer Rheland drank. He couldn't stop yet, not when his stomach clenched in undying hunger and the need for blood gnawed at his psyche. He knew what he needed to do. Rheland's needs far outweighed his newly changed outlook on life.

"You are draining him," Weston said. His cool tone broke through the fog that clouded Rheland's judgment.

"Who cares? It is just some human," Cambridge replied.

Ah, the brothers, ever on opposite sides of each other. There had once been a time when they were closer than two peas in a pod, as the saying went. Rheland had envied it and loved the sight of them. Turning them was one of his many selfish desires, but it had also been the catalyst that broke them apart.

"We are trying to do less damage to humans now that we are out in the open," Weston pointed out.

Neither one stopped Rheland even as the human whimpered and his breath caught. They were so weak, so breakable. It was why any that he treasured was changed. Rheland freed his fangs and lapped up every drop of blood that covered them.

"It's not enough." His voice sounded raw to his own ears.

Weston squatted down, wearing a fitted suit, his blond hair pulled back in a low ponytail. His startling blue eyes pinned

Rheland in place. “We will find you more, but you must slow down.”

Rheland reacted before he could gather his thoughts. Air whipped by his face, and the sound of drywall cracking resonated around him.

“You dare restrict me?” He hissed at Weston as his hand tightened around his slender throat. It would be easy to rip it out. To watch him die. However, it would hurt Rheland greatly to feel the loss of his sired vampire.

“He didn’t mean it that way,” Cambridge said.

Weston closed his eyes, knowing better than to fight Rheland’s hold. He relaxed further, and Rheland released him.

“Enough. You two can leave. Take the human with you.” His control was slipping every second.

“There is blood in the fridge,” Weston said, fixing his suit.

He’d always been the calm and collected one. Rheland once believed it was a quality fitting of a vampire. However, when it was aimed his way while he battled the monster of blood lust, it infuriated him more than it made him proud.

Weston took a step back, avoiding Rheland’s gaze as he did so.

“I cannot sustain myself on it.” Rheland punched the wall, his fist carving through it. A puff of dust filled the air, momentarily clouding his vision.

The brothers looked at each other, and Rheland hissed. “I said to leave!”

“Yes, sire,” they said in unison.

Once again, Rheland was left alone. He snatched his hand out of the wall, shaking off the debris. His stomach clenched, making him bite his lip. Blood dripped down his chin, but it wasn't blood that would sustain him. It was no better than air.

Rheland swallowed down the bellow that threatened to break free. How much longer would he have to face this unbearable hunger? How many centuries had it been since he felt the need to slaughter millions?

He shook his head, forcing it all away the best he could as he made his way toward his bedroom. Each step felt as if he was dragged through drying cement. Every hair on his body felt electric, making him want to peel his flesh off.

A distressed laugh left him, and he forced his eyes closed, counting back. He attempted to grasp onto thoughts that soothed him. Nothing worked. Rheland's mind was blank. The only bliss he received as of late was when blood slid down his throat and dripped down his chin. Not any blood would do. Fresh blood was what he needed; to hear the heartbeat and feel it against his tongue as he ate.

Blood bags were no better than drinking mud. Just the thought turned Rheland's stomach. He yanked his shirt off and then his jeans. He turned on the shower and stepped inside. The cool water was welcomed.

Rheland closed his eyes and tilted his head back, letting the water drop over his face. If he turned the knob, the water would become hotter. Then he could imagine it was blood raining down on him. His fingers twitched at his side, tempted by his wild thoughts.

"I have lived too long." Rheland grabbed the soap instead and made quick work of washing the human's smell off his body. The faster, the better.

In and out, Rheland wrapped a towel around his waist and made his way toward the kitchen, only to glance at the fridge and walk right back out. He headed to the living room, flopped down on the couch, and turned on the tv, hoping something would take his mind off it all. Clicking through the channels, he stopped at a talk show. They were discussing the newest vampire club. It was a bar where humans who didn't mind being bitten could go. And vampires could drink ethically in the public eye.

I should go.

Rheland had no guards. His sired children brought him his food lately, but it wasn't enough. Another snack would do it for the night. With his mind made up, Rheland was dressed in no time in soft black jeans, a turtleneck, and loafers.

Driving across Multicity was nothing more than a blur. The closer he got to the actual city, the more his mouth watered in anticipation. Ringing echoed around the car, making him grind his teeth. He looked and found the button to answer the call. Technology never stopped evolving, and it annoyed Rheland on a good day. Some things didn't need to change. Why would anyone want to answer a phone while driving?

“Why did you leave your home?” Weston asked.

“Oh, did you want me to visit you, son?” Forcing the gentle tone was taking more effort than it had before. Rheland was losing his grasp on what most would call humanity. If he did, he might ruin all the work his children had put into coming out to the human race.

“Sire, you can barely hold back your thirst right now.” Weston's heavy sigh came through the speakers. An exaggerated gesture when vampires had no need to breathe.

He's been around that uncivilized wolf entirely too long. Thinking about Karter brought a certain wolf to the forefront of Rheland's mind and pissed him off even more. He and Lynk were still at odds. The werewolf didn't so much as look Rheland's way anymore, making it clear he was still angry with him.

"I do not need you to remind me of my current state," Rheland snapped.

Silence followed, and Rheland's hold on the steering wheel tightened to the point the leather creaked in protest.

"I will send Axel to—"

"I can be out on my own," Rheland said, cutting Weston off.

"Very well." The silence that greeted him was welcomed.

Rheland knew supernatural and human relationships were on rocky ground, especially after the battle. He was the oldest walking vampire. There was no need for him to be guarded like a child.

He found a parking spot and stared at the red neon sign. Fangs. It was so out in the open. Of course, human protesters were kept at bay by security as they shouted obscenities at both humans and vampires entering the club.

There had been multiple occasions of coming out of the shadows, and each one had been met with large massacres of the supernatural. They were all hoping this time would be different. No one knew Rheland was the king of all vampires.

"Act like any other vampire out for a drink." He wanted to laugh at his words.

It would be better if he fed from a werewolf. They healed faster and could afford to give up far more blood. The idea of sinking his fangs into a werewolf was appealing. However, with their nonaggression treaty, he couldn't go hunting a wolf in the woods.

Rheland exited the car with a single thought. Control. He would drink from a few humans and then leave. Enough to sustain him for the night. The gravel crunched under his shoes.

"Don't go in there. They worship the devil," someone shouted.

Rheland internally laughed. The devil had nothing on him. He smiled as he walked up to the bouncer.

"Fangs or ID."

Rheland's fangs dropped, and the bouncer nodded, letting him in. The smell of blood was subtle, and in its place was a lavender scent. Rheland stopped breathing in the air instantly. He'd rather not smell a flower.

"Good evening, sir," a woman said as he approached. "The rules are simple. One, only bite if you are given explicit consent. Two, no physically harming any human. Three, no biting any human that does not have the fangs band around their right wrist. And four, please remember that we are all here for a safe and good time." She smiled and handed him a small card.

On it was a simple explanation of who the employees were. Rheland pocketed it and walked further into the bar. Music played in the background. It was not too loud that it would overwhelm any newly turned vampires but loud enough for the humans moving about to enjoy it.

“Oh, sorry, I almost forgot.” The woman reached out to Rheland, and her cool hand touched him. He stared at it, and she pulled away instantly her smile stayed. “How old are you?”

Rheland cocked a brow.

“What I mean is—” She shut her mouth and smiled. “Please go ahead.”

Rheland walked past her and further into the club. It was dark, with purple and blue lights lighting up the booths and walkway. His eyes easily adjusted to the lighting, and he continued forward, scanning every inch. Little signs divided the areas by blood type.

How forward thinking. Rheland headed toward the O positive but stopped as something caught his attention. Everything in him froze as he turned to stare at a man he’d buried long ago.

Before Rheland knew what was happening, he was across the room, mere inches from the human.

“Frode?” Rheland’s voice sounded distant to his ears.

This can’t be real. It wasn’t possible even if the man looked like him down to his facial structure. The human blinked slowly, his green eyes dull as he stared up.

“Call me whatever you want as long as you pay.”

The human spread his arms out, showcasing the bite marks on his flesh. There was a multitude of white fang marks left by vampires. Rheland bit the inside of his cheek at the raw anger rushing through him. *No one bites my Frode.*

“Do you want a drink, or are you just going to stand there looking lost?” The human gazed up at Rheland. “You know I

don't normally do young vampires. Reckless and whatnot.”

“My appearance is not an indication of my age.”

The human rolled his eyes. “Yeah, I figured.” He gestured to the empty spot on the leather sofa beside him.

Rheland's body moved on its own as he took the offered seat. He still couldn't stop staring at the human. His sharp jawline, straight nose, and lean frame. He even had Frode's freckles over the bridge of his nose. Maybe he had a bit more; the lighting in the bar left much to be desired, even with Rheland's enhanced vision.

“I'm not earning any money while you look at me.”

Rheland could feel the bloodlust calming as he stared at the human. He knew it wasn't permanent, but it was what he'd been looking for.

“Come home with me.”

The human side-eyed him. “Going to cost you.”

“I can more than afford it.”

“What, have I become your personal snack?”

Rheland couldn't deny the desire to bite the human that looked so much like Frode but more than that, he needed something to help force the bloodlust back while he regained his strength and control.

“It's not required. What I—”

The human waved his hand. “Yeah, it's a no for me. I'm not some bright-eyed, bushy-tailed guy. Don't weave some fairy tale for me. If there is no exchange, then move along. I'm working.”

Rheland was taken a back for a moment. The human went to stand, and he snatched him back down.

“Fucking supernaturals with their stupid strength.” The human glared at him.

Rheland wondered if he would still be glaring at him if he knew who he was. “Being my snack is fine, but what I want is for you to be available to me any time of the day.”

The human stared at him. “Why me?” He shook his head before Rheland could answer. “I actually don’t care. What if I say something like fifteen thousand a week?”

“I’d say you’re selling yourself at a low price.”

The human let out a raspy laugh. It was like listening to nature in the middle of the woods. A sense of peace touched Rheland for a single second.

“Yeah, probably, but that’s more than enough.”

“All living expenses would be taken care of. You would stay with me in my home.”

Rheland expected the next words out of the human’s mouth to be something along the lines of him asking what guaranteed Rheland wouldn’t kill him. Instead, the human shrugged.

“I have nothing else going on, and this place is getting over-saturated. I can’t work more than two days out of the week.”

Rheland looked at the scars on his arms and, upon closer inspection, the dark circles under his eyes. He was giving blood far more than just two days.

“If you didn’t catch on, it was a yes,” the human said.

“Then let’s go.”

“Wait. What? Right now?”

The human glanced around but Rheland wasn’t waiting; he was polite enough asking the human first. He pulled him up, but they didn’t so much as make it out of the booth.

“Where do you think you’re taking that one?”

Rheland glanced up, staring into the eyes of a vampire. It wasn’t unheard of that most vampires didn’t know who he was. He’d stepped back from even their eyes centuries ago. He was nothing more than a legend of sorts.

The vampire that stood before him now couldn’t be more than a hundred years old.

“I am taking him with me,” Rheland said.

“Look, kid. I’m not even sure how you got in here.” The vampire looked Rheland up and down and dismissed him without a second thought. “It’s against the law to be turned so young. Get out of here before I get you and your maker in trouble.”

Rheland was hardly grasping onto the sanity that he worked hard to keep. He might not have his full strength, but some vamping wouldn’t talk so freely to him.

The vampire moved closer to the human as if to shield him from Rheland. “Come on, Ace. There is another tabl—”

Rheland shoved the vampire down, grabbed his arm and twisted. He pinned it against his back with barely restrained strength. He could feel the vampire trying to fight against his hold.

“I don’t like to repeat myself. I’ve been in a bit of a mood.” As if to prove his point, Rheland twisted harder until a

resounding crunch came from the man's arm.

He sagged forward, his fangs bared as he kept his scream silent. It wasn't enough. If Rheland couldn't have the blood he so desired, then at least screams would dampen some of his need. He squeezed his hand and rubbed the broken bones against each other, breaking them into little more than fragments. There was a lot a vampire could heal from, but it would take years to heal his arm.

A pained-filled squeak escaped the vampire; it still wasn't enough.

"Excuse me, but please let my employee go."

Rheland was tempted to keep a hold of the vampire, but he heard the whispers. People were starting to pay attention to them. He released him and turned to face a vampire he'd seen around Cambridge before. The man's eyes widened before he bowed to Rheland.

"I hope Hanzal hasn't insulted you, sir."

"He, in fact, did," Rheland said.

"Boss, he's trying to take one of the humans out," Hanzal said, holding his arm close to his body. He stared at it as if perplexed why it wasn't healing.

The boss, whose name Rheland hadn't bothered to remember, glanced at the human who carefreely lounged on the leather sofa. He yawned as if it was a normal Thursday night for him.

"We do not rent our employees out."

"I wasn't asking," Rheland said.

He nodded as if he expected Rheland's response. "Please take him. But first, allow us to get him ready. He's served at

least three tables tonight.”

“Not needed.” Rheland grabbed the human up.

“I’m not going unless you can afford me,” the human said.

Rheland looked into the forest-green eyes that seemed to suck him in. “I can more than afford you.”

“Fuck it.” The human shrugged and stood up straight.

Rheland had known the man was taller than him but standing next to him emphasized their height difference.

“I quit,” the human said.

“Clean out your locker before you go,” the other vampire said. Rheland stared at him, and he quickly bowed again. “I will send his things.”

“Eh, it’s nothing but trash anyway. Toss it for all I care.” The human sauntered toward the exit, forcing Rheland to follow behind him. For someone who’d given up so much blood, he was steady on his feet.

“What did you come here in?”

Rheland stepped up next to him. The cool breeze blew through the human’s chestnut brown hair. It was just as soft as Frode’s had been. Rheland found himself reaching out toward him to touch it.

Dull green eyes stared down at him with a bored expression. “You might not feel it, but it’s cold as fuck outside. My nipples can cut glass right now.”

Frode would have never spoken like that. His Frode had been a gentle soul in love with life. He saw the beauty in everything, even in Rheland.

Rheland's fingers curled as he dropped his hand to his side. He was once again reminded that the human standing before him was not Frode, he was the one thing holding back Rheland's urge to murder.

"You're good enough."

"Thanks. So glad I could meet your low standards." The humans side-eyed him. "What, you're twenty-two max?" the human said.

Rheland reached up, grabbing a fistful of the human's hair, and brought him to eye level. "You would do well to keep your mouth shut."

To Rheland's surprise, the human glared at him. Defiance shimmered in his eyes. and where he expected to smell fear, there was nothing. He released him, and Rheland headed toward his car.

"Better put that in writing," the human said.

If only he understood right now wasn't the time to test Rheland.

"Knew you had money by the sweater you're wearing, but looks like I'll be getting a nice bonus this year." The human opened the door to the Ferrari and got in. "If I live that long." Sarcasm dripped heavily from his lips.

Rheland couldn't contain the predatory smile that appeared on his face. "As long as you're aware."

The human shrugged as if it was completely common to get in the car with a vampire. Maybe it was. They were in a new era, one Rheland had hoped wouldn't turn into another monster hunt as it had done so many times before.

CHAPTER TWO



Falling asleep in a car with a vampire might have been the stupidest thing Ace had ever done. Then again, there was that time he helped a cheating ex out and refinanced his parent's home. Or the time he ended up at some werewolf orgy party and spent the night locked up in a closet, hiding.

Ace had done a lot of stupid shit, but this had to be the closest he'd come to death. *Maybe.*

His eyelids felt heavy as he blinked them open. The first thing he noticed was that he wasn't in the car anymore. The smell of lavender wasn't burning a hole through his stomach, and the bed he was lying on was the softest thing he'd ever touched.

Ace was half tempted to shut his eyes and say fuck it. If he died, at least, he'd go wrapped in clouds. What more could a guy like him ask for? Fuck waking up and seeing the bullshit he'd stepped in. There was no doubt a catch to the vampire's deal. Nothing in life was a sweet deal. Strings and knives were always attached to them, waiting in the shadows.

"You should go back to sleep. You are severely dehydrated and low on blood." That same mellow voice called to Ace.

There was no point trying to go to sleep now, especially when everything in him wanted to open his eyes.

"Nothing an energy drink and a cookie won't fix," Ace grumbled. He rubbed at his burning eyes, wishing it would go away so he could open them already. It was one thing not to give a fuck and another to stick to it truly.

Guess my will to fucking live is still kicking and screaming. Ace blinked and turned his head just as the vampire walked further into the room.

“Not that bright, are you?” The vampire peered down at him.

He expected to see pity. That was one look Ace was accustomed to, or disgust. Neither of those showed on the vampire’s face. It was like looking at a blank canvas. Ace’s stomach turned as he tried to decipher what the vampire could be thinking or feeling. Even the supernaturals had tells, but the one standing before him was no different than a statue.

Ace let his tired eyes close once more. “Last I checked, you aren’t my boss yet, and this is a free city. I’ll do what the hell I want.” Ace attempted to sit up.

Something pressed against his chest and forced him back down. He dropped his arms and squinted through his lashes. The vampire held him down with three fingers.

“Fucking super strength bullshit.” Ace gave up quickly and closed his eyes. “You know this is a kidnapping, and under the new laws, you can be executed by the princes.”

Not that Ace believed that bullshit for one second. The supernatural would always have a leg up in the world. They were predators, and humans were nothing more than prey. It was the circle of life.

The pressure lifted, but Ace didn’t attempt to move again. Why the hell should he? The bed was way too comfortable. It took every ounce of strength to fight the sleep that tugged at him.

“Did you drug me?” Ace groaned. He hadn’t felt like this in a long time.

“No. You’re too weak to handle any kind of drug.”

Ace chuckled. “Yeah, that’s what you think. Pass me an ibuprofen before this headache kicks in.”

“You’re stubborn. How are you still alive, Frod—”

Silence greeted him, forcing Ace to open an eye. No one was there. “The hell?” He groaned under his breath as he contemplated what to do.

Ace took the time to look around the best he could from his position on the bed. The walls were a soft cream color. Light and dark blues decorated the space. It looked something like what he’d see in a magazine. There was no television, just a single lounge chair in the corner with decorative pillows, the same blue as the other decorations around the room. Overall, it was a nice space, but it felt plastic, as if it was set up for display, not actual use.

The air in the room shifted slightly. Ace didn’t have to turn his head to the side to know the vampire was back. A shadow was cast over him as the vampire leaned in.

“Drink this.” The vampire held out a cup for him.

Ace grunted with the effort it took to sit up. Shit, maybe he’d been going a little too hard at his job. It wasn’t like he had a choice; the bills were piling up every day. He was late every time except for the most important one, and it took most of his money.

Being bitten by vampires and treated like a juice box was the least of his worries. Ace could endure absolutely anything but losing his little brother. So, what if he could barely sit up right now? As long as Logan was cared for, he’d push past his limits.

“Are you enjoying watching me struggle?” Ace huffed as he finally sat up, no thanks to the vampire.

“Yes.”

Ace rolled his eyes. “Fucking vampires are all the same.”

“Are we?” the vampire asked as if truly perplexed.

“Yes.” Ace grabbed the cup. “Selfish, hungry, arrogant, and annoying.”

Boisterous laughter filled the room as the vampire bent over, chuckling. Ace’s eyes widened as he stared at the vampire. He was the first to laugh when most turned angry and either choked him or promised a painful death.

This vampire is weird.

“Drink up, Fro—human.”

He looked up at the vampire. “Look, I don’t know who I look like to you, but my name is Ace.”

Pressing the cool glass to his lips, Ace sighed at the relief that filled him. With the first sip of the liquid, he’d expected water or even juice. The lack of smell left him with little to no choices.

The cold disturbing taste of milk hit his tongue, and Ace’s natural reaction was to spit it out. “Uh, fuck.” He wiped his mouth with the back of his hand as he glared at the vampire. “Do I look like some serial killer to you?”

“What is wrong with milk?”

“It’s just plain milk. Who drinks a cup of fucking milk?” Ace sputtered as he tried to place the cup down. Luckily the vampire took it, and he wiped at his mouth frivolously. He reached for his shirt to drag it over his tongue but froze as he realized he didn’t have one on.

“Um, what the hell?” Ace lifted the blanket, and sure enough, he was as naked as the day he was born. “Is there any reason why I’m naked in your bed?”

“This isn’t my bed. It’s one of the many rooms in my home. You’re naked because you stunk.”

Ace released the blanket. *Okay, don’t freak out. There have been worse situations. Shit, I’ve had dreams worse than this.* Ace exhaled a slow, easy breath. “Okay, but what right did you — You know what, it’s not important. If you have my clothes, I’m going to get out of here.”

“You can’t leave.”

Ace’s heartbeat picked up, but he refused to show just how nervous that statement made him. “And why is that?”

The vampire looked just as confused as Ace had felt. “I still need to pay you.”

Ace wasn’t about to skip out on any money, even if it felt strange. “For what?” There weren’t any new bite marks Ace could see. “You didn’t do anything to me while I was asleep, did you?”

“What would you have me do?”

Ace’s mouth opened, but no words came out as he was left stunned. What was the right answer to that? He eyed the man before him, taking in his slight build, short stature, white hair, and gray eyes. His face was oval, making him look far too innocent to be a bloodsucker.

“Nothing,” Ace finally said.

“If you’re up, we can figure out the conditions of the job.” The vampire turned around and headed toward the door. His walk was graceful, almost feline-like.

“First, clothes,” Ace said and pointed to himself. Sure, he was more than comfortable in his own body but being naked and having a business conversation wasn’t exactly easy.

The vampire glanced over his shoulder. “There are some in the closet. They should fit you.”

“Thanks... What’s your name?” Shit, how stupid Ace had been that he hadn’t asked the man’s name. *Idiot.*

The vampire hesitated as he stopped by the door. His fingers curled up into a fist, and for a second, Ace assumed he wouldn’t receive a name. It was fine with him; plenty of patrons at the bar had given false names, not that Ace had ever bothered to remember them anyway. He also hadn’t willingly gone home with any of them either.

Shit, I either fucked up big time or stumbled across the opportunity of a lifetime. He was leaning heavily toward the former and then the latter.

“Rheland.”

Ace stared at the man’s back. “Oh, um, thanks, Rheland.”

“Don’t mention it. Get dressed and meet me in the room three doors down.”

Rheland was gone the next second, leaving Ace in the quiet room. He hadn’t noticed when he first woke up, but the place was almost eerily silent. He went from sharing an apartment with four other people to being in what he assumed was a mansion with a single vampire.

Didn’t vampires usually live in dens? Ace scrubbed his brain, trying to remember the special that now came on tv. It was some program trying to close the gap between humans and supernaturals.

Ace flipped the cover back and hopped out of the pillowy soft bed. The world swayed as he stood up straight.

“Fuck.” Ace pressed his fingers to his temple and counted the seconds until he stopped feeling like he was on the merry-go-round from hell.

He moved over to the closet, expecting high-end clothes and over-the-top fashion. Instead, he found drawers full of sweatpants and shorts varying in sizes, along with regular shirts.

“This place gets weirder and weirder.” Ace quickly grabbed the clothes in his size and slipped them on.

He made his way down the hallway till he got to the third door left open. Walking in, Ace found Rheland sitting behind a huge computer, clicking away at the keyboard. He grunted as he stared at the screen.

Ace swallowed back the laughter. It was like watching a senior citizen trying to work with the latest technology.

“Have a seat,” Rheland said.

Ace cleared his throat and took the free chair across from the desk.

“Here,” Rheland said.

The single sheet of paper was passed over. Ace picked it up and read over the contract. It was simple. He was to stay in the home with Rheland for the next six months. There would be no exchange of blood or even household duties.

“Yeah, this is bullshit.” Ace ripped the contract up. “Nothing in this life is free. You want me to believe that you want me to just sit around looking pretty?” He huffed out a dry laugh. Yeah, his luck wasn’t remotely that good.

Ace blinked, and Rheland was in front of him, forcing him further back in the chair. He made it a rule not to show fear in

front of a supernatural, and it was exceedingly hard with their heightened senses.

“You test the limits of my kindness.”

“I didn’t ask for it,” Ace shot back.

Rheland’s gray eyes seemed to darken like storm clouds. Ace wasn’t sure why the man wanted him around. Maybe because he looked like this Frode guy, but either way, he understood he had something Rheland wanted. In return, Rheland would pay him enough to cover Logan’s hospital expenses and then some.

“Make a deal I can understand,” Ace said.

Rheland stared at him, and Ace ensured to meet his gaze. There was the saying never look a gift horse in the mouth or some shit like that, but Ace would examine it till his heart was content.

“What would you give?”

Ace thought about it. “I’ve given blood plenty of times.”

Rheland laughed. “You do not have nearly enough to sustain my hunger.”

Ace winced; it felt like he’d been insulted. “Good to know. I can give a little and stay here. It will be like working at a daycare or nursing home.”

Rheland stared at him. “If it weren’t for your face, I would kill you.”

A chill ran down Ace’s spine. He didn’t doubt the vampire’s words for a second. “Yeah, I’ve been told I have that effect on people.”

Rheland moved away from him, and Ace could breathe slightly easier. The vampire took a seat behind the desk once more. His fingers flew over the keyboard, and Ace relaxed in his seat.

Ace rubbed the back of his neck. “The amount is fine, and six months works for me.” It was probably more than enough.

“I’ve never met a human quite like you,” Rheland said and passed over the new contract.

Ace shrugged. “What can I say? You got lucky with the limited edition.” The dollar amount was still insane. However, after seeing how Rheland lived, he had no doubt the vampire could afford it.

“Pen?”

Rheland grabbed Ace’s hand, and he watched transfixed as the vampire’s fangs dropped and pierced his thumb. The pain registered, pulling Ace out of his stupor. “Sign in blood?” Ace cleared his throat. “Feels like I’m making a deal with the devil.”

“I am far older than any devil.” Rheland smiled, his fangs gone, leaving behind straight white teeth.

If the world hadn’t known about supernaturals and Ace wasn’t a skeptical piece of shit, he might have been fooled into thinking Rheland was some normal twenty-year-old who was too innocent for the world.

Ace pressed his bleeding thumb to the line near his name. He pulled his thumb back and popped it into his mouth. He felt Rheland’s eyes on him the entire time. This was it.

No going back.

CHAPTER THREE



Glass shattered, and rowdy teenagers started shouting. Lynk forced his eyes open as the blazing sun broke through his blinds and covered his face with bright light. He couldn't afford to sleep for much longer. A few of the members of his pack were already up.

Lynk was up and moving. He made his bed before making his way to the kitchen. Faith was already there, her curly hair up in a ponytail.

"Morning, Lynk." She was ever the soft presence in their pack. She gave him a sweet smile as she flipped over a pancake.

"Morning, Faith. Where is Avery?"

"He went to clean up the broken glass," she said.

Lynk shook his head. "Avery better not be cleaning by himself. Whoever made the mess should be helping." He ensured his voice was loud enough for all the kids to hear him.

Faith chuckled. "This place isn't exactly great for kids. Especially ones like them."

It was a familiar topic between them. In fact, Lynk had it with most of the older members of his pack and often.

"We are currently living off the council money. It's not exactly a high-paying position." It was also one Lynk hadn't been able to refuse. No matter how much he'd wanted to.

"We can help," Faith said.

"You two give enough." Lynk placed his hand on her shoulder, and she sighed. "I'll come up with a plan."

She nodded. "Yes, alpha."

He stole a pancake, and she growled at him as he walked out of the kitchen.

“You need to eat more than that,” Faith shouted after him.

He would when he found the time. First order of business, Lynk needed to go over some paperwork involving some new packs forming and the information on the latest strings of werewolf attacks.

A flame’s flickering caught his eye, and Lynk sighed. “Put it out, Hazel, before you burn the couch... again.”

“Yes, alpha.” Hazel snuffed out the flame and smiled widely at Lynk. Her gold eyes lit up with joy. She was getting better control over her magic each day she trained with Finnely.

“Pancakes.” Hazel sniffed the air. “Blueberry and chocolate chips.” She shifted in the next second. Now an auburn-colored wolf, she padded to the kitchen.

“No shifting indoors,” Lynk reminded her.

The pup’s head lowered, and she tucked her tail under her. Hazel got so excited; they all did, resulting in spontaneous shifting or magic spurts. It was a lot to deal with. Lynk scratched behind Hazel’s ears.

“Remember, you must breathe through it when you feel an unexpected shift coming.”

Hazel shifted back and grabbed a huge T-shirt. “Yes, alpha. Sorry.”

Lynk smiled at her. “It’s fine. Go enjoy your pancakes.” He stopped her before she could run off. “Get the others so they can eat too.”

As if summoned by magic, the boys ran out of their room, pushing and shouting as they made their way to the kitchen. Avery was a few steps behind them with a trash bag in his hand. He shoved it behind him and smiled at Lynk.

“Morning, Lynk.”

“Do I even want to know what broke?” Lynk asked.

Avery cocked a brow at him. “Something broke?”

Lynk debated if he truly wanted to know. The mess was cleaned up, and he was certain Avery handled whatever had happened.

“Right.” Lynk turned and went back toward his room. He stopped at the girls’ room and knocked.

Sattin sat on her bed, knees close to her chest. Her red hair hung in ringlets around her face, and she stared at her hands.

“Something wrong with your fingers?” Lynk asked.

Sattin shook her head and balled her fist, shoving it into her lap. Dark circles framed her eyes.

“You’re not sleeping again,” Lynk said.

He moved further into the room. He reached out toward Sattin but stopped as she pulled back. She was a vampire-witch hybrid. She didn’t need or crave the same sense of touch that werewolves did.

Lynk let his hand fall as he cleared his throat. “Is there anything I can get you?”

She shook her head, refusing to talk.

“Sattin, I cannot help you if you don’t tell me what’s wrong.”

She looked up at Lynk, her purple eyes shimmering with tears. Lynk acted on his instincts as he sat down and opened his arms to her. Sattin scrambled over to him and buried her face into the crook of his neck.

Her body shook as she let out silent cries. She'd been like that since they'd saved the kids. Sattin was the oldest test subject and had been there since she was seven. Certain things about Sattin made him wish he could kill the people who hurt them all over again.

Lynk ran his hand over her head, letting her get it all out. Sattin slowly pulled back. He wasn't surprised when her face was void of any tears.

“Do you want to talk about it?”

Sattin shook her head.

“Want breakfast?” He offered the small piece of pancake he had left. She smiled and took it.

“I... I can't.” Sattin pointed to the food and then to herself.

“Can't keep it down?” Lynk asked. He had noticed she was eating less. “Maybe you need more blood.”

Her dietary needs were different as a hybrid. She needed blood but could still enjoy regular food, or at least she could before.

She nodded.

Lynk smiled at her. “Need me to stay here for a bit?”

Sattin stared at him before shaking her head.

Lynk stood up and slowly reached out to her. As long as he didn't move too fast, she wasn't frightened. He ruffled her

curls, and she huffed and smoothed them out the best she could as he pulled his hand back.

“Come find me if you need me, okay?”

She nodded.



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NOON ROLLED AROUND MUCH FASTER THAN LYNK HAD noticed. He rolled his shoulders back as he stood up from his bed. He headed to the kitchen, noticing instantly that the place had been cleaned. Faith had left him a plate with three hearty sandwiches.

Lynk happily scarfed the first one down. As his stomach growled in hunger, he helped himself to the other two as well.

“See, you finally came out,” Phexx said.

Lynk grunted around a mouth full of food. He swallowed and drank some water to wash the rest down.

“We need to go for a run,” Lynk said.

The muscles in his neck felt tight, and his wolf was clawing at him. If he felt like a caged animal, he could only imagine what the others were going through.

With Lynk working so much, not having any pack grounds, and Karter’s home under constant surveillance now that the princes were celebrities, their running time as a pack had been cut down tremendously.

Phexx grunted. “Yeah, but the city-sanctioned running ground sucks, and unless we already had an established pack on claimed land, we are confined to using that heap of shit.” Phexx pushed some of his hair out of his face. “Then again, that isn’t our only option.”

Lynk didn’t even want to think about the other option.

“You’ve been avoiding him at all costs,” Phexx said.

Lynk grunted. He didn’t need to ask who *he* was. There was only one person Lynk was avoiding like the plague, and it

was a certain white-haired vampire.

“It’s better this way.” Lynk brought the mug to his mouth and took a long sip of hot coffee.

Phexx glared into Lynk’s cobalt blue eyes, waiting for him to crack. He wouldn’t. Lynk stood by what he said. When he got around Rheland, they either ended up butting heads or in the sheets. Neither was a good option.

“You’re the boss,” Phexx said as he took a chair at the small kitchen table.

One of the younger twins came running in, knocking over a bowl in a hurry. Phexx caught it before the glass could hit the floor. Lynk snagged one of the youngest members of his pack by the back of his shirt.

“Slow it down.”

Leo was normally the one sitting down and reading. His deep brown eyes flickered red before they settled.

“What’s wrong?” Lynk placed a hand on the boy’s shoulder, hoping to ground him. It worked perfectly for his twin brother. From what Lynk understood, Lucky was more wolf than Leo.

It was complicated, with the children all being some form of a hybrid. They were an anomaly in this changing world, and Lynk had taken it upon himself to watch over them.

Leo frowned. “Lucky tore my book up.”

Lynk kept his groan suppressed. The children were becoming more restless by the day. There was only so much he could provide them in the small three-bedroom apartment. There were way too many of them. All of them were practically on top of each other.

“Lucky,” Lynk called.

The other twin showed up with an innocent look already plastered to his face. His brown hair was wild and untamed, not helping with the illusion he was trying to create.

“Yes, alpha?”

Lynk lifted a brow, not saying anything as he stared the other boy down. Lucky broke in exactly ten seconds.

“It was an accident, I swear!” He looked at his brother. “He wouldn’t share and there is nothing else to do. Sattin and Murphy are both watching the game on TV.”

Lynk pinched the bridge of his nose. “Apologize to your brother.”

“Sorry,” Lucky muttered.

Leo hissed at Lucky. Lynk made eye contact with Phexx. Leo was showing more signs of being a vampire each day. But he hadn’t exactly been turned. Everything was complicated.

“Leo, breathe,” Lynk said.

Phexx was up and squatting in front of the boy. “Hey, why don’t I show you some of the books I brought over?”

Leo nodded, but he still glared at his brother. Phexx stood, and Lynk already knew what he would say.

“Both of the princes are busy, and I’ve asked Karter’s other boyfriends. They don’t have the time,” Lynk said.

Phexx smiled. “Well, there is a certain vampire that we all know has the time and knowledge to help.” He placed a tattooed-covered hand on Lynk’s shoulder. “This is for the kids. It’s not just younger ones having issues. Sattin stays

locked up in the girls' room with headphones on, and Joben can't keep anything down."

Lynk sighed, knowing exactly what Phexx was hinting at. As werewolves, they could only help them with so much.

"Rheland wants to kill them," Lynk argued. Although the vampire hadn't made a move, Lynk knew deep down he wouldn't as long as the children didn't pose a threat.

Phexx stared at him. Lynk already knew what would come out of his mouth before he opened it.

"We will protect them."

Lynk had no further argument he could bring to the table. Not one that was sound enough to get him out of going to talk to Rheland.

"Fine."

Phexx smiled.

"If I didn't know any better, I'd think you wanted to go see the king of vampires," Lynk said.

Phexx laughed, and a look that could only be described as psychotic crossed his face before he buried it. "What can I say? It's always a fun time over there."

They hadn't been at Rheland's place since the bloody war. And it was starting to take a toll on all of them. Rheland's place had become somewhat of a second home. Somewhere the pack could get together day or night.

"Come on, Leo," Phexx said, herding the boy out of the small kitchen. "Make sure you tell him you can't wait to see him."

Lynk grunted in agreement. “Lucky—” What was he supposed to do with the boy?

The door to the apartment opened. The twin pack members Sevyn and Havyn walked in. Sevyn was as wild as ever, making the most noise as he made his presence known. Havyn was not too far behind him, shaking his head at his brother’s shenanigans.

“Hey, Lynk, there was a piece of paper on the door,” Sevyn said. He handed it over and ruffled Lucky’s hair. “Come on, let’s go play one of the board games.”

Lucky looked up at Lynk, and he sighed. “Go ahead.” They both ran off as Lynk looked over the pink piece of paper.

His stomach flipped as the ever-pressing weight on his shoulders grew heavier.

“Discrimination isn’t exactly illegal right now,” Havyn said.

Lynk looked up from the paper that stated he had thirty days to vacate the premises. His wolf paced inside of him, wanting nothing more than to run and hunt. He suppressed it the best he could. This was absurd. Becoming the wolf wasn’t going to keep him and his pack from being homeless.

“This isn’t fair,” Lynk growled.

Havyn nodded. “You’re not wrong, but any aggression will be seen as an attack. We are all basically walking on thin ice around here.”

Lynk ground his teeth; they had all been human at some point. It wasn’t as if he or even the twins had sought out becoming werewolves. Certainly, none of the children in his pack had wanted to become what they were. Not that it

mattered to humans. Lynk knew that better than most. With the current changes, it would be years before they were all comfortable around each other. If that day ever came.

“I’ll start looking into another place,” Lynk said.

Havyn scratched at the back of his neck, and Lynk instantly knew he wanted to say something.

“Out with it.”

“We lost our jobs at the convenience store,” Havyn said.

Lynk rubbed at his jaw. “And?”

“We can’t pay rent this month, and the landlord pretty much gave us the same pink slip.”

Lynk blew out a slow breath and took it all in. He’d fix this. His pack needed him; there was no space or time for him to give in to the despair waiting in the shadows.

“I’ll handle it. Don’t worry,” Lynk said.

Havyn nodded as his shoulders dropped, and the tension between his eyebrows relaxed. “Thank you.”

Lynk pulled him in, and they stayed locked in an embrace for a few moments. Werewolves thrived off of physical contact. Although Lynk had pulled Havyn in to soothe the young werewolf, it helped him as well. The tension eased a bit, and his wolf backed down.

“Can you go tutor Hazel and Joben?”

“What about Sattin?” Havyn asked.

Lynk shook his head. “She doesn’t do well during the day. It’s getting worse. Leave her be.”

Havyn’s head tilted. “She’s becoming more vampire each day. What are we going to do?” Havyn glanced past Lynk.

“Doesn’t she need a den, not a pack?”

Lynk hated the idea of splitting the children up, not when they’d gone through so much. He didn’t care if they were vampires, wolves, or witches; they were a part of his pack. His wolf saw them that way as well. They were his to protect and care for.

“I’m going to see if Weston or Cambridge can take her on.”

Havyn’s eyebrows raised. “Uh, what about—” he shut his mouth. “Never mind.”

“What about Rheland?” Lynk asked.

Even saying the vampire’s name made his heartbeat pick up.

Havyn’s brown eyes searched Lynk’s face before he answered. “Yeah.”

It was no secret that there was tension between Lynk and Rheland. “You know his thoughts on them.”

Havyn nodded. “But he’s left it alone now.”

Yeah, but the vampire would rather kill the children than try and raise them. Lynk’s chest tightened at the thought. They hadn’t asked to be kidnapped or tested on. They deserved a chance to live like any of them.

Havyn smiled. “It’s just a thought.”

Lynk sighed. “I’ll keep it in mind.”

Havyn left the kitchen, leaving Lynk to his chaotic thoughts. Havyn made a good point but seeing Rheland again meant facing the burning desire he had for the vampire. One

Lynk would never act on again, not after what had happened last time.

The apartment went from moderately noisy to somewhat quiet for the time being. It wouldn't last long. He had four angsty teenagers, two kids, and pack members that came over often. The apartment was not the ideal place.

“I need to find us a pack house soon.”

As if to add to his shit list of things to do, Lynk's phone dinged. He looked over the message and growled. Who in their right mind told him it was a good idea to be a part of the newfound werewolf council? He had enough unwanted responsibility.

“Phexx,” Lynk called out.

The werewolf popped his head out of his room.

“I'm heading out. I'll stop and get Avery and Faith to come with me.”

“I'll hold down things here, alpha,” Phexx said.

Lynk nodded, grateful for the man. Without Phexx, Lynk was certain the responsibilities would have weighed him down, making it impossible for him to do anything.

CHAPTER FOUR



“What are you doing in here?” Rheland kept his eyes closed as he listened to Ace’s heartbeat. It changed rarely. The human had incredible control, or he had no will to live. Rheland was still trying to figure out which applied to Ace.

“Making sure you’re alive. Or is it dead?”

Rheland opened a single eye and peered at the human hovering over him. It was a shock to his system seeing Ace’s face. It looked so much like his Frode until the human spoke.

“There isn’t any food here, and I don’t know the address to get pizza delivered,” Ace said.

“I should have put no talking in the contract.” Rheland closed his eyes once more.

“Yeah, shoulda, coulda, woulda. Now for me to, you know, stay alive, I need something other than water or disgusting milk.” Ace huffed. “Who the hell just has milk sitting in their fridge?”

Rheland was out of bed in a flash and grabbed the human. He flipped him over and straddled him in the next second. His small hand wrapped around Ace’s throat. For a short second, Rheland was drawn in by the feel of Ace’s pulse thumping against his fingertips.

“If you were hungry, you could have just said so,” Ace said.

His heart was clearly racing, and his breathing had picked up. However, he looked calm as he turned his head, offering his long neck. His skin was so pale Rheland could make out his veins. His fangs dropped instantly as if he were some hundred-year-old vampire.

The hunger gnawed at him, making his stomach burn with need. Rheland forced his fangs back and cleared his throat.

“You will not tell me what to do.” He leaned closer and forced Ace to meet his eyes. “Learn your place, or it will be a lesson you will regret receiving.”

Ace’s thick lashes fluttered as his face grew red. Rheland loosened his hold, and the human sucked in a deep breath. The color receded, and he licked his lips.

Rheland watched his pink tongue trace along the seam of his lips.

“Since we’re putting tips out there, if you want to choke me, don’t press against the windpipe. Apply pressure to these points on each side.” Ace pushed himself up on his elbows. “If I’m going to be killed, I want to cum on the way out.”

Rheland shook his head and took a step away from the human. He would either kill him or fuck him. Anything to shut the man the hell up.

Ace held up his arm, offering it to me. “You need to eat, right?”

“No.”

Ace let out a stark laugh. “Yeah, okay. It’s normal to stare at someone’s pulse point like it’s pumping thanksgiving gravy through their veins.”

Rheland frowned as he pulled his gaze from Ace’s pulse point. “You haven’t fully recovered. It has been only a day.”

“I’ll be fine.” Ace rolled his eyes. “Man, why can’t all vampires be this considerate?”

I’m not. Rheland kept the thought to himself. He just didn’t want to kill the human yet. Ace wasn’t Frode that was clear; when his mouth was shut for a short second, Rheland could pretend.

“Your blood won’t do me any good right now.”

Ace’s mouth fell into a frown. His thick brows dipped. “I need to make a payment.”

What is wrong with this human? So many would jump at the chance to live rent-free in Rheland’s home. He had no responsibilities, and yet he demanded to work.

“You’re becoming more trouble than you’re worth,” Rheland grumbled.

Ace shrugged. “Well, you signed a contract, so pay up.”

Rheland vamp sped over to Ace and shoved him against the wall. The barest of yelps left the human; other than that, he kept a relaxed facade, even while Rheland held him down.

“I won’t take blood, but I’ll feed.”

Ace cocked a brow. “Last I checked, blood is the only way your kind can survive.”

He wasn’t wrong, but there was another life liquid. It wasn’t nearly as fulfilling or even as potent as blood, but it could do in a pinch.

“Hands above your head.”

“I feel like I need a safe word now.” Ace lifted his hands above his head as instructed.

Rheland dropped to his knees and tugged at the loose waistband of Ace’s sweats.

“I can honestly say I didn’t see this coming,” Ace said.

He stared down at Rheland, his deep green eyes penetrating the vampire’s very soul.

“If you don’t want to continue, you can wait to feed me in two weeks.”

Ace was quiet for a few seconds. Rheland was certain the human would backpedal on his odd demand.

“No complaints from me,” Ace said.

His cock smacked Rheland in the face by surprise. He pulled back. Rheland had stripped the human the night before, and he hadn’t been nearly as big. His cock was thick and long. Rheland’s mouth watered, and suddenly, his interest in sucking the human’s cock increased.

He wrapped his fingers around the thick length. Ace hissed but stayed plastered against the wall.

“Complaints?” Rheland asked.

He didn’t know why but felt like teasing the human back. Rheland would have never done it to Frode, but Ace? The human was a ball of sarcasm and snide comments. He could take a bit of his own medicine.

“I’ll let you know once you get started.” Ace smirked down at him.

Rheland opened his mouth, letting his tongue out, and flicked against the tip of Ace’s cock. He sucked and kissed the tip until the human groaned.

I’m going to make you scream.

“Do you always play with your food?” Ace asked.

Irritation twisted Rheland’s stomach. He would shut the human up one way or another. Rheland relaxed his jaw as he took Ace’s full length into his mouth and down his throat.

“Motherfucker,” Ace groaned. A thump accompanied his curses as he slammed his head back against the wall.

Rheland swallowed around the hot member in his mouth. It was always so good. With him being cold constantly, it was like being lit from the inside. Rheland moaned, surrounding Ace's cock in vibrations.

“Shit.” Ace's hand dropped down, and slender fingers wove through Rheland's white hair. “Fuck, you shouldn't be so good.”

Rheland pulled back and shoved his face forward, swallowing his cock back down. Ace's hold on him was nothing more than for show.

“Close,” Ace mumbled.

His hips flexed forward, and Rheland smiled around his cock. He relaxed his jaw more and sat back.

“Uh, really?” Ace stared down at him. His face was flush, making the freckles decorating his face stand out more. His lips were parted as he breathed heavily.

Rheland stared up at him, waiting for the human to do his worst.

“Fuck it.” Ace placed the palm of his hand on the back of Rheland's head and slammed forward. His body flushed against Rheland's face. If that were all he would do—

Ace curved over Rheland a little. His other hand wrapped around the vampire's throat and pressed down.

“Fuck, that's better.” Ace pounded into him, using his mouth and throat as his personal fuck toy. The human disregarded him as nothing more than something to get off with.

Desire turned inside of Rheland as he looked up at Ace through his lashes. He watched his face contort in bliss right

before hot splashes of cum filled his mouth.

Rheland swallowed every drop. Ace sagged against the wall breathing heavily.

“I... fuck, is this public knowledge?”

“What?” Rheland asked, pulling himself together. His cock was hard in the confines of his jeans.

“You know, that vampires can drink cum like blood.” Ace shoved his shoulder-length hair back and stared at Rheland expectantly.

He shrugged. “I have no idea. Not many vampires like to. It does very little to dampen the hunger.” And it placed them in a vulnerable state, not that Rheland had anything to worry about. Still, he wouldn’t tell Ace that.

“So, it’s like an appetizer?” Ace asked.

Rheland’s brows dipped. *What the hell goes through this human’s head?*

“It’s a good question.”

“It’s a stupid one,” Rheland said. He smoothed out his shirt.

“Need help with that?” Ace asked. He gestured to Rheland’s groin.

The vampire smiled. “You wouldn’t be able to handle it.”

Ace shrugged. “I don’t bottom, but I’m more than happy to bend you over and fuck you. You’re easy on the eyes.”

“Was that a compliment?”

“I guess it was,” Ace said. He pulled his sweats up and moved past Rheland.

Maybe I should. It had been a while since Rheland had given in to such urges. The last time had been with Lynk. Just remembering the werewolf made his hole twitch. He felt empty, and it was driving him insane.

“It isn’t in your contract,” Rheland said.

Ace crossed his arms over his chest. “True. We’ll say it’s a bonus.”

“For who?”

Ace smirked as if he was confident even when faced with a being far exceeding his lifespan.

“Well, why don’t we go find out?” Ace said.

He was far too daring to be Frode. Rheland thought about the man who he’d known many centuries ago. Frode would have never initiated, let alone be so cocky about his prowess in bed.

Another difference.

Rheland took a step toward Ace when the sound of a car approaching grabbed his attention. He turned his head and stared down the hall that led to the foyer.

“What?” Ace asked.

Rheland opened his mouth only to snap it shut.

“Give me a minute.”

Rheland would know that gravelly voice from anywhere. He vamp sped out without another word. The door was flung open just as Lynk raised his hand to knock. His light brown eyes flickered down to Rheland.

“You’ve been avoiding me,” Rheland said.

The werewolf cocked a dark brow up at him. Lynk had let his hair grow some since the last time Rheland had seen him. The tight coils on top of his head only made him look more handsome.

“We had a difference in opinion last time we were near each other,” Lynk said.

Right. The damn hybrid children. Rheland kept his face impassive, knowing the wolf would be analyzing the smallest misstep.

“What brings you to my home?” Rheland asked.

Lynk’s shoulders stiffened before he cleared his throat. Rheland smiled up at him, and it seemed to help the wolf relax.

“We need to talk,” Lynk said.

Rheland’s gaze danced over to the car, and he distinguished a few sets of eyes aimed his way. Not even five seconds later, the sound of an approaching bike could be heard.

“We as in the entire pack?” Rheland asked.

Lynk nodded.

The small inking of hope fizzled, and Rheland chastised himself for having it. He was too old for this shit.

“Right.”

Lynk stepped closer as if sensing Rheland’s unhappiness. The moment he did, the werewolf went stock still before a deep growl emitted from him. Rheland blinked. Afterward, he was forced down on the ground, and Lynk’s nose pressed against his neck.

“Who is it?” Lynk growled.

“Who is what?” Ace asked. He tied his hair back as he headed their way. “I hope you brought some food, although you don’t look like a pizza delivery guy.”

Lynk growled at Ace before he stopped the sound abruptly. His light brown eyes dropped to Rheland. For a short second, Rheland swore he saw hurt shimmer in their depths.

The instinct to reassure Lynk rested on the tip of his tongue. Rheland held it back at the last second. They were nothing to each other.

“Werewolf?” Ace asked.

Lynk stood up, and Rheland followed suit. “Lynk, this is Ace.”

“You’re busy. I should have called,” Lynk said as he turned around.

What? Rheland looked back at Ace and then Lynk. Confusion took over. The sound of the motorcycle died as Phexx dismounted his bike.

Shit. Rheland looked at all three men. He couldn’t tell if he was fucked or in some type of strange dream.

“Hey, babe,” Phexx greeted.

Rheland jerked his head at the beta wolf. “I’m not busy. Ace works for me.” He wasn’t sure why he felt the need to clarify anything, not when Lynk had made it obvious he’d been avoiding Rheland.

“Good, then we can all have a chat,” Phexx said, knocking shoulders with Lynk. “The twins are on their way.” Phexx glanced up and over Rheland’s head. “Who’s this?”

“This has nothing to do with me, right?” Ace asked.

Rheland nodded.

“Eh, I’m nobody important. Just a starving man.”

Rheland held back a groan. “There is a computer in my office. Use it to order groceries.”

Ace saluted him and made himself scarce.

Rheland couldn’t tell if he was glad about it or not. He turned on his heels. “No reason for you to keep them in the car. They can come in.” He pointed to the kids in the car.

This would be interesting. No matter what happened, Rheland just hoped he and Lynk could repair whatever was between them.

CHAPTER FIVE



The seedy scent of sex hung off of Rheland like cologne. It was a curse and a blessing to have heightened senses. Phexx considered it a blessing right now. Phexx smirked at the vampire and watched the human as he slunk away.

“A human for the almighty king himself?” Phexx teased.

Rheland’s gaze cut to him, and Phexx’s wolf clawed at him to be released. If it were possible, he was certain Rheland would have killed him with that look alone. That only made Phexx smile even harder.

“Was it good?”

“Phexx, enough,” Lynk said.

To anyone who didn’t know Lynk, he would have sounded relaxed and maybe nonchalant. However, Phexx could hear the undertone of anger.

Ah right. Phexx shoved his teasing down. Lynk was normally a laid-back guy. It looked like his wolf was riding him hard right now. As if it was taking everything in him not to go chasing after the human and tear him to pieces.

Rheland brushed past Phexx. For a short second, sparks danced along his flesh where they touched.

“Sorry, your majesty. I’ll make sure to get on my knees and bow next time,” Phexx said.

Rheland huffed. “We both know you wouldn’t stay down there. A dog like you would be tempted to bite the hand that feeds you.”

Phexx let out a boisterous laugh. “Is that a bad thing?” He moved closer to Rheland, unable to stop wanting to be closer to the vampire. It was an abnormal pull toward him. “I know

how you vampires love biting.” Phexx bared his teeth, wanting nothing more than to take a bite out of Rheland.

The king smirked at him. “Are you saying you want a taste of me?” Rheland sidestepped Phexx and headed down the hall. “You wouldn’t last more than a few seconds, pup.”

Phexx placed a hand over his chest, acting as if he’d been physically wounded. “Bringing age into this. Low blow.”

Rheland shook his head as his grey eyes danced over to Lynk. The alpha wolf followed silently.

“Why bring him? It will only draw out whatever you have to speak to me about.”

“Ah, you don’t enjoy our little chats?” Phexx puffed out his bottom lip and tilted his head down. “That hurts my heart.”

“If you weren’t a werewolf, I would have sworn that thing was long dead,” Rheland pointed out. He turned around, and Phexx instantly missed his gaze trained on him. He jogged around the vampire and moved before him. Rheland slowed down a bit, staring at him with a cocked brow.

Since Phexx met the king, he wanted to take a bite out of him. It had been clear that Lynk and Rheland had eyes for each other and no one else. Now with the human around, maybe his original thought hadn’t been true. His alpha stole glances at Rheland, and the vampire king did the same to Lynk. It was almost comical how they both sought each other out but tiptoed away simultaneously.

Phexx twisted around and walked backward, staring at the two of them as they advanced into Rheland’s home. The smell was very much the same. The human couldn’t have been there more than a few days. His scent was light, barely noticeable.

“When did you get the human pet?” Phexx asked.

Rheland shrugged. His body stayed relaxed, but Phexx knew that was a learned behavior. There was no reading the vampire's reactions; they weren't natural. Too perfect and stiff at times.

"Two nights ago," Rheland said.

Phexx's head tilted. "Must have been an amazing night. He came home with you and got to stay."

Alpha power washed over Phexx, and he stopped in his tracks. Rheland looked at him before turning to face Lynk.

"What do you all have to talk to me about?" Rheland asked.

Lynk took a deep breath, and the pressure on Phexx's shoulders eased up. He rolled them back. It was rare for Lynk to lose any semblance of control. Even when Phexx outwardly flirted with Rheland, he never reacted in such a way. It was another thing he'd have to keep an eye on.

Phexx stopped, and Rheland halted right before their bodies collided.

Shame.

He smiled down at Rheland. The vampire was at least a foot or so shorter than him. "In a hurry to get us out of here?" Phexx leaned down, his black hair falling forward and framing his face. "We interrupt your fun time?"

The vampire's gray eyes cut to Phexx unbothered. There was a challenge that Phexx wanted to meet with claws, teeth, and blood.

"Hardly. I was feeding."

Phexx couldn't help it. His mouth opened, and the words sat heavily on his tongue. The front door opened just as the

twins came in.

Sevyn, ever the attention seeker, shouted loud enough for all to hear. Even those without enhanced hearing.

“It smells like sex. Who was fucking?”

“Sevyn, that’s inappropriate,” Havyn growled.

It was too late now. Phexx went with it and stared down at Rheland. “Yeah, your grace. What’s with the hot smell of sex if all you were doing was feeding?”

Rheland didn’t so much as bat an eye. In fact, the vampire stopped all his outwardly human reactions. He no longer pretended to breathe or blink. His movements were unnaturally smooth, as if even his bones and muscles weren’t bound by the rules that applied to everyone else.

“Sorry,” Havyn said as they caught up to them.

He avoided Rheland’s gaze. He clearly wasn’t apologizing to the king of vampires, but Lynk. Phexx glanced at his alpha, saw the danger they were encroaching on, and took a step back. Phexx was all about the fun, bloody times, but even he knew when to call it quits. His alpha was on the edge of losing the fight he was having with his wolf.

“It’s fine.” Rheland moved past Phexx once more. “Let’s get this talk over with.” To Phexx’s surprise, Rheland didn’t turn around once as they were led to the living room. The human scent was a bit stronger in there, draped over the couch but nothing more.

Rheland took a seat, and Phexx hopped over to his left side. Phexx draped an arm around his back and leaned in as close as he could. He welcomed little comforts where he could. As a werewolf, he wanted nothing more than to hold Rheland down, rub his scent all over the vampire, and then lay

on top of him. It was a marking thing that even Phexx had difficulty wrapping his head around some days.

“Havyn and Sevyn, have a seat,” Lynk ordered.

They both nodded and took the other couch. The only person left standing was Lynk, and it was clear he was avoiding the couch. Or was it Rheland? It was hard to tell at the moment.

“First thing I wanted to speak to you about is the children.”

Phexx watched Rheland like a hawk, but it was pointless. The vampire wouldn't show anything. It didn't stop him from mentally picking the man apart.

“What about them?” Rheland finally asked.

“Three of them are part vampire. Two of them are showing more signs of being more vampire than anything else. We are being supplied blood thanks to Weston, but I can't teach them how to be vampires,” Lynk said.

“And let me guess. My children are too busy to help with that.” Rheland rested his head on his hand as he sighed. It was such a human thing to do one would almost believe it.

“They are starting to crave more, and their control is slipping. Teaching them how to hold it together is easy, but as they grow stronger, they forget everyone else isn't like them,” Phexx added.

“No one is like them,” Rheland added.

Lynk nodded. “And we have a duty to help them with what we can.”

Rheland stared at Lynk for a long while. “And so, you brought them to me?”

“Yes, I know you could help them the most.” Lynk took a step forward. Once before Rheland, he lowered himself to his knees.

It was a submissive pose, and as the alpha, he was lowering himself to someone who could be a threat to their pack. It was a huge no-go for most wolves, but Lynk didn’t have the same mindset as other alphas. It was one of the reasons Phexx was more than happy to follow the man. He was willing to do anything for his pack. Even if it meant lowering himself.

“You’re serious about this?” Rheland asked.

“Yes, they are part of my pack. I’d do anything for them,” Lynk said without any hesitation.

Rheland’s fingers twitched. If Phexx hadn’t been watching the vampire so closely, he might have missed it.

“Okay, I can help, but you must understand I still believe they are a threat,” Rheland lifted his hand before anyone could object. “I understand they are children, and they didn’t pick this, but such is the way of life.” He looked at Lynk. “You took responsibility for them, and since you’re asking me to help, I will give my assistance for now.” Rheland leaned back on the couch. “I know that’s not it.”

“What gave it away, your royal highness?” Phexx asked.

“All of you are here. The only ones missing are the ones living with my children and the two who are married.”

Lynk nodded and got up. He moved to the couch and finally took a seat. The moment he did, Rheland moved subtly toward him. Phexx smothered the smirk that threatened to grace his face.

“We are in temporary need of housing.” Lynk cleared his throat. “If you’re willing, could you house us for a few months? We, of course, will pay.”

“I don’t need money,” Rheland said.

“No shit. You have too much if you ask me,” Sevyn growled.

Phexx shot the younger werewolf a glare. He had the decency to look down and away.

“What would you like for us to pay with?” Phexx grabbed Rheland’s chin, the skin soft against his fingers as he turned the vampire’s face to look up at him. His gray eyes were so dark, framed by dark lashes. There wasn’t a blemish in sight. His cheek looked baby soft.

“Money won’t do. How about our bodies?”

Rheland’s eyes widened, and he pulled free easily of Phexx’s hold. “You agree to this?” he asked Lynk.

Phexx met Lynk’s gaze over the king’s head and mentally implored his alpha to say yes. Why keep denying what he wanted? Rheland was right there. As a werewolf, the desire to take what they wanted burned through their veins. How in the hell Lynk fought against it twenty-four-seven was an anomaly.

“Yes,” Lynk said.

Rheland glanced over each of them, and Phexx held his breath. He wanted to shake the damn vampire to agree already. The closer he got to him, the better. Phexx wasn’t as strong as his alpha; he saw Rheland, and he knew he wanted the man. The only thing slowing him down was waiting for his alpha to make a move first.

“All of you?” Rheland asked.

Havyn sat up straighter and looked to Phexx and then to Lynk.

“Uh, yes, I’m okay with that.” Havyn nudged his brother.

“Now I can talk?” Sevyn grumbled. He huffed as if he had better things to do. He was a constant handful; him and Karter both. “Yeah, sure, why not.”

“At least one of you needs a muzzle,” Rheland said.

All eyes fell on him, but the vampire stood without a care in the world. “Okay. I’m not a huge fan of bagged blood anyway. I’ll drink when and wherever I want. In exchange, your pack can be housed here along with the assistance of your vampire hybrids.” Rheland offered his hand, and Lynk took it.

“We get to pick any room?” Sevyn asked.

“Except the one that housed your clothes. I gave that one to Ace. Any others are up for grabs.”

Phexx grinned. “So, your pet’s name is Ace?”

“Who the hell is that?” Sevyn asked.

Rheland looked ready to throttle Phexx, but he didn’t move. One day he would push the vampire so far they’d come to blows. There would be pain and hopefully blood. Lots of it.

CHAPTER SIX



This couldn't be happening. The idea of pinching himself or even piercing his flesh with his fang flashed before him. The pain would tell Rheland if he was in some strange dream. First, Frode's doppelganger, and then the werewolf pack asking to move in? The stars couldn't be more aligned for him.

"I am no one's pet," Ace said. He sauntered in, holding a pizza box. "Uh, there were kids outside. I told them to come have some pizza, and they said something about their alpha or another." Ace popped open the box, and the room was flooded with the smell of cooked dough and cheese.

Lynk approached him. "You went near my pack members?"

Ace froze with the slice of pizza halfway to his mouth. A whiff of fear drifted from Ace before it dissipated. He shrugged. "Ordered pizza and offered it to the kids. Figured it had to be better than sitting in a car."

Lynk stared at Ace for a long while as the room filled with tension. Rheland wasn't sure what to do. Ace was someone new in his life, but he couldn't exactly allow Lynk to kill the human either. Very little riled Lynk up or even made him upset. The number one thing was his pack members.

"Is he feeding you?" Phexx asked.

Ace blinked and brought his pizza to his lips finally. "Eh, he tried to give me milk. This is the first real food in a while."

Phexx's nose scrunched up. "Why milk?"

Rheland shrugged. "Don't humans enjoy it?"

"No," they all said in unison. Even Lynk glanced at Rheland as if he were insane.

He made a mental note that none of them seemed to like it. “But doesn’t it make your bones stronger?” He was pretty certain he’d heard it once upon a time.

Ace laughed. “Man, how long has it been since you were a human? The early seventies?” He shook his head as he ate his pizza.

The werewolves in the room turned to look at Rheland expectantly.

“I’ve never been,” Rheland said nonchalantly.

Ace stopped mid-chew as if the knowledge had shocked him. “What?” His mouth was stuffed with cheese.

“Rheland, you’re not supposed to tell anyone,” Lynk growled.

Oh, how I missed that voice. Nothing compared to Lynk growling; it was deep and menacing in the best way.

“Tell me what exactly?” Ace asked.

Phexx got up and snatched the box from the human. He groaned. “Could have at least sprung for the meat lovers.”

“Hey.” Ace snatched the box back. “Want your own pizza? Order it. I offered to share with the kids, not you.” He looked at Rheland, and the vampire knew the human was mentally putting two and two together.

“I could just kill you and take the pizza,” Phexx offered. He smiled like a madman.

Ace didn’t so much as bat an eye at the offer. “You will have to wait. I signed a contract in blood.” He waved his hand in the air. “Obligations come first and death second.” He grinned. “Unfortunately.”

Rheland was starting to think the luck was more bad than good. Already he could feel the tension rising in his shoulders. A few minutes in their company and he saw the future. Mundane fights between two who had a death wish that he had no plans on granting.

“I’ll hold you to that,” Phexx said.

Rheland vamp sped over to them before it could go any further. The next thing they would do was set a damn date for the execution. He was between them in the blink of an eye. His hand rested on each of their chests.

“If you two don’t stop, I will make a meal out of one of you and a pelt out of the other.”

“Oh, baby, you want to wear my fur?” Phexx growled. He looked pleased with himself.

“Neck or thigh?” Ace asked. He pressed against Rheland’s hand. “Or I can always give you another snack. Can’t say it’s the worst way to feed a vampire.”

They couldn’t be serious right now, right? Rheland’s body heated up. He was actually thinking about it. He shook his head free of his twisting thoughts.

“Phexx,” Lynk called.

The werewolf pulled back, and the burning heat pressed against Rheland disappeared. It was almost jarring to no longer have him there. Rheland’s fingers curled in as if trying to protect the little warmth that lingered behind them.

Ace was next taking a step back, breaking his contact with Rheland. The vampire shoved the strange feeling it invoked in him down.

“Just to be clear, you all are werewolves, right?” Ace asked.

“Have you been living under a rock?” Sevyn asked.

Havyn and Sevyn stood. Rheland hadn't noticed when they'd gotten up, let alone moved closer. He blinked and glanced around. All of them stood closer to him but not enough for his liking. How insane was it that he wanted them even closer, pressed up against him so he could be surrounded by heat and hear the multitude of their pounding heartbeats?

It's probably the hunger. Just thinking about it made his stomach growl.

“Didn't know vampires' stomachs could make that noise,” Havyn said.

Rheland placed a hand over his. They normally didn't, but Rheland was a different case. His hunger far outweighed any standard vampires. He could easily drink an entire town's population without getting drunk off the blood. It wasn't the sanest thing to do, but it could be done.

The idea of sinking his fangs into a throat and drinking until nothing but a twitching, bloody mess and dying heart was left made him salivate.

“Rheland.”

Lynk's deep, smooth voice broke through the bloodlust fog threatening to overtake him. Fire burned his chin as his head was tilted back and forced to look into bright brown eyes. It was like looking at molten lava, devastating but unable to turn away.

“What's happening?”

Rheland couldn't even tell who it was who'd asked. He was transfixed by Lynk and captured by his hunger. Lynk looked away, and the binding hold broke. Rheland's gaze dropped, landing squarely on Lynk's thrumming pulse. It took little effort to listen to his blood rush and how his heart thumped. The deep, grounding sound made Rheland's gums ache.

His fangs dropped down on their own.

"I don't know," Lynk answered.

Rheland moved closer to him, seeking out the fire that burned just under his deep brown flesh. *I want to taste him again.* How long had it been since he had Lynk's rich blood coating his tongue and filling his stomach? Too long to count.

"He's hungry." Phexx jerked Rheland's face toward him, and the vampire hissed in annoyance.

It was short-lived. The strong smell of blood radiated off Phexx like an expensive cologne. It was what drew Rheland's attention to him from the start. Right now, as his hunger took over his mind, all he wanted to do was slam the werewolf down and tear into his throat. Gorge himself in the deliciousness that was Phexx's blood.

"He looks like he's about to eat you," Sevyn said. His head peeked over Phexx's shoulder and drew Rheland's attention.

So many choices. It was like an all-you-can-eat buffet. It reminded Rheland of the old days when werewolves were nothing more than dogs for him to use.

"Your grace, are you home?" Phexx asked.

Why was he such a tease, always addressing Rheland in such a way? He had to know what it did to the vampire. It both

pissed him off and turned him on. Another annoyance from the man.

Heat surrounded Rheland; it was like being bathed in sunlight. He was dragged back, and his spine was set on fire as Lynk's scent surrounded him.

"I thought you ate," Lynk said.

"I was just the appetizer," Ace answered.

Rheland looked around. He could see them all and their varying reactions to him but talking was impossible. It was taking everything in him right now not to kill them all. His instincts screamed for him to tear into each of them.

"Do you need to eat?" Lynk asked.

The concern in his voice might have been Rheland's fragile brain making it up. He was uncertain, but he could hold onto the hope of it being true. He glanced over his shoulder, opened his mouth, and ran his tongue over his fangs. The sharp edge cut his tongue, and the taste of his own blood greeted his taste buds.

Fresh blood perfumed the air, and Rheland's head snapped forward. Crimson liquid dripped down Phexx's forearm to the floor. Time slowed down as he watched a single drop crash to the ground.

Rheland broke free of Lynk's hold with little to no effort and had Phexx slammed to the couch in seconds. He straddled the werewolf and sank his fangs into his arm. It wasn't gentle in the least, but still, Phexx moaned. His blue eyes captured Rheland's, and they stayed locked in a stare as Rheland devoured his blood.

He greedily swallowed down and sucked mouthful after mouthful of blood. It was so good. Phexx's blood was spicy

with a hint of wildness. It coated Rheland's tongue, and he wanted so badly to suck the werewolf dry.

“Rheland.”

His name being called was nothing more than a distant sound. Now that he had started, he couldn't stop. Skipping out on eating for an entire night wasn't the best decision, not while his hunger was at an all-time high.

Rheland couldn't have predicted the outcome even if he could magically see into the future. Hands grabbed at him, and he shoved them away. The sound of wood splintering and drywall cracking was nothing more than an annoyance. He swallowed down more rich blood and groaned around the mouthful of flesh in his mouth.

Phexx's thick lashes fluttered, but he never broke eye contact. “Shit, you're taking a lot.”

I need to stop. Instead of Rheland listening, he pushed his fangs in deeper and sucked harder.

“Fuck or double down,” Phexx moaned. He thrust up, his hard cock rubbing against Rheland's ass.

Even sexual desire wasn't enough to pull Rheland from his hunger. Again, hands tried to drag him away. Rheland's fangs were yanked free, and displeasure rained down on him.

“Sit!” Rheland could feel the moment his eyes changed red, and his power was forced out.

“Uh fuck,” Sevyn swore.

He hit the ground hard, and Havyn was only a few spots away from him. Even Ace was sitting on the ground, the pizza box turned upside down on the floor. He stared at Rheland in

confusion. Lynk sat the closest. He'd been the one to remove Rheland's fangs from Phexx's flesh.

"Rheland—"

"Silence," Rheland demanded.

Mouths snapped shut as his power rushed out like a crashing wave. He needed more. Phexx groaned under him. His eyelids were low, but he was still staring at Rheland as if he hung the moon they howled to at night.

Rheland brought his mouth back down to the punctured wounds and let out his own groan as he sucked in more blood. Phexx's heartbeat slowed slightly, but it wasn't gone. He listened keenly, not wanting to miss the moment it stopped.

Growling was the only warning Rheland received before he was tackled. Fur and a hard body crashed into him. Teeth and claws scraped over his skin as he was dragged off Phexx onto the floor.

Rheland blinked as he stared up at a huge wolf face. White hair with bright brown eyes stared down at him. Lynk growled at him, and Rheland slowly came to his senses. He forced his fangs back in and stared at Lynk in confusion.

How in the hell did he break my compulsion? The sound of broken bones and groaning was all Rheland could focus on as Lynk shifted in front of him.

"What the hell was that?" Lynk growled.

Rheland didn't even know where to start, not when Lynk was naked and draped over him, still caging him in. Rheland's gaze roamed over his impressive chest and down his cut torso before he was forced to meet Lynk's eyes once more.

“Rheland,” Lynk growled. He looked angry, and shit, it made him look even hotter.

“My hunger.” Rheland licked his lips and moaned instantly at the taste of Phexx’s blood.

“What about it? I’ve never seen you like this. Is it because your guards are no longer here?”

Is he concerned? Rheland wanted to ask but kept the question at bay for fear of the werewolf shooting him down. Again.

“No, it has nothing to do with them. It happens from time to time.” He lifted his hand and pressed it against Lynk’s chest. Why did they have to run so hot? Rheland had the stupid notion of curling up against Lynk’s chest and closing his eyes, resting like he’d seen so many of them do before.

In all his years, there was only one thing he wished was different for vampire kind. He’d wanted them to be as close nit as werewolf packs were. When he’d observed werewolves, they all clung to their people, offering comfort and connections. Vampires were lonesome creatures, and the best Rheland could achieve was dens. They were only a pack’s mock version.

“You lost control,” Lynk said.

It wasn’t a question, and so Rheland wouldn’t treat it like one. He pushed a little harder, and the werewolf moved back just slightly enough for him to sit up. Rheland was the king of vampires. Having no control was nothing more than shame on him.

“Rheland,” Lynk called.

Stop calling my name. It did things to Rheland he wasn’t exactly sure about. It made him want to submit to the wolf,

which was out of the question. He could play with them and even bend over for them but submitting was out of the question.

“Everyone out,” Lynk ordered.

Rheland’s power had fizzled away, and he’d shoved it deep down. It took so much more energy out of him to use it. To his surprise, Phexx rolled off the couch and groaned.

“Fuck, going to have blue balls.” He readjusted himself and winked at Rheland. “Next time, your majesty.” He smiled as if he hadn’t been close to dying. “Next time, I get to bite you.”

Rheland couldn’t control his reaction; he’d been too caught up in the shock. Phexx laughed as Havyn and Sevyn each took an arm, and they left out of the living room.

“Come on, pet,” Phexx shouted.

“Not a pet,” Ace grumbled. His green eyes bore into Rheland. Still, the human said nothing as he stood up and grabbed his pizza box. He exited the room along with the werewolves, leaving Lynk and Rheland behind.

“Want to tell me what’s happening?”

How could he sound so calm and collected right now? Rheland looked at the werewolf before averting his gaze. “While you’re naked?”

“You’ve seen me naked more times than you’ve seen me clothed.”

True, but Rheland had things to distract him back then. Like fighting his brother. He grunted, and Lynk sighed. He reached back, tugged the small blanket off the couch, and draped it over his lap.

“Going to start talking?” Lynk asked.

“Are you demanding that I do?” Rheland asked.

Lynk shrugged. “No, and don’t start that. It’s just the two of us.”

And there lies the issue. Rheland sighed. It shouldn’t be so easy to drop his guard with someone, let alone a werewolf. Lynk wasn’t even in his hundreds, yet Rheland felt more relaxed with him than when surrounded by vampires that followed his every command.

“After the war, I used a lot of my power, and in doing so, I’ve awakened my true hunger.” Rheland glanced at Lynk, trying to gauge the wolf’s thoughts. “It has happened in the past a few times. It will pass in a year or so.”

“What did you do in the past to help?”

Rheland’s spine stiffened. “That’s—”

“Never mind,” Lynk said. He placed a hand on Rheland’s shoulder. “You don’t have to talk about it.”

Was it pity? Did Rheland have the energy to turn it down? No, he didn’t want to dredge up the past or the choices he’d made. There was nothing he could do about his past except learn and move forward. With each decade that passed, he changed. No one was ever perfect. However, the things Rheland had done weren’t exactly forgivable. He feared that if Lynk ever learned of the amount of blood at his feet, he’d want nothing to do with Rheland.

“How can I help?” Lynk asked.

“You want to help after you saw what happened with Phexx?”

“You weren’t in control.” Lynk ran his hand over the tight coils on top of his head. “Is it always like that?”

“It can be,” Rheland said. He gave up willing information to Lynk; it shouldn’t be so easy, yet it was. “As long as I feed regularly, that won’t happen again.”

“We can do that.” Lynk stood up and offered a hand to Rheland. “We offer you blood, and in exchange, we get to stay here until I find a suitable place for my pack.”

So, eventually, you will leave. Rheland stared at his hand for a few seconds before he took it. He was in no position to resist. Werewolves were the ideal food during these times. He just hadn’t expected them to come willingly this time.

“All of you?” Rheland asked.

Lynk shrugged. “Havyn, Sevyn, and Phexx have already agreed to it. We weren’t sure what to offer you for this but trading a place for blood is simple.”

“Okay.” Rheland finally gave in; there was nothing else he could do. Why should he resist? He was receiving more than he could have asked for, even if it was temporary.

CHAPTER SEVEN



“Lucky, give it back!”

Ace was up in seconds as his door swung open, and two children ran in. One hopped up on his bed and jumped off the other side, trying his hardest to dodge his brother.

“Lucky!” the other twin shouted. His eyes flickered red. Before any of them knew it, he was on the other side, tackling his brother.

Ace blinked a few times. They had to be no more than ten, maybe eleven. He slipped free of bed and glanced over at the door. No one had come for them yet. He sighed and squatted down next to them.

“What are you two fighting about?” As if they noticed him for the first time, both boys’ eyes widened, and they scrambled back.

Ace stayed still. He noticed the fear in their eyes. He was certain they’d been in the car last night, but he hadn’t seen them past the teenagers. He waved, trying to make himself seem less threatening. If he was even considered a threat. Ace was pretty confident the children weren’t human.

Call it a sixth sense or whatever, but Ace had always been able to tell when someone was more of a danger to him than he was to them.

Both kids looked around, and Ace watched them. It was like looking at caged animals. They were searching for a way out. He lifted both hands slowly and sat down on his ass. “Not going to hurt you, but you two did wake me up. Just figured maybe I could help you solve your problem.”

The one who’d come in running, who Ace was certain was called Lucky, spoke first. “You’re the human who offered us pizza.”

Ace nodded. “Yeah, and sorry about the state of the remaining pizza. Some stuff happened, and it ended up flipped upside down.” Ace grabbed the back of his neck, still remembering the force that had shoved him down on the ground. It had felt like he’d been nothing more than a rag doll. He shook the strange feeling off his body and focused on the kids instead.

They reminded him of Logan when he was that little. How long had that been? Two, three years top? Ace’s smile wavered.

“Are you okay?” the other twin asked.

Ace nodded. “Mind telling me what the argument was about?”

They both seemed to have calmed down since running into Ace’s room.

“Lucky took my book.”

“He won’t play outside with me,” Lucky argued back.

“The sun is annoying.”

The two sounded as if they were about to start arguing again. Ace clapped his hands, and they both jumped. *Skittish*.

“What if you play inside?”

“We might wake the king up,” Lucky said.

King? Ace’s head tilted to the right as he remembered yesterday that one of the werewolves kept calling Rheland majesty or king. Wasn’t that just a joke?

“Rheland?” Ace asked.

Both twins nodded. As if to ensure Rheland wasn’t standing at the door, they both glanced over at it.

“King of what?” Ace asked.

“Vampires, duh,” Lucky said.

What now? Ace had never heard that information before. In fact, in all the interviews with the prince of vampires, they said there was no power above them. *Why am I even shocked?* Vampires lied just like humans. It was starting to make sense now with Rheland’s comment about never being human. So many questions circled Ace’s mind that it was impossible to ignore them.

“It’s daytime. Vampires sleep during the day.” He’d checked already. Rheland slept like the dead. Ace had been forced to watch him; well, not forced, but there had been little else to do besides watch television. The vampire was far more interesting.

“You don’t know much, do you?” Lucky’s twin shoved him.

“He’s human. We aren’t supposed to say anything.”

“Like?” Ace asked.

Both boys shut their mouths, and he couldn’t help but laugh.

“It’s okay. You don’t have to tell me.” Ace moved, and both boys flinched. His brows dipped. “I’m hungry now that I’m awake. Figured I’d make some breakfast.” He got up slowly, and the boy’s eyes never strayed from him.

“What are you making?” one of the twins asked.

Shit, what *was* he making? He figured food was the easiest and safest way of moving off the floor. He was young, but even he was in pain after his ass started going numb. “Hmm, I’m not sure. Thinking of an omelet.”

“Pancakes too?” Lucky asked. He looked at his brother. “Leo likes chocolate chip ones.”

Leo and Lucky. Cute. Ace nodded. “Then chocolate chip for the win.”

Both boys stood up and followed Ace at a safe distance. He didn’t force them to catch up or slow down. He let them have their moment, although they were terrible at whispering.

“We shouldn’t be doing this. Alpha will be upset,” Leo whispered.

“Everyone is asleep, and Faith isn’t coming over today,” Lucky said.

They were both quiet for a second.

“He’s human,” Lucky whispered.

“I know. Phexx said he’s a pet of the king’s.”

Ace groaned. “Not a pet.” Damn werewolf. Was it his thing to piss people off? If so, he was doing a fine job getting under Ace’s skin.

Both boys stopped just outside of the open kitchen, their eyes as big as saucers.

A sigh slipped free.

“Then what are you?” another voice joined in.

Ace remembered him from the night before. Another set of twins. Havyn, or was he Sevyn?

“Havyn!” Both boys shouted as they ran toward the man. He scooped them up and took them to the table.

“What are you making?” Havyn asked.

“There was a request for chocolate chip pancakes, and I make a pretty decent omelet,” Ace said.

Havyn rolled up the sleeves of his shirt and washed his hands. “I’ll help.”

“Uh, thanks, but it’s not a lot.”

Havyn side-eyed him. “There is an entire pack here. We may be small, but we eat like wolves.”

As if to give Havyn’s words some weight, Lucky howled. Ace glanced at the little boy at the table, laughing.

“Okay, so the entire pack then.” He hadn’t exactly bought enough. Yeah, Ace wanted Rheland to feed him proper food and the vampire all but gave him free rein of his credit card. He’d kept it as reasonable as possible.

If there was one thing Ace knew how to do after all his years of living the poor life was how to stretch some food.

“Alright, let’s do this. How many mouths exactly are we talking about here?”

Havyn counted off each kid and adult that would be eating. Ace’s eyes widened. It wasn’t exactly a huge pack. He’d heard some had over two hundred members, but it was still a lot. Ace hadn’t been around so many people outside of work in a long while.

“Guess I will need your help then.” Ace grabbed some ingredients. Surprisingly, it was easy to work with Havyn. The man moved around him easily, as if he was used to working around others.

Maybe it was a twin thing? Yesterday it had seemed as if his twin drew most of the attention even though it had been the bad kind.

They were nearly done making copious amounts of food when the other kids started to roll in. The teens groaned and took seats at the table. Sevyn dropped in, yawning as he went right to his brother. Conversations flowed around them.

“Oh, good. The pet knows how to cook. Was starting to think you weren’t trained,” Phexx said.

Ace glared at the tattooed asshole before him. Phexx’s blue eyes shimmered with mischief that Ace had no business falling prey to.

Still, the bait was juicy, and who was Ace to turn down stupidity at its finest? “Says the one who needs to wear a collar.”

Phexx’s smile widened. “Try and put one on me, and it will be the last time you have functioning hands.”

Ace didn’t doubt Phexx’s threat, but he still met the werewolf head-on. “Oh, but if Rheland places one on you, then you’ll bark like a good doggy, right?”

Phexx’s eyes lowered, and the hairs on Ace’s arms stood to attention.

“Phexx.” Lynk walked in.

There were always people like him who commanded a room with ease, and Ace had always been able to slip under their radar and ignore them. However, that wasn’t the case with Lynk.

His gaze landed on Ace instantly. It was impossible to hold the man’s stare for longer than a few seconds.

“Who got up with the twins?” Lynk asked.

Everyone looked around and shrugged.

Havyn answered. “Ace was already here with them when I came out of the room.”

Surprise showed on Lynk’s face as he turned to face the human. “Thank you.”

Ace shrugged. It wasn’t a big deal. He was just as hungry as them. And they reminded him of his little brother when everything had been good.

“I hope they didn’t wake you up,” Lynk said. His voice was deep but held a soft edge. Far different than the reaction Ace had received the night before.

Was it because he’d woken up with the kids, or was this Lynk’s natural personality? The others around Lynk seemed to gravitate toward him, and he touched them all. A hand on a shoulder, ruffling another’s hair, or outright receiving hugs. They all seemed so close. It was like they were family.

A pang in the middle of Ace’s chest radiated outward, and he wanted nothing more than to scratch at it. To make it go away as fast as possible. He had no desire to examine what was happening inside of him.

Ace took a step back and headed out of the kitchen.

“You haven’t eaten,” Lynk said before he could make it far.

Ace shook his head. “I’ll be fine. I normally don’t eat until later in the afternoon anyway.” He slipped free before he could be pulled back into the kitchen. It started to feel suffocating and not in a bad way.

So many people, and Ace had almost felt slightly comfortable around them. He was losing his shit, and it had only been a few days since he’d been brought there. He needed to stay focused, to remember this was a mean to an

end. Six months and he'd be out of there. There was no reason for him to be sucked in.

CHAPTER EIGHT



Sounds of children laughing and others talking surrounded him. A smile tugged at the corners of Rheland's mouth as he opened his eyes. He could have woken up sooner, but it wasn't worth the energy drain it would cause. The moment he sat up, his door opened.

"Things got a bit hectic yesterday," Lynk said, waltzing into Rheland's room as if he owned the place.

The vampire watched as Lynk sat down on the bed's side. What would it take to drag him into the bed and convince him to give in to their shared desires?

"So, it did," Rheland said.

Lynk stared at him as if he expected more, but Rheland had nothing for him. He'd given all the explanations that he had the night before.

"Each of us signed our contracts," Lynk said.

Rheland had been so taken by Lynk in his room that he hadn't noticed the stack of papers he held. He passed them over. Each of the pack members received their contract. All except the children.

The vampire glanced over them and froze as he reached Phexx's. The sneaky wolf added some extra shit onto his contract. He'd added in his body, not just his blood. Rheland had thought it was a joke, but he should have known better. The others were standard. No one else had changed anything, not even Lynk.

"Okay."

"It can start now," Lynk said.

Rheland looked up from the papers. "You're going first?"

Lynk stared at him as if it was common sense. “Yes, and if the others are busy or unable, come find me. I will give you what you need.”

Lynk had to know what he was doing to Rheland, right? The werewolf was gentle in ways Rheland never thought he'd crave. There was a side to Lynk that Rheland wanted even more. The beasts that were unleashed when the man truly let loose on his desires. Heat swam in the pit of his stomach as memories attempted to flood his mind.

“I'll eat later,” Rheland said. If he weren't careful, he'd tackle Lynk and shove the man's massive cock inside of him.

Displeasure was written all over Lynk's face, but he kept his mouth shut.

That won't last long.

Rheland stood out of bed and vamp sped to the bathroom. He dressed and met Lynk outside of his room the moment he was ready.

“I need to introduce you to the children.”

Need? Rheland kept the comment to himself. “Vampire hybrids first. There is very little I can do with werewolves or witches.”

“Come on,” Lynk said as he led the way.

Rheland was just fine letting the huge man lead. He occupied his time admiring the taut lines of Lynk's back and how the t-shirt clung to his body.

Lucky piece of fabric.

Saliva pooled in Rheland's mouth the more he took him in and the more his imagination ran wild. The thought of running

his tongue over every inch of Lynk's body and scraping his fangs over the hard muscles made him hard before he knew it.

Rheland forced his gaze away, wanting to think about something other than his undying lust for Lynk.

They stopped at one of the many open rooms. The curtains were drawn, letting in the moonlight. It was nowhere near as bright as a full moon, but it still bathed the area in a beautiful glow.

"Where is Ace?" Rheland asked.

Lynk visibly stiffened before he answered. "He left this afternoon and hasn't been back since."

It felt as if there was more he wanted to say. Nothing else came out of Lynk's mouth.

"Are you jealous?" Rheland asked. He moved closer to Lynk.

The werewolf stared down at him. "Why should I be?"

Rheland shrugged. "Then why do you growl every time Ace is brought up?"

"He is an outsider."

"So am I."

Lynk was already shaking his head before Rheland could even finish talking.

Don't get happy over something so stupid

Rheland shrugged. "I'm not part of your pack."

Lynk opened his mouth and snapped it shut. He glanced away, and Rheland felt as if he'd both lost and won.

"Alpha." A soft voice greeted.

Rheland glanced over. There wasn't one, but multiple children. Their heart rates varied. Some sounded unique, unlike anything he'd ever heard before. One was exceptionally slow. The girl with red hair. Her heartbeat was that of a drum, but it only thumped every few seconds as if it was coming to a stop.

"Come in," Lynk said.

They moved closer, their gazes locked on Rheland. Although most people saw Rheland and thought he was some weak creature, the children didn't look at him as such. They seemed far warier than most.

Rheland suppressed the smile that notion tried to draw out of him. It was probably because they remembered he'd planned on killing them.

"Your majesty," the redhead said. She bent at the waist, and the others followed her example.

Rheland looked at Lynk. Had he told the children to act this way? One glance at the werewolf dismissed that thought instantly. He looked perplexed by their behavior.

"You don't have to bow," Rheland said. He grabbed onto the persona he tended to use around others. He was young and calm.

The redhead lifted her head along with the other children.

"You want us to kneel?" the one with deep brown skin asked.

What? Rheland thought about it for a few seconds and remembered they'd been in a lab under his brother's direction. They undoubtedly were forced to kiss the ground he walked on. His brother could never overcome the fact that humans stopped worshiping them as gods.

“No, none of that is necessary. Treat me how you would treat Lynk,” Rheland said.

Their eyes went wide, but none of them argued with him. It was easier that way. It was clear they respected the alpha wolf, and honestly, Rheland hated the overly formal crap. He did it because vampires were creatures who needed structure and a firm leash on the monsters they were.

Lynk stepped forward with a smile. Rheland’s stomach flipped when he noticed it had been aimed his way. It was stupid what a simple grin from the werewolf could do to him.

“This is Sattin, Joben, Lucky, and Leo,” Lynk said.

All four children were stiff as boards as they stood before Rheland. It was like they were trying to disappear, but there was nothing for them to sink into.

“All have vampire traits?” Rheland asked. He stared at the youngest two. The older ones were okay. It still went against his rule of turning children, but they weren’t so young that their minds would be warped into madness and death the longer they lived.

“Yes.”

Sattin, the one with bright red ringlets, cleared her throat. “I know you can help us the most.”

She sounded so sure of herself. If Rheland weren’t mistaken, she was a seer of some sort. “No future is ever set in stone. There are always multiple possibilities.”

Sattin nodded. “Yes, I know.” Her voice dipped down to nothing but a whisper. “They will get older.” She said, pointing to the twins.

Rheland cocked a brow; they'd been his biggest worry. To remain in a ten-year-old body but age mentally was torture. There were limitations placed upon them. As their mind and hormones grew, they'd be driven to bloody madness and forced to repress what they didn't understand.

“For how long?”

Sattin's nose scrunched up, and her eyes glazed over for a second before they cleared once more. “I don't know.”

Disappointing.

She moved forward, still keeping a distance between them. “I do know they at least grow to the age of eighteen. After that, there are too many gateways, and it's too hard for me to see.”

Rheland kept his surprise to himself as he looked at the children. They weren't going to become an issue. Well, not in the way he thought they would. Only time would tell if they would cause other problems.

“Who's training you?” Rheland asked.

Sattin shook her head. “The coven here no longer exists. It's just Finnely right now, and seeing isn't his specialty. I mainly read books and focus on the flow of magic.”

Rheland looked at the other teenager. He was lanky with dark brown skin and curly black hair.

Joben practically jumped. “I'm studying with Finnely. I can enhance stuff. I'm not great at it yet, but Finnely says I'm improving every day.”

“How much blood do each of you need?” Rheland asked.

“I only need it two to three times a week. Depending on if the visions are stronger than usual, I may need more,” Sattin

said.

Joben was next as he stepped forward. His arms stayed at his side. Rheland had the distinct feeling that any movement from him would make the boy would react instantly. He did his best to stay stock still.

“Once a week. I prefer regular food but mixing in some blood does help.”

“Does it taste bad to you?” Rheland asked. Trying to understand the children and their unique needs would be a challenge. They weren’t standard vampires or even witches. Each of them was a mix of something.

Joben glanced over Rheland’s shoulder to Lynk, and the vampire shoved down the annoyance. His own sired children would never.

“Go ahead and answer him,” Lynk said.

Rheland smiled, hoping that helped speed it along and made them feel even more at ease.

“It tastes okay. It’s kind of like drinking orange juice every day. It can get boring,” Joben answered.

“Same for you three?” Rheland asked the other children.

Sattin shook her head. “I prefer blood over regular food. I get sick if I eat too much of the other stuff. Blood doesn’t do that to me.”

“It’s gross and slimy sometimes,” Lucky said. His nose scrunched up in distaste, and he looked at his brother. “Right, Leo?”

The more subdued twin hesitated with his answer. “I like it.”

Lucky made a gagging sound. Lynk cleared his throat, and the boy stopped instantly.

“Okay, so two of you prefer blood, and the other two need it when necessary. What about fresh blood, or is this all based on bags?”

“Bags,” Lynk answered. He glanced at the children before meeting Rheland’s gaze. “We weren’t sure how to teach the children to drink fresh blood. Not to mention only Sattin’s fangs have dropped, but it was only one time.”

Rheland nodded. “Guess that will be the first step.” He tapped a slender finger against his chin. “We can do this tomorrow night, so get plenty of rest during the day.”

“Faith will be here soon. Get ready to do your schoolwork,” Lynk said.

“Yes, alpha.” They each bowed to Rheland before they left the room.

“I expected them to be a bit rowdier,” Rheland said truthfully.

Lynk laughed. “They can be. They are just...”

“Scared,” Rheland said. He’d have to be blind, deaf, and stupid not to notice. “Can’t blame them.”

“They will get more comfortable around you as time passes,” Lynk said. He rested a heavy hand on Rheland’s shoulder, and it instantly grounded him. “They were skittish with the pack members and me at first too. They’re good kids.”

Good didn’t matter in the world they lived in. Rheland bit the inside of his cheek and nodded. If Lynk saw that they were

good and not a threat to their flimsy peace with humans, then Rheland would believe him for now.

“You’ve taken to the fathering role with ease,” Rheland commented.

A smile graced Lynk’s face, and it felt like Rheland was looking at the sun. He squinted and persevered, unable to look away from the werewolf.

“They are great kids, and I don’t know. I’ve always liked the idea of having children one day.”

“Why didn’t you?” Rheland asked.

Lynk looked away. “I was turned. After that, I never thought about it.”

Rheland wanted to ask how he’d been turned, but it wasn’t exactly a question one asked a werewolf. The majority had layers of trauma wrapped around the night they were changed.

Lynk shook his head and faced Rheland once more. “You need to eat.”

One time the werewolf witnessed him lose control, and now it felt as if he was obsessed with it.

“I spoke to Weston—”

“You called one of my sired children on me?” Rheland couldn’t figure out if he was annoyed or intrigued. “And what did he say?”

“That feeding from each of us daily would help you.” Lynk’s gaze bore into Rheland’s. He knew there was no reason to deny the truth, not after last night.

“How is Phexx?”

“Your majesty, did I just hear my name come out of your mouth?” the devil himself asked. He sauntered over to them, his tattooed arms on full display and his jet-black hair pulled back.

He shouldn't be so damn pretty.

“I personally would prefer it if you moaned or even screamed my name.”

Rheland didn't know what to do with Phexx. One look at Lynk said he was just as lost.

“Rheland was just asking how you were,” Lynk said.

“I'm great. Why? Did I taste that good? You want another bite?”

Yes. Rheland kept his mouth shut.

“Not tonight.”

“What?” Phexx growled. He looked angry, as if Lynk had told him to shovel cow shit for the night.

“He nearly drained you yesterday. It's not up for debate,” Lynk said. His matter-of-fact tone left little to no argument.

Rheland watched as Phexx's shoulders dropped, and he nodded. “Yes, alpha.” The man might be a wild card and a bit of a nutcase mentally, but it was clear he respected Lynk.

“I'm about to feed Rheland. Watch over everything.”

What? Rheland's head whipped to the side as he stared at the man. He would feed from Lynk? It would happen sooner or later, but he hadn't expected it so soon. Lynk had made such a habit of avoiding him, and now he would feed him.

Rheland's gums tingled. The urge to tackle the huge man down right then and there rode him hard.

“Oh.” Phexx smirked at them. “Just feeding, or should I get the kids outside for a group activity?”

“Go, Phexx,” Lynk ordered.

The beta wolf groaned. “You two need to give in already.”

I wish. Rheland kept his mouth sealed shut as Phexx left them alone. Lynk led him to the small loveseat, and they sat. Their knees knocked together, and it felt like Rheland was hooked to a live wire. Pulses of electricity warmed him from the inside.

Lynk pulled his shirt off, and Rheland swore under his breath. The universe was testing his fucking sanity. He swallowed back the drool before he made a fool of himself.

“I can bite anywhere?” Rheland asked. He normally took and thought about it later. However, with Lynk, it was like walking on ice and hoping not to fall and bust his ass.

Lynk nodded, and Rheland closed his eyes for a second before grabbing the werewolf’s arm. He pulled Lynk close and brought his mouth to the man’s pulse. His heartbeat thumped against Rheland’s lips and called to him like a siren to a sailor.

His fangs dropped, and he scraped them over Lynk’s flesh. Hands gripped his waist and pulled him closer. Every nerve ending pulsed to life, and Rheland was far hungrier for something other than Lynk’s blood.

His stomach clenched, and Rheland didn’t want to wait anymore. His fangs sank in like a knife in butter. Warm blood gushed into his mouth and slid down his throat like fine wine.

More. A muffled moan left him as he held Lynk tighter, unwilling to let the werewolf go. He could drink him dry, but then he would never have Lynk again. The latter thought was far too depressing and kept his bloodlust at bay.

Rheland pulled back, his fangs still covered in Lynk's blood. He collected every drop, reluctant to allow any of it to go to waste. Lynk's thumb wiped over the corner of his mouth. Without thought, Rheland captured his wrist and sucked the small droplet of blood off the werewolf's thumb.

Tension grew hotter between them, making it impossible to ignore it. Rheland glanced up through his lashes and froze in place. Lynk's eyes shimmered with the gold flecks of his wolf as he stared at Rheland. The vampire felt like nothing more than a rabbit caught in a tiger's gaze. One wrong move, and he'd be devoured.

No matter how badly Rheland wanted to be shredded to pieces by the alpha wolf, he also wanted it to be more than just instincts. He desired the passion and soft caresses that came with having Lynk close.

"Thank you," Rheland said once he released Lynk's wrist. The werewolf sucked in a breath. His pulse thrummed so loudly it might as well be on surround sound.

"Anytime," Lynk said as he stood up.

Rheland missed the heat he provided instantly. Before he knew it, he grabbed Lynk again and halted the man's retreat.

"What? Are you still hungry?"

Rheland let out a dry laugh. "You have no idea." He reluctantly released Lynk.

"You can take more."

Rheland shook his head; it wouldn't stop the burning need to have Lynk or the desire to be at the werewolf's mercy again.

"Rheland." Lynk's tall frame cast a shadow over Rheland as he moved closer.

Lynk's phone dinged. He pulled it out of his pocket, the moment ruined before it could truly begin. Lynk's eyebrows creased together, and his lips turned down in a frown.

"I have to go. I wasn't planning on leaving so soon—"

"Go. I won't maim the kids," Rheland said.

Lynk went stiff and stared at him.

"Right, not a good joke." Rheland pushed his fingers through his hair. Why was he such a mess when it came to Lynk? He could be confident. Hell, he was the king of vampires. Still, when faced with Lynk, he was no better than a twenty-year-old trying to snatch his first boyfriend.

"I'll be leaving Phexx behind," Lynk said.

Rheland didn't argue. He just nodded. "Okay, go handle whatever dog business you have."

Lynk growled. "Wolf."

"You both bark. I'm not seeing much of a difference," Rheland said.

Lynk was in his space once more. Rheland stopped breathing in the air around him in fear he might cave to his baser needs.

"I can show you the difference another time." Lynk's phone went off again. The werewolf turned away from Rheland and left the room.

Did he just flirt back? Rheland tossed his head back and pulled his hair. How in the hell was he supposed to do this? It was a toss-up with Lynk on a good day. Maybe Rheland should stop overthinking it. That was easier said than done.

"To hell with this." Rheland tossed up his arms.

The only way he would understand Lynk was to make the man break down all the walls he'd erected between them. He would make Lynk lose control and give into the searing attraction that pulsed between them.

CHAPTER NINE



Three fires and four fights later, Rheland was having second thoughts. It was one thing to fight an enemy who could roast you and another to put out multiple ones while a child had a tantrum.

He pinched the bridge of his nose as he took a seat. The house was finally somewhat quiet. The children had been separated for the most part, and there was an adult with them. How in the hell Lynk did this in a small three-bedroom apartment and kept his sanity was beyond Rheland's understanding.

The kids were a handful, and it had only been a few hours since Lynk had to go.

“Well behaved, my ass.”

“Sorry about that.” Havyn stepped into Rheland's home library. He avoided gazing at Rheland; it wasn't the first time the vampire had noticed it, either. There was always a slight pink hue to his cheeks whenever he was close, and his heartbeat always picked up just the slightest.

“It's fine.”

Havyn didn't leave right away. Rheland rested his head on his hand as he took in the werewolf before him. He was slender, still taller than Rheland but not nearly as tall as Phexx or Lynk. The twins had no more than a few inches on him.

“Did you have something else to tell me?” Rheland asked.

Havyn's gaze met his for a second before he focused on what Rheland felt like was his forehead. He fought the urge to rub at the spot the werewolf stared intently.

“Tomorrow is my day to feed you.”

Rheland smiled. “Oh, is it?” He stood up and made his way to Havyn. He grabbed the werewolf’s chin and moved him so he was forced to lock eyes with Rheland.

“That’s better.”

The pink hue that decorated Havyn’s face intensified. Rheland wanted nothing more than to bite the man, and it wasn’t out of hunger either. He ran his tongue over his blunt teeth keeping his fangs at bay.

“Want to practice before then?” Rheland asked.

Havyn audibly swallowed. “If you want.”

Rheland pulled Havyn closer, and the werewolf came easily. *He makes me want to play.* It wouldn’t be so bad if he had a little fun. Would it? Rheland’s fingers danced along Havyn’s neck and over his shoulder. “Where should I bite you?”

Havyn’s heartbeat was so loud Rheland could feel it as if it was his own.

“Maybe here,” Rheland said, tapping the werewolf’s pulse. He moved his fingers down, touched him on the wrist, and stroked it. “Here?”

Havyn’s breathing picked up, and his eyelids dropped halfway. Still, he didn’t break eye contact with Rheland. The vampire’s hand skirted over Havyn’s clothed cock, resisting the urge to squeeze.

“Spread your legs for me,” Rheland said.

Havyn obeyed without argument, and Rheland tapped against his thigh. “I think I should bite here. What do you think?” Rheland rubbed small circles on the werewolf’s inner thigh, soaking in the small gasps that escaped him.

“I... yes, please.”

“Please, what?” Rheland asked.

Havyn’s eyes widened, and he stared at Rheland wordlessly, begging for the answer.

Ah, he is so adorable.

“Please, Rheland. Bite me.”

Shock waves of desire ran down Rheland’s spine. He bit his tongue to hold back the groan that Havyn’s words invoked.

“Pull your pants down,” Rheland said.

Havyn reached down, his fingers hooked in his pants just as Sevyn’s loud voice reached their ears. Both of them looked to the door just as it swung open.

“There you are.” Sevyn marched in like a tornado and dragged his brother back away from Rheland. “Come on. We’re going for a run.”

“Tomorrow,” Rheland said.

Havyn nodded as his twin dragged him out of the room, leaving an achy Rheland behind. He dropped down onto his seat and palmed his clothed cock. Another minute or two, and he’d have had the sweet wolf under him.

Rheland could be patient even if he didn’t want to be. He forced himself to grab one of the many books off the shelf and opened it. A distraction was needed. He slowly lost himself in one of his many books. It wasn’t long before the night hours were nearly up.

“Hungry?” Ace asked as he walked into the room. The human acted as if he healed like a supernatural. It was still far too early to take any of his blood.

“Do you have a death wish?” Rheland looked up from the book in his hand to stare at the human. Something about Ace gave him pause.

The human had been gone nearly the entire night. Now that he was back, the stench of antiseptic and death hung on him. The only place that smelled like that was a hospital or a clinic. He looked over at Ace and didn't see any physical injuries.

“Eh, maybe. Why? You want to grant it?” Ace asked.

Rheland's brows scrunched tougher, and he closed his book. “Not particularly, no.”

Ace rolled his eyes as he made his way further into the room. “Is it because I look like that Frode guy?”

Yes.

Laughter devoid of humor left Ace. “You don't even have to answer out loud. I can tell from your expression alone.”

Rheland had been sure he hadn't reacted in the slightest. Yet, Ace had read him like an open book.

“Why do you want to die?”

“Why should I want to live?” Ace countered.

Rheland was up and shoved Ace against the wall. He winced, but the human kept his hands to his sides.

“How absurd you want to die so badly.”

Ace's eyes were glazed over. For the first time, Rheland picked up the scent of liquor.

“Says the man who's dead.” Ace laughed, dropping his head back. The thump did little to cover the hysteria that laced Ace's laughter. “Fuck you.”

Something in Rheland's chest twisted. "What happened?"

"You care?" Ace slapped Rheland's hand away, and the vampire released him. The human staggered on his feet.

"Where did you go?"

Ace sighed. "Shit, if I had known you were going to nag me, I wouldn't have signed the contract."

Rheland's eye twitched. Maybe it was because he'd fed from Lynk earlier, but he wasn't nearly as murderous as before. It didn't stop the urge to throw Ace around and slap him a few good times, though.

Frode would never behave this way.

"If you're not hungry, I'm going back to my room." Ace shoved off the wall and headed toward the door.

Rheland gritted his teeth and held back all five seconds before he vamp sped and cut Ace off.

"What? Changed your mi—" Ace's words died as Rheland picked the human up and vamp sped out of the house.

The cool night air greeted him the moment they stepped outside. He jumped and landed on the roof with ease. The stars twinkled above. With little to no light pollution in the area, he could still enjoy the night sky as he'd done so many times over the years.

Rheland dropped Ace to the roof, and the human groaned as he rubbed at his back. "So little. It should be against physics to have that much strength." He glared up at Rheland. "Why did you bring me here?"

Rheland grabbed him by the collar and dragged Ace over to the house's highest part. He dangled the human over the

edge with one hand. Ace looked down and then back to Rheland.

“Do it.” Ace shook his head, and Rheland thought he had some second thoughts. Maybe he valued his life more. “Maybe you should go a little higher. I might survive from this height.”

“What?”

Ace met his gaze. “There is no way I’m staying alive in a vegetative state.”

He’s lost his mind.

Rheland pulled Ace back over to the roof and dropped the human on his ass. “This isn’t going to work.”

Ace’s eyes went wide, and he stared down at Rheland as if he’d slapped him like he wanted to. “What, you’re firing me? After taking me from a good-paying job?”

It should be Rheland who looked so shocked. What the hell was he supposed to do with a human like Ace?

“No, I mean you coming in here begging for death. You want to die so badly, go jump off a building.” Rheland took a step forward. “I can guarantee while you’re here, there will be no meeting the grim reaper. Ever.”

Ace’s breathing picked up. His green eyes bore into Rheland as if searching for a soul the vampire didn’t have.

“So, what? I stay here and keep living?” He rolled his eyes. “Six months is all you got. That’s an easy sentence compared to the past four years.”

What does he mean? The question rested on the tip of Rheland’s tongue, but he swallowed it back. He doubted Ace would willingly offer the information. What exactly had Ace

gone through? Rheland knew he had no right to ask. No right to care, not when he was only using Ace for his face.

“What’s your plan after six months?” Rheland hadn’t even thought about it. He’d just chosen a random time frame. Thinking about it now, the idea of Ace dying and him being forced to look into lifeless startling green eyes again made his stomach twist with anger and unease.

“Doesn’t matter.” Ace leaned forward, and his nose grazed Rheland’s. “I might just take your advice and jump off a building.” He straightened up and moved around Rheland. “Find me when you’re hungry.”

Rheland was on the roof alone and at a loss. He looked over his shoulder. Ace was already down from the roof and dropped to the upstairs living room balcony. Rheland knew the human was odd but even the toughest of men have always buckled when faced with true death. But there hadn’t been a shimmer of fear in Ace’s eyes.

“Frode, how can he have your face but not your light or will to live life?” Rheland closed his eyes as he spoke to the ghost of a long-lost lover. One he needed to let slip free from his heart.

CHAPTER TEN



One visit, and Ace was at his mind's mercy. It was why he didn't go. How many days had passed since he left the hospital? One, two, maybe three? Shit, Ace hated this. His eyes felt heavy and burned as if he'd poured an entire bottle of shampoo into them. His tongue was drier than a desert. It might as well be sandpaper.

Ace groaned as he rounded the corner, and morning light hit him square in the face. "Fuck!" He covered his eyes.

"You would think you're a vampire with that reaction to the sun." The deep, authoritative voice could only belong to one man.

Ace peeked through his lashes. Sure enough, Lynk sat at the table drinking what Ace could only hope was coffee. The morning light bathed him in a warm glow, and unlike Ace, he looked well-rested.

"Nope, just human," Ace grumbled. He dropped his hands and headed toward the fridge. He yanked it open so hard the contents rattled. The sound ground against the growing headache that tried to drag him further down the pits of misery.

"Are you okay?" Lynk asked.

"Peachy."

Ace grabbed lunch meat and the mayo, intent on making something simple and fast. If it weren't for his body's stupid need to eat, he would have stayed holed up in the room assigned to him. Ace found the bread and slapped the pieces down on the counter.

"Is the sun bothering you?" Lynk asked.

Ace slammed the silverware drawer closed. "No, but you the fuck are."

Silence greeted him, but Ace wasn't stupid. He could feel the weight of the man's stare boring into his back. The werewolf could drill a fucking hole with the intensity he was staring at Ace with.

"What?" Ace growled as he twisted around to face Lynk.

The man cocked a brow at him as if Ace was losing his fucking mind. Maybe he was.

"I didn't say anything."

"You sure? It feels like you want to," Ace said. He jerked back around and slapped some meat on the bread. He scooped a dollop of mayo out on the other slice and smashed the pieces together. Good enough.

He just wanted to eat and pray that no more memories or dreams of the past plagued him. Ace knew it was futile, and it would be a while before it all stopped. The entire morning was spent with countless memories until he gave in and stood up. Sleep wasn't happening.

He'd had high hopes no one would be up so early with everyone's schedule in the house mostly being around late afternoon and throughout the night. Such was his shitty luck that he ran into someone.

"You look exhausted. "

"Commenting on my looks now, are we?" Ace asked. He bit his sandwich, and it was like eating a soggy newspaper. He couldn't be bothered by how it tasted and swallowed it down.

Ace just needed some sleep, meds, and a few bottles of vodka. It would be a hard week, but he'd recover. Forced sleep was the only way for his brain to shut the fuck up and for him to be able to function. In another week or so, he'd be fine.

He'd bounce back like he always did and move forward. There was no other way to go about things.

"Do you mope around here often?" Lynk asked.

"Do you get involved in everyone's business?" Ace shot back.

He expected anger and welcomed it even. So many others had been touted to indignation with less. However, that wasn't the case with Lynk. He shrugged. *What the hell is wrong with him?* Ace ate more of his gross sandwich.

"You don't seem to be enjoying that. I'm finished with this. Would you like it?" Lynk asked.

On his plate was a proper sandwich with all the fixings. Ace's mouth watered, and his stomach growled as if to answer for him.

"I don't need charity," Ace said.

Lynk sipped his coffee. "I'm not giving it."

Ace dropped the remainder of his sandwich in the trash and grabbed Lynk's. He tore into it. His taste buds sang in joy as he ate.

"You're staring," Ace said after swallowing a mouthful.

"What are you doing here?"

"Same thing as you." Ace opened his mouth to take another bite but paused. "You and Rheland have a past?"

A look passed over Lynk's face. If Ace hadn't been watching the man, he would have missed it.

"No."

"Right, and the sky isn't blue." Ace shook his head. "So what? You two together, exes, or what?"

“None of those things,” Lynk said. He sipped his coffee, looking more relaxed than when Ace first walked in. “We’ve just known each other for a little while.”

“What, years?” Ace asked. “Let me guess, you two went to high school together, and bam, he was turned into a vampire, and you two were split apart, and then you were turned into a werewolf. One day you two found each other, but so much time had passed, and now you don’t know how to act on the feelings between you.”

Lynk blinked slowly at Ace, and the human couldn’t believe he’d guessed right. The short surprise was shoved down to the pits of hell as soon as Lynk burst with laughter and sat his coffee mug down before he spilled it.

“That is the first time I’ve heard that.” Lynk shook his head as more rich laughter left him. It had a strange effect. Ace could physically feel himself relax.

“So, I was wrong by how much?” Ace asked, shoving away the calm feeling that tried to creep up on him.

“All of it.” Lynk rested his huge arms on the table and turned to look at Ace fully. “How old do you think Rheland is?”

Ace shrugged. “He said something about being king of vampires, but, come on, he’s so...” Ace waved his free hand. “He doesn’t talk like he’s old. I’ve met a hundred-year-old vampire that still used slang from his time. Rheland doesn’t do any of that.”

Lynk nodded. “True, it’s how he blends in so well.”

“So, how old is he?” Ace asked.

“You will have to ask him yourself.”

The human rolled his eyes. *I don't care anyway.* He placed the plate in the dishwasher and reached over the fridge where he'd seen some liquor had been stored. Ace whistled as his fingers wrapped around a slender top. The bottle was the high-end stuff he couldn't afford on his good nights at the blood bar. Ace poured himself a cup and downed it with two swallows. It was a smooth burn, nothing like the gasoline he sometimes bought after a particularly hard visit seeing his brother.

Clanking drew Ace's attention. He groaned as he watched Lynk wash the plate he'd just placed in the dishwasher.

"Are you looking to put me in your debt?"

Lynk's head tilted, and the man looked confused by Ace. "You remind me of one of my pack members."

"Doubt it."

Lynk smiled at him and finished with the dish. "A little help goes a long way."

"Don't need it." Ace hadn't had help in years, and having it now wasn't going to change his outcome. "Do you ever stop?"

"It happens from time to time with me being the alpha of this pack. I'll keep it in mind if you don't like it."

Ace ground his teeth. For some reason, it pissed him off. "Good idea." He swallowed back another shot of liquor.

Lynk took the bottle away from him, and Ace's eye twitched. "The fuck are you doing?"

"That's enough."

"What happened to minding your business?" Ace thought about punching Lynk. One look from the man, and he knew it was a bad idea. Even with his mind a shattered mess, Ace

wasn't crazy. There was a difference between having a death wish and asking for an ass beating. The latter wasn't on Ace's wish list.

He tossed his hands up in surrender and left out of the kitchen. "Fuck this shit."

"Find me when you're ready to talk," Lynk said.

Ace laughed. "Never happening." They were strangers to each other, and it would stay that way.



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NIGHTFALL CAME, AND ACE GOT BARELY ANY SLEEP. HE forced himself out of bed and dragged himself to the shower. Turning on the water, he leaped under the spray without waiting for it to warm up. Ice-cold droplets rained down on him and dragged him further away from drowsiness.

His eyes slid shut, and Ace soaked in the chilling water and how it made him feel numb inside and out. *If only I could be this way all the time.* Life would have been so much easier.

The cold water went warm and then hot. Ace opened his eyes and washed up quickly. The remainder of the shower was spent cleaning the grime off his flesh and trying to piece himself back together.

Ace shut the water off and stepped out of the shower. Most people would have felt brand new. Ace felt annoyed he had to move around at all.

The fluffy towel soaked up the water from his hair as he squeezed it. One look at his face in the mirror, and he knew the shower wasn't enough. His skin was paler than usual, and the dark circles that had disappeared since he'd been at Rheland's place were back. Ace dropped the towel, grabbed the brush, and ran it through his hair, working out the mats and tangles that had taken up residence in the few days he'd lost track of time.

The last tangle was a bitch. Ace thought about cutting his hair for the fiftieth time. He groaned as he let the brush drop from his cramping hands.

Opening the door, he hadn't expected to find Rheland stretched out on his bed, staring at the ceiling without a care in the world.

“Took you long enough. What were you doing in there?” Rheland’s gray eyes leveled him with a knowing look.

“Jerking off. My bad. If I knew you were stopping by, I would have caught your snack instead of letting it go down the drain.”

Rheland sat up slowly, his penetrating gaze never wavering from Ace. “What a shame.” His gray eyes dropped down, skirting over Ace’s exposed flesh.

Normally, Ace would flip him off and shoo him out. However, maybe this was the distraction he needed. He desperately wanted to feel like himself, but more importantly, he was over being at the bottom of life. What better way to fix that than to top a vampire who claimed to be a king?

“I’m sure I have some more left,” Ace said. He dropped the towel around his waist and walked to the bed. Each step felt like he was getting closer to himself.

“You’re very sure of yourself for a human,” Rheland said with a smile.

Ace stopped just shy of touching the bed. Rheland vanished from the middle of the bed to right in front of Ace. His eyes were glued to Ace’s cock.

“You look hungry.” Ace pushed the vampire back on the bed and followed on top of him.

“Starving, actually,” Rheland said. He reached between them, his cool fingers wrapped around Ace’s cock, and stroked up lightly. “As much fun as it was sucking you off, I have a feeling you want something more.”

Ace smirked. “Good. I don’t have to spell it out for you.”

He pulled back and thrust forward into Rheland's light hold. It wasn't nearly enough. However, it took very little to get Ace hard, at least when it came to the vampire. There was something about Rheland that made him want to bend the vampire over and have his way with him. Maybe it was his mind finally breaking.

"Can't fuck you through your clothes." Ace groaned as a thought occurred to him. "I don't have any lube."

Rheland cocked a brow. "I have blood. Unless you're squeamish."

It sounded like a challenge. Ace looked at Rheland's clothed ass and then his face. "I don't have much to spare."

Rheland laughed, shimmying out of his jeans. "Good thing I do."

Ace's heart rate skyrocketed as Rheland cut into his own hand, and blood coated his small fingers. Unable to move, Ace stayed there watching as Rheland fingered himself. The way his ass moved quickly distracted him from the fact that the vampire was using blood.

"Didn't know blood was so universal."

"Make it work whenever and however you can," Rheland said.

Ace nodded, not that the vampire was paying him any attention. Soft moans filled the room as Rheland rocked back and forth, taking his fingers in deeper each time.

"I've lost my mind." Ace hadn't known he spoke out loud, but by the laughter resonating from Rheland, he had.

"Probably. Are you going to use it as an excuse?"

Ace grabbed Rheland's wrists and snatched his fingers out of his hole. Ace spat on the puckered flesh and pushed three fingers in. The wet tight feel around his fingers drew him in further. He was soon finger fucking Rheland before he knew what he was doing. Ace curled his fingers in search of the spot he knew would have the vampire whimpering.

His fingers grazed over Rheland's prostate. The vampire's hole tightened around Ace's fingers, threatening to either break them or keep them forever. Ace couldn't wait to put his cock inside of him.

"That's enough. Let's see what you got," Rheland taunted.

Maybe it was Ace's imagination, but the vampire seemed far more playful than usual. Normally, he was telling Ace to shut up or trying to force him into his place. If he had the mental spoons for it, Ace would be trying to figure out why it felt like they'd switched spots.

He pressed against Rheland's prostate one more time, and the cry that came from the vampire only made Ace want to do it again. He barely refrained as he stood up. Ace lined his cock up with Rheland's hole. For a split second, he had second thoughts, but he ignored them all and plunged inside the vampire.

"Fuck."

Ace's cock sank into Rheland's body, and he swore at the way he was gripped. He thought the vampire's mouth was heaven, but his ass had to be pure hell because it was a fucking sin to feel this good. Ace groaned under his breath, his fingertips digging into Rheland's waist and leaving bruises that would disappear faster than they came.

“Told you. You can’t handle it,” Rheland said. There was a smile plastered on his face that infuriated Ace to a whole new level.

I’ll fucking show him who can’t handle it. Ace pulled out until only the tip of his cock rested at Rheland’s entrance before he plunged back in. He scraped his blunt nails over the creamy skin of Rheland’s ass, admiring the pink lines that faded just as quickly as he made them.

“Are you sure?” Ace changed the angle just slightly and thrust forward. Rheland clenched around him, and the muscles in his back bunched. “I think it’s you who can’t handle it.”

Rheland turned his head. White hair fell over his eyes as his mouth was left open, and the barest of moans left him. It wasn’t good enough for Ace. If he would fuck the vampire, he would do it until Rheland was nothing more than a mess afterward.

The door opened. Ace was far too deep inside Rheland and so wrapped in pleasure he didn’t give a fuck.

Tattoos were all Ace saw before he shoved his hair back and met blue eyes. Phexx grinned like a wolf. “Don’t stop on my account.”

Ace met his gaze and laughed. “Wasn’t planning on it.” He drove into Rheland, dragging a groan from the both of them.

“Maybe learn some new tricks,” Ace taunted.

Rheland reached back and slammed their bodies together. “If you two are going to go back and forth, do it another time.”

Pleasure rippled through Ace, making him see stars for a moment.

“Better yet. I’ll join,” Phexx said.

Ace cocked a brow and stopped moving. The vampire hissed at him, and Ace laughed.

“You like it that much?” He pulled out slowly before plunging forward. Their bodies slapped together, and Ace watched, enamored by the bounce of Rheland’s ass. The vampire tightened around his cock, and he groaned.

“Stop again, and I will break your neck,” Rheland threatened.

“Oh, dirty talk.” Ace picked up the pace again, slamming into Rheland repeatedly. He felt like he was on the edge of death, bliss just waiting for him to make the jump. “Tell me more.”

Phexx laughed as he took up residence in front of Rheland’s face. The werewolf didn’t have time to take his pants off; Rheland shredded them in seconds. His hole tightened, and Ace groaned as he was forced to slow down.

“Someone is excited,” Ace muttered.

“Take what you want, your grace,” Phexx said. The way he said your grace sounded as if he was mocking Rheland.

“Plan to.” The light glinted off Rheland’s fangs before they sank into Phexx’s tattooed thigh.

Ace shoved his hair out of his face, sweat clung to his skin, and he watched, unable to look away, as Rheland drank from Phexx’s thigh. A bead of blood escaped and slid down, only to be soaked up by the sheets. Ace’s cock twitched in the tight confines of Rheland’s ass, and he swore under his breath.

Ask him a week ago if he’d get turned on by watching a vampire eat, and Ace laugh. It was utter insanity, yet he pulled out only to plunge back in. His body screamed in pleasure as

he used Rheland's ass to forget everything, to drown in something other than self-loathing.

"Fuck," Ace groaned. He brought his hand down hard against Rheland's plump ass. It should be impossible to have such a firm ass. Ace wasn't a vampire or a werewolf, but he wanted to take a bite out of Rheland.

"Drink as much as you want," Phexx said. He ran his fingers through Rheland's white hair. The strands were bright against his tattooed hands. Ace's fingers twitched, and he thought about pulling Rheland back and fucking him harder as he held on to the vampire's hair like reins.

"You squeamish?" Phexx asked.

Ace's hips faltered, but he righted it and hit Rheland's prostate dead on. The vampire tightened around him to the point it was painful to pull out.

"Uh." Ace's head fell forward, his red hair cascading around his face as he tried to hold back his orgasm. "Not in the slightest." He laughed at himself and watched his blood-covered cock go inside Rheland. There was something wrong in his head.

He rolled his hips forward and moaned as Rheland flexed around his cock. The vampire was drawing him closer to climax faster than Ace wanted.

Phexx laughed. "Looks like you're having a hard time. If you can't handle the king, then by all means, move."

Ace's head snapped up, and he glared at the werewolf. He snatched Rheland up, tearing his fangs free of Phexx's thigh. Blood splattered out and onto the sheets. It said something about Ace that he didn't falter in fucking Rheland. He held the

vampire flush against him as he thrust upward, chasing the ecstasy that shocked through him.

He dropped his hand down to Rheland's cock and stroked. He lifted his hand and smirked.

“Did you cum already?” Ace stared at the mess on his hand for another second before wrapping his hand around the vampire's length and using his cum as lube. He stroked in time to his thrusts.

Rheland's head fell back on his shoulder. He pushed back against Ace, chasing after his cock as if he couldn't get enough.

“Who can't handle who?” Ace groaned against Rheland's ear.

All he received were moans in return for his question. Rheland's eyes were screwed shut, and he clenched so tight around Ace's cock that the human was forced still. Cum splashed over Ace's hand, dragging out his release. He moved as much as he could, pumping his cock inside Rheland as he filled the man with every ounce of cum he had.

“Not done,” Phexx growled and dragged them both down.

His tattooed hand worked furiously over his pierced cock. It took only a few strokes before he was cumming all over Rheland's face.

“Fuck,” Phexx groaned.

Ace panted as he hovered over the vampire, his cock still firmly inside of him.

“Round two?” Rheland moaned. His eyes were glazed over, and if Ace weren't sure he was crazy, he'd swear the vampire looked even hungrier.

“A man after my own heart,” Phexx said.

Ace slipped out of Rheland’s hole and flipped over onto the bed.

“Think your pet human is tapped out,” Phexx joked.

Ace flipped him off. *Fucking supernaturals.*

Phexx laughed. “Switch. Let’s see who can make him cum the fastest.”

Ace felt far lighter than he had in the past few days. “Fuck it.” He shoved his cock in Rheland’s face. As the vampire gazed up at him, his fingers tightened in fluffy white strands. “Your blood. Clean it up.”

Rheland’s gaze turned hot, fire flickering in his eyes. He moved toward Ace. The man moaned as his head tilted back, waiting for Rheland’s mouth.

Whether or not he was losing his mind, Ace didn’t care. This was where he wanted to be right now.

CHAPTER ELEVEN



What the hell happened?

Rheland's body felt light and heavy all at once. He opened his eyes and groaned at the blurry vision. The sun was still out, but he didn't need perfect vision to notice that not one but two people were in his bed. Phexx was to his right, plastered to him. The man's arms were wrapped so tightly around Rheland that he knew if he needed oxygen, he'd have difficulty breathing it in.

What surprised him more was Ace. The human was out cold, his head turned toward Rheland on the pillow next to him. One of his hands rested on Rheland's waist. The vampire understood Phexx. Werewolves sought out touch and comfort even when they were as insane as Phexx, but Ace was human.

Rheland reached out toward him on instinct, his fingers moving lightly over his face, tracing his nose's sharp edge and the soft dip in his lips. Ace was striking, the kind of man that a few lifetimes ago Rheland would have turned him without a second thought. Just to keep him near.

Rheland noticed the door open and dropped his hand. He wasn't in his room. The night before flashed back to him, and he vaguely remembered pulling himself toward the pillow and closing his eyes.

Heat wound around him, and Lynk's warm scent hit Rheland. He fought with his instincts to open his eyes. His body was lifted, and his face was pressed firmly against a hard chest.

"I know you're up," Lynk said.

Rheland curled his face closer as the werewolf carried him up the stairs and toward his room, no doubt.

"What gave me away?"

“I heard you moving before I opened the door,” Lynk said. He opened the door to Rheland’s bedroom. The vampire expected the werewolf to dump him on the bed, but Lynk kept moving toward the ensuite bathroom.

Rheland was gently put down on the heated floor as Lynk turned the water on.

“What are you doing?” Rheland asked.

“Cleaning you up. You can move during daylight hours, but it takes a lot of energy, right?”

Well, yeah, but it didn’t explain why Lynk was doing it. Rheland opened his eyes and mentally cursed the fact his vision was a blurry mess. Lynk’s shirt came off, and then his pants.

It wasn’t long before Rheland was lifted again and put under the warm water. The sense of touch wasn’t great during daylight hours. Everything felt muted, but Rheland still basked in it, knowing Lynk was taking care of him.

“Why are you doing this?” Rheland finally asked.

The washcloth ran over his abused hole and down his legs. Lynk wasn’t leaving a spot of him uncleaned. *Why can’t he do this during the night?* Rheland mentally groaned.

“Unlike the other two, you will be stuck with all this on you till nightfall,” Lynk said.

“You know that’s not what I meant.”

“Because I want to,” Lynk growled. He held Rheland firmly as he washed behind his knees.

“What am I going to do with you?” Rheland placed a hand on Lynk’s broad shoulders and leaned down. “You make my head hurt and bring out parts of me that have died long ago.”

Lynk met his gaze. Rheland knew all he was staring at were milky white eyes, a film covering his normally gray ones. The werewolf didn't flinch or avoid Rheland's gaze.

"You told me once there would be nothing but sex between us. Are you saying you want more?" Lynk asked.

Was that hope in his voice? Rheland's stomach flipped, and he opened his mouth. Instead of the yes he knew he should have given, he gave the truth.

"I don't know. I can pretend."

Lynk shook his head and returned to cleaning Rheland. "That wouldn't be fair to either of us."

Rheland huffed out a laugh. "You wouldn't give us a chance anyway."

It wasn't just Rheland's lack of emotions that got in their way, and Lynk knew it. The werewolf stood up, and Rheland's hand slipped down his bicep. He let his hand fall to his side and ignored the need to touch Lynk more, searing its way through his veins.

Lynk turned the water off and dried Rheland off. The silence was normal, but it was far from welcoming.

"Did you wake up just to pull me out of bed with Ace and Phexx?" Rheland asked. He studied Lynk's face the best he could with his limited vision.

The werewolf said nothing before slipping a shirt over Rheland's head. The shirt was way too big to be his, and the scent wafting off it belonged solely to the alpha wolf in front of him.

"You're confusing as hell, you know that?" Rheland said.

"Maybe it's better that way."

Rheland attempted to step back, and Lynk grabbed his hips in a bruising hold.

“Stay still.” There wasn’t any confusion when it came to that tone.

“Who are you commanding?” Rheland stepped closer till only a sliver of air could pass between them.

“Rheland, don’t start,” Lynk growled. “I know you can’t see, but you’re deliberately challenging me right now.”

“And if I am?”

Rheland was at a disadvantage with it being morning. It didn’t mean he was so weak he couldn’t hold his own against a dog. Lynk carried him out of the bathroom and then slammed him down on the bed. Rheland flipped them over just as fast and wrapped both hands around Lynk’s throat.

The growl that left the werewolf vibrated up his arms. Lynk broke the hold and tossed Rheland against the headboard. His body dropped uselessly.

“Fucking morning.” Rheland shook it off and lifted himself, ready to attack. However, Lynk had already regained control over his instincts.

“You do this shit on purpose every single time,” Lynk growled.

“You’re hot when you get riled up.”

Lynk shook his head. “You have issues your damn self.” He moved toward the bed and pulled the blankets back before moving Rheland under them. “You have issues.”

“I have issues? You’re tucking me in like I sleep during the day instead of what really happens.”

Lynk paused before he shrugged. “I could bury you in the backyard if that makes it feel more authentic.”

Rheland shut his eyes in annoyance. “What am I? A bone?”

Lynk hummed, and the bed dipped next to Rheland. He didn’t dare open his eyes again. He knew the moment he caused a scene, Lynk would be gone.

“What made you bring Ace here?”

His eyebrows knitted. *What made him ask that?* Rheland thought of all the possibilities in the world, and none of them would fool Lynk.

“He looked like someone I once knew.” Rheland moved a little, straightening out his body. “Not that they act anything alike. Their similarities stop literally at the face.”

“Was it someone you loved?” Lynk asked.

I hate these questions. “A very long time ago when I still had the capacity for it.”

“What do you see when you look at him?”

“Annoyance, confusion, desire. Take your pick.”

A soft chuckle left Lynk. If anyone walked by, they’d think they were having an intimate moment. Maybe they were. Rheland couldn’t tell anymore, not even what was happening in his head. He knew he was attracted to Lynk, and he knew he liked the werewolf being close to him. Was that enough anymore?

“You should keep him around even when we leave.”

Something in Rheland ached, and he tried to figure out what exactly. “Probably not.”

“Why?”

“He’s going to leave.”

Like everyone does. Even Rheland’s sired children had left him at some point. It was his siblings first, then the first man he loved, and soon it became a pattern. Somewhere along the way, Rheland had hardened that part of his soul. Now, when people left, it was no more than an annoyance, but he was no longer a broken mess at the end of the day.

Lynk hummed but said nothing else. He stayed conscious simply to listen to Lynk’s heartbeat. Time ticked by, and he could feel the drain on him the longer he stayed aware. Movement caught his attention before he let go completely and fell into the deep hole of nothing.

“Stay,” Rheland said before he could think better of it.

Lynk didn’t say anything for a long while. For a short moment, Rheland believed the werewolf would stay.

“I shouldn’t,” Lynk said. He stood up and gone was the warmth that radiated off of him, leaving Rheland feeling colder than before.

“What are you afraid of?” Rheland asked.

“We’ve been over this,” Lynk stressed.

“Yes, and I’m not sure how many times I have to stress to you that I’m more than capable of handling myself and your wolf.”

Lynk was already moving further away, and Rheland wanted to slap the man. How many times had they toed this line? How many times had Rheland put himself out there for Lynk, only for the man to walk away?

Too many fucking times.

“I nearly ripped your throat out,” Lynk growled.

“Nearly!” Rheland sat up. “You didn’t succeed. If you did and this is the afterlife, I’m calling bullshit I should be able to have you.”

Lynk was already at the door, and Rheland knew he’d lost the argument. There wasn’t a chance for him to win.

“Losing control like that.” Lynk shook his head. “I wasn’t in control. You wouldn’t know what that feels like.”

Rheland arched his brow, and Lynk cleared his throat. “It’s just not something I can handle, Rheland. I can give you anything but that.”

“No, you can’t.” Rheland flopped back. “You will keep this wall between us. Every step we take getting closer, you erase just as fast and put up a new wall.”

Lynk was silent for a long while. Rheland was falling prey to the nothingness that tugged at his mind.

“Fine, keep running, Lynk.” Rheland closed his eyes and curled around a pillow. “One day, I won’t let you run anymore.”

“Maybe that will be the day you will open your heart back up.”

That thing had died off a long time ago. Why couldn’t Lynk understand that? This obsession with Lynk was as close as the werewolf would ever get to Rheland’s heart.

“Looks like we both have some crazy wishes,” Rheland muttered.

“See you tonight.” The door closed, leaving Rheland alone again.

Like always. Rheland dropped back against the bed and closed his eyes. Fighting the inevitable was pointless. In a few decades or so, he'd forget it all and move on. Except that didn't feel right.

“Maybe my siblings had a point.”

The world they lived in one day wouldn't be a place for them to live in. Maybe Rheland should think about joining his siblings in eternal slumber.

CHAPTER TWELVE



There were regrets and uncertainties in life. Lynk was currently struggling with both.

Maybe coming here was a bad move. Lynk attempted to close his eyes, but it was futile the moment he did. Grey eyes were the first thing he saw. Followed by a soft face and slender body. His attraction to Rheland had been apparent since day one, but there were too many obstacles.

Lynk shook himself of his melancholy thoughts as his pack members arrived. First were Faith and Avery. Faith instantly went to the children, and they flocked to her like chicks to a hen. Lynk had offered for them to come along, but it was good the couple had their privacy. Not to mention the kids saw it as getting out of the house when they went to stay with Avery and Faith.

“Uh, finally, anything but wedding planning,” Karter shouted as he made himself known.

“How’s that going?” Lynk asked.

Karter groaned, but it was Eddison who answered. “He does nothing, but cause problems left and right.”

“Who the fuck wants to get married in front of billions of people?” Karter flipped his boyfriend off.

Lynk didn’t envy Karter in the slightest. When it came to him being a public figure. Lynk had it bad enough being a part of the newly formed wolf council. Karter was nothing short of a celebrity as Weston’s boyfriend.

Ace came down the stairs, and Eddison and Karter both stared at him. The human moved around everyone without a care in the world. It was almost as if he didn’t realize he was surrounded by people who could kill him.

Lynk shook his head and headed toward the backdoor. “Everyone is out here. Come on, Karter.”

“Be good,” Eddison said.

“Go fuck yourself,” Karter shouted back. He caught up to Lynk with ease. The werewolf was surprised that Karter waited until they were outside to say something.

“Who the hell is that?” Karter growled. He pointed behind him, and it didn’t take a genius to know he was referring to the only human in the house.

“Rheland’s pet,” Phexx answered.

Karter looked back at the door and then at Lynk. “And you’re okay with that?”

Why was everyone so worried about what Lynk could handle? “His name is Ace.” Lynk shook his head at Phexx as the werewolf was determined to start something. “Everyone will be here soon to help. Get ready.”

Karter caught up to Lynk, and he knew the man wouldn’t let it go. Karter was just one of those who could never leave well enough alone.

“So you’re sharing now?” Karter peeked up at Lynk. “I mean, good for Rheland. It’s a lot of work to handle all that dick—”

“Karter,” Lynk growled.

He lifted his hands. “What? I’m just saying I have four vampires, and even my jaw and ass get tired.”

Lynk’s left eye twitched. Sometimes the other werewolf made him want to strangle him.

Luckily, Lynk was saved from any more Karter when a huge brown wolf headed their way. There was no need to warn Karter. He stripped in seconds flat and shifted before the wolf was even a few feet away. They collided in teeth and claws, crashing to the ground to tussle.

Soon another wolf joined the pile, and they all snapped at each other. Lynk knew before long, others would join. As if summoned, Hazel shouted and came running out of the house. She shifted into her wolf and charged headfirst.

“No flames!” Lynk warned her.

If she did, the others would heal, but no one wanted to smell burnt fur. Murphy jogged out, and the moment he saw the huge pile of wolves, he looked at Lynk with want.

“Go ahead. We are still waiting on Rome.”

Murphy was mature for his age, only fourteen; he tended to forget he was a kid. Lynk tried to give the kids as much of a childhood as he could. Murphy’s pasty skin vanished, and a huge silver and brown wolf was in its place. He shook out his coat and instantly joined the puppy pile.

Watching his pack members be so free eased the knot in Lynk’s chest. He laughed as Karter was tossed out of the pile, only for him to join back in.

“You would think Avery was a big kid,” Faith said. She stared at her mate lovingly.

To have that. Lynk absently glanced back at the house, checking all the windows for grey eyes, but he should know better.

“Where are the other children?” Faith asked.

“Inside with Rheland, they are still practicing with their fangs.”

Her brows lifted in surprise. “I was certain he would have given up by now.” She glanced at the house before lowering her voice. “He must really like you to keep trying with the kids.”

Lynk was already shaking his head. Rheland desired, maybe even wanted Lynk, but the vampire didn’t like him. The man was incapable of it. At least right now.

Faith chuckled before she stepped away from him. “Being in denial for too long can lead to misery,” she warned.

Phexx chuckled, and Lynk glared at the other werewolf. “Is everyone having fun at my expense?”

“Yes,” Phexx answered without faltering. He moved closer to Lynk. “We can all see how you two are around each other, and yet you fight it.”

Phexx shook his head, and a perplexed look came over his face. “You know, I knew you were strong, but damn, this has to be torture.”

Lynk grunted. “The first thing a werewolf learns is to live with the pain.” It sounded sad even to his ears. Lynk didn’t want to talk about it, if ever.

“Rome is here,” Havyn said, jogging their way. He looked at the wolves all tussling and groaned. “I’m not helping you, Sevyn.” His brother barked back at him before diving back into the fight.

Shortly, Rome stepped out of the house and headed their way. “Rheland told me to tell you the others are coming out and to wait.”

Lynk glanced back at the house. Before he could think about it, he was heading toward the mansion. He opened the door, and the other four kids raced toward him. Sattin smiled at him.

“How was it?” he asked.

“I cut my tongue,” Joben groaned.

“I want to run,” Lucky growled. He looked angrier than the rest. Leo, on the other hand, seemed entirely too lost in thought to even have heard Lynk.

“It’s harder than we thought,” Sattin grumbled. She touched her teeth. “Easy for them to come out when we’re angry or distressed, but other than that, uh.” She rolled her eyes. “Can I skip the run? I want to go read.”

Lynk nodded. “Go ahead, Sattin. What about the rest of you?”

“I’m going with Sattin,” Leo said.

The twins went in opposite directions, and Lynk smiled. Before, splitting them apart for more than a few seconds was impossible. Even in the apartment, the two gravitated to each other no matter how much they fought. At the mansion, it seemed they were each coming into their own.

Rheland turned the corner just as Joben and Lucky raced outside to join the others. Lynk and Rheland’s eyes locked, and the ever-present tension in the room thickened. The undeniable pull between each other tugged at Lynk to go to Rheland. They hadn’t talked since the night he’d cleaned him up.

“You said they were practicing all night,” Lynk said.

Rheland shrugged. “They were getting frustrated, and yes, it produces results. It makes for a messy vampire, though. I gave them the night off.”

“What are you going to do now?” Lynk asked.

Rheland’s head tilted. Before either of them noticed, they’d grown closer. It happened every single time.

“I was planning on watching you.”

Lynk’s heart fluttered, and he was certain the vampire had heard it. His gaze dropped to Lynk’s pulse point.

“Are you hungry?” Lynk asked.

Rheland licked his lips. “Always.”

His pink lips shimmered. Lynk’s flesh tingled with the awareness that soon he’d have Rheland’s mouth on him. He was playing with fire. However, no matter how many times he warned himself he’d be burned, this time, he kept moving forward.

“You don’t have time to feed me. I can wait,” Rheland said.

The idea of holding off on feeling his fangs filled Lynk with agitation. He swallowed back the growl his wolf tried to emit.

“They’re having fun out there. I have time.” He grabbed Rheland before he could argue. Closing the backdoor, Lynk took a few steps back and leaned against the wall.

“You’re too tall,” Rheland complained. His fangs were down, and Lynk couldn’t help but stare at them. He’d felt Rheland bite him more times than he could remember, yet he craved it more each time.

Lynk placed his hands on Rheland's waist and lifted the vampire with ease. Rheland's legs wrapped around him. Instantly, he was flooded with thoughts of slamming the vampire against the wall and fucking him until he screamed himself hoarse.

Lynk rapidly blinked a few times and lifted Rheland so that he wasn't pressed against his growing hard-on. The vampire was having none of that and wiggled his way back down. Lynk barely held back a groan as pleasure played with him.

Their eyes met, and the sexual tension grew tenfold. Lynk could practically taste it. He thought about feeding Rheland more often and that hearing the others be with him would dampen his desire for the vampire. If anything, it only made his wolf want the man even more. To bite him and hold him down. Claiming his small body again and again until it was engraved on the vampire that he belonged to Lynk.

Lynk closed his eyes, breaking the moment. Never going to happen. He tilted his neck, offering it to Rheland, knowing it was one of the vampire's favorite spots to bite. The other one was far too dangerous. Lynk only had so much self-control.

Warm breath fanned over his sensitive flesh. The small hairs at the nape of his neck stood to attention.

"Stop playing," Lynk growled.

Rheland chuckled, and it almost broke Lynk's resolve. "Fine, alpha."

Lynk's hands tightened on Rheland's ass just as the vampire's fangs penetrated him. The sharp pain did little to

douse the flames of ecstasy that flowed through his veins. His fingers dug into the firm flesh of Rheland's ass.

Why does he test the little restraint I have? Lynk closed his eyes and gave in for a short bit. It was the only time he could when Rheland's fangs were buried in him. Rheland's fingers ran up and down Lynk's arms and over his chest.

A growl tumbled free before Lynk could catch it.

"You taste so good," Rheland moaned.

Danger flashed through Lynk's mind like a tornado warning. "If you're done eating—"

Rheland's tongue ran over Lynk's neck. His brain short-circuited, making it impossible to talk, let alone think.

"I could eat you up." Rheland's breath fanned over Lynk's ear as the vampire ground his body against it. "But then, how would I ever taste you again?" His tongue made intricate patterns on Lynk's neck. "What do you think, Lynk? I should give in and drain you?"

A shiver raked down Lynk's spine. Before he knew what he was doing, he twisted around and slammed Rheland's back against the wall. He gathered the vampire's hands above his head and held them there. His breathing was just as erratic as his heartbeat.

"Rheland."

The vampire rotated his hips, rubbing their clothed cocks against each other. Pleasure rippled up through Lynk.

"Say my name again." Rheland's legs tightened around Lynk's waist. "Stop holding back."

Lynk moved closer, the opposite of what he was supposed to be doing. Their mouths were a breath away from each other.

“Ruin me, alpha.”

Lynk dodged Rheland’s lips at the last second and bit down on the man’s shoulder. The coppery tang of blood reached him and pulled Lynk back from the brink of insanity. He pulled back and watched as the red soaked into Rheland’s shirt, where Lynk had bitten him.

“Why did you stop?” Rheland whimpered.

I need to back away now. Lynk shook his head and put Rheland down on his own two feet. The vampire pouted as if he wasn’t an ancient being.

“Let me guess, you’re stopping just as it was getting good,” Rheland said.

Lynk took a step back, sucking in air that didn’t smell and taste like Rheland. “I have a pack run to watch over.”

Rheland’s gaze dropped to Lynk’s crotch. “Hard?”

He took another step back. “Rheland.”

The vampire sighed and put his hands up. “Fine, I’ll be good.” He winked as he turned around and headed outside.

Lynk doubted being good was a possibility for Rheland. *Give me fucking strength.*

CHAPTER THIRTEEN



Another week, and Lynk was back to avoiding Rheland. Truthfully, the vampire might have gone a bit too far, but it wasn't his fault. When he was in Lynk's arms, it was impossible not to become a needy whore.

Rheland knew what he wanted; Lynk to ruin him in the way only he could.

"What are you thinking about, your majesty?" Phexx asked.

Without missing a beat, Rheland vamp sped over to him and flipped the werewolf on the ground and sat on top of him. "How best to break your neck." Rheland's small fingers wrapped around Phexx's throat.

"Fuck. Foreplay with you never disappoints," Phexx said. He grabbed Rheland's hips and dragged him over his hardening cock. Rheland's entire body lit up.

"You have some issues." Rheland's hold tightened, and Phexx's smile grew wider.

"Yeah? You like it, don't you?"

Rheland said nothing. He couldn't agree or deny it. "What do you want, Phexx?"

"To break you in half, your grace."

Rheland stared down at Phexx, letting his gaze track over the exposed art on his body. He wanted to take a moment to admire and examine all of it. Most werewolves with markings had to get them long before they were turned. The ordeal of keeping permanent tattoos wasn't worth it.

"Say the word, and I'll strip right here and now."

Rheland rolled his eyes. He didn't put it past Phexx. As appealing as it sounded, he moved off the werewolf.

“Don’t you have other things to do tonight?”

Phexx propped himself up on his elbows. Rheland liked the way he looked on the ground a little too much. He needed to get his libido under control. Sure, it had always been healthy, but with the pack moving in with him, it had kicked into overdrive. It didn’t help that his diet now consisted mainly of werewolf blood. He had more energy than he knew what to do with.

“Later then,” Phexx said as he stood up. He brushed off his clothes, his gaze never wavering from Rheland.

Feeling like prey was strange, but Rheland couldn’t deny it had its appeal.

“Phexx,” Lynk called out.

Rheland turned around to face the alpha werewolf. The moment their eyes met, electricity danced along Rheland’s spine. He took a single step toward the man, only for him to break the moment.

“Lola called. Looks like we have to go hunting.” Lynk left just as fast as he’d come.

Rheland thought about dragging him back. Phexx knocked shoulders with him and pulled Rheland out of his head.

“See you later.” He grabbed Rheland’s hand. Where most would kiss the back of it, Phexx bit him. Pain shot up Rheland’s arm. Unable to differentiate between the pleasure that accompanied the small amount of pain, it drew him closer.

“Stay up for me,” Phexx called.

Rheland smirked at the werewolf. “You’ll have to come find me. Might be in someone else’s bed tonight.”

Phexx laughed and lapped up the drop of Rheland's blood on his bottom lip. "Oh, I don't mind sharing." He winked and headed out.

I'm doomed. Rheland pushed off the wall. He headed out of the library and made his way downstairs. To his exasperation, the children were already waiting for him.

"Fang practice again," he announced.

A round of groans followed.

"Can we do strength work instead?" Lucky whined. "I want to break more bricks."

"The point is not to break them," Rheland reminded him.

He took a seat on the couch and opened his mouth. It was a bitch talking and explaining while showing. "New approach: feel along your gums and try to push the fangs out. Might hurt at first, but once you get the hang of it, it'll be nothing more than a slight sting."

They each tried. Rheland watched over them.

"Remember, all emotions need to be suppressed."

"Crap!" Leo shouted.

Rheland moved over to one of the younger boys. He reached out toward him slowly. He knew how the children feared him. To his surprise, Leo did nothing but turn red in the face with frustration.

"Breathe," Rheland instructed.

"Why can't I do it?" Leo's eyes watered.

Rheland was lost as to what to do for a second. These were children. Expecting them to suppress their emotions was probably an impossible task.

“It takes time.”

“How long did it take you?” Lucky asked.

Rheland shrugged. “I don’t remember. It was so long ago.” That answer didn’t seem to help any of them. “Think of it like pulling a string,” Rheland said.

“Out of our mouths?” Sattin asked. She looked disgusted, but Rheland was trying.

“Go ahead and try again,” Rheland coached.

All the children had taken to Rheland’s teachings about most things, but fangs seemed to be the hardest for them. He’d let it go. Fangs weren’t a necessary defense for vampires.

A look of concentration came over each of them. Rheland sat back down, silently cheering them on. The smaller two were surprisingly fast learners. Leo’s fangs dropped, and he jumped up and down when it happened.

“Look, look!” Leo pointed to the small fangs in his mouth. “King Rheland, look. I did it!”

It wasn’t that Rheland didn’t see what made children so great. He did, but he’d witnessed first-hand what happened to humans turned at a young age. It was a life of misery and pain. He wouldn’t wish it upon anyone.

“Good job.” He ruffled Leo’s hair, and the kid’s eyes widened. “What?” Rheland glanced up and noticed all eyes were on him. “Is there something on my face?”

Sattin shook her head, and bright red curls bounced around her face. “No, sir, you... um, we..”

“You were ready to kill us before,” Joben finally answered.

Rheland shrugged. “Doesn’t mean I can’t tell someone good job.” The kids all looked at each other, and Rheland sighed. “I’m not going to kill you.” He sat back down and rested his elbows on his knees.

“Is it because our alpha wouldn’t like it?” Lucky asked. His big eyes stared up at Rheland expectantly.

“That’s part of it.”

“What’s the other part?” Joben asked.

“What happened to you all being too afraid to ask questions?” Rheland ran his hand over his face. He’d become used to them asking questions about the lessons, but this had nothing to do with being a vampire.

“You’re terrifying, but you aren’t cruel toward us,” Sattin said.

“Phexx likes you, and he’s cool,” Lucky added.

Rheland grunted. Phexx liked him? He knew the psycho enjoyed fucking him, but he didn’t think he *liked* him. Rheland chastised himself for acting like a child instead of the ancient vampire he was.

“Havyn does, too, and he’s a good judge of character,” Leo said.

Rheland stared at the kids. “They talk about me?”

All of them nodded. Joben rolled his eyes as he took a seat. “All the time. The only one who complains about you is Sevyn.”

“Yeah, but he complains about everything,” Sattin pointed out.

Wow. Rheland knew he should get them all back on task, but there was one pressing question. As if she already knew his question, Sattin smiled at him and answered without him needing to ask.

“No, he doesn’t, but he does watch you the most.”

Rheland wanted to ask her to use her magic. He knew seeing the future was a fickle thing.

“Alright, enough gossip. Let’s practice biting.” Rheland offered his arm to Leo first since he was the one to drop his fangs on command first. “The goal is not to go too fast because you can tear the skin too much. However, you do not want to go too slow either, or it will cause your food pain.”

“What if we never want to drink from someone?” Sattin asked.

Rheland’s normal response was to shoot down the notion, but he thought about the world they were about to live in. “You should still know in case of emergencies. There are multiple scenarios where you might have to bite someone.”

Leo licked his lips, his eyes flickering red before they settled. It was a normal vampire thing to happen. It mostly occurred in newly changed vampires. Their blood lust mixed with an overwhelming amount of emotions.

“Go ahead,” Rheland said.

Leo opened his mouth as big as he could and struck. Rheland’s flesh tore. Blood gushed out and splattered on the floor. Rheland mentally chastised himself. He should have thought to put down some towels or at least move the lesson to the kitchen.

“Uh, not what I was expecting,” Ace said. He turned around and returned just as Rheland eased Leo’s teeth out of

his arm.

“See the bite mark you left? The left hole is bigger than the right.” All the children gathered closer and nodded. “You got excited and moved your head a little too much.”

Leo licked his lips and instantly started to race around the room.

“What’s wrong with him?” Ace asked, dropping the towels on the floor. “It’s like he ate a bag of cotton candy.”

“He drank some of my blood.”

Leo shouted and whooped as he flipped, turned and ran in the other direction.

“Who’s next?” Rheland asked.

“Maybe they shouldn’t feed from you,” Ace suggested. He rolled up his sleeves. “I have some to spare.”

No, sat on the tip of Rheland’s tongue but he swallowed it back as the human stared at him.

“You aren’t drinking any of it,” Ace said.

“They’re still learning.”

Ace waved it off. “I have good pain tolerance.”

Rheland’s left eye twitched. “Don’t complain if they rip a hole in your arm.”

Ace smirked. “I won’t. Now come on, scaredy cat.”

I’m going to kill him one day. Rheland gestured for Sattin to try.

She cleared her throat. “Will you stop me?”

“Of course. This idiot has a death wish, but I don’t plan on letting it be granted any time soon.”

Ace sighed. “You really know how to suck the fun out of shit.”

Rheland glared at him, and Ace’s gaze dropped to the younger two kids. “Sorry.”

They both shrugged. “We’ve heard worse.”

Probably seen worse too. Rheland kept that thought to himself. “Remember, Sattin, do it slowly. Ace, let her know if it’s too fast or slow. Joben, you can try on my arm.”

“Let me know if I hurt you,” Sattin said.

Ace nodded. She bit him, and he kept his face impassive.

“That’s good, Sattin. You aren’t drinking, just practicing.” She pulled back and wiped Ace’s blood off her lips with the back of her hand.

“Want to try, Lucky?” Ace asked.

The little boy ran over to Ace and bit down.

Rheland was up in seconds just as Joben pulled his fangs out. Ace stayed still, but Rheland could tell instantly that Lucky had gone too fast. Blood ran over Ace’s arm and splashed onto the floor.

“Shit, should have put the towel under me.”

That’s what he’s worried about? Rheland grabbed the back of Lucky’s neck as he growled. “Let go.”

The boy was more werewolf some days. The last thing Rheland wanted was for him to tear a piece of flesh from Ace and eat it.

Ace’s right eye twitched, but other than that, he stayed calm.

“Hey, brat. I need this arm in order to keep beating you at Mario Kart. Let it go.”

Rheland was about to force Lucky back when the kid released Ace on his own. Ace reached over and ruffled his dirty blond hair.

“Good job, ease up next time. You went a bit fast.”

Rheland grabbed Ace’s arm and ran his tongue over the opened wounds, sealing them. The children were part vampire, but it didn’t seem they got all the vampire traits.

“Thanks,” Ace said.

Rheland nodded. “That’s it for now,” he announced.

Ace stood up and stretched. He was far too complex for Rheland’s liking. He couldn’t help but watch the human.

“Take a picture. It lasts longer,” Ace said.

Rheland groaned. “Your mouth ruins it every single time.”

Ace smirked. “Good thing pictures don’t talk.”

“One of these days, I’ll grant that wish.”

CHAPTER FOURTEEN



The cold air barely penetrated past his thick fur. Phexx leaped over a fire hydrant, his claws scraping against the pavement as he gave chase. His head tilted back, and he howled when he caught sight of the wolf they were chasing.

Blood rushing, lungs burning, Phexx kicked it into overdrive. His heart was firmly lodged in his throat, making every breath heavy. It was the best feeling in the world. Phexx pushed himself harder, moving around the city as if it was the woods.

Regardless of where they'd lived as humans, most wolves had a hard time navigating the city. Too many sounds, smells, and sights. Not Phexx. He thrived on the challenge; it only made the hunt that much more fun.

Trash cans crashed right before him. Phexx deviated slightly, jumping and pushing off the wall to avoid tripping. The other wolves who'd caught up to him slipped up, and he mentally laughed at them.

Rookies. Screams filled the air, and Phexx would laugh if he were in his human form. People jumped out of the way as the wolf in front of him barreled down the sidewalk.

Fuck, I'm causing a scene. It would be a bitch tonight if more humans were hurt. What happened to some decorum? They were supposed to stay hidden. This dumbass was making it ten times harder now that they were public.

The werewolf dodged to the left, and Phexx's claws scraped against the pavement as he forced his body to turn in full sprint. They went down another dingy alley.

White fur was nothing more than a blur next to him, and Phexx stopped just as Lynk tackled the wolf. Phexx lowered

his body, growling at the wolf, daring him to give his alpha a problem. That meant it could go from detainment to a fight.

Phexx bared his teeth at the wolf as he slumped to the ground breathing heavily. His tongue lulled out as he tilted his head and submitted to Lynk.

More wolves joined them. Phexx knew the fun was over. He moved closer to Lynk, and his alpha backed away from the perp.

“Shift now,” Ryder said. His alpha power washed over them like a wool blanket.

Phexx shook it off with ease. Broken bones echoed around them, and pain-filled cries accompanied them. After a few long stretched-out minutes, the werewolf was finally in human form.

Tucker Harrison, a former member of the bay wolf pack. He'd been banned for turning his girlfriend against her will. There were mistakes, and then there were dumbasses like him.

The man groaned as he sat up. “This is bullshit,” Tucker spat.

“Under the new law changing any human against their will is an offense. You've broken that by changing Mya Norse. How do you plead?” Ryder asked.

Tucker flipped him off. “That bitch is lying. She begged me to become a wolf.”

Lola shifted in the blink of an eye, being a natural-born wolf. She stepped up next to her mate. “Then why run?”

Tucker rolled his eyes. “Maybe because this makeshift council was on my ass.” He growled as if any of them would

be remotely intimidated by him.

Phexx huffed. This fucker was keeping him from a certain vampire.

“We’re supposed to be free, but because those leeches wanted to come out, the rest of us have to live like fucking animals.” He spat at Lola’s feet.

Tucker looked around, locking eyes with Phexx for a moment. He snapped his teeth at the man, mentally laughing when he jumped. Lynk shook his huge wolf head at Phexx.

What? Phexx barked, and Lynk stared him down. He knew the alpha wolf was telling him to wait it out. Half of them shifted into humans, and the others stayed in wolf form just in case the so-called rogue wasn’t alone.

Lola didn’t bat an eye at his hostility. Maybe because she had a brother like Karter, who was a constant ball of trouble. Either way, Lola handled it like a pro. Phexx might have killed the bastard just to finish this.

“Then you won’t mind coming back with us and being questioned,” Lola said. She moved toward Tucker. Just as she approached, he leaped up.

Phexx lunged forward. He sank his teeth into Tucker’s ankle and dragged him back. However, it seemed he didn’t need to get involved. Tucker’s body slumped before crashing to the ground. Blood splattered over Lola’s face, and she looked more like Karter than before. Phexx knew they were twins, but damn, it was uncanny sometimes.

“Block off any humans coming this way,” Lola instructed.

Lynk shifted as he stepped toward her. Ryder was already checking over his mate, and Phexx glared down at Tucker. Well, that was one way to serve justice.

“Phexx, go check the area. I felt eyes on us,” Lynk ordered.

He gave a curt nod before running out and slinking around the area. There were too many smells to track anyone. The way the wind was blowing, all he could smell was the pizza being made two blocks over.

Phexx still kept to the shadows as he checked every area he could. He turned a corner, certain that all the humans had cleared the area. Sirens reached his ears, and he growled. He didn’t have to watch to know it was headed their way. He raced back to the others and forced his body to shift.

Pain blossomed over him as his muscles stretched and shrunk, his bones breaking and reforming. His fur receded as his teeth changed.

“Humans are on their way.”

Lola groaned. “We’ve told them to allow us to handle this.” She looked down at herself, still caked in blood.

Phexx gave her a toothy smile. “Next time, let me have the fun.”

She shook her head at him just as someone handed her a towel to wipe herself down with.

Guess it’s time to get modest for humans. Phexx cracked his neck to the left and then the right. “Shit, so now what?”

Lynk passed him a pair of sweats, and Phexx slipped them on. “Now we get the fun privilege of speaking to the task force over paranormal creatures.”

Ryder looked around and flagged Lola down. The blood was mostly cleaned off her leaving her naturally light brown

skin on display. She pointed to his hair, indicating she needed a hair tie.

She shook her head and went back to talking to a few other werewolves.

“So, we aren’t going home?”

Lynk sighed. “Not for a while.” Sure enough, humans were jogging their way.

“You would think they’d stay clear of monsters,” Phexx said.

“We were like them once.”

Phexx nodded. “I don’t know. I feel like I was never one of them.”

Lynk side-eyed him. Phexx knew the werewolf was trying to figure out just how crazy he was.

“Or are you avoiding home because a certain vampire is there, and it’s impossible to avoid him?”

Phexx had noticed how Lynk moved around the mansion lately; it was like he was actively ensuring he and Rheland weren’t in the same space. Which was insane since the werewolf had grabbed Rheland from between him and the human.

“I’m not avoiding anyone,” Lynk said.

“Oh, we’re lying now?”

“Drop it, Phexx.”

“I’m curious why you drape your scent all over him and yet won’t claim him as yours.” Although the idea of Rheland only belonging to Lynk made Phexx want to shift and fight the alpha wolf.

“Stop growling,” Lynk commanded.

His alpha power forced Phexx down. He bowed his head and submitted without a fight.

“I’m not claiming him as my own.”

“But you want to,” Phexx pointed out.

“It’s complicated,” Lynk said.

Phexx shook himself free of the alpha power. He stared at Lynk and saw the truth in the man’s eyes. He meant it. Something in Phexx’s chest eased, and he nodded.

“What if someone else wants to join in?” Phexx asked. He rolled his shoulders back. “I mean, I was already shocked by the human, but I don’t know. He seems okay.”

A look overtook Lynk’s face. Just as fast as it had appeared, it vanished. “Rheland can do what he wants.”

Phexx looked down, and blood dripped from Lynk’s balled-up fists.

“Yeah, keep telling yourself that.”

It wasn’t supposed to be this way. He knew he was attracted to Rheland from the start. All that power and blood lust called to the monster inside of him.

However, since they’d moved into Rheland’s house, he noticed he wanted to chase down the vampire more. Teasing him became a fun pastime, and he looked forward to his turn to feed him.

Whatever was going through Lynk’s head, he hoped the werewolf figured it out. He and Rheland were like gunpowder and fire. If they weren’t careful, they would take them all out with them.

“Come on, it’s going to be a long night,” Lynk said as he headed toward Lola and Ryder. “Once we get to the cars, message the twins to let them know we’re going to be gone for the rest of the night.”

“And you will message Rheland,” Phexx said, already knowing what his alpha wolf planned.

Lynk grunted, and Phexx barely held back his laughter. The only upside with the two-playing cat and mouse was that he teased them about it. *Free entertainment.*

CHAPTER FIFTEEN



The phone slipped from his fingers, and Havyn glanced at his brother. Sevyn knew instantly something was wrong. Maybe it was a twin thing. “What?”

“Lynk and Phexx will be gone for the remainder of the night.”

Sevyn nodded. “Okay, the kids are all getting ready for bed anyway.”

Havyn chewed on the inside of his cheek. “Yeah, but it was Phexx’s night to feed Rheland.”

Sevyn stopped playing the video game and sat the remote down to the side. His shoulders tensed as he attempted to act calm. Havyn knew his brother like he knew the back of his hand.

“One of us has to do it?” Sevyn’s voice was smooth, not a drop of his fear coming through.

Havyn was already prepared to reassure his brother he didn’t have to go this time. However, they’d both signed the contract trading their blood for housing. It wasn’t a bad deal. The house had three floors, and everyone received their own room. They’d decided to bunk together.

Havyn couldn’t remember a time he and Sevyn had ever been apart, and the dependency had only worsened once they were changed. Even without a pack, they had each other. It kept them both on the side of sanity until they found Lynk and their pack.

They both had fed Rheland a total of zero times. Every single time it was their day, either Lynk or Phexx was fed on. Even Ace was pulled in.

Havyn was over waiting.

“What about the human?” Sevyn asked.

Havyn shook his head. “The kids practiced on him today.”

“Fine, I’ll do it,” Sevyn grumbled. He snatched up the remote and glared at the screen as he hit play. His finger tapped on the side, revealing how nervous that idea made him.

Havyn would feel bad for his brother if Sevyn didn’t cause his problem himself. He had half a mind to let Sevyn go through with it just so his brother could get over whatever hang-ups he had about Rheland. However, Havyn was at the end of his rope. He wanted to be the one to feed Rheland.

“Well, actually, I was going to do it,” Havyn said.

“What?” Sevyn shook his head. “Don’t you hate the way it feels?”

Correction, Havyn hadn’t liked that one time they’d gone to a vampire bar. The way they’d stared at them had sent ants trekking down Havyn’s spine. Rheland was different. The way the vampire looked at Havyn wasn’t special, but it wasn’t degrading either.

“I can handle it. We’re supposed to be helping anyway.”

“Yeah, I can take one for the team,” Sevyn said and shouted at the game.

Havyn sat there, trying to figure out how to convince his brother he could do it. The truth was Havyn *wanted* to do it. He wanted to feel Rheland’s fangs embedded in his flesh. More importantly, he wished to be pressed against Rheland and get closer to the vampire.

His crush on the king of vampires had only grown every day. It didn’t matter to him or his wolf that Phexx and Lynk were close to Rheland. Not even the fact that Ace, a human,

had some kind of relationship with Rheland bothered him. If anything, it meant there might be room for him.

Havyn could only hope.

“No, you can handle it next time. You don’t always have to do the hard stuff,” Havyn said.

Sevyn finished the game, and his head flopped back on the bean bag. His brown eyes bore into Havyn’s soul. Tension-filled seconds ticked by, and Havyn knew the moment his brother picked up on it.

Sevyn rolled off the bean bag and glared up at him.

“You have got to be shitting me.”

Havyn sighed. “Sevyn.”

“Don’t Sevyn me. The fuck are you thinking?”

That Rheland was hot, special, smart, powerful, and overall, someone he wanted to get closer to. Havyn was certain there was more to Rheland than met the eye. The vampire had his mask on tight. He acted and spoke like a human majority of the time. When he let that persona slip, the little glimpse into the real Rheland only drew Havyn in more. He was powerful and ancient, yet he was just as flawed as any of them.

“You like him?” Sevyn spat.

Havyn shrugged. “You don’t?”

“He’s the king of vampires. You and I both know the shit he’s done to werewolves in the past.”

Right. Rheland was the reason werewolves had been enslaved to vampires a few hundred years back.

“We don’t know the full story.”

Sevyn laughed. “Who the hell wants it? I don’t plan on forgiving him.”

Havyn sighed. “We weren’t even werewolves back then.”

“Doesn’t matter. I’m sure he wants to do it again.”

Havyn wanted to yell at his twin, but it was pointless. He understood on some level.

“I don’t know what happened back then, but I don’t plan on forgiving him either.” After all, Havyn wasn’t even sure if there was something to forgive.

“But you can fuck him?” Sevyn shook his head. “Everyone has lost their mind. He is the ultimate enemy.”

“We’re sleeping in his house,” Havyn stressed.

“And I sleep with an eye open every day.” He tapped his temple. “I don’t trust him as far as I can throw him.”

“Sevyn, you were literally hanging off the bed earlier, passed out snoring.”

Sevyn growled, and his eyes flashed that of his wolf’s. “You know what I meant.” He took in a few deep breaths.

Havyn knew he wouldn’t convince Sevyn to think any other way. He’d have to come up with his own thoughts on Rheland.

“Then it’s settled. I’ll feed Rheland, and you can stay clear of the enemy.”

Sevyn’s brows dipped. “Maybe we should go together.”

Havyn cocked a brow. “Oh, good idea. Gang up on the king of vampires.”

Sevyn flipped him off. “It was an idea. Don’t be a dick.”

“Yeah, and the open hostility from you will just go over so well.” Havyn punched his brother in the arm. “Breathe.”

Sevyn shook his head and plopped back down on the bean bag. “Havyn.”

“I’ll be safe. I swear.”

“He can kill you before you even blink,” Sevyn said.

“I thought you found that hot.”

Sevyn’s face screwed up in disgust. “That’s Phexx’s thing. I’m all for a challenge, but the idea of being killed with little to no effort isn’t for me.”

Havyn laughed. “Good to know you’re conscious of limits.”

His brother flipped him off as Havyn headed for the door.

“Don’t worry. I’ll be back later.”

Sevyn grumbled. Havyn caught his brother watching him from the reflection on the tv.

Havyn trekked up the stairs until he got to the third floor, where Rheland’s room was. Havyn’s stomach erupted in a fit of butterflies as he neared what he’d been dying to do since they’d moved in. Weeks had passed, and finally, he was about to have Rheland to himself.

The thought of racing back downstairs and taking Sevyn up on the offer plagued him. With his brother at his side, at least, he’d be able to deviate some of the attention off himself. The last thing Havyn wanted to happen was for Rheland to realize he was boring. Especially compared to Sevyn, who was far more outgoing than him.

Havyn lifted his hand, his pulse thundering in his ears, making it impossible to hear. He brought his knuckles down against the hardwood and swallowed as he waited for an answer.

The door opened a little. Havyn stepped through, his heart firmly lodged in his lungs as he sought out Rheland.

“Finally,” Rheland said. He smiled, and it almost came across as sweet. However, Havyn wasn’t stupid. Behind that soft, innocent face laid the devil himself.

“Sorry for the wait,” Havyn said,

Rheland popped his lower lip out, and the sight would be funny if it weren’t so hot.

“This is the first time you’ve come to me.” Rheland lifted a leg and propped an elbow on it. “Thought you wanted to feed me?” Rheland was up before Havyn could answer. Each step brought them closer. Havyn was stuck to the spot.

“I do.”

“You’re so honest,” Rheland said as he reached up and ran his fingers over Havyn’s neck.

Am I? Havyn could hardly think straight. He nodded, although Rheland hadn’t asked a question.

“Come on, where can I bite?”

Havyn swallowed back the moan as he remembered the last time Rheland asked him. “Neck.”

“Classic.” Rheland led Havyn over to the bed and sat him down.

Havyn took his shirt off, his heart pounding away. He tilted his head just enough for Rheland. The vampire didn’t get

behind him like he thought he would. No, Rheland straddled his lap, and Havyn's hands instantly went to his ass. He held Rheland there as the vampire ran his mouth over Havyn's pulse point.

"Are you excited?" Rheland asked. He wiggled his ass, and Havyn's hard cock answered for him.

Havyn hadn't even noticed when it had happened. Rheland kissed the sensitive flesh on Havyn's neck, pulling a deep groan from him.

"Good. Me too."

Rheland's fangs scraped over Havyn's throat before he broke the skin. Pain shot down Havyn's shoulder. For a split second, he almost asked Rheland to stop. He squeezed the vampire's ass, and the pain receded to a throb. The throb shifted to an ache. Soon Havyn was rocking up against Rheland's ass, mudding the lines of pleasure and pain in his head.

The sound of Rheland drinking filled Havyn's ears and was far more erotic than the werewolf would have ever guessed. His cock strained against his clothes, and it was made no better as Rheland continued to grind against him at random.

Rheland pulled back and wiped the corners of his mouth. He sucked any of Havyn's blood left off his fingers.

"Delicious."

Havyn stared at his mouth, transfixed.

"What? You're looking at me like you want something," Rheland said. He leaned closer and rotated his ass over Havyn's lap. "If you don't take it, then I guess you don't really want it."

It was as if a switch was flipped inside Havyn's brain. He was reacting before the thought could fully form. He flipped them around. Rheland's back hit the bed. Havyn trapped the vampire and brought their mouths together in a heated, desired-filled kiss.

Havyn bit down on Rheland's lip before swiping his tongue over the area, erasing the sting.

"I've wanted to do that for a while."

Rheland blinked up at him. "You wanted to kiss me?"

Havyn stared into Rheland's grey eyes. His face showed nothing, but his voice gave away that there was something wrong.

"Yeah."

A smile appeared on Rheland's face. "Want to do it again?"

More than *anything*. It was far better than Havyn could have ever imagined. He lowered his mouth to Rheland's, much slower this time. Their lips came together. Sparks danced along Havyn's lips and traveled throughout his body.

One taste, and Havyn wanted more instantly. He nipped at Rheland's lips gentler this time, and the vampire opened up for him. Their tongues tangled together, and Havyn was transported to heaven. His body lit up as he laid more of his weight on top of Rheland. He pushed the vampire firmly against the bed as he attempted to devour him through the kiss.

His hands moved on their own; it was like he couldn't get enough of Rheland now that he had him. His fingers pushed up under Rheland's shirt and touched cool skin that heated upon his touch. It was like the vampire was soaking up

Havyn's warmth. He had plenty to spare and was more than willing to give it all to Rheland.

Havyn's fingertips grazed against the soft peaks of Rheland's nipples. A gasp left the vampire, and Havyn did it again. He toyed with them, enjoying how the vampire arched his back and moaned for him. Havyn greedily swallowed up every sound that tried to escape. He felt ravenous.

They pulled apart, and Havyn dropped to his knees in front of Rheland. He slipped his fingers past the waistband and stared up at the vampire.

This is it. It's actually happening. Havyn's heart was lodged in his throat. What if he messed this up? Better yet, what if he was no good? Rheland was ancient; he had to have plenty of experience. Not to mention he was with Phexx and Ace too. And Havyn was pretty sure a time or two with Lynk. Havyn couldn't compare in the slightest.

Cold fingers touched Havyn's face and stopped his spiraling thoughts in their tracks.

"Stop overthinking things," Rheland said. He leaned down and kissed Havyn. "Do what you want with me."

Havyn closed his eyes for a moment as a full-body shiver wrecked down him. Rheland had no idea what he was handing over and how much Havyn craved those words from him.

Clothes came off in nothing but a blur. Havyn couldn't be pressed to care. He was fully focused on Rheland and them coming together finally.

"There is lube in the drawer," Rheland said. He turned over on his stomach and pushed out his ass in waiting.

Havyn scrambled over to grab it and popped the cap open. He poured a generous amount on his fingers and pressed two

against Rheland's hole. Havyn knew there was no going back, not that he ever wanted to. He couldn't count how often he'd dreamt of this very thing happening. Of having Rheland.

"I won't break," Rheland said.

Havyn groaned. "I know." He worked the vampire open, stretching him and lubing up his hole as efficiently as possible. It took all his restraint not to grab Rheland's hips and thrust his cock inside of him.

"Turn over," Havyn said.

Rheland glanced over his shoulder. Havyn grabbed the vampire's hips and flipped him over. He wanted to see every expression that slipped past Rheland's perfectly formed mask as he was inside the man.

Havyn intertwined their fingers and forced Rheland to look at him. His eyes widened. Before the vampire could run away, Havyn pushed his cock inside and earned a sultry groan out of Rheland.

Tight, slick walls gripped Havyn's cock and promised sweet nothings.

"You feel even better than I imagined," Havyn said.

"You thought about me a lot, huh?" Rheland asked.

Havyn didn't hesitate when he answered. "Yes."

Shock came over Rheland's face before the vampire erased it. He was a blank canvas once more. Haven couldn't help but puff out his chest at the fact he pulled such a reaction out of Rheland.

They locked gazes, and it only spurred Havyn on more. He changed the angle just slightly and knew the moment he struck

Rheland's prostate. The vampire tightened around him every single time he hit the spot.

Rheland's eyes fell closed. He turned his head, moaning out in pleasure.

"Open your eyes," Havyn said.

Rheland didn't listen. Havyn leaned closer, keeping his hips still. Even as Rheland clenched around him, he fought his body's need to move.

Havyn kissed each eye. "Please open your eyes."

Rheland groaned but opened his eyes. Havyn smiled down at him.

"Thank you."

Rheland opened his mouth just as Havyn pulled his cock out till only the tip of it rested inside of the vampire. He slammed forward. Whatever Rheland was going to say shifted into a moan that bordered on a scream.

"You sound so intoxicating." Havyn licked his lips and did it again. "You squeeze me perfectly."

Rheland's body tightened around him and dragged his climax out. The vampire's back arched, and his nails bit into Havyn's flesh as he climaxed along with Havyn.

"What?" Rheland asked.

Havyn licked his lips and stared at Rheland's cum splattered on his torso.

"I want to go again."

Rheland chuckled. "Then do it."

Havyn's eyes widened as Rheland clenched around him, making him moan.

“Give me all you got.”

Havyn didn't hesitate. He fucked Rheland as if it would be the last time, only to ask for more every single time one of them finished. He didn't want to stop and had no plans to either.

The werewolf flipped Rheland around onto his stomach and slipped right back inside. It was like coming home after a long day of misery. Havyn slammed forward and watched as Rheland's ass bounced every time their bodies crashed together.

Rheland's moans were music to his ears as they echoed off the walls. Havyn wanted to record them and play them on repeat day in and day out. Havyn leaned over Rheland's body, bringing them closer together and shoving his cock in deeper.

“Shit,” Rheland swore.

If Havyn could, he'd have touched Rheland's soul. He grabbed the vampire's hands and held them down to the bed as he pounded into him.

Havyn's breathing was erratic as he held still. “Again.”

Rheland whimpered and shook his head. “You're a demon.”

More. I want more. Havyn groaned and pounded into Rheland, never wanting it to end.

Havyn lifted Rheland and turned his head so they could kiss. Their mouths didn't match up perfectly, but that was okay. He sucked on Rheland's tongue and reached around his waist to stroke his cock.

Muffled moans of desperation spoke to something in his soul. Havyn tightened his hand and slammed into Rheland

with renewed strength.

Pleasure tripled and skirted up Havyn's spine, stealing his breath away for a moment as stars took over his vision. He growled his release as he filled Rheland with more cum.

The world came into focus all too soon, and Rheland dropped to the bed. Havyn's cock slipped free with an audible squelch. Cum dripped out of Rheland's hole, hypnotizing Havyn for a moment.

"Stop. Watching." Rheland sounded exhausted.

Havyn hopped out of bed, grabbed a towel, and cleaned Rheland up the best he could. No matter how much he wiped, more cum gushed out of Rheland's used hole. What did it say about him that all he wanted to do was scoop up the cum that had spilled and stuff it back inside of Rheland?

The werewolf cleaned up and crawled back into the bed. He fixed them so that Rheland could rest at the bed's head instead of its foot. Havyn held onto Rheland as long as the vampire would allow him to.

"Do you need to eat again?" Havyn asked.

Rheland groaned and mumbled words against his chest. There was no way in hell Havyn could decipher any of them.

"Huh?"

Rheland drew his head back and glared at Havyn. "They always say watch out for the quiet ones. What the hell was that?"

Havyn's face felt hot the more Rheland stared at him. "What was what?"

Rheland shook his head and curled back up against him. Havyn smiled and hugged him tighter.

“Rheland, blood?” Havyn reminded the vampire.

He shook his head. “As much as I’m all for fucking all night, morning is coming, and I don’t have the energy to do it again.”

Was the sun coming up already? Havyn sighed. Another few seconds passed, and Havyn opened his mouth but shut it as Rheland’s door opened.

Phexx walked in. He moved right past the bed and into the bathroom. The shower turned on, and a few minutes passed with Phexx showering.

The door opened again, and Havyn’s back stiffened. Lynk stood in the doorway nearly as wide as it. He stared at Rheland in Havyn’s arms.

“All good here?”

“Yes,” Havyn answered.

Lynk nodded, but it looked like he wanted to say more. He turned away and left the room. The bathroom door opened, and Phexx waltzed out. Water dripped down his cut body, tattoos and scars decorating every inch of him. He towel-dried his hair and slid into Rheland’s bed.

“Oh, good you warmed him up,” Phexx said. He curled around Rheland and closed his eyes.

Havyn thought about leaving for all of five seconds. He’d planned on asking Rheland if he could stay anyway. Phexx didn’t seem to mind that he was there.

“Stop overthinking and go to sleep,” Rheland grumbled. His eyes were still closed.

Havyn smiled and did just that, closing his eyes and enjoying having Rheland in his arms. Fuck it. He finally got

the chance to be with Rheland, and he wasn't about to let it slip away.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN



Complicated was something Rheland could handle; he wasn't nearly as bored as he'd been before. Now he had multiple men occupying his time in and out of bed. When they weren't around, he now had children to train. In all his years as he walked the earth, he never thought he'd be watching over children.

Rheland wouldn't admit it out loud, but he was becoming fond of the little things. Even the ones he didn't train with. Hazel was a constant ball of energy. If she wasn't setting things on fire in his house, she was running around howling at random hours.

With all of that, Rheland should have kicked her out. However, she was by far the sweetest of them all and the least afraid of him. She had no qualms coming up to him. Murphy, on the other hand, was the polar opposite of the girl. He was far more reserved and polite. The only time Rheland had witnessed him be more like a child was when he was in his wolf form.

Maybe he feels safer like that. At least he can fight back if someone attacks him.

The twins were a handful on their own. Lucky and Leo were one and the same but different. Leo seemed to be the calm one on the outside, but he was far quicker to anger than his brother. His vampire side was more prominent as well.

Sattin and Joben were polite but still spoke their minds when they wanted to. Rheland could easily respect that, especially knowing what they'd gone through. The fact that any of them were remotely stable was a testament to Lynk's parenting.

The man never gloated about it or even pointed it out. What he'd done with the children in such a short time was

nothing short of incredible.

Now, if only the werewolf would give that same time and energy to Rheland. He knew he was a lot of work. Years of suppressing most of his emotions had left Rheland raw and empty. He knew how to fake it like the best of them. However, Lynk saw through him every single time.

Why couldn't the werewolf pretend with him? Why couldn't they play make-believe that maybe the walls that surrounded Rheland's heart would shatter?

Rheland gave up on the book he had in his hand as shouting down the hall reached his ears. He could block out the noise around him; however, as of late, he found it hard to ignore those who now surrounded him.

The shouting grew, and laughter quickly joined in. Rheland approached the open door, his footsteps light.

There in the room was Ace with the children. Leo, Lucky, Hazel, Murphy, Sattin, and Joben. They surrounded a board game, and each one took a turn. Ace laughed and smiled with them.

Rheland couldn't help but admire the glow on his face as he entertained the children. The vampire knew there had to be a reason an air of sadness surrounded Ace at all times and why he was openly accepting of death. However, he hadn't tried to figure it out either.

Maybe that needs to change. Rheland couldn't deny the pull to know more about Ace. There was no way he'd allow his heart to be pulled in by a human. He couldn't fight himself either. There was something about Ace that tugged at him. Rheland was starting to think it didn't have anything to do with him looking like Frode.

“He’s good with them,” Lynk said.

Rheland had heard the moment Lynk stepped his way. The werewolf stopped just outside the door as Rheland had. No one noticed them, and it felt like they were watching over something special.

Rheland rested his head against the door frame as they both watched Ace play a board game with the children.

“You should keep him around even when it’s time for him to leave,” Lynk said.

Rheland’s back stiffened. “Leaving already?” He glanced at Lynk, who was staring at him.

“No.”

“Then why are you talking about it?”

Lynk smiled, and Rheland turned to face him fully.

“Because I can see how good he is for you.”

Rheland had no idea what Lynk was talking about.

Lynk moved closer and cupped Rheland’s face. His hand was hot pressed against his skin, and it scratched at something in Rheland that had him leaning in.

“You’re changing,” Lynk said.

Rheland huffed out a laugh. “You’re delusional. I am the same as I have always been.”

Lynk’s bright brown eyes bore into him. It felt like he was tearing Rheland apart in search of something.

“No, I can see it.” He leaned close, and Rheland’s stomach flipped.

Rheland licked his lips. His gaze dropped to Lynk's mouth in hope. *Is he finally giving in?*

"Alpha!" Hazel yanked the door open, and Lynk pulled back, breaking the moment.

Hazel's eyes bounced between them, and her smile grew even more. Her rosy cheeks strained to the max. "King Rheland!"

Her volume control was that of a bullhorn at all times. Rheland was certain the girl knew nothing about whispering. Still, her infectious smile was hard to ignore.

"Come play. We're starting another round!"

They looked at each other before moving into the room. Ace's green eyes were plastered to Rheland, and he felt like the human was watching him closely. It made his stomach knot up for some reason.

Rheland sat next to Ace, and the human smirked at him. "Just because you're a king doesn't mean I plan on taking it easy on you," Ace said.

Sattin groaned. "One of you has to beat him. He's been beating us at this thing every single day."

Joben nodded, a frown plastered on his face. He glared at the board as if it had personally offended him. Murphy was no better, his fists balled up.

"You didn't let the kids win?" Lynk asked.

"Fu—" Ace cleared his throat. "Nope. They want to win, they're going to have to beat me."

"Alpha, can you help us?" Leo and Lucky asked in unison.

“Hey, no teams. Bunch of cheaters,” Ace chastised. He discarded the papers and handed out new ones. Rheland watched him closely.

“If anyone can beat you, it’s King Rheland!” Hazel shouted. She pointed between the both of them with a smile.

Rheland’s eyes widened. He wanted to tell her he’d never played any of these games, and the only reason they had any was because of Ace. He’d purchased them the second week the children had been in Rheland’s house.

“This is a human game,” Rheland said.

Ace shrugged. “I’m pretty sure Yahtzee and Candy Land don’t discriminate.”

Rheland shrugged. He’d never played either of them.

“It’s two games in one,” Lynk said.

All the children nodded.

“We get bored waiting on our turns, so we play two to three games at once,” Joben said.

“It helps us multitask,” Murphy added.

“And I get to win multiple times at once,” Ace gloated.

Hazel, Lucky, and Murphy growled as Leo, Joben, and Sattin hissed.

Ace laughed without a worry on his face. Rheland doubted any other human in his shoes would have done the same. Children were the most unstable creatures. He was just lucky that those in the house were better at holding back.

“I think the alpha will win,” Sattin said.

“You better not be using your power,” Murphy chastised.

Sattin rolled her eyes. “I’m not. Between the two of them, our alpha has at least played these games.”

Rheland couldn’t argue with her there. He hadn’t played much attention to human games in a long while. Maybe it had been him walking around with his eyes open but unable to see anything.

“I’m a quick learner,” Rheland said.

Hazel’s smile dropped for a moment. She looked unconvinced.

“Uh, I’m switching to the alpha’s side,” Leo said. He scooted closer to Lynk.

The werewolf had the nerve to laugh. Lucky followed suit, and Murphy jumped ship as well. All that was left was Hazel.

Rheland started up at the sweet girl. “You aren’t going to abandon me, are you?” Rheland asked.

Hazel looked to Lynk before she faced Rheland with determination.

“Me and you!” She held up her hand, and Rheland lifted his to match. She smacked it hard, and he couldn’t help the smile that took him.

“I’m starting to feel like the villain here,” Ace muttered.

“You’re going down,” Lucky said.

Hazel nodded as she took a seat in Rheland’s lap. He went still for a second before he settled in. Ruffling her hair, Rheland mentally vowed to beat Ace.

“What are the rules?” Rheland asked.

“Are you sure about this, Rheland?” Ace asked sternly.

Rheland squinted at the human. “I’m going to take you down.”

“Alpha, don’t get left out,” Leo said.

Lynk smiled. “You two are done for. Did you know I’m great at all games?”

Ace laughed. “Good, a challenge. I can’t wait to rub it in everyone’s faces.”

Rheland couldn’t help but stare at Ace. Something twisted inside the vampire. He realized he wanted to see more of Ace’s real smile, the one that glowed with happiness.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN



Staying out of the way should be easy. It never was for Sevyn. He chastised himself for his misstep as he waltzed right into a room with the house's monster.

Rheland rested against the bookcase staring out the window.

“Being a creeper,” Sevyn said.

The smart thing would have been to walk away before the vampire noticed him. However, no one ever said he was smart.

“Says the one who's watching me from the door.”

Rheland didn't even turn around to face him. For some insane reason, it irritated Sevyn on another level. He stepped further into the room.

“I was looking for some peace and quiet.”

Rheland's ass was encased in tight jeans, and he wore a sleeveless fitted black shirt. He was small, but he had detailed muscles in his back. Sevyn imagined licking or biting the vampire. He quickly shook his head.

Sevyn refused to be like everyone else. His brother was supposed to be the genius of the two of them, and even he'd fallen head over heels for Rheland. He chased after the vampire like some lovesick puppy. It was disgusting and annoying on a good day. What was so good about him anyway? Rheland was nothing more than a vampire who was far older than them and too powerful for his own good.

“Those are two words that don't fit you too well,” Rheland said. He turned, and finally, his grey eyes landed on Sevyn.

His stomach tightened and twisted. *Stay fucking strong.*

“You don't know me.”

Yeah, not buying the shit he's selling. Sevyn dragged his gaze away.

He'd be damned before he'd fall for the spell that surrounded Rheland. There was no way a pack of werewolves would be enticed by a vampire any other way. Magic had to be in the air or the food.

“What is going on in that little brain of yours?” Rheland asked, his face right in front of Sevyn's.

He hadn't noticed the vampire move at all. Sevyn jumped back and grunted as he swallowed back the shout that nearly left him. Rheland smirked at him as if he knew exactly the effect he had on Sevyn.

“Are you afraid of me?” His eyes twinkled, and Sevyn would have sworn everything he had that the vampire got a kick out of it.

“Hell no.” He straightened up and busied his hands, shoving his fingers through his hair. *Stop shaking.*

“I don't think that's true,” Rheland said. His head tilted, and he reached out toward Sevyn.

The werewolf was left helpless. No matter how much he screamed internally to move, he couldn't even blink. His eyes stung and blurred as they watered.

Soft fingers drifted over his chin and then his lips. Rheland pushed up on his tippy toes and brought his mouth toward Sevyn's ear.

“You smell like fear.” He took in a breath and blew it out against Sevyn's neck and ear. “It smells delicious. Makes me want to take a bite.”

Sevyn's heart thundered against his ribcage, threatening to break out.

"Sevyn?" Rheland whispered.

A shiver raced down Sevyn's spine and stole his voice. He shut his eyes, trying his hardest to figure out what the fuck was happening. He was scared, but his cock was hard at the same time.

I'm fucked in the head. I swear something's wrong with me.

Rheland chuckled, and Sevyn opened his eyes to glare at the vampire. He backed up and was all smiles.

"I don't want you touching me," Sevyn said. He looked around the room, his gaze stopping on a vase with dead roses.

His body finally moved with a single thought in mind. Snatching up the vase, he dumped everything on the floor. The carpet was instantly soaked with dirty water, and more petals broke and scattered over the floor.

Sevyn paid them little attention. He opened his mouth and shifted his teeth as much as he could, making them slightly sharper than his human ones. He tore into his arm the flesh gave way. Hot blood splashed over his mouth and tongue. He spat it to the side and balled his fists as he held the bleeding wound over the vase.

"Dramatic, aren't you?" Rheland asked. He vamp sped over to Sevyn and grabbed his wrist.

"I thought I said don't touch me," Sevyn tried to yank his hand away, but there was no give.

He'd fought vampires before and knew exactly how strong they could be. Rheland was on another level.

“You’re wasting my food,” Rheland said.

“That’s all I am to you.” Sevyn attempted to break free again. He dropped the vase. The little blood he’d collected stained the carpet along with the water as he raised his other hand to punch Rheland.

The vampire caught it with ease. It wasn’t fair. Fear wrapped around Sevyn and threatened to strangle him. His knees hit the ground, and the world shifted around him as he went from looking down at Rheland to looking up at him.

“Breathe,” Rheland demanded.

Sevyn’s stupid brain and body obeyed. He sucked in a lung full as he was forced to look up at Rheland.

“Good boy,” Rheland said. He wrapped his mouth around the hole in Sevyn’s arm and sucked, all while staring into Sevyn’s eyes.

What is this? Sevyn’s heartbeat jumped along with his cock. He shoved his wrist closer to Rheland’s mouth and groaned as pain and pleasure raced over his arm straight to his cock.

Rheland smiled as his tongue ran over the hole. Sevyn was transfixed, stuck on his knees before the king of vampires.

This is wrong, but why does it feel good? Sevyn bit his tongue to keep from asking Rheland to suck more.

“That was good. But I’m thinking of sinking my teeth into you next time,” Rheland said.

Sevyn blinked rapidly as he tried to regain control. He shook his head and jumped up. He said nothing as he raced out of the room, ignoring the laughter that came from Rheland.

No distance could erase the feel of Rheland's lips on him or the way being so close to him made Sevyn feel. A growl worked up from his chest. His fist collided with the wall, and the drywall caved under his strength. It did nothing to stop the tremors still wreaking havoc on his body.

Sevyn paced his room, his wolf on edge. Everything in him screamed he needed to return and face Rheland. He wouldn't win, Sevyn held no delusions who was the stronger predator between the two of them.

"Why are you pacing?" Havyn asked as he walked into their shared room.

Sevyn opened his mouth, but Rheland's scent hit him hard. "Were you with him?"

There was no need to specify when there was only one person in the house Sevyn detested.

"I was in his bed last night." Havyn grabbed his shirt and smelled it. "Do I smell like him?"

"Everything smells like him!" His pacing picked up once more as fear trickled down his spine, and his cock twitched in the confines of his jeans.

"Sevyn, you need to breathe or go for a run," Havyn warned.

He flipped his brother off. Fuck Havyn. He didn't understand the confusion turning Sevyn upside down.

"What's he doing?" Ace asked. The human stepped into their room as if he was welcomed.

Sevyn growled. Havyn stepped in front of Ace, shielding him. "Take a few steps back. He's on edge."

“About?” Ace asked. He didn’t budge. If anything, he seemed too relaxed. He confused Sevyn almost as much as Rheland did.

“Good question.” Havyn’s weighted gaze landed on Sevyn. “Want to inform us what’s wrong?”

“No!”

“Is he always this resistant? Or is it a werewolf thing?” Ace asked

Sevyn growled. “Shut up, human.”

“Sorry,” Havyn said.

It only made Sevyn angrier that his brother felt the need to apologize for him. It wasn’t needed.

“Human is the least offensive term I’ve heard.” Ace moved around Havyn and peered at Sevyn. “He looks a little afraid.”

“I’m not afraid of shit!” Sevyn ate the distance between them in seconds. If it hadn’t been for Havyn, he would have torn the human’s throat out. “You know nothing.”

Ace shrugged. “I’ve seen fear, and it’s written all over your face.” He glanced down at Sevyn’s body. “But that’s not it, is it?”

“Ace, you’re not helping,” Havyn growled.

“Oh, I was supposed to be helping? Shit, not really my thing.”

Sevyn saw red and lunged for the human. Havyn shoved him back, and Sevyn crashed against his bed and flipped over it.

“Get out,” Havyn said.

“Don’t have to tell me twice.” Ace ran out, and all that was left was Havyn and Sevyn.

Sevyn’s right shoulder cracked, and then the left. His wrists were broken and shortened. His fingers bent backward before shattering and shortening.

“Fuck! On the night Lynk isn’t home, really?” Havyn glared at Sevyn, but it was too late; he was already too far gone in the shift.

His brother was right next to him, but it sounded like he was miles away. Sevyn shook his head, trying to calm himself down. Phexx and Lynk were both gone. He shouldn’t need them to hold his hand. He’d been a werewolf for a few years now. He had better control; it just wasn’t great.

Time warped before him as Sevyn fought the change.

“What is going on?” Rheland asked.

The vampire’s grey eyes trained on Sevyn, and he growled in warning.

“He’s losing control,” Havyn admitted.

If Sevyn could, he’d curse his brother out. Instead, he settled for growling. He grabbed his arm as it broke. It was far more painful resisting the shift than giving in. Searing white pain laced through every inch of his body. Everything was on fire.

“I can see that.” Rheland tapped a delicate finger on his chin in thought. “Won’t make it outside.”

“No,” Havyn answered.

Sevyn growled. They were ignoring him. Rheland smiled down at him, and unease had him backing up from the vampire, only for his back to hit the wall.

“There is a window. He won’t die from the height,” Rheland suggested.

He can’t be serious.

“Without Phexx or Lynk here, letting him out would be reckless and a lot more work,” Havyn stressed.

Sevyn stopped listening to them; it was taking everything he had to fight the shift. His bones kept breaking and reshaping back and forth from wolf to human. He dropped to the ground before trying to stand up again. The agonizing pain wouldn’t even allow him to see straight.

What would it be like to bite him? Sevyn ran his tongue over his teeth. He hadn’t noticed that he was moving closer to the vampire.

“He needs to get rid of the excess energy,” Rheland said as if he’d done this plenty of times.

Shit, maybe he had. The Crescent Moon pack might be their first official pack, but both brothers had been around others before. Plenty of stories existed of how vampires used to enslave werewolves, keeping them as nothing more than pets.

I’m no one’s fucking pet. Pain shot up his nose, throwing him out of his thoughts. Sevyn jumped up and stepped back.

“Ow.” He covered his stinging nose and looked at Rheland in confusion. “Did you just flick my nose?”

“Sit,” the vampire commanded.

“I’m not some labrador—”

Once again, the world around him moved fast. One second, he was standing over Rheland, and the next, he was at eye level with the man’s abdomen.

“You need training, that’s for sure,” Rheland said.

Sevyn snapped his head back and glared at the vampire.

“We aren’t dogs,” Havyn said.

However, his brother sounded way too fucking calm right now.

“But you are,” Rheland said. His weighted gaze kept Sevyn in place. “How about I play with the both of you?”

Sevyn’s pulse raced as he was forced to stay on his knees. “How?”

Rheland smirked as if he’d won something. “However I see fit.”

Sevyn didn’t need to look at his brother to know he was more than happy to do what Rheland wanted. “Why?”

“Do I need a reason?” He lifted his hand. “This will help calm your beast down, and I get to have some fun.”

Sevyn licked his lips. *Why in the hell does that offer sound so appealing?* Yes was the only answer he could come up with. There wasn’t a part of him that wanted to say fuck no.

I’m fucked if I don’t get away from him.

“Our alpha—” Havyn started. His knees hit the floor next to Sevyn. He, too, stared up at Rheland.

“Your alpha has his own contract with me, just like the both of you.” Rheland pushed his fingers through Havyn’s hair, and a pathetic whimper left Sevyn.

He cut it off instantly and growled. “You can’t handle the both of us.”

Laughter bubbled out of Rheland. Sevyn knew no good would come of it.

The vampire gestured for Havyn to approach. His brother was up in seconds, practically frothing at the mouth to get to Rheland.

Havyn groaned as he kissed Rheland. He fell way too easily, but that wasn't a surprise. Sevyn knew firsthand how hard and fast his brother had fallen for the vampire.

It didn't bother him at the moment. No, what was taking up most of his brain cells was that *he* wanted to kiss Rheland. He wanted to know if his lips were really as soft as they looked. Or if the small taste he had in the library was nothing short of his delusional desires.

“Get undressed, both of you,” Rheland said.

Havyn didn't hesitate to follow the order, but Sevyn wasn't so sure. He looked at the door and then back at Rheland. Sevyn's shifting had slowed down. Was that because he'd gained control, or was that the vampire's doing?

His mind was a mess. Sevyn had learned from the past that it was never a good thing. It only meant his control could slip once more.

“What's the matter, Sevyn? Still scared?”

Yes. He licked his lips. “Not even a little bit.”

Rheland smirked at him as if he knew Sevyn was lying. “Strip.”

Clothes fell away, and so did any chance of running away.

Rheland made a show of taking off each item of clothing slower than the last. He was teasing them, making them wait.

Sevyn growled but stayed perfectly still. He was practically salivating as he was made to wait. His blood

thundered in his ears, and he nearly missed Rheland's command.

"Are you listening?" Rheland asked.

"Yeah," Sevyn growled.

Rheland was in his space. A hand whipped across Sevyn's face before he knew it.

"Try again."

Shivers raced down his spine. He ran his tongue over the cut on his lip. It was healing already, but it didn't keep him from pressing against it to relish in the sting.

"Yes, I'm listening."

"Better," Rheland praised.

The simple word made Sevyn want to do anything to hear it again. Shit. It was too late to run. As if Rheland knew what Sevyn was thinking, he grabbed a fistful of his hair and yanked his head back.

"Don't be bad, Sevyn." Rheland's lips were light as they pressed against Sevyn's pulse. "I'm not above punishing you."

A whimper broke free before Sevyn could catch it.

"Sit," Rheland said.

Havyn pulled over one of the chairs in the room. Sevyn plopped down without another thought.

"Hands behind the chair. If they move at all or you let your hands go, I stop."

Anything but that. Sevyn was far too invested to turn back now. Sevyn stared up at Rheland, waiting for what was to come next. The vampire didn't disappoint as he straddled Sevyn and grabbed his cock.

“Ready?”

Sevyn opened his mouth to answer, only for a long, drawn-out moan to be the only thing that escaped. Rheland took his cock in one downward thrust.

“You feel great,” Rheland praised.

Sevyn nodded. He felt good too. Rheland was tight around him. He fit around Sevyn’s cock like a glove.

Rheland chuckled, and it sounded too light for what they were doing. He raised his hips, and Sevyn swore to any gods that would listen. He never wanted it to stop; he constantly wanted to feel pure ecstasy. It was far better than the wild anger that coursed through his veins daily.

Rheland slammed down, and their bodies clashed together in a thunderous applause. Once Rheland started, he picked up speed, moving so fast that he was almost a blur.

“I don’t think I can wait,” Havyn said.

Sevyn was barely holding on as Rheland rode his cock. Every downward thrust dragged him closer to climax. His toes curled in the carpet as he restrained from ending all too soon.

Rheland stopped and leaned forward. “You don’t mind, do you?”

Mind what? Sevyn couldn’t think, let alone answer philosophical questions.

Something hard pressed against his cock, making Rheland’s already tight hole even tighter. Sevyn swore as he saw colorful spots behind his eyelids.

“Keep your hands behind you,” Rheland warned, his voice strained.

Sevyn nearly whimpered in distress. He locked his fingers together tighter to the point he was certain one of them would be broken. It didn't matter. The pain did very little to stop the burning pleasure from taking over. If anything, it boosted it.

“Uh, fuck,” Rheland moaned.

Sevyn forced his eyes back open, but it was pointless. He was captured instantly by the vampire's big grey orbs. It was like looking at a foggy mirror with little flecks of crystal decorating it.

Havyn dragged his cock out, and Sevyn swore. He broke a finger the moment his brother slammed back into Rheland.

“Fuck, it's too tight,” Havyn said.

Unable to think, let alone form full sentences, Sevyn could only nod.

Rheland's mouth hung open, and pleasure was written all over his face as he rocked in time with Havyn's movements. His fangs dropped down. As if a puppeteer controlled Sevyn, he tilted his head to the side and offered his neck up.

Pain blossomed as Rheland pierced his flesh with his fangs. It did the inevitable and shoved Sevyn over the edge. His body jerked as his eyes rolled to the back of his head. He came inside Rheland repeatedly, unable to stop.

He heard their muffled moans but could not pay attention, still wrapped too tightly in the confines of ecstasy. Sevyn slowly calmed down, his cock released from the sanctuary that was Rheland's ass.

A sharp slap to the face pulled Sevyn from his blissful haze. He still held his hands behind his back. His fingers had gone numb at some point.

“Don’t think we’re done yet,” Rheland said.



SEVYN WAS BARELY CONSCIOUS AS HE HEARD LYNK'S DEEP voice.

“What happened?”

“Nothing I couldn't handle,” Rheland said.

The bed dipped, and a warm, calloused hand touched his head. Sevyn pushed against it with the little strength he had left, seeking comfort. His wolf settled even more, having his alpha there.

“Are you going to join us in bed?” Rheland asked.

Sevyn tried to stay up to listen. Everyone knew there was something between Lynk and Rheland. They just hadn't done anything about it that any of them knew about. Sevyn almost suggested he return to his room so they could finally have their moment, but his arms were wrapped around Rheland, and he pressed himself firmly against the vampire. His flesh cooled Sevyn down even more.

He wasn't going anywhere. They'd have to pry the vampire from his hands, and even then, Sevyn might shift. He had no idea what that meant for what he felt for Rheland or what would come of tomorrow. However, Sevyn only had one need at that moment, and that was to stick close to Rheland.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN



“Ace!” Lucky barged into his room, a smile plastered to his face. His brown hair covered his eyes. Ace couldn’t contain the smile from stretching his lips as he looked at an excited Lucky.

“Why are you running?”

Lucky hopped up on the bed and started bouncing. “Because, because.”

It was still early to be so awake. Maybe not for the human population, but definitely for supernaturals. It was mid-day. Ace assumed he’d be able to slip out without anyone noticing, but that was proving to be more difficult.

I’m getting too close. Too invested. However, even as he thought it, there was no way Ace wanted to walk away from the kids or anyone who lived in the house. He had a few months left, and he might as well enjoy it.

Ace reached for the ball of energy and stopped him from jumping. He sat Lucky back down on the floor and slipped the money envelope into his bag.

“What’s up?” The look of pure excitement came over Lucky’s face again. Ace was quick to raise his hand. “Calm down. I can’t understand you.”

It wasn’t long before Murphy and Hazel bombarded his room. Hazel looked hyped on sugar as she bounced on the balls of her feet.

“The game’s in,” Murphy said. The boy usually stayed refined as if he came from some aristocratic family, but sometimes Ace saw the child side of him. His eyes lit up like fireworks as he started rambling about the latest video game Ace had preordered with them.

“And the remote controllers came!” Hazel whooped. Before Ace knew what was happening, the girl vanished, and in her place was a wolf.

“Uh, that’s one way of showing excitement.” Ace blinked down at her as she started to chase her tail.

“Hazel,” Murphy groaned.

“It’s okay. She’s really excited,” Ace said.

Murphy shook his head. “Alpha said we needed to control our shifts. We aren’t supposed to shift in the house.”

Hazel’s head dropped as she whimpered. Ace reached out and debated all of five seconds before petting her behind the ears. She instantly perked up.

“Well, what he doesn’t know won’t hurt him,” Ace said.

Lucky laughed. “I won’t say a word.”

Murphy didn’t look so sure. Hazel gave him the biggest puppy dog eyes Ace had ever seen.

“Fine, I won’t say anything either.”

Hazel barked, and Ace laughed. “You’re going to give us away. Change back.”

“Come on, let’s go play,” Lucky said, grabbing at Ace’s hand.

“Alright, alright.” Ace glanced at the bag and remembered what he was supposed to be doing. It gave him pause. How could he have fun with the kids when his baby brother would never do the same again?

“Ace?” Hazel called. She grabbed one of his random shirts lying around. Her big doe eyes pleaded up to him. He ruffled her messy brown curls.

“Come on, going to kick all of your as— butts.”

The kids laughed, and it set Ace at ease. He'd go to the hospital. It was inevitable, but for now, he'd give the kids something he couldn't give Logan anymore. Happiness.

They headed to the second floor, where one of the rooms was changed into a game room. Phexx lounged on the couch with a remote in his hand.

“Hey, pet,” Phexx said.

“Hey, dog,” Ace shot back.

Phexx quirked a smile but continued to play the new game.

“Hey, Phexx, we were going to play that,” Hazel said.

Ace waltzed over to the couch, shoved the man's long legs off, and took a seat.

“Hurry it up. We want in.”

Ace was certain if it weren't for the fact that he technically belonged to Rheland, Phexx would have killed him. Phexx came off as one of those insane guys who killed people just for sneezing too loudly. It might be exaggerating, or it might not be. Ace couldn't find a fuck to give either way.

Phexx cocked a brow, but his gaze never wavered from the screen. “You want to get your butt handed to you?”

Ace noticed even Phexx tried his best not to curse around the children. Although according to the kids, they'd seen and heard worse.

“In your dreams,” Ace said.

“Ace is the best player,” Lucky boasted.

Ace puffed out his chest.

“Yeah, against a bunch of kids, but he will lose against me.” Phexx’s words seemed to be aimed at something else.

Ace laughed. “I doubt it. More like we either tie or I will win every single time.”

Phexx growled and ended the session. “Alright, come on. Put your money where your mouth is.” Phexx winked at Ace. The human felt he didn’t mean actual money but a certain someone.

“Winner gets to go first next time?” Ace offered.

Phexx shook his head. “Let’s up it. Winner gets to go first and decide where the loser is placed.”

“What are you two talking about?” Hazel asked.

Phexx and Ace both looked down at the little girl.

“Nothing important,” they said in unison.

“Yeah, just know I’m going to win,” Phexx said.

Ace rolled his eyes as they started up the game. The kids moved around them and settled in.

Had it been a full month? At what point did Ace get sucked into family life? The children treated him like any other house member, although Ace was the only human there.

Maybe it was because packs were known to be family-oriented that Ace felt so at ease around them. Whatever the case, it was becoming harder for him to draw the line between where they were and where he stood.

They played games for hours. Ace lost track of time until his thumbs and fingers started to cramp.

“I’ll take over,” Murphy said.

Ace happily passed the controller over. Neither he nor Phexx won once, and there was even a point they had to work together to beat a boss.

“Here, runts,” Phexx said, passing over his controller as well.

Ace’s stomach growled, and he stood, headed toward the kitchen. He was vaguely aware that Phexx was behind him. He paid the werewolf little to no attention, his brain set on feeding his stomach.

His mind was elsewhere as he made himself something to eat. Ace didn’t even care what it was as long as it took away the dizzying feeling of going without food for so long.

“What the hell is that?” Phexx asked, wrinkling his nose at Ace’s meal.

Ace flipped Phexx off. “You got something to say, dog?”

Phexx grinned as he approached. Ace met him toe to toe.

“You two are like water and oil,” Havyn said.

“Nah, we mix better than that. Don’t we, pet?”

Ace rolled his eyes. “Only when there is an extra ingredient in the mix.”

“What fuck are you two even talking about?” Sevyn asked, right behind his brother. His dark brown eyes bounced between the two of them. Havyn, on the other hand, laughed.

He knows.

“They’re talking about me,” Rheland said as he walked into the kitchen.

It was as if the moon itself was in the room. All eyes gravitated toward Rheland. He commanded attention without

trying. It only made Ace want to rebel and push the man. Maybe because he liked the way Rheland grabbed him up or how the vampire moaned his name.

“Why are you in the kitchen?” Ace asked.

The vampire had no reason to be.

“My food is in here.”

Every single person stopped moving.

“Which one of us?”

The supposed schedule was tossed out the window early on. Whoever found Rheland first tended to feed him and then some. Ace slipped in more than a few times. Lately, he wasn't feeding Rheland blood, not that he was complaining.

“Phexx,” Rheland said.

The werewolf smiled as he'd just won the Nobel Peace Prize.

“Coming, Ace?” Phexx asked. It was rare for him to use his name.

Ace wanted to say yes. It was insane how badly he wanted to join them, but he could only avoid responsibility for so long.

“I'm good this time,” Ace said.

A look close to hurt flashed over Rheland's face. However, just as fast as it had appeared, it vanished.

“Twins?” Phexx asked, unbothered by Ace's refusal.

“Sevyn, Havyn, you two are with me,” Lynk said, popping his head in and answering for everyone.

“Damn it,” Sevyn growled.

Rheland laughed. “Fun time next time.” He was smiling, but his eyes were on Ace, studying him intently. “Where are you running off to?”

Lynk backtracked. The big man looked like he answered to no one. Out of everyone in the house, he was also the kindest, from what Ace could tell.

“There has been an increase in werewolf attacks.” Lynk looked over at Ace. “Be careful if you leave the house. They’re random as hell, but still better safe than sorry.”

Ace grunted. “Noted.” The only reason he didn’t want to be attacked was that there was a chance he’d survive. The last thing he needed was to become a huge German shepherd.

Rheland began to talk to Lynk as the twins left to prepare. It was the perfect time. *It’s now or never.*

Ace slipped free and made it to his room. He grabbed his bag and made a quick trip to the bathroom. As he caught his reflection in the mirror, he stopped short. A huge smile was plastered on his face.

No dark circles lined his eyes. Although he stuck to nighttime hours, his flesh had a healthy glow. Ace reached up and touched his face, poking at his cheeks.

“What is happening to me?”

Asking himself felt useless as he leaned over the sink to look closer. *Am I happy?* There was no way in hell. Ace’s phone rang, pulling him from his thoughts. He took it out, and his smile faded.

I don’t need to be happy now.

Ace answered it. “I’m on my way.” He hung up before anything else could be said. Ace headed out of the house and

trekked a few houses down, where he caught an Uber.

“There’s a bunch of vampires out there. You should be careful,” his driver said.

Ace shrugged. “They are just like you and me.”

The old man coughed out a gruff laugh. “Never. They’re monsters.”

And humans are any better? Ace stared out the window. The last thing he wanted to do was start a philosophical debate with a stranger.

“Don’t tell me you’re one of those freaks who love—”

“I’d appreciate it if you did your job and drove the car.” Ace didn’t bother looking at him.

Luckily, the driver shut up. By the time Ace reached the hospital, he was more than ready to jump out of the car. Normally, it took him a long time to work up the courage.

“You don’t have to wait.”

The old man rolled his eyes. “Whatever, freak.” He drove off, and Ace sucked in a breath, happy to be away from him.

He wasn’t on anyone’s side, not that there needed to be sides. He hated people who tried to force him to choose. He lived with a bunch of supernaturals, and none of them had asked him to view humans as food or trash. Rheland treated them all like walking juice boxes.

Ace shook the annoyed feeling off and headed toward the old run-down hospital. It was all he could afford at the time. And now that he was making more than he had in his life, he could take his brother to a better hospital. What was the point?

“Mr. Hansen.” One of the nurses waved him over.

Ace painted on his smile. She looked him over. Nurse Cathy had been there since Logan had been admitted. She knew Ace’s story better than he did some days.

Her blue eyes widened, along with her smile. “Wow, you look great.” She reached over, and he forced himself to stay still. Ace didn’t care for people touching him.

But that’s never the case at home. Ace shoved the tiny voice in the back of his head away. Right before Cathy’s hands came in contact with his face, he was yanked back.

“Doesn’t he? I try to make sure he gets three to four square meals a day and plenty of moonlight,” Rheland said.

Ace’s back stiffened, and he glanced over his shoulder to see Rheland standing there. A smile that could charm a priest into worshipping the devil decorated his face.

“Oh, you got a boyfriend?” Cathy clapped her hands together. “I’m so happy for you.” She wiped under her eyes, although no tears had broken free. “If anyone deserves someone, it’s you.”

Rheland rested his arm around Ace’s waist. “I couldn’t agree more.”

What is happening? I must be dreaming, right?

Rheland looked up and shut Ace’s mouth for him. “If you’ll excuse us,” Rheland said.

“Oh, sure thing. Go right on ahead,” Cathy said.

Ace was frozen for another second before he went with it. He made his way to his brother’s room with Rheland in tow. The same old door was closed, and Ace normally stayed right

there. Sometimes he opened the door. Other times he was too chicken shit to.

Rheland reached past him and opened the door. Ace's feet carried him inside, his brain completely checked out. He stopped in the middle of the small room, staring at the frail boy in bed. Logan was thirteen, and Ace had already shot up to six feet by then. His brother, on the other hand, hadn't grown much.

"This isn't a part of our contract," Ace whispered.

Rheland hummed as he approached. Ace could practically feel him pressed up against his back. There was no heat, but it was still unusually comforting.

"Many things weren't a part of the contract," Rheland said coolly.

Ace stared at his brother listening to the steady beep of the machines. "Yeah."

They stood there. Ace had never had anyone else visit his brother. The doctors and nurses didn't count. Having Rheland there felt different. He wasn't sinking into despair. It was still there, splashing against his ankles, but he wasn't choking on it.

"Is this why you have a death wish?" Rheland asked, breaking the moment of silence.

Ace shrugged. "He is all I have left." His throat felt raw. "And soon, I won't have anything."

"Death is cruel taking someone so young, but at least he's had someone like you watching over him."

"He would have been better off with someone so much better." Ace's nails bit into the meaty flesh of his palm as he

turned around to face the vampire. The plea rested heavily on his tongue. No matter how badly he wanted to ask, the words would not form.

“Do not ask the impossible of me,” Rheland said.

Ace bit the inside of his cheek, tasting the coppery tang of blood as he forced himself to nod. That was that. There was no point wishing for more.

Rheland grabbed his hand, and Ace stared down at their intertwined fingers.

“Giving him my blood could kill him or turn him. Both options are not ideal.”

“The kids at the house—”

“Are special.” Rheland squeezed his hand. “They were not turned but made.”

Ace felt like he had heard a fairytale. Rheland’s brows scrunched together, and he moved them closer to the bed. Every step was like wading through cement.

“To turn someone so young would only lead to their minds breaking as they grow. Mentally an adult, their bodies forever that of a child. Could you imagine the amount of fear, frustration, and anger that would occur?” Rheland shook his head as his eyes shimmered.

Are those tears?

“Blood lust would win, and he’d end up killing hundreds. Thousands. His impulse control would wither to nothing, and he wouldn’t kill to feed but for the joy of it.” Rheland reached out for Logan with their combined hands forcing Ace to get closer to his brother than he had in a long time. “In the past, the turned children went after other children. In their warped

minds, they were rescuing those who might suffer the same fate as them.”

Rheland let his hand go, and Ace was left holding his little brother’s hand.

“I made it a law never to turn children. The youngest has been seventeen and been allowed to live.”

“What happened to all the ones before the law?” Ace asked.

Rheland’s shoulder dropped, and he knew the vampire’s answer before he said it.

“We killed them all.”

Ace turned to face his brother and squeezed his hand. “Doctors don’t know what happened. One day he had a seizure and was placed in a coma. He was supposed to wake up a few weeks later, a month or two tops.”

“But?” Rheland asked.

“It’s been two and a half years.” Ace cleared his throat. “He’s all but brain dead. I’m just too selfish to let him go.”

Soft lips pressed against his temple, and Ace closed his eyes. He didn’t deserve the comfort.

“I will be outside the room,” Rheland said.

Ace nodded and spent time with his brother. It felt different than normal. Maybe because Rheland was there, or maybe because Ace was starting to accept the inevitable. That Logan was already gone.

Ace kissed Logan’s forehead. “I’ll be back next time. Maybe sit longer, read a story.” He hadn’t done that in a while.

Ace stepped out of the room, wiping his eyes clear of any tears. He found Rheland leaning against the wall, out of place in a hospital. He turned his head. The moment their eyes met, Ace went to him. He had no idea what to expect.

“I’m ready to go home,” Ace said.

Rheland nodded and grabbed his hand. Before they left, Ace made a quick stop to pay the next month’s bill. He could technically pay six months ahead but this way it forced him to show up at least every other month.

Everything else was a blur, and Ace let Rheland handle it all. It felt surreal to check out, knowing he didn’t have to think about where he was going or what he would do at that moment. The car ride was spent in silence, and Ace was grateful for it.

Ace thought about buying some alcohol; it was what he did after a visit. He’d grab the vodka and sit in his room for a bit. Gearing up for the storm that was surely coming his way. The house came into view, and Ace was the first one out.

The moment Ace opened the door, he was enveloped in warmth. That should have been off-putting but instead grounded him in comfort. A muscular chest and beefy arms wrapped around him. Ace grunted as Lynk hugged him.

As the alpha wolf put him down, Ace blinked up at him.

“Oh, good, you’re back,” Karter shouted.

Ace had met him a few times since the pack moved in. He’d thought Sevyn was bad. Karter gave everyone a run for their money.

“What’s going on?” Ace asked.

Lynk clapped him on the back. “We’re drinking. Come on.”

Ace glanced back at Rheland, and the vampire shrugged.

“Already got the good stuff down,” Karter said. He grinned, holding three bottles. “My soon-to-be father-in-law can buy us a shit ton more.”

Rheland sighed, but he didn’t deny it.

“Still weird as fuck to say that.” Karter groaned. “I mean, look at him. I look like I could be his older brother.”

Lynk moved in front of Rheland, and Ace was certain Karter was just saved from an early grave. One of his vampire boyfriends steered him back toward the kitchen.

“What are you waiting for?” Lynk asked.

Ace had plans to be alone, but peeking into the kitchen, he saw the entire Crescent Moon pack there. Faith and Avery waved at him, and Rome lifted his glass. Ace wasn’t sure what to say or do. He’d met everyone and even watched them run a time or two, but that had always been from the outside. At that moment, it felt like they were dragging him into their circle.

The insane part of it all was that Ace wanted it. Even if it was for a short time, he wished not to be alone with his thoughts.

“He’s a pussy,” Phexx said, taking a shot. “He knows we can out-drink him.”

Ace stormed into the kitchen and grabbed himself a cup. “I can drink just as much as the rest of you. But to make it fair, you’re all drinking double.”

Laughter burst out around the room, but no one disagreed. Ace took the first two shots back in quick succession.

At the third one, Karter stopped him. “Beating your ass.”

“Fuck you, no one beats me,” Karter growled.

“Karter,” Lynk warned. He cleared his throat and lifted his drink. “Ace isn’t a wolf, but I, as alpha of the Crescent Moon pack, make him an honorary member.”

“Shit, this vodka is stronger than I thought,” Ace said.

Everyone laughed, but he was serious.

“Make a toast,” Karter said.

Ace looked around the room. A toast. He had no idea what to say. He shut his mouth as soon as it opened. There was one person he wanted to lift in happiness. He thought ensuring his brother slept comfortably was enough, but maybe he should have been doing more. Even if Logan wasn’t awake.

When it was time to say goodbye for good, Ace would be ready to send his brother off with love and acceptance.

He lifted his glass. “Logan,” Ace said. He downed his drink and tapped the glass on the table.

All the werewolves around him lifted their drink. “To Logan.” They took their shots, and a chorus of howls rang out in the kitchen. A laugh burst free. Ace tilted his head back and joined the room of werewolves and howled.

One night he’d celebrate Logan and who he was supposed to be. Tomorrow, he’d let himself break a little, but no more would he shatter.

CHAPTER NINETEEN



Soft fingers combed through Havyn's hair. He groaned as he turned his head in Rheland's lap.

"You're supposed to be sleeping." The vampire was deep into his book, but Havyn felt his eyes on him every so often. It was like his soul was being touched. Only Rheland had that effect on him.

"I asked to rest, not sleep."

Havyn opened one eye and peeked up at Rheland. His book was still hovering over Havyn's face.

"Rheland."

The book snapped shut. Havyn was graced with looking at Rheland. His heart skipped a beat, and his wolf howled for the vampire above him.

"You're not resting at all," Rheland teased.

Havyn held back his grin. "I'm comfortable. That has to count." He reached up for the vampire and pulled him down. "But what would really make me relax is tasting your lips."

"I can't decide if you're a perv or a hopeless romantic."

"Can't I be both?" He brushed their lips together and groaned as Rheland gave in.

Havyn ran his tongue over the seam of Rheland's lips, wordlessly begging for entry.

"Are you this sweet with every guy you like to fuck until they break?"

"You haven't broken yet," Havyn shot back. He smiled but shook his head. "Only you."

Rheland's eyes widened for what felt like forever but were probably no more than a few seconds.

He opened his mouth, and Havyn covered it. “You’re going to say something that’s either going to make me want to fuck you so hard we break this couch or shift.”

Rheland pulled his hand away. “Not hearing the bad part yet.” His pink tongue poked out and danced along Havyn’s fingertips.

Butterflies and pleasurable tingles wrecked him from the inside out. The former would be a guarantee if Rheland didn’t stop playing with him.

Havyn growled. He lurched for Rheland only to fall face-first into the back of the couch. Rheland, halfway across the room, chuckled at him.

“I have to go coach the children. Have fun with fucking the couch until it breaks.”

Havyn whipped around, but it was too late. Rheland was long gone. He flopped back on the couch and growled in frustration.

Footsteps moved his way. Havyn knew it wasn’t Rheland’s. They were too heavy and careless. Only one person had that kind of walk.

He turned in time to see Ace stepping through the door. “Rheland in here?”

“Just missed him,” Havyn said.

Ace stared at him and cracked a smile. “You got shut down?”

“He ran,” Havyn corrected.

Ace laughed, and Havyn quickly joined in. They were all after Rheland, and the vampire knew it. The only one who hadn’t gone after Rheland now was Lynk.

“What are you doing tonight?” Havyn asked.

Ace shrugged. “I have no idea. Want to watch a movie?”

Havyn jumped up. “Might as well.”

“Get rid of that first,” Ace said, pointing to Havyn’s stiff cock. Ace shook his head. “Don’t even think about asking for help.”

Havyn huffed out a laugh. “No thanks, I only want Rheland’s.”

Ace stopped in his tracks, and a look of pure desire crossed his face.

“Want to go hunt down a vampire?” Ace asked.

If Havyn didn’t know any better, he would have sworn Ace was a werewolf and not a human. He pushed Ace.

“Can’t. He’s with the kids.”

Ace frowned. “Maybe later.”

Havyn shook his head.

“Don’t look at me like that. I know you shared him with Sevyn.”

“And you’ve shared him with Phexx.”

Ace smirked. “Rheland is hot when he’s being destroyed, even better when it’s more than one of us doing it.”

Havyn couldn’t disagree with that. Remembering how tight Rheland’s hole felt around him and his brother’s cocks made him want to hunt down the man even more.

“Whatever you’re thinking isn’t helping your situation,” Ace pointed out.

Havyn groaned. “Yeah, give me a few minutes to meet you downstairs.”

“A few minutes?” Ace laughed. “Hope you can keep up with Rheland with that time frame.”

Havyn shoved Ace out of the way. “Don’t worry. I make sure he has nothing to complain about.”

Ace hummed as he headed downstairs. Havyn made a beeline for his bedroom and went straight to the shower.

He stripped quickly. His cock was aching, and desire burned through him like wildfire. Havyn didn’t wait for the water to warm as he jumped in. Even with the water’s icy coldness, he stayed hard.

Havyn wrapped his hand around his cock and let his eyes fall shut. Pleasure trickled up and down his spine. Rheland came to mind instantly, and his hand tightened around his length on its own.

His mouth fell open as he stroked up and circled the head of his cock. Rheland’s name dripped from his parted lips as he envisioned the vampire on his knees in front of him.

Big grey eyes looking up and begging for more.

Havyn cursed as he fell forward, thrusting into his hand, chasing after the pleasure that swirled in the pit of his stomach.

“Please, Havyn, more,” Rheland begged.

Havyn’s mind was shoving him over the edge, and his hand couldn’t keep up.

“Fuck.” It was the only word he could get out as shockwave after shockwave crashed through him. Cum

splashed against the tile wall, and he watched as it slid down and circled the drain.

“Would have been better inside of Rheland.” Havyn closed his eyes and rested against the wall, sucking in the air like a dying man.

Havyn shut the water off and shoved all alluring thoughts of Rheland to the back of his mind. If he kept thinking about the vampire, he was bound to be back in the shower, stroking his cock again.

Sooner or later, Havyn would have to tell Rheland how he felt. He just didn't know when that would be.



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SEVYN FLOPPED ONTO THE BED ACROSS FROM HAVYN. HE could see from far away that his brother was troubled.

“What about Lynk?” Havyn asked.

Sevyn groaned. “He wants Rheland too, but he won’t go for it.”

“What if he asks us to give him up?” Havyn asked, worrying his lip.

Sevyn stared at him with worry in his brown eyes. Havyn normally had some kind of answers, but he had no idea how things would play out. He hadn’t even been able to tell that vampire how he felt.

“He won’t.” Phexx’s chilling voice pulled them both from their thoughts.

“How do you know?” Sevyn asked. He looked just as worried as Havyn felt.

Phexx walked further into the room. His tattooed and scarred chest was on full display. His jet-black hair was pulled back, showing off his high cheekbones and angular jaw.

“Our alpha is stubborn, but he isn’t blind. He has smelled Rheland on all of us.”

“Doesn’t mean he won’t get tired of it,” Havyn said. He sat up in bed. “We all know they had a thing way before any of us got here.”

Phexx smiled. “I know it’s what’s driving his wolf insane. We all are claiming what was rightfully his.” He laughed, showing off just how unhinged he was.

Sevyn growled and tossed up his arms. He was always on edge, and now was no different. Havyn kept a close eye on his brother, but he wasn't worried. If Phexx couldn't help him, then Rheland could.

"That doesn't help us," Sevyn said.

"At any point in time, Lynk could have fought us and made us back down from Rheland, but he hasn't," Phexx pointed out.

The conversation created an enormous amount of anxiety. His stomach knotted and twisted in the worst way possible.

Havyn groaned as he said what was undoubtedly on all of their minds. "Doesn't mean he won't."

"I won't," Lynk said.

All three of them turned toward the door, surprised to see their alpha. Even Phexx's eyes went wide.

"Alpha," Phexx said.

Lynk nodded and walked further into the room. "Phexx is right. I could have demanded you all stay away from him."

"But you haven't." Havyn sat up further.

"Yet," Sevyn added.

Lynk looked at each of them, meeting their eyes. Havyn's stomach rolled with unease. He respected Lynk, but the werewolf doubted he'd be able to give up Rheland. Not now that he'd had him.

"And I won't. Each of you understands what you're doing, and as far as I'm concerned, as long as it's not causing strife within the pack, you're all free to sleep with whomever you want."

“What if we want more?” Sevyn asked.

Fuck. Havyn loved his twin, but he wanted to slap the shit out of him. Now was not the time to push this on Lynk. Asking for more felt like testing the already strained boundaries.

A deep growl resonated around the room as a thick blanket of power weighed down on them. Havyn submitted instantly, recognizing the power as his alpha's.

It was dragged back, and Havyn could once again breathe freely.

“Do each of you want more with him?”

Everyone was silent, and Havyn knew he couldn't hold it in.

“I do.”

“Hadn't thought about it, but the idea of Rheland choosing one of us makes me want to kill everyone,” Phexx said.

Sevyn nodded.

Havyn couldn't believe they were admitting to wanting more of Rheland. It wasn't just sex.

“What about you, Lynk?” Phexx asked.

Their alpha was silent. “Nothing will happen between us... for now.”

Havyn's eyes widened. Was Lynk admitting that there might be a chance? They each had their relationship with Rheland and minded their own, but Havyn was secretly cheering them on. He could see how it was bringing out more of Rheland each day they all held him.

CHAPTER TWENTY



The night started perfectly, just as Phexx loved it to. Pain radiated down his torso as claws ripped through fur and flesh. He growled and twisted around. He was back on his feet in seconds. Before his opponent could recover, he pounced. Phexx sank claws and teeth into the back of the brown wolf he was fighting. A howl pierced the air as Phexx dragged the beast down.

They twisted around on the ground, and Phexx internally laughed. His opponent tried to fight him off. He was slammed against the ground and forced on his back.

Phexx momentarily let go, and the wolf scrambled away. He shook his head, limping as he tried to regain his footing. Phexx shook out his coat and was back on his feet in seconds. He circled the wolf, enjoying how his opponent watched his every step. He feigned a lunge, and the wolf leapt back, baring its teeth.

That's it. Stay strong. The last thing Phexx wanted or needed was for his opponent to give up when the fun had just started.

He paced around the injured wolf three times, closing in with each circle. Phexx taunted his opponent, leaping at him but never attacking. The wolf leapt at Phexx, and he dodged the first swipe of claws. However, the second caught his right shoulder.

The pain was welcomed as it trickled down his shoulder and arm. If he were in human form, Phexx would undoubtedly be smiling right now.

He dodged to the right before attacking once more. His teeth sank into fur, and the wolf dropped under him as it whimpered in pain. Phexx twisted his big head, flopping the wolf from side to side.

Blood coated his tongue and snout. He was breathing and eating blood. Phexx released his opponent and licked his snout as he paced around the wolf trying to stand up.

Cheers around him were nothing more than crickets to him. Phexx focused on one thing only, specifically the werewolf before him.

“Get up!” someone cheered for his opponent.

Phexx joined them mentally. He wasn't nearly done fighting. He wanted to relish in the blood and pain that came with fighting for longer. What he craved more was the rush that came with facing death. His opponent wasn't weak, but he wasn't strong enough to give Phexx the rush he needed.

Phexx dropped to the ground panting as he stared at the wolf. He grew bored of waiting and rolled over on his back and stared at the sky. The scent of anger perfumed the air, and Phexx mentally laughed.

A slight shift disturbed the air, and Phexx knew the moment his opponent finally got his ass up. He waited till the last second, a shadow cast over him. Phexx rolled out of the way just in time. His mouth opened, and he snapped his teeth on the werewolf's hind legs. The crack of his bones could be heard over the crowd's shouts.

A whimper and howl of pain followed. Phexx didn't stop. He yanked the wolf back, making its head slam into the ground. Dust and mud coated its face as Phexx dragged it around the circle like a prized kill.

Phexx even added a prance to his step, lifting his paws higher than needed. He dropped him and waited for the wolf to get back up. The werewolf breathed heavily, his eyes dull as he stared up at Phexx.

Aw, don't give up now.

The werewolf bared his neck at Phexx, giving over his submission. Phexx tossed his head back and released a howl, and others joined. He let the shift roll over him. His bones broke, and his muscles and limbs re-shaped.

He groaned as he stretched. Feeling tight and stiff after fighting in wolf form wasn't uncommon.

“Did you have to show off?” Lynk asked.

Phexx shrugged. “He challenged the alpha of my pack.” He grinned, and the big man laughed.

“He won't be challenging anyone anytime soon,” Lynk pointed out. His gaze bore into Phexx. “You need to go hunt. You're still hyped up.”

Phexx rolled his shoulders back. A hunt sounded good, but what he wanted was a certain vampire.

“Headed home first,” Phexx said. He sauntered out of the shed they were using to handle less humane business. He caught Lola, Karter's sister, getting ready to go in.

“You're going to miss it,” she said.

Phexx tossed up his options. “I have something even more entertaining.”

She shook her head. “I don't even want to know.”

Phexx waved his goodbye as he ran to his bike. Forgoing the helmet, he headed home. The wind whipped through his hair and dried the blood on his face.

By the time he made it home, he was even more energized. Phexx let himself in and inhaled a big breath. He ignored all scents but one.

A single thought occupied his mind, and all he could think about was the vampire. He caught Rheland's scent, and a shiver a delight coursed through his veins.

Everything was a blur as he moved around the house and up the stairs. If anyone called or spoke to him, Phexx hadn't heard anything.

Phexx crashed into Rheland's room as the vampire was getting dressed. He stopped halfway with the skintight black shirt just above his chest muscles. His pink nipples were on full display, and his smooth, unblemished skin called for Phexx to ruin it repeatedly.

"You look..."

"Amazing?" Phexx offered. He sauntered in, his sights on one person.

Rheland didn't back away. He dropped his arms, not bothering to lower the shirt the rest of the way.

Good, plan on ripping it anyway.

"More like bloody." Rheland gestured at Phexx. "Had fun?"

He laughed and licked his lips, blood still caking them. "It was okay, but it didn't scratch that itch."

Rheland smiled at him. Phexx saw the danger and bloodlust in his eyes. "Should I help you with that?"

Phexx's heartbeat picked up on its own, and his stomach knotted. "Fuck."

Rheland stood in front of him one second, and then the next, he knocked Phexx's legs from under him. "I don't know. I'll have to see if you can last that long."

Phexx laughed, staring up at Rheland. “Careful, your majesty. I might rip your throat out.”

Rheland’s face went blank, and his grey eyes shimmered crimson red. “I could kill you without moving a finger.” He bent over and put his foot in the middle of Phexx’s chest. “Give it your all. I don’t want to explain to Lynk that he’s down a wolf.”

“Fuck, you’re perfect.” Phexx grabbed Rheland’s leg and yanked. Instead of falling, the vampire caught himself in his hands and twisted around, forcing Phexx to release his hold. The heel of his foot rammed into Phexx’s nose, and blood gushed out as the pain blossomed over his face.

Fuck yeah.

Phexx felt more himself, more alive when fighting or fucking. He attacked, grabbing Rheland and tossing him on the bed. The vampire bounced once before Phexx was on top of him.

He ripped away Rheland’s pants. The fabric caved under his strength with little to no effort.

“Someone is in a hurry,” Rheland said.

Maybe he was. All Phexx knew was he needed the vampire, like fish needed water.

Phexx leaned forward and bit the vampire’s ear. “I need to devour you, Rheland.”

The vampire flipped him over, and Phexx blinked as the ceiling came into view. Rheland’s face replaced it in seconds as he straddled Phexx’s waist.

“You used my name.” He lifted and ripped open Phexx’s pants. He pulled his cock free and took it inside of him. “Are

you that desperate for me?”

“Yes.” Phexx didn’t harbor an ounce of hesitation.

He flipped them around once more, slamming Rheland against the bed. His cock slipped free, and Phexx growled as he backed up. He stripped out of his clothes as fast as he could.

Rheland was up in seconds, clinging to Phexx. His slender hands wrapped around his throat as his ass swallowed Phexx’s cock in glorious heat. Pleasure, like no other, ripped through the werewolf, taking him apart.

Phexx grabbed Rheland’s waist smirking at him as his air was stolen. This was all he wanted. He slammed up as he yanked Rheland down on his cock fully. Their bodies crashed together, making a thunderous sound.

A choked-off moan came from Rheland, but it wasn’t enough. He wanted the vampire to scream his name. Phexx set a punishing pace that had them both moaning.

His muscles burned, and his lungs begged for air. Phexx didn’t bat Rheland’s hands away. He only fucked the vampire harder, shaking his body with every plunge. Ecstasy wrapped around him as spots danced in his vision.

Phexx was either going to cum or pass out. Neither was an option; he wanted to ruin Rheland. He moved one of his hands closer to Rheland’s stretched hole. He touched where they were joined and shivered as pleasure danced down his spine.

“What are you do—” Rheland moaned as Phexx shoved two fingers alongside his cock.

It had already been a tight fit. With the added fingers, he was barely able to move. The next time Ace was there, he would convince the human to fuck Rheland’s hole with him.

Phexx knew it would be amazing and even better when they'd get to witness Rheland's face lax with pleasure.

Phexx rolled his hips and stretched Rheland's stuffed ass even more. He added another finger. He moaned as Rheland clenched around his cock.

"Fuck, you feel too good."

Rheland shook his head, his hands tossed above him as pleasure overtook him. Phexx watched transfixed as Rheland gave up control.

For someone so deadly and powerful to be under him gave Phexx a rush no amount of fights could. He growled as Rheland whimpered and pulled him closer with his legs.

Their bodies were practically glued together. He followed Rheland down to the bed and kissed him. The vampire's eyes widened. For a split second, Phexx thought he'd ruined it.

Rheland smirked at him and pulled him back, bringing their mouth together once again. Phexx moaned as he lost himself in Rheland. It felt different, but not at the same time. He still wanted to take Rheland apart, but he wanted to see more of the vampire falling apart in other ways.

Phexx pulled back and stared down at Rheland as he continued thrusting inside him. He had such beautiful skin, no tattoos, scars, or even a freckle in sight.

Phexx ran his tongue over his teeth as an idea came to him. He met Rheland's gaze for a single second.

"You better not— Uh, fuck."

Phexx bit down until he tasted blood. He let the piece of flesh go, only to strike again and bite another piece of Rheland. He repeatedly did so. Finding new areas to bite

down, leaving bloody bite marks behind. Every time one healed, he'd put it right back.

He bent Rheland in half and moved his leg in front of him so that he could bite the back of Rheland's leg. His teeth sank in, and Rheland screamed. His ass tightened around Phexx's cock to the point there was no way he could move.

“You like it, don't you, Rheland? Being stretched out for me.”

Phexx withdrew his fingers and fucked Rheland harder as the vampire came, spilling cum all over his torso. His eyes rolled backward, and his mouth hung open as he exhaled beautiful moans.

Rheland was covered in bloody bite marks. Even as they healed, plenty of evidence of what Phexx had done remained. The base of his spine tingled, and his thrusts stuttered as his climax rocked through him.

“Fuck, you look good covered in bite marks,” Phexx moaned.

His head dropped back as Phexx howled out his pleasure. He slowed down fucking them both through their orgasms.

Rheland groaned and pulled Phexx down to him, forcing him to drop the vampire's leg. He said nothing as they kissed again. A new kind of pleasure blossomed over Phexx, one that felt warm and intoxicating.

Rheland pulled back. “Clean this blood and cum off of me.”

Phexx huffed out a laugh. “Right away, your majesty.”

He looked down at his cock still stuffed inside of Rheland.

“What?” the vampire asked.

“I pull out, and my cum is going to escape.”

Rheland groaned and flopped back against the bed. “There is something wrong with werewolves.” He turned his head, his soft white hair falling over his eyes. “You can always fill me some more later.”

Phexx’s cheeks hurt with how hard he was smiling. His cock slipped free, and he scooped Rheland up.

“I’ll hold you to that.”

“Sure you will,” Rheland said.

The vampire rested his head on Phexx’s shoulder. He sat him down before turning on the shower and getting them both in. Phexx cleaned them both up. He’d only arrived home maybe two hours before sunrise.

Rheland’s grey eyes were already turning milky white. He didn’t move nearly as much, and talking had pretty much stopped. Phexx turned off the water and dried Rheland.

He normally didn’t take care of the vampire, not like this. He met Rheland’s other needs, but Phexx could see why Lynk always came in after him. The vampire almost felt hopeless in such a state.

Rheland’s eyes closed, and Phexx placed him down on the bed.

“Don’t think I can’t kill you when I’m like this.”

Phexx laughed. “Of course not, your grace.” He moved Rheland under the covers and joined him.

He knew vampires died during the day. However, it felt more like sleeping, minus the breathing part. Minutes passed as Phexx found himself watching Rheland intently.

Had he ever felt this way about anyone? Phexx couldn't remember, but he knew Rheland was somehow special to him.

A knock pulled him from his thoughts, and he glanced over to see Lynk standing at the door. Phexx hopped out of bed and met his alpha.

"I cleaned him up already."

Lynk frowned, and Phexx waited for him to say something about it. Was he mad? Was it his way of getting close to Rheland but keeping his distance as well? Phexx had way too many questions.

"Good. Come and eat," Lynk said.

Phexx followed him downstairs and to the kitchen. The house was otherwise silent. The sun had already broken the horizon, and with everyone on vampire time, they were all sound asleep.

Lynk passed him a steak as his stomach growled with undiluted hunger. He finished the first one and hurriedly took a second one.

Phexx leaned against the wall. "You stopped looking for a new place for our pack. Didn't you?"

The alpha wolf went stiff before he relaxed. It was too late to pretend Phexx hadn't seen his reaction. The silence built between them, and Phexx smiled as he bit into his steak.

"Good, because I wouldn't leave." He met Lynk's gaze. "I won't ever leave him."

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE



Hot blood splashed over Rheland's tongue, and he groaned as he swallowed and pulled more into his mouth. Electricity sparked along his throat and traveled through his body. His eye fell closed as he basked in the glorious feel of eating. His stomach no longer ever cramped from hunger. He had his fair share of people to buy. If he were honest, it was better than he could ever imagine.

A calloused hand massaged the back of his neck, and Rheland melted further. He forced his eyes open to find Lynk staring down at him. Rheland swiped his tongue over the holes, sealing them.

“You got enough?”

If Lynk weren't careful, Rheland would drain him of every ounce of blood he had. Rheland pulled back, lapping up any blood staining his lips or that might have slipped free. “Yes.”

His voice sounded soft to Rheland's ears. Lynk's hold tightened, and Rheland was sharply aware that they were alone. Lynk, for once, didn't have his phone on him. There was nothing to interrupt them, no way for Lynk to run away with ease.

Rheland leaned forward. To his surprise, the werewolf stayed put. Their faces were only centimeters apart, and Rheland stared into Lynk's beautiful eyes.

“Rheland—”

“If you tell me to stop, I might just kill you,” Rheland hissed.

Lynk smiled at him. “Fine.” His hand dropped from Rheland's neck and landed on his waist. Before Rheland knew it, he laid back on the couch, looking up at Lynk.

“This is more like it.” Rheland reached out for him and wrapped his arms around Lynk’s neck. “Don’t stop now.”

“We are playing a dangerous game,” Lynk warned.

A thrill shot through Rheland. “We are dangerous beings.”

A smile graced Lynk’s face, and Rheland knew he wanted the man more than anything. Their mouths finally met, and Rheland wanted to shout in rejoicing. He settled for feeding Lynk his moans.

Lynk leaned forward, his weight welcomed on top of Rheland’s smaller frame. His lips brushed along Rheland’s ears. “You want me to give in?”

Rheland nodded. There was no denying he wanted to feel that spark again. It had only happened that one time, and Rheland knew he wanted a repeat.

“If I hurt you—”

Rheland hooked his legs around Lynk’s waist. “Then I will hurt you back.”

His back arched, and he sought after the radiating sun that was Lynk. Finally, the werewolf dropped against him, drenching Rheland in his warmth. Lynk’s mouth bit along his neck, and Rheland tilted his head further. A growl vibrated from Lynk’s chest and echoed through Rheland.

He smiled as he bared more of his neck to the alpha wolf.

“Rheland,” Lynk growled.

“Can’t control yourself?”

Lynk’s nose and mouth pressed against Rheland’s neck, followed by his tongue. A sharp pain blossomed over his throat, and Rheland groaned.

Rheland shoved Lynk over, and they crashed to the floor. His fangs bared, he hissed at the werewolf. “You’re not the only one who can bite.”

Lynk breathed heavily under him, his heartbeat thunderous in his ears. His thumb ran over Rheland’s cheek, leaving a hot streak behind. He touched Rheland’s fangs, and it was like a fire had consumed the vampire. He gasped as the need to embed his fangs in Lynk clawed at him.

A knock at the door stopped everything as Leo walked in. “Alpha, can we have ice cream?”

Lynk was already far across the room, plastered against the wall. Lynk sat up on the floor, clearing his throat. Leo, none the wiser, smiled innocently at them.

“Pretty please,” Leo said.

“Go ahead,” Rheland said.

Lynk was too busy pulling himself together.

“Yay.” Leo was out of the room just as fast as he’d come.

“That was close,” Lynk said.

Rheland nodded. “I thought you locked the door.”

“You were supposed only to be feeding. Didn’t think I needed to.” Lynk shook his head, a smile on his gorgeous face. “I know for the future to lock it just in case.”

Future? Rheland wanted to ask what that meant. Was he no longer looking for a place for his pack? *Would he stay?* Each question burned a hole inside of Rheland the longer he stayed quiet.

Children’s hollering could be heard on the second floor. “We better go help before it gets out of control.”

“The others are there.”

Rheland moved over to the werewolf in a flash, shoving him back down and straddling him. “Are you saying we can pick up where we left off?”

His body hummed with need, and it was taking everything Rheland had not to say fuck everything and have Lynk. He listened out this time and caught it when more footsteps were headed their way.

“Another day,” Rheland offered. He got up and headed out of the room, bypassing Hazel and Joben as they raced toward Lynk’s room.

Rheland stepped into the kitchen, surprised to find Faith and Avery there. As far as he knew, there hadn’t been any pack meetings.

“Rheland,” Faith greeted. She smiled sweetly.

There was an additional heartbeat with hers, and Rheland smiled. “Congrats.”

Her face lit up. “Thank you.”

Phexx popped up behind Rheland and draped an arm around the vampire. It felt all too common and right to be surrounded by the werewolf.

“They’ve come to babysit,” Phexx said.

“Where are all of you going? More meetings?” There had been more uproar with the new wolf policies.

“No, we’re going out,” Sevyn said.

Rheland glanced at the man in confusion. “We?”

“Yes, you, your majesty, and us.” Phexx blew over Rheland’s ear, making zaps of pleasure race down his body.

“Us?” Rheland asked.

“Man, for someone who’s supposedly older than time, you sure catch on late,” Ace said, entering the kitchen.

Rheland’s fingers twitched. The human smirked at him, acting as if he knew that Rheland had wanted to choke him at that moment.

Ace lifted his head, gesturing for Rheland to come toward him.

Phexx growled. “Him first, and then it’s my turn.”

Rheland shook his head and broke free of the werewolf’s hold. “Let me go get dressed.”

“What you’re wearing is fine,” Lynk said. He finally appeared, and Rheland squinted his eyes at the wolf.

“Did you know about this?”

Lynk dared to shrug. Rheland would kill all of them one day.

“I’ll be quick.” He vamp sped to his bedroom and picked out tight-fitted jeans with a tight-fitted black sleeveless shirt. He brushed his hair back and was downstairs before any of them were even headed toward the door.

Excitement bubbled up in Rheland, and he couldn’t quite get rid of it. Going out was no big deal, and he’d been out plenty of times. It felt different with the guys at his side. The limo pulled up, and Rheland hopped in. Lynk and Phexx hopped in after him, taking up a spot on either side of him.

“You’re not driving your bike?” Rheland asked Phexx.

“No way I’m missing limo action,” Phexx said. He leaned closer and bit Rheland’s ear.

The vampire accidentally allowed a moan to slip free. Havyn and Sevyn growled, their eyes shimmering with the power of their wolves as they stared at Rheland. One glance around, and Rheland found Lynk and Ace both staring at him with desire.

His mouth went dry. For a second, Rheland felt like he was floundering in a large body of water. All eyes were on him, and the air in the limo grew hotter with every passing second.

Phexx laughed, and it broke the momentary tension. “See, no way am I missing that. They were all about to jump you.”

Rheland shook his head. No, that wouldn’t happen. He peeked at Lynk, expecting the alpha wolf to deny Phexx’s claims regardless of what had happened in his room only moments prior.

Lynk leaned back and draped an arm behind Rheland. The vampire was even more aware of the wolves around him than before. For some odd reason, his chest felt strange. It was tight in a way it hadn’t been in a very long time.

Rheland caught himself rubbing at it and shoved his arm down to his lap.

“What bar are we going to?” Ace asked.

“There’s a new one owned by one of the small local packs,” Phexx offered.

All of them looked at Rheland. The vampire sat up, feeling all the attention on him again.

“Maybe not,” Havyn offered. He leaned back, and the button-up he’d picked fit him perfectly. Rheland knew exactly what was under his clothes and how good Havyn felt pressed against him.

“What are you thinking about?” Phexx whispered.

Rheland regained control of himself. Whenever surrounded by or with any of the five men before him, he seemingly forgot how to control himself. His libido won every single time. If that weren't bad enough, he was certain they knew it.

“Wouldn't you like to know?” Rheland said.

“Bet you I could guess,” Ace said. The human smirked across from him with a knowing look.

“Open your pretty little mouth, and I'll rip your tongue out.”

“Doubt that. You like to suck on it too much for that,” Ace countered.

Rheland froze and lowered his gaze at Ace. That was it. He was across the limo in a flash and on top of Ace in seconds. The human smiled and placed his hand on Rheland's ass even while the vampire's hand was wrapped around his throat.

The air in the limo was once again hot and tight. Rheland rolled his hips and held back the groan that nearly left him. All eyes were on him. He knew one wrong move, and four hungry werewolves and one human would attack him.

The limo came to a stop all too soon, and Rheland was forced to release Ace. The human laughed and dropped his hands to the side.

“Where are we?” Rheland asked.

He stepped out of the limo, and Lynk pulled him close.

“It's a supernatural bar on neutral grounds.”

Rheland took in the sight of the blue and red neon lights. They were a bit too bright.

“More humans come here than supernaturals,” Ace whispered.

Rheland glanced at the human, and desire rushed through him. He quickly looked away and moved toward the bar. They entered as a group. Instantly, Rheland had to dim down his senses. The sound and smell were overwhelming. He slowed down his breathing to nonexistent. Still, pretending to be human came far more naturally, especially in public.

“I’ll get drinks,” Ace said.

Rheland moved further into the room. It wasn’t overly crowded, which was a bonus. He wasn’t sure what to do for a second. He glanced back as he felt eyes on him and smirked at the fact each of his guys was watching him closely.

Rheland was always seen as the king of vampires. He certainly was old as hell, but he’d kept up his human appearance, ensuring he understood what was normal for him to blend in. Blending in was key to survival. Rheland headed toward the idle dancefloor, intent on teasing the five men who couldn’t keep their eyes off him.

Rheland moved his hips in the middle of the dance floor, letting loose.

“You’re not from around here.”

Rheland didn’t have to open his eyes to know a vampire was talking to him. Hands too cold for his liking dropped to his hips and pulled him close. Rheland’s back stiffened.

“We can have a good time. I know a human who wouldn’t mind being between us,” the vampire said.

Rheland was about to break his arms when a growl met his ears. His guys were right there, yanking the vampire away from Rheland. Lynk snatched Rheland against him, anger simmered in his brown eyes.

“Fuck off,” Phexx growled.

The vampire barred his fangs. “Move it, flea bags.”

Rheland reached for Phexx and Sevyn, hoping they wouldn't do anything stupid, but he reached for the wrong werewolves. Lynk's fist collided with the vampire's face three times before the vampire dropped to the ground. Blood splattered, and people around them noticed and shouted as they jumped back.

“Don't touch what's mine. Next time, I'll kill you,” Lynk warned.

Rheland felt like he was in an alternate universe. Lynk had claimed him in public. Ace turned Rheland's head, and he stared up into green eyes.

“You okay, Rheland?”

“I could handle him,” Rheland said.

Ace smiled. “Yeah, but you have to think it's hot that you don't have to.” His other hand wrapped around Rheland's torso and brushed along his hard confined cock. A moan slipped free, and Ace laughed even harder.

Havyn moved closer, clocking anyone who could look at them. He stared down at Rheland and kissed him. “No one gets to have you but us.”

Rheland's chest once again throbbed with an ache that was starting to tingle throughout the rest of his body. *Is this what it feels like to be alive?*

Havyn kissed him. Rheland gave in instantly, moaning into it as the werewolf coaxed his tongue out to play.

How in the hell had it happened? When did their mutual exchange turn into more? Or had Rheland been fooling himself the entire time? He had no answers, but Rheland knew he wanted every single one of them.

Havyn pulled back and pecked Rheland on the nose sweetly as if he hadn't nearly brought Rheland to his knees with a kiss alone.

"The look on your face was priceless," Sevyn snickered next to Rheland.

The vampire grabbed him by his hair and pulled him in for a kiss next. He bit Sevyn's lips until he tasted blood and caught the rest with his tongue.

"I'll have to ask you all to leave," one of the bouncers said.

Rheland pulled back, and his red eyes flashed. "Nothing happened, and everyone is fine." The people watching them all stopped moving. "Erase all video."

The people around the room deleted whatever they'd filmed. Rheland's power rushed through the room. "Go back to dancing and having fun." As if he hit play on a movie, all werewolves, humans, and vampires returned to dancing and enjoying their time.

Rheland blinked and groaned as he stepped back. Lynk reached out and caught him. Rheland thanked him and squeezed his fingers.

"What was that?" the vampire on the floor asked.

Rheland almost forgot about him. He bent down to mesmerize the vampire, but Phexx stopped him.

“Fuck off before I kill you. Fuck what my alpha said.”

The vampire’s eyes widened and scrambled up before vamp speeding away. Rheland couldn’t blame him. Phexx had that look in his eyes like he’d disembowel someone and wear their intestines as a scarf.

“Home. Now,” Lynk said.

Rheland turned to argue with the man but stopped short at his expression. A shiver of delight spread goosebumps all over Rheland’s arms. He was more than ready to go home.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO



Anger rolled through Lynk as he ushered Rheland out of the bar and toward the limo. How dare someone touch Rheland. It had started as a fun idea and turned sour fast. When the vampire placed his hands on Rheland, Lynk saw red. Now all he wanted to do was strip the vampire of all his clothes and drape him in his scent.

“Lynk,” Rheland called.

The werewolf shook his head, opened the limo door, and shoved the vampire inside. He followed him in and cornered Rheland. Lynk felt out of control, which kept happening when he was with Rheland. He feared it before but was starting to realize ignoring the magnetized pull between them was futile.

He sought out Rheland every chance he got, even when it was in both of their best interests to steer clear.

“You’re growling.” Rheland’s cool hands were like a balm to Lynk’s soul when they touched his face. He pressed against them, seeking out more of Rheland’s touch.

“You two should get a room,” Ace said. The human never held his tongue.

Lynk glanced at him and expected his wolf to see him as a threat, as he’d seen the first time they met. Instead, Lynk felt calm, surrounded by the men that shared Rheland’s bed. Each of them stared at the vampire with want and affection.

Phexx sat next to Ace, and even he was staring at Rheland. Lynk sat up and pulled Rheland onto his lap. The vampire didn’t fight him. Instead, he relaxed against him as if it was normal for them to touch so much.

One thing about Rheland was that he adapted with such ease. For him to be so old, he changed up when need be. From Lynk’s point of view, it had always been like acting. There

certainly were little parts of Rheland that poked through, but it was all an act. However, as of late, Lynk didn't feel that same detachment from Rheland. Emotions showed in his eyes and actions. He said and did things that weren't like him and were at the same time.

“Or you can do it here. I'm not opposed to watching,” Phexx offered.

“I'm with Phexx,” Sevyn said.

Of course, he was. Havyn slapped his brother on the back of the head.

“No,” Lynk said.

He wanted Rheland alone for the first time in so long. He'd willingly share with them later, but not tonight. He needed to ensure Rheland could handle him and what could really happen between them.

“Next time?” Phexx attempted.

“Do you ever stop?” Ace asked.

“We all know the answer to that.” Phexx turned his expecting gaze to Lynk.

“Yes.”

Rheland turned in his lap and cocked a brow at him. Gods, he was gorgeous. His grey eyes were solid like stone yet looked soft like silk. His lips were a natural pink, and he had round cheeks that gave him an overall innocent look.

Lynk wanted to drag him in for a kiss. Before the thought could fully form, he was pulling Rheland down and bringing their mouths together. The vampire gasped, and Lynk took the opportunity for what it was and deepened the kiss.

A moan tried to escape Rheland, but Lynk greedily swallowed it and pulled the man firmly against him. His cock hardened and pressed against his pants' seam. Everything around him became white noise as he lost himself in the feeling of Rheland. How long had he resisted?

Lynk saw how Ace and Rheland were together. The human brought out more of Rheland's humanity than anyone else. Phexx and Rheland had a burning attraction that even Lynk was envious of. The twins were like lovesick puppies pining for Rheland's attention. And where did that leave Lynk?

I want to be with him too.

No, more than that. Lynk wanted to possess Rheland's heart just as much as the vampire had possessed his.

He'd tried to keep Rheland at a distance for so long, knowing the vampire could never hand over his heart. Maybe that wasn't the case anymore. He was growing softer with each day that passed.

The limo arrived, and nobody left. The air grew hot as all eyes went to Rheland on Lynk's lap. The vampire stayed poised the entire time, not letting anything show. If Lynk didn't know Rheland so well, he'd say the vampire was unaffected by them. However, that was far from the case.

Rheland's back was ramrod straight, and his ass flexed every few seconds, which drove Lynk insane. He kept swaying back little by little.

"Aren't we going inside?" Rheland finally asked.

"Sure," Phexx said.

Lynk pushed his fingers under Rheland's shirt and pulled. The sound of fabric tearing filled the back of the limo as Rheland's shirt split in two. It fell to the side, and hungry

growls emitted from the other guys. Even Ace was salivating at the mouth for their vampire.

“First, we’re all pissed that you let some vampire touch you,” Havyn said.

Rheland didn’t argue with them. Instead, the vampire leaned against Lynk’s chest. He instantly wrapped his arms around Rheland’s waist. Lynk grabbed a leg and spread him open.

“I get to keep my pants on?” Rheland asked.

Lynk growled and nipped at the side of his neck. The vampire taunted him by baring his neck. He knew that it drove Lynk insane, tugging at the werewolf side of him that wanted to eat Rheland alive.

A growl rumbled through Lynk’s chest. He closed his eyes, forcing his beast back.

Soon.

“No, you don’t. Ace.” Lynk glanced at the human, and he dropped before Rheland.

Lynk nodded for Phexx and Havyn to move as well. Every single one of them moved as if they’d practice attacking Rheland together.

Ace produced a pocketknife and twisted it around skillfully. “If I cut you, don’t worry. We’ll just use it as lube.”

The human was meant to be there with them. Ace sounded more like a supernatural than a human.

“Is this some kind of punishment?” Rheland asked.

Lynk grabbed his arms and lifted them to drape back around his neck. Rheland didn’t resist as Lynk exposed him

more to the others.

To his right side, Phexx was latched onto one of Rheland's nipples. Judging by how Rheland's body twitched, Phexx wasn't holding back. Lynk hid his smile behind Rheland's shoulder.

Havyn moved to his left. His tongue peeked out and flicked across Rheland's nipple, teasing him. A tremble covered Rheland' from head to toe.

Lynk's hands flexed around the vampire's hips as his cock grew harder with every second that passed. He'd hold back because once they were all done, he would drag Rheland up to his room and tear the vampire to pieces. And maybe if all things worked, he'd put him back together.

Sevyn stayed sitting back, watching the rest of them. Lynk could tell he wanted nothing more than to attack. The need rolling off Sevyn only mixed with everyone else's.

Ace pulled the fabric of Rheland's pants away. They dropped to the ground, leaving the vampire stark naked. Lynk pulled him back and groaned at the feel of Rheland on his lap.

"Ah," Rheland cried out.

One peek down his torso was all Lynk needed. Ace had the vampire's cock in his mouth.

"Does it feel good?" Lynk asked.

Rheland nodded.

"You like all of our attention on you, don't you?"

Rheland's nails bit Lynk's shoulders as the vampire nodded again.

"Say it."

Rheland hissed at him, but his hips moved. He flinched as Havyn blew over his nipple. Lynk could tell they were all torturing Rheland in their own way.

“Stop,” Lynk said.

Everyone pulled back, even Ace. Pupils blown, they kept their gazes locked on Rheland. The vampire visibly shivered.

“Why did you stop?”

Lynk unhooked his arms from the back of his neck and turned the vampire around so they were face to face. “You have a lot of us. Can’t leave anyone out now, can we?”

Rheland glanced back over his shoulder and looked at Sevyn. “But making him wait is always better.”

Lynk didn’t doubt it. He saw how Sevyn and Rheland interacted. The vampire treated him more like a dog. Sevyn seemed to love it, and Lynk saw no reason to get in the way of that.

He hummed. “Yes, but I plan on having my way with you later.”

Rheland turned and met his eyes, desire twinkling in them. “Oh, all night?”

“And well into the morning.” Lynk glanced past the vampire. “Go ahead.”

All four of them attacked without hesitation. Ace and Sevyn changed spots. Sevyn slipped under Rheland and between Lynk’s thighs as he took Rheland’s cock into his mouth.

Rheland’s mouth dropped open as his pupils dilated. His shaky hands rested on Lynk’s shoulders.

Phexx and Havyn attacked his nipples. The vampire looked as if he was on the verge of losing his mind. Lynk looked over his shoulder and met Ace's eyes as he ate Rheland's ass as a man possessed.

Sucking and slurping sounds filled the space, driving up the desire that coursed through all of them. Lynk tilted Rheland's head up and smiled at him.

"You feel that good, huh?" He hadn't known he'd like teasing the vampire so much until now. Rheland was always put together damn near perfectly. When he was in their hands, it all fell away.

Rheland's tongue flicked out and ran over his lips, leaving behind a light sheen. Lynk leaned forward and kissed him.

"Tongue out," he demanded.

Rheland stuck his tongue out. Lynk sucked on it, pulling another moan from the vampire. His trembling was bad before. Now, it was damn near tremors. His fingernails dug into Lynk's shoulders once more.

Rheland dropped a bit, and Phexx laughed. "Careful, Rheland." He lifted the vampire back up, and everyone attacked him again.

Lynk released Rheland's tongue. The vampire cried out as he moved his hips back and forth. "Going to cum," he moaned.

Without Lynk saying a word, every single one of them stopped and backed away. Rheland dropped onto Sevyn's lap.

"Why?" Rheland licked his lips. "Why did you stop?"

"We told you it's a punishment," Phexx said.

Ace groaned. “Although I feel like we’re the ones who are getting fucked over here.” His breathing was just as labored as everyone else’s.

Rheland looked up at Lynk, and the werewolf smiled. “Don’t worry. We will get to have fun with Rheland later. But for now, I want him alone.”

“It’s about time, honestly,” Phexx said. He groaned and stretched, reaching for the door. “You two have been pussy footing around for a while now.”

Havyn nodded in agreement and followed him out of the limo. Ace was right behind him, and Sevyn kissed Rheland before following the others.

Only Lynk and Rheland remained in the limo.

“So, now what?” Rheland asked.

“Now I get to have you the way I’ve wanted you for a while now.” Lynk moved toward the door and snatched Rheland up.

The vampire broke loose, and his feet hit the ground. He glanced at Lynk with a smile on his face. His cock stood up hard, glistening with saliva and precum.

“I’ll carry you.” He grabbed Lynk and lifted him with ease.

Rheland vamp sped through the house, everything nothing more than a blur to Lynk. He would have felt some kind of way if it was the first time Rheland had carried him, but it wasn’t. When his feet touched the floor, Lynk gathered Rheland’s hands in one of his and slammed the vampire against the door. He ensured it was locked.

“Can’t have a repeat of last time.”

Rheland smirked at him, and he took the vampire's mouth in a heated kiss once more. He couldn't wait to have Rheland. The need for the man burned through his veins like lava.

One little taste wasn't enough. His beast growled, and it worked its way out of his mouth.

"Stop holding back, Lynk," Rheland moaned.

A shiver worked its way down Lynk's spine. "I don't plan on it." He snatched Rheland off the door and moved them to the bed. His feet couldn't carry them fast enough.

He dropped Rheland on the bed. Rheland bounced a few times as Lynk chuckled at him.

"How is that funny?" Rheland hissed. He propped himself up on his elbows.

Lynk couldn't help but let his gaze travel over every glorious naked inch of him. His mouth watered, and he quickened his haste to get undressed.

His clothes were carelessly tossed to the side. As the last piece of fabric fell away, Lynk was on top of Rheland in a flash. He grabbed him and flipped him over.

Rheland caught himself and glared over his shoulder at Lynk.

"You said don't hold back."

"Didn't say treat me like a rag doll, though."

Lynk reached between Rheland's legs and stroked the vampire's cock. A moan dripped from Rheland's parted lips.

"But you like it," Lynk said.

A visible shiver wrecked down Rheland's spine. Lynk kissed every inch visible to him, wanting to savor the moment

as much as he wanted to tear into Rheland. He was at war with himself, and it was becoming harder to decide how he would have Rheland.

“Lynk.” A simple breathless moan came from Rheland, and Lynk was done for.

He growled as he spread Rheland’s hole and smiled at the glistening star. Ace had been going to town. He worked in two fingers and swore at how tight Rheland felt around his fingers.

Rheland lowered his chest more and pushed his ass back, offering himself up on a silver platter. Lynk swallowed, trying to keep his animal instincts in check. Rutting against Rheland would be hot, but he wanted so much more.

“You’re teasing me,” Lynk said.

Before Rheland could utter anything, Lynk curled his fingers, seeking out the spongy spot he knew would have the vampire screaming. Sure enough, his fingers grazed over it, and Rheland gasped. He did it again, and Rheland’s hole clenched around his fingers, trying to suck him in even further.

“You’re hungry.”

“Yeah, so why don’t you give me your cock already?” Rheland wiggled his ass. “I’m stretched enough. Please.”

Lynk withdrew his fingers and glanced at his cock, knowing Rheland wasn’t stretched enough. He doubted he could hold out for much longer.

Pleasure ripped through Lynk, making any thought fizzle away. All he could see, smell, and hear was Rheland. He rested the tip of his cock against Rheland’s hole and pushed in, watching as Rheland took him in inch by inch.

“Fuck, you’re big,” Rheland moaned. His head turned each way as he pushed back to take more of Lynk in.

His cock was confined in a tight heat, dragging him in every single time he pulled out. How was Rheland so cold and yet so hot on the inside?

Lynk’s head fell back as he plunged into Rheland.

“You’re so deep,” the vampire gasped.

As far as Lynk was concerned, he wasn’t deep enough. He grabbed a fistful of Rheland’s hair and snapped his hips forward. The clashing of their bodies was like applause that filled the room. Rheland’s moans were nothing more than the promise of an encore.

Lynk would never tire of it. Sweat slid down his body as his breathing became erratic. Lynk’s vision blurred for a second as his beast fought to the surface. He didn’t try and shove it down, not this time. His gums tingled, and his teeth shifted to that of his wolf.

Rheland’s head fell forward, and Lynk growled. He doubted the vampire knew what was happening behind him. Yet, he presented his neck to him.

Lynk couldn’t stop himself even if he wanted to. He attacked, sinking his teeth into Rheland’s neck. Pure ecstasy shot straight to his head.

Blood coated his teeth, and the base of his cock swelled. Rheland’s screams were like music to his ears as he forced the knot into Rheland’s tight hole. Lynk howled against Rheland’s neck as his knot was swallowed up by his body and wrapped tightly in wet heat.

Lynk panted as he climaxed, filling Rheland with more cum than he thought possible. He rocked shallowly, unable to

pull out any further.

“You feel so good.” Lynk’s voice was gravel to his own ears. His teeth cut his tongue as he tried to talk.

Rheland whimpered and glanced over his shoulder. Blood ran down his back from the bite mark on his neck. It wasn’t healing as fast as normal wounds on the vampire.

“Rheland.” Lynk brushed his fingers over the mark.

The vampire batted his hand away and turned awkwardly. Their mouths met in a slow kiss that felt far more emotional than anything they’d done before.

“It’s fine.”

Rheland bit Lynk’s lip as his hole clenched around Lynk’s knot and pulled another moan from him. Pleasure made Lynk’s mind hazy, and he gave in. He’d ask in a little bit. Right now, he wanted to drown further in Rheland.

They continued to rock together until Lynk’s knot waned, and his cock slipped free.

“Fuck,” Rheland moaned. His body twitched, but he stilled next to Lynk.

“Your neck is healing slowly,” Lynk said. His teeth had shifted back to his blunt human ones. He worked his jaw around, trying to disperse the lingering ache.

“Yeah, the bite of an alpha wolf is toxic to vampires.”

“What?” Lynk was up in seconds and dragging Rheland closer to inspect the wound.

Rheland laughed. “It’s fine. I’ve been attacked a few times, and I always heal. Some of your blood will counteract the poison.”

Lynk offered up his arm with a quickness. “Why didn’t you say anything?”

Rheland bit him and sucked his blood greedily. Feeding the vampire had easily become one of Lynk’s favorite past times.

“Take as much as you need.” Lynk’s heartbeat banged in his eardrums as he watched Rheland closely.

Rheland pulled back and ran his tongue over the puncture wounds. Lynk quickly checked the back of his neck, and the bite mark was healing. He sighed.

Rheland laughed. “It’s hot that you worry so much about me.”

Lynk growled. “Why?”

“I didn’t want you to hold back. You’re one alpha, a very powerful one, but still, you aren’t old enough to take me out with one bite. Maybe if you were a descendent of the firsts beasts.”

Lynk’s brows lifted. What the hell did that mean? Rheland curled into him, and Lynk decided to put off all other questions.

“Shower?”

Rheland groaned. “Yeah.” His eyes were still closed.

Lynk scooped him up, and cum gushed from his hole, hitting the sheets. A grin tugged at his lips. He’d watch how hard he bit Rheland from now on, but the knot would have to happen again.

Lynk got them both in the shower and cleaned up. The white film was already covering Rheland’s eyes as he opened them for a moment. Lynk left him in the bathroom to ensure

the curtains were secure in his room and the blackout screens were in place.

Once safe, he picked Rheland up once more and brought him to bed. He placed him down and covered him with clean linen. Regardless of what the vampire said, when he died during the day, it was like he was sleeping.

White hair fell over Rheland's face as he lay there. His face was soft, and his body lax. Vampires were extremely vulnerable during daylight hours.

"Stay," Rheland said. His voice was low and foreign.

Lynk relaxed. "Planned to."

He didn't have it in him to fight it anymore. Rheland had survived the night, and Lynk's wolf was more at peace. Maybe it was what he'd been missing this entire time. It felt stupid that he'd fought so hard against having Rheland.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE



The moment the sun fell and the sky darkened, Rheland's eyes flashed open. He kept still as he took in the various heartbeats in his home. It was a comfort now.

“Did you sleep well?” Lynk asked.

His hot body was pressed up against Rheland, and he scooted even closer.

“How do you know when I'm awake?” Rheland was certain he hadn't moved a single muscle.

“I just feel it.”

The pang in Rheland's chest intensified, and he rubbed at it. “Feel it where?”

Lynk's hand traveled up from his side and rested on his chest.

“Don't say something cheesy like your heart.”

Lynk huffed out laughter, and the warm air brushed against Rheland's hair. “No.”

Lips pressed against the back of Rheland's neck; it was still sore. A shiver worked its way down his spine, and he scooted back against Lynk.

“My soul.”

“That is equally cheesy,” Rheland said, but he couldn't stop the smile from stretching his lips.

He turned over and stared at Lynk's face slightly before snuggling in closer. He buried his face against the big man's chest and sighed as he listened to his steady heartbeat.

Time seemed to slow down around them, cocooning them in bliss. Moments passed. As Rheland lay there, listening to Lynk's heart, he allowed his mind to wander.

What would it be like to be surrounded by them all the time? To listen to their heartbeats whenever?

Rheland's stomach clenched. He pressed himself even closer, twisting their legs together.

"I was wrong," Rheland said, breaking the momentary silence in the room.

Lynk cracked an eye open. Before Rheland knew what was happening, the werewolf sat up in bed and pulled him close. It was like the big guy couldn't help himself.

"About what?" Lynk asked.

Rheland snuggled closer, chasing the heat radiating off him in waves. "A lot." He lifted and covered Lynk's mouth with his hand. "Tell anyone I'm admitting to any of this, and I will kill you."

Lynk pulled his hand away and tilted Rheland's head back and at an angle so that their lips could be brought together in a heart-crushing kiss.

"I won't tell a soul."

Lynk smiled down at him, and Rheland knew it was well worth it.

"I think—" Rheland sighed. "I'm pretty sure you bastards are dragging the emotions I swore I locked away back out."

Lynk was quiet for a long second. Rheland pulled free of his hold and looked up at the alpha wolf.

"Well?" *Why the hell is he quiet?*

Lynk ran his hand over the tight coils of hair on top of his head. "Yeah, I noticed."

"What do you mean you noticed?"

Lynk shrugged. “It’s been happening for a while now, especially around Ace.”

It has? Rheland wanted to argue, but instead, he asked for an explanation.

“You’re softer, more in touch with your humanity around him. With us, you can still be a vampire who shuts off everything, but with Ace—”

“I’ve been trying to understand him and, in doing so, became softer.” Rheland cursed. “Who else has noticed?”

Lynk quirked a smile at Rheland as if he was attempting to hide his laughter. “Not sure. Is it that big a deal?”

“Yes, I was wondering why the kids started coming to me, and Ace’s smart-ass mouth has been even worse lately.”

Rich laughter left Lynk as he shrugged. “You will have to ask them yourself.”

“Motherfucker.”

The door opened, and Phexx burst in with a smile.

“What are you doing?” Rheland asked.

The werewolf hopped onto the bed and sighed. “Finally, you two have fucked.”

“Phexx,” Lynk growled.

The werewolf seemed unfazed as he laughed. “We’ve all been waiting for what felt like forever. Even Ace noticed.”

“What did I notice?” Ace asked as he stopped outside the door. He took one look at Rheland and Lynk and smirked. “They fucked?” He sighed. “Finally, was starting to think it was some edging game you two were playing.”

He walked in as if it was his room, unbothered that all three supernaturals in the room could kill him without so much as a second thought.

“You all knew what was about to happen,” Rheland pointed out. They were the ones who had stripped him naked.

Phexx shrugged. “There have been so many close calls between the two of you that we weren’t a hundred percent sure it would happen.”

“It happened?” Sevyn asked. He popped his head in with Havyn right behind him.

His brother sighed but gave Rheland a warm smile.

“Come in, why don’t you,” Rheland said.

“We did.” Ace took up another spot on the bed, looking too comfortable.

“I thought you locked the door?”

Lynk grinned and shrugged. “I unlocked it at some point.”

Of course, he did. Rheland looked to the men who were now so entangled in his life that he didn’t see a future without them.

“I bet it was the vampire hitting on Rheland last night,” Ace said.

The entire room broke out in growls, and Rheland pinched the bridge of his nose.

“Oh, it was,” Ace said, laughing.

Phexx joined in, and Rheland dropped his head. The two of them together were the worst combination, and it had to be the one Rheland liked the most. He was a glutton for punishment.

“You two have a lot of time on your hands,” Lynk said.

“I mean, what else am I supposed to do?” Ace asked.

Phexx rolled over on his side and propped his head up on one hand. “Does this mean we can all take this to the next level?”

“Next level?” Rheland’s head popped up as he stared at the werewolf. “What the hell does that mean?”

“Hold on.” Phexx pulled out his phone, and his fingers flew over the screen.

“What am I waiting for?” Rheland asked.

The answer to his question came in racing heartbeats and hurried, loud movements. Havyn and Sevyn burst into the room next.

“Close the door,” Phexx said.

Lynk and Rheland looked at each other but said nothing as Sevyn scrambled out of bed and shut the door. The sound of the lock clicking echoed around them. Rheland looked at each guy in the bed with him.

“Phexx start explaining,” Lynk said.

Ace’s brows dipped, and Rheland knew the human was just as confused as Rheland and Lynk. Whatever Phexx was up to, he was in on it himself.

“I think I’ll go—” Phexx yanked Ace back down before he could fully stand up.

“Don’t even think about it.” Phexx’s blue eyes landed on Rheland. “You know how we each feel about you.”

“I don’t,” Rheland said.

Havyn was the first one to jump in. “I’m in love with you.”

Rheland listened to the werewolf’s heart, and sure enough, he told the truth. Rheland blinked a few times. How did he feel? He liked Havyn; he was sweet, quiet, and wild in the most unexpected ways. And if he thought about the emotions that had started bleeding in him, he felt something strong for Havyn.

The werewolf smiled at him, and Rheland opened his mouth to speak. However, Sevyn spoke up, cutting off his reply.

“I like you a lot, scared shitless but aroused.”

“That’s called scaroused,” Ace said.

Everyone looked at the human, and laughter filled the room.

Sevyn shrugged. “Well, you scarouse me.” He rolled his eyes and sat back on the bed.

Was it confession time?

Phexx cleared his throat. “I want to torment you all the time, and I’m pretty sure I’m falling for you.” He grinned. “In the I want to decorate the bedroom in your blood kind of way, of course.”

“Of course.”

Rheland looked to Ace, and the human’s eyes widened.

“Oh, shit. I didn’t have anything prepared for this confession time.” Ace slipped off the bed. “One second.” He placed his hands together and stared up at Rheland. “Forgive me, father, for I have sinned—”

Rheland shook his head. He didn't expect anything from Ace. Would he like it? Looking deep into his heart, he found it was a resounding yes. Along the way, he'd stopped seeing Frode in Ace and only saw the human for who he was.

"Okay, sorry, but seriously... I don't know what I feel." He met Rheland's gaze head-on, and his heartbeat stayed steady. "I know I like being in bed with you. You're the first and only person I've brought to see my brother." Ace shrugged. "It makes you special. How special, I don't know yet."

Rheland couldn't help but smile. He nodded. That was understandable. The last one was Lynk. After the night they had, he wasn't sure what to expect from the man. Calloused fingers brushed along the nape of his neck over the lingering ache from Lynk's bite.

"I've been in love with you for a long time. I'm just now letting it happen."

Rheland stared at him. He understood instantly why Lynk kept turning him down. It wasn't just his control, but the alpha wolf had felt something more for him. He reached out and touched Lynk's face.

How could any of this be for him? Centuries had passed, and Rheland had come accustomed to his heart frozen off and his humanity locked away. He lived for his children and the vampires of the world, nothing more. He'd given up on anything remotely mirroring love. In the end, they all left him, or it never lasted.

This felt different. A few hundred years of feeling nothing was catching up to him, and Rheland was starting to feel far more than he thought he could.

Thought I was broken. The pang in his chest radiated to warmth and engulfed Rheland in an unusual sensation.

“Isn’t there something you want to ask us?” Phexx asked.

“There is?” Rheland followed as his head tilted to the left and the right. He sat up in the bed and took in each of their faces. His chest throbbed, and he fought with himself not to rub at it.

Rheland had noticed some differences in his life. The constant ache of loneliness wasn’t present when he was with any of the men who sat before him. He wanted more. What that more entailed was still to be determined. Rheland knew the barrier around his emotions and humanity was cracking day by day around them. It made him far more vulnerable than he’d been in years, and that alone was terrifying but not enough to shut it all off. Rheland wanted something different, something more in his life that was far more worthwhile than his power. What was eternity if it was spent alone?

Once upon a time, that question had been proposed to him. His gaze drifted to Ace. Where he used to always see Frode, he could only see Ace. He had far more freckles, and his eyes were a duller green that captured the soul. He was sarcastic and an asshole with a god’s cock.

“Rheland,” Lynk said.

The vampire blinked and realized he’d gone stone still. He moved around, making it more natural looking for those around him. “A question.” He looked down at his fingers and then back up to his men. “I don’t have one.”

Phexx’s smile dimmed, and Rheland instantly wanted to go to the man and comfort him. Rheland comfort someone? He’d

done it before, but that had happened out of confusion. Ace had been hurting, and it was clear as day he was suffering.

“Is that true?” Lynk asked.

Rheland sighed. “It’s not a question, more of a demand. You all will stay with me.”

“As in, together?” Sevyn asked. His gaze jumped to his brother’s.

Rheland could tell by all of their heartbeats that they were excited.

“You mean all of us?” Ace asked.

“Yes,” Rheland said.

“I’m staying.” Havyn reached out to Rheland. He let him grab his hand, intertwining their fingers.

“Me too,” Sevyn said.

Phexx smiled. “I already informed Lynk I wasn’t leaving you ever. Going to have to kill me, baby.”

Rheland snorted. *Of course, that’s what he wanted.*

Ace bit his lip. “I was only supposed to do six months.”

Rheland’s stomach twisted.

“I wouldn’t mind signing a longer contract,” Ace said.

He’d take it for now. Rheland nodded.

Lynk pulled him close, and Rheland sighed.

“I stopped looking for a new place a few weeks back. The kids love it here, and I could tell none of them want to leave you. And I especially want to stay close.”

Rheland couldn’t believe what he was hearing. “I want to answer each of you on how I feel.” He shut his mouth as he

thought about it. “I need time to explain it.” He met their gazes. “It has been hundreds of years since I’ve opened myself like this.”

“Fuck, you’re really that old?” Ace asked.

“We keep explaining this to you,” Havyn sighed.

“Yeah, it’s one thing to like joke about Rheland being ancient, but fuck he’s as old as dirt.”

Rheland had Ace pinned under him before anyone saw him or could move. “You are just begging for it.”

Ace grinned up at him. Rheland’s hold on his neck tightened. Ace moved his hand exactly where he’d asked for it last time. “Remember, I want to go out cumming if you’ll do the honors.”

What the hell am I getting myself into?

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR



Ringling roused Ace out of the blissful dark dream. He lifted his head and groaned as he slipped free of the overly hot bodies near him. He glanced back and groaned at the dog pile in Rheland's bed. He still couldn't believe what was happening. He was a human in some kind of relationship with a vampire whom he shared with a bunch of werewolves. If someone were to tell Ace this would have been his future, he would have laughed in their face.

Now staring at the bed of tangled bodies and Rheland's white hair barely peeking out under everyone, he couldn't say he wanted to be anywhere else. A smile graced his face as he thought about waking up with them every night. Thinking about the future had never been something Ace did, not since Logan became sick.

Ace's stomach clenched, but he couldn't stop the heat in his chest as he stared at the men who were quickly showing him there was still something to live for.

Not to mention the kids. They brought the light back into Ace's world. He managed to do with them all the things Logan never could. He could practically hear his brother's laughter and see his smiles when he was with them.

Ace froze as he realized he'd been thinking about a future. Not just tomorrow but farther ahead. It hadn't been a part of his plan, but now, staring at the guys in bed with Rheland, the beating organ in his chest throbbed.

"Maybe I'll stick around," Ace whispered.

The ringing stopped only to start up again, and he shook his head. The smile was still on his face as Ace fished his phone out of his pocket. Everything slipped away, and dread punched him square in the chest, nearly knocking the wind out of him.

His finger trembled as he swiped to answer the call. Bringing it to his ear, Ace held a small inking of hope that it wasn't the call he'd been dreading for years.

“Mr. Hansen, this is Dr. Hamish. Do you have a moment?”

Ace grabbed his pants and slipped them on. “One second.” His voice sounded strange to his ears as he scrambled out of Rheland's room.

He ran as fast as he could, like his feet were on fire. When he reached his room, he shut the door and locked it.

His tongue was glued to the roof of his mouth, and it took every ounce of strength to speak. “I'm—” Ace closed his eyes. “How is Logan?”

Ace leaned against the door, his heart lodged firmly in his throat, making it impossible to swallow. There was a moment of silence that didn't bode well for the news that was to come.

“Mr. Hansen, we would like for you to come in.”

Ace squeezed his eyes shut as his stomach dropped to his feet. “Can't you just give it to me over the phone?”

“I could, but I think you should come in, Ace.”

In all the years Logan had been at the hospital, Ace could count on his fingers the number of times the doctor had used his name. Despair threatened to drag him to the pits of hell.

“You should say your final goodbyes.”

Why? Logan's been gone for years. I was just too pathetic to accept it. The scream was lodged deep in Ace's psyche as he stood there staring at the far wall of the room he'd been staying in. Everything bled away, and he was left with nothing.

“Ace,” Dr. Hamish called.

“I’ll, um, I’m on my way.” Ace had promised to see it through no matter how much it tore him apart.

He hung up the phone, not listening to anything else the doctor had to say. It was going to go in one ear and out of the other.

Ace moved around, unaware of half the things he was doing. His movements were robotic as reality continued to crash against him, trying to force him to his knees.

Before Ace knew it, he was standing outside of the hospital. He couldn’t recall how he arrived there. For all he knew, he walked. The sun was setting, bathing the sky in bright oranges mixed with purples and blues.

It was beautiful, and Ace would have appreciated it more if it wasn’t for what he needed to face. He cleared his throat and rolled his shoulders back as he stepped toward the building. The sliding doors gave way, and Ace stepped in.

The nurses smiled at him, but they didn’t reach their eyes. Ace nodded at them and headed toward Logan’s room, knowing it would be the last time he visited.

The window was open, and fresh flowers rested in a vase next to Logan.

“Who are those from?” Ace asked.

The doctor walked in and gave Ace a tight smile. The room was devoid of its usual beeping, making the air feel still.

“One of the nurses said a white-haired man came to drop them off yesterday.”

“Rheland?” *He’d come to visit Logan?* Ace couldn’t hold back the smile even if he wanted to. His eyes stung with

unshed tears, and he wanted nothing more than for Rheland to be there with him now. “Okay,” Ace said.

Dr. Hamish cleared his throat and moved in front of Ace. He was a plump older man. Ace had known him during Logan’s entire stay. Yet, he couldn’t tell anyone anything about the doctor except he did his job.

“I’m sorry to inform you that Logan passed this afternoon.”

Ace said nothing, incapable of speaking. Instead, he nodded for the doctor to continue. He went over Logan’s illness and how they’d ensured he was comfortable to the last end.

“How much more do I owe?” Ace asked.

The doctor’s eyes widened. “Oh, um, I wouldn’t know for sure you would have to take that up with billing, but from my understanding, everything has already been taken care of.”

“What?” Ace looked away from the bed where his brother still lay. Didn’t they normally take someone to the morgue once they died?

“The gentlemen who left the flowers paid for the next year. Of course, the money will be refunded, but anything you were late on has been handled.”

Rheland did all of that? Ace wanted to yell at the vampire and fall into his arms simultaneously. “I understand.”

“I’ll leave you for a bit. Someone will be by shortly to transfer Logan to the morgue.” Dr. Hamish placed a hand on Ace’s shoulder. “Take all the time you need.”

Ace waited for the door to close before he stepped closer to the bed. Logan’s skin was pale, and his hand was cool to the

touch. His brother was no longer there, and maybe he hadn't been for a long time.

Ace sat down and pushed some of Logan's hair out of his face. Unlike Ace, he'd gotten their mother's black hair. Still, he had some pasty skin decorated with freckles from their father.

Memories of when they were younger in the small two-bedroom apartment with their parents came fluttering through. Ace hadn't delved into any of his memories for years. It was when he'd had all of them. Before his parents were killed in a drunk driving accident, leaving Logan and him to fend for themselves.

Bright sunlight, kites, food, and laughter filled his mind. His mother danced with him as their father tossed Logan up and caught him. Those were memories Ace had buried a long time ago. Now that he was looking down at the last of his family, he couldn't help but drag them back to the surface.

"You can rest now and be with mom and dad," Ace said. He cupped his brother's face as sharp pricks danced in the back of his eyes. His vision blurred, and he blinked as tears fell. "Said I wasn't going to cry. What little brother ever wants to witness his big brother cry?"

Ace hiccupped as he leaned over and pressed a kiss to Logan's forehead. It was probably too late, and Ace was drawing it out. He still sat there and talked with his brother.

Regret should be all that Ace felt, but there was a certain acceptance there. His brother was better off not being held back by him. He sat there for what felt like moments. With one look at the window and the darkened sky, he knew he'd been there for well over an hour or two. Ace stood up and wiped the tears from his face.

“Love you, Logan.” Ace headed toward the door and found nurse Rosy talking with some people. She smiled at him, and he nodded at her. She was probably to thank for no interruptions.

Ace made sure to take the toys he'd originally brought with him when Logan was first admitted to the hospital. He had his favorite superhero in one arm, a picture of their family, and a few other small toys. Ace had once believed Logan being surrounded by everything he'd enjoyed and loved would have helped heal him somehow. And why wouldn't they? They lived among witches, vampires, and werewolves. Anything could be possible and not at the same time.

Each step toward the exit felt like one that was freeing and wrapped in despair at the same time. How could Ace feel sad and happy at once? Ace knew in his heart that Logan was better off. No more beeping, no more hospital smells. Ace didn't know if any of it bothered his brother, but he did know that the boy he'd watched over loved running, adored the smell of winter, and would have gotten a kick out of running with a bunch of werewolves.

Maybe in another lifetime, Logan would be able to.

Ace stepped out with the few items that belonged to Logan. He always thought he'd break down. He'd fall into a pit of despair and be unable to do anything. Living wouldn't be a burden anymore because he would be done. And yet. That wasn't how he felt at all.

He needed to go home. Ace wanted to be surrounded by the others. Being alone was great and all, but that wasn't what he needed anymore.

A deep growl penetrated the air, and the fine hairs on the back of Ace's neck stood to attention. He'd been around

enough werewolves to know what they sounded like. And being in a house full of supernaturals, he'd gotten used to predatory gazes on him.

Instead of calling for a car, he'd walked, trying to clear his head. The hospital parking lot was empty, and behind the huge building was no better. The city's sounds could be heard all around him, but it didn't drown out the growl that had fear gripping Ace's lungs.

Ace stopped moving. He forced his breathing to slow down as he looked around. *I need to call Lynk.* The alpha wolf warned him there were a bunch of attacks happening in the city. Ace reached for his phone. His fingers brushed against the warm metal in his pocket before the wind was knocked out of him. Everything he held went flying as he crashed down to the ground. Pain shot through his side, and a silent scream was all he could muster.

His eyes watered as Ace rolled on the ground, trying to overcome the pain that rained down on him. Something hot and wet splashed on his cheek. He blinked rapidly, trying to clear his blurry vision. Ace stared up at a wolf looming over him, its teeth bared.

Fear wrapped tightly around Ace and made the use of his limbs impossible. The wolf growled at him, the only warning it gave before it lunged for him. Teeth tore through his shoulder. White hot pain stole all thought as a single word left him.

“No!”

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE



A scream cracked the air and had all of them up and out of bed.

“Sattin,” Lynk growled. The big man shifted and was out of the room in seconds.

Rheland grabbed his robe and was right behind him before he vamp sped past the werewolf. He opened Sattin’s door and found her crying and on the floor.

Rheland rushed to her side without thought.

“What’s the matter?”

She was trembling, and her eyes were glossed over. Lynk crashed through the door and shifted as fast as he could. He panted as he raced over to Sattin’s side. Shorts were tossed at him, and he slipped them on just as he pulled the teenager into his lap.

“She’s still stuck in a vision,” Lynk said.

The other kids were at the door, along with Havyn, Phexx, and Sevyn.

“Is Sattin okay?” Leo asked. He held Lucky’s hand as they stared at Sattin with worried-filled gazes.

“Should we call Finnely?” Murphy asked. His pasty skin was even more ghostly as he trembled. They were all trying to be tough, but fear and sadness poured from their pores and polluted the air around them.

Rheland glanced at them and stood up. He moved toward them and met Phexx’s gaze. The werewolf changed spots with him and went over to help with Sattin.

“Come on, let’s go downstairs,” Rheland said.

Havyn and Sevyn grabbed up the younger kids. Havyn carried Hazel in his arms, and Sevyn had both twins.

“King Rheland, will Sattin be okay?” Joben asked.

Rheland couldn't answer that. He knew witches who were seers turned out two ways. Dead or driven into insanity. He didn't want that for Sattin. If possible, he would do everything he could to ensure it didn't happen.

“She's tough. Worrying isn't going to help her.”

Murphy nodded. “She's part vampire. She'll come out kicking later.”

“That's right,” Rheland said.

He led the kids to the living room and grabbed a few of the throw blankets lying around. His home had changed so much since they all came to live with him. It felt less like a house out of a catalog and more like a home. There were pictures the kids had made, even vases that were too holey to hold water but perfect for added decoration.

“Who wants a snack?” Rheland asked.

All of them looked afraid.

“What?” Rheland glanced around in confusion.

“Maybe I should make it,” Havyn said.

“Your cooking is shit,” Sevyn said.

All the children nodded as if it was a known fact. Rheland groaned.

“Not fair. I've never tasted it before. It all tastes the same to me.” Imagining biting into a sandwich brought the urge to scrape at his tongue. “It tastes like sand.”

“And that’s why we won’t let you in the kitchen,” Havyn said. He kissed Rheland.

Their lips pressed together. Instantly, Rheland was hit with desire and warmth. How could he not fall for each of them when they pulled him apart with simple touches?

Havyn pulled back, and Rheland grabbed him before he could get far. “I love you.”

Rheland met Havyn’s eyes and saw the truth in them. “I love you too.”

Havyn’s eyes widened. Before Rheland knew it, he was in Havyn’s arms, their mouths pressed together once more.

“What are you two so happy about?” Sevyn growled.

Havyn put him down, and Rheland grabbed Sevyn. The realization had hit him like a ton of bricks. He should make it sweet and break it down for each of them. That only meant waiting even longer.

“Realized I’m in love with all of you,” Rheland said.

Sevyn looked at his brother and then back at Rheland. “Really?”

“Yes.” Rheland chuckled. Now he needed to do was tell Phexx, Lynk, and Ace how he felt. The alpha wolf undoubtedly already knew; he seemed to pick up on Rheland’s feelings before he did.

The kids clapped like they’d seen a grand play, and Rheland shook his head. Right, he needed to calm down and remember that they had a house full of kids. He cleared his throat and looked around the room.

Something had been tickling the back of his mind that he couldn’t quite place. Rheland glanced around again and closed

his eyes as he listened out for all the heartbeats in his home.

There was one missing.

“Where is Ace?” Rheland asked.

Sevyn glanced around. “He wasn’t in bed when we got up either.”

Rheland was gone in seconds, checking every room in the house in a flurry of motion.

Lynk came racing down the stairs. Rheland stopped short, glancing behind him.

“What?”

Phexx’s eyes went to the door and then to Rheland. “Come on.”

Rheland didn’t question him.

“We’re coming too,” Havyn said.

Phexx nodded. “We will need you.”

“Murphy, Joben, you’re in charge. Boys, listen. Don’t let anyone in the house while we’re out,” Rheland said.

“Yes, sir.”

Rheland didn’t feel great about leaving the children alone. He grabbed a phone and messaged his sired children to come to watch over the hybrids.

They piled into the van. Lynk whipped it around and out of the driveway with a skill even car racers would envy.

“What is happening?” Havyn asked the question that no one dared to.

Rheland’s stomach soured as dread dripped down his spine. *This isn’t going to be good.*

Lynk's hold on the steering wheel was one second from breaking the thing. Rheland doubted the steering wheel would last much longer.

"It's Ace."

Rheland sat up instantly. Out of all his guys, Ace was the only human, the most fragile of all of them. "What about him?"

Lynk growled and hit the steering wheel, making Rheland's worry rise further.

"There have been some rogue werewolves lately, and it's a bit harder dealing with the public eye and whatnot," Phexx said.

"Just tell me what the hell we are going toward?"

Phexx nodded. "Sattin had a vision of an attack, and Ace was the one being mauled."

"What!" Rheland reached into the back and grabbed Phexx by the shirt, pulling the werewolf closer. "Where?"

Phexx was smart enough not to break the hold Rheland had on his shirt. "The hospital."

Ace would go to the hospital for only one reason, but it couldn't be for any regular visit. They'd agreed to go together again. *Something must've happened to Logan.*

Despair and anger swirled in the pit of his stomach, and Rheland felt his power rise inside of him. A hot hand cupped his face.

"Calm down," Phexx whispered. His face was close to Rheland's.

“How can I calm down?” Rage was quickly winning above all else. How could Rheland not have noticed sooner that Ace was gone?

Phexx growled. Staring into his eyes, Rheland could see how angry he was.

“Rheland, we will be there soon. Turn around and sit,” Lynk said.

Rheland hissed and turned slowly in his seat. One more of them tried to calm him down, and he’d kill someone. Lynk’s jaw was clenched so tightly the muscle jumped.

They were all acting calm, but that was far from the truth. Rheland turned all the way around and caught sight of his reflection. His eyes glowed red, and his fangs were out.

Ace, you better not die.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX



The hospital came into view. Rheland had the window down. Sirens could be heard in the distance.

A bone-chilling shout pierced the air, and Rheland didn't have to be told who it was. He was out of the car in seconds, not waiting for Lynk to come to a full stop. He vamp sped closer to the sound of growling and screams.

His feet couldn't carry him fast enough. Rheland collided with the first wolf he saw. The sounds of bones breaking under him did little to dispel the rage coursing through his veins. Rheland grabbed the back of the wolf's neck. His fingers dug past fur and then muscle wrapping around the hard bone of its spine.

Yanking up with all his strength, he tore through muscle and flesh. A wet tearing noise resonated and filled his ears. Hot blood splashed over his face and arms, and still unbearable rage filled him.

Rheland blinked as he sought out another to tear apart. He stopped in his tracks at the sight before him. Werewolves clashed with one another. He could easily tell them from the others.

Phexx dragged down another wolf. He was savage as ever as he ripped the other beast's throat out. Lynk was no different, taking on two wolves. He was easily bigger than them and outmatched them in skill. His silver fur shimmered in the moonlight but was made even more beautiful as it was decorated with blood.

Havyn and Sevyn weren't too far off, double-teaming another wolf, dragging it down between the two of them. His men fought around him. It was familiar to Rheland. Humans fled, some injured by the rogue wolves, but none of that mattered.

The moment he saw Ace, Rheland vamp sped over to him. He dropped to his knees when he reached him. Blood soaked his clothes further, not just any blood but Ace's blood. He didn't know where to touch. There wasn't one place that wasn't bleeding.

Ace's eyes fluttered, unfocused. Rheland wanted to rip the werewolves apart all over again.

"You— You're st-st-strong." Ace's lips trembled with every word that tried to leave him.

Unsure where to touch, Rheland went for his face. "Stop talking." His fingers lightly danced over Ace's cheek, wiping away the blood splattered there.

Ace coughed. It sounded like a laugh, but Rheland might have been losing it. "Sowy."

"What the hell are you apologizing for?" There were so many open wounds.

"Don't," Lynk growled.

"He won't heal from this."

"And your blood might kill him," Phexx said, pulling Rheland back.

He knew that, but watching the light flicker in Ace's eyes was too much for Rheland to handle.

Ace groaned. "I...I..." His face contorted in pain, and he let out a whimper. "I..."

"Stop talking," Rheland hissed. His fangs barred, and he glared down at Ace. "Say another word, and I will rip your tongue out."

Rheland hadn't been so angry in a long while.

Ace cracked a smile. A tear slipped out the corner of his eye as he met Rheland's gaze. "I... I don't wanna die."

Rheland wanted to scream at the idiot. He waited till now to take back his death wish.

"You better not, or I will bring you back to life just to kill you myself," Rheland growled.

Ace's eyes fluttered closed, but a smile was on his face. "Make a deal with the devil for me." His voice was barely over a whisper. Still, Rheland had heard it all, even the very last words that shook him to his core.

"Think I fell in love with a vampire."

"Rheland!" Lynk grabbed him and forced him to focus on his face.

Rheland couldn't understand the feeling inside of him. It felt like glass shards were dragging down his back and over his chest repeatedly, deeper each time.

"Look at me," Lynk shouted.

Rheland blinked slowly.

"He's still alive."

Lynk's words echoed in Rheland's head until they finally registered.

"We need to get out of here." Lynk reached for Ace. Rheland reluctantly let the alpha wolf handle the injured human.

Ace coughed, and more blood splattered over his lips. His inhale sounded wet. Rheland wanted nothing more than to kill the wolves all over again.

Phexx grabbed his arm. He was naked and covered in just as much blood as Rheland.

“We got all of them.”

Rheland balled up his fists as the anger still hadn't subsided. He wanted nothing more than for them to return to life just so he could kill them all over again. Why did they have to attack?

“Phexx, get Rheland in the car. Havyn, check to see if anyone else who was attacked is still breathing. Sevyn, call Lola and get the council down here.” Lynk dished out orders, handling everything like a true alpha.

Rheland didn't argue as Phexx ushered him toward the car. His warm hand was the only reason Rheland didn't fly off the handle and go on a killing spree. He focused on Ace's weak heart and the way it faltered every so often. His stomach rolled each time.

“Rheland, he's strong,” Phexx whispered.

“We both know that's not enough.” Rheland wiped the tears as he stepped into the car. He turned instantly to stare at Ace. His eyes were squeezed shut, and his body was wracked with tremors.

In all of Rheland's time on earth, he'd only witnessed a werewolf being made maybe five times. It was far too violent and gruesome. The possibility of Ace dying was higher than him living.

Unlike vampires, no coaxing or amount of blood would guarantee he survived. It would be nothing short of a waiting game. One Rheland would spend in pure agony.

Lynk jumped behind the wheel.

“Where are Sevyn and Havyn?” Rheland asked. Seeing one of his men near death set him on edge. He couldn’t fathom losing any of them.

Was this to become his new way of life? To worry about those around him leaving him before he got enough time with them? An ache built in Rheland’s chest as sorrow tried to burrow its way in and drive him mad.

Rheland was better off not feeling anything. Warm fingers gripped his chin, and he took in Lynk’s features. His brown skin, light brown eyes, and full lips.

“We won’t leave you,” Lynk said.

How could he promise that? Even so, Rheland wanted desperately to believe Lynk to trust his word. Because of these five men, he opened up once more. He accepted love when he’d thought it was impossible.

“Okay.”

Lynk pulled him close and kissed him. Rheland gave in, sinking further than he could think.

“They will meet us back at the house. They are going to make sure the council gets there first to get everything cleaned up,” Lynk said.

Rheland wanted to say no. However, he had no say so over werewolf business, no matter how badly he wanted all his men with him at all times.

The drive was spent in silence. Rheland focused solely on listening in on Ace’s heartbeat. He kept his eyes closed as they drove.

“We’re home,” Phexx said.

Rheland didn't want to open his eyes. He'd be faced with seeing a bleeding Ace losing all color and he hadn't improved.

"How long?" Rheland asked. He didn't need to specify when both werewolves had to know what he was talking about.

"If he doesn't start to heal, but we will know tonight," Lynk said. He grabbed Rheland's hand and squeezed.

"And then he shifts," Phexx said.

Rheland wasn't about to second guess them when they felt so certain that Ace would pull through. He followed behind them as they carried Ace inside. The kids ran down the stairs, worry etched on their faces as they headed toward Ace. Sattin was up, her eyes bloodshot and the color gone from her beautiful face.

She ran to Rheland, and he didn't hesitate to hug her. "It's okay."

She looked over at Ace, and Rheland did the same. Lynk and Phexx placed him on the floor in the downstairs living room. Undoubtedly for Rheland's benefit. Werewolves normally waited for the change outside. The first shift was always violent.

"Will Ace be okay?" Hazel asked, her voice barely over a whisper as she clung to Murphy.

"He's going to be joining our pack as another wolf," Phexx said. He smiled, but it didn't quite reach his eyes. If the kids noticed, they pretended as if they didn't.

"Come on, let's go sit around Ace." Rheland led the children over to the couch. They pushed it far against the wall and moved everything else out of the room.

He sat down, wanting nothing more than to be next to Ace. He left it to Lynk, for now. Instead, he sat with the kids surrounding him as they waited.

Time passed at a snail's pace as they sat there. Hazel fell asleep in Rheland's lap. Leo was on the other side of him, and Lucky was drifting off on Rheland's right. The older kids stayed focused, all eyes on Ace.

The front door opened, and everyone jumped. Sevyn and Havyn ran in, breathing heavily as if they were running back home. Sevyn's eyes were wild as he looked around. When they landed on Rheland, he came racing over.

He dropped to his knees in front of Rheland. No words passed between them, but there didn't need to be any. He leaned forward, ensuring not to disturb Hazel. Sevyn met him the rest of the way with a kiss.

Sevyn sat at his feet as they all looked at Ace once again. Lynk and Phexx sat by his side, coaching him through it all. Telling him to accept the change and whatever else werewolves needed to change.

Havyn came back into the living room and draped a blanket over each of the children. He leaned over the couch and pressed a kiss to Rheland's forehead.

"He's going to be a great wolf," Havyn said.

Rheland nodded.

Ace groaned and coughed, drawing Rheland's attention instantly. He sat up, willing Ace to move and shift.

Time dragged on, and Rheland hissed as his vision blurred.

"We will watch over him," Havyn said.

Rheland wanted to scratch the film off his eyes, but he knew it would be useless.

“I’ll stay right here.”

No one argued with him. He closed his eyes and let the darkness swallow him up. Rheland continued to wake up every so often, opening his eyes and seeing nothing but listening out for Ace.

On the fifth time, Rheland forced himself up from the heavy fog surrounding him. He heard it. Ace’s heart beat stronger than before.

“See, he’s already healing,” Havyn whispered in Rheland’s ear.

A smile tugged at his lips but fell just as quickly. It was impossible to stay afloat but knowing Ace was healing meant the chances of him becoming a werewolf were strong.

A joyful whimper slipped free, and Rheland closed his eyes once more.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN



The pain was endless. There was no light, only darkness. Ace wanted to scream, but even his voice felt too weak. How could he keep going when there was nothing to move forward for?

Whispers of intangible words reached his ears. Ace wanted to scream for them to go away. Maybe then, the pain would stop.

Ace tried again and again, but nothing came out of him.

“Don’t give up.”

Finally, something he could understand, but what the hell did it mean? If the voice felt the excruciating pain Ace was in, they wouldn’t be asking him not to give up. Let him float away. Let the pain stop.

“Rheland.”

One simple word, and Ace gave pause. Grey eyes, a soft round face, pink lips, white hair, and slender cool fingers appeared before him.

Rheland’s face smiling at him was the first to take his attention, and the image shifted to that of the vampire crying. Ace wanted nothing more than to pull him close and tell him it would be okay.

The words he had uttered before the endless darkness and pain had taken over him, he’d meant them. He wanted to live and love Rheland. He wanted to hang out with Phexx, argue about mundane things, relax with Havyn and Sevyn, and laugh with Lynk. Ace planned on beating all the kids in every game possible and watching them grow up. That was a future he had never sought, and now it was all he wanted.

A growl worked its way up his chest and scraped along his vocal cords.

More pain, but Ace held on to the images of a future he planned to have. The sounds of something breaking reached his ears before a scream dragged from his soul's deepest part.

Again, the crack of bones echoed in his ears, and Ace was left in nothing but pain. He attempted to turn over to curl in on himself. None of his limbs would listen to him. Another growl left him.

“Shift!”

Something hot washed over Ace, and he felt his body responding without his command. Something in his soul clawed at his insides. On some instinctual level, Ace knew to go with it. To let it out.

Pain rolled through in waves making it hard to breathe, let alone think. However, Ace pushed on. He fought through it all, teeth and claws.

Every inch of him ached from head to toe. But the pain had started to recede. He blinked. The world was heavily distorted. The colors were muted, but the smells that surrounded him were sharp.

Ace flopped to the floor, his four legs unable to hold himself up for longer than a few seconds.

Four legs?

Lynk came into view. He hovered over Ace. Light shimmered around him, and Ace opened his mouth to speak, but only a whimper broke free.

“It’s okay. You did good,” Lynk said. His fingers ran through Ace’s fur, blanketing him with a sense of calm.

Fatigue plagued him and dragged his eyes closed without his permission. He forced them open as a scent he knew well

reached him.

Rheland kneeled before him. Soft fingers touched his face gliding through the fur with ease. However, Rheland's eyes were stark white.

“You both need to rest,” Lynk said.

Ace whimpered and pushed past his fatigue. He pressed his snout against Rheland's torso, breathing in more of the vampire's scent.

This was what he'd wanted. Ace wasn't ready to go. He wanted to stay with them. And now he would be able to. His eyes fell closed once more.

I'm so fucking tired.



A COOL BODY SETTLED ON TOP OF HIM AS OTHER HOT BODIES lay around him. Ace groaned as he overheated.

“Uh, I know you all are dogs, but the puppy pile is a bit much,” Ace said.

“You’re one too, or did you forget?” Phexx grumbled.

Ace turned his head to glare at the man. His blue eyes danced with mischief.

Yes, Ace had forgotten. He groaned as he freed his arm and pressed his fingers into his eyes.

“Might have slipped my mind,” Ace said. He wiggled under Rheland. The vampire still hadn’t woken up. “What color is my fur?”

“That’s the first question you want to ask after two days?” Rheland grumbled.

“It’s a good question,” Ace argued.

“Silver with black-tipped fur,” Havyn said. His head popped up. Messy black hair was a nest on top of his head.

“Why are all of you in bed with me?” Ace asked. He broke another arm free. He wrapped his arm around Rheland’s waist and held him close. Ace was complaining, but in truth, he loved it.

For a second there, he almost missed out on this.

“Get some more rest,” Lynk demanded.

Ace looked over to the man. His eyes were still closed, even as he gave a demand.

“Do I have to listen now that I’m a werewolf?”

Lynk opened an eye and cracked a smile. “Go to sleep, Ace.”

“If you’re challenging the alpha, you have to go through me first,” Phexx said. He sounded a little too enthusiastic for Ace’s taste.

“Eh, I’m still tired anyway.”

Rheland chuckled. “Looks like someone doesn’t have a death wish anymore.”

Ace rolled his eyes, but he grabbed Rheland and kissed him. “I might have something more to live for.”

“Is that a confession?” Rheland asked.

“Aw, how sweet who knew you could be so mushy,” Sevyn said.

Ace groaned. “I thought Lynk said to go back to sleep.”

Rheland laughed and snuggled against Ace. He felt his heart beat even harder. Smiling was inevitable, especially when he was so happy.



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“JUST TO BE CLEAR. I HAVE TO HAVE ALL MY BONES BREAK and limbs reshaped and go galloping in the night?”

“When you put it that way, it sounds like we’re asking you to do some ritual,” Sevyn said.

Ace shrugged. “Tomato, tomato.”

Karter pointed at him. “You have some serious issues, you know that?”

“Me?” Ace stared at the werewolf, perplexed. Hadn’t he taken a look in the mirror? “Look, I just want to understand what’s going to happen. Full moon runs, fleas, and hunting.”

“We don’t have fleas,” Karter growled.

Ace rolled his eyes. “Dude, I’ve seen you scratch in wolf form. You have fucking fleas.”

“Don’t start, you two. There will be plenty of time for that later after Ace’s first shift,” Lynk said, halting everything.

Butterflies erupted in the pit of Ace’s stomach. He wrapped his arms around himself and fought not to run back inside and puke up everything he ate.

“Are you sure?” Ace asked for what felt like the twentieth time in five minutes. He remembered shifting. He hadn’t done it once since then. An entire week almost felt like a fever dream.

“Don’t be nervous,” Sevyn said. He dropped an arm around Ace’s shoulder and pulled him close. The smell of him was familiar, and Ace relaxed a bit. He hadn’t ever been a touchy-feely guy. However, even he could admit that Sevyn’s

touch was grounding him in a way he couldn't properly understand.

"Alpha, everyone is here," Murphy said. He came running with Rome and Hazel on his heels.

Ace audibly swallowed as he looked around the group of people there for him. It was insane. Never in his life would he have thought this would be his future. Not too long ago, he was certain that once Logan left this world, he wouldn't be too far behind.

"Are you ready?" Rheland's smooth voice penetrated the momentary fog.

Ace blinked a few times, taking in the vampire attire. He really did look like some twenty-year-old with nothing better to do but party and talk shit. His white hair was gelled back, and he sported a black turtleneck that Ace wanted nothing more than to rip off him.

A growl resonated around them and had Ace looking around to see who'd been the one growling.

"Man, you got it bad," Sevyn said, punching Ace in the arm.

"Says the one dropping to his knees every time Rheland snaps his fingers," Ace said.

"Uh, we can hear you!" Sattin covered her ears, and so did the other teens.

"Please, PG around here," Murphy growled.

Rheland laughed and winked at Ace and Sevyn. It was like he was promising to ruin them both later. Ace couldn't fucking wait.

“Let’s get this shifting thing over with.” Ace rushed over to Lynk, nerves bouncing around, making it impossible to stand still longer than five seconds.

All the werewolves gathered. Ace was in the middle. He glanced over his shoulder and saw Rheland with Sattin, Joben, and the twin boys at his side. Leo and Lucky hadn’t fully shifted yet. But from what Ace understood, it would be any day now.

He turned back and faced Lynk as he stood before him.

“You were welcomed as an honorary member, and tonight we welcome you into the Crescent Moon pack as a member of the pack. As a wolf.” Lynk’s voice seemed to resonate around them.

All eyes were on Ace. He could feel each and every single one of them. The jittery feeling he’d had since they woke up only intensified as time ticked by. His skin tingled and buzzed as if a million insects crawled just under the surface.

“Ace Hansen, do you accept me as your alpha?”

Lynk’s gaze bore into him. There was only one answer for Ace. He’d found a family with them. Even when he wanted to resist, Lynk made him feel welcome.

He tilted his head to the right baring his neck. “Yes.” It felt as if his very soul was submitting. His eyes slid shut as Lynk touched the side of his neck.

Lynk pulled him in for a hug, and everyone shouted. Ace tried to play it off, but he couldn’t smother the smile even if he tried. Phexx, Havyn, and Sevyn joined. Followed by Avery, Karter, Rome, and Faith. The kids wiggled in, and soon Ace was surrounded by his pack. His family.

Lynk pulled back. Everyone followed, leaving Ace in the middle once more. If he was jittery before, he was downright ready to jump out of his skin. Ace rubbed his hand up and down his arms, trying to calm down.

Lynk smiled at him. "Let's shift."

One word, and everything twisted and turned around Ace. The others dropped to their knees, and he was right behind them. Karter and Rome were the only ones to shift quickly. The rest of them had it hard.

Pain, fucking pain erupted over Ace's body and threatened to swallow him whole. The sounds of his bones shattering reached his ears, but his screams quickly drowned them out. Time moved so slowly that he feared the pain would never stop.

Just as fast as everything had permeated, it changed. Pain changed to ache, and soon, even that was nothing more than a distant memory. Ace shook his entire body and took a step forward.

Lynk's wolf stood before him. No matter how many times Ace had seen Lynk in wolf form, nothing would or could compare to seeing him while also being a wolf.

A chorus of howls erupted, and Ace was compelled to join in. He tossed his head back and howled to the moon above them. Freedom washed over Ace as Lynk led the pack, and he ran with them.

Ace had doubts that being a wolf would be any different than being human, but running with the wind rushing through his fur, it was most certainly different. Everything was heightened and clearer. It opened him up to so much more.

Ace couldn't say he'd ever set out to be a werewolf. Still, he was more than happy to be one now. His head fell back as claws ripped through the earth, and he graced the world with another howl.

I am free.

EPILOGUE



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One month later

Silver fur with black tips could be seen from a mile away. Rheland homed in on Ace and kept an eye on him.

“Give him some more time,” Lynk said.

Rheland nodded and leaned against the big man. Leaving Ace alone was hard. He wasn't a fragile human anymore, but Rheland couldn't erase the picture of him battered and bloody. He'd nearly lost him, and that fear was stuck inside of him as if it was a knife piercing his heart. It would take some time to overcome it.

Phexx walked over to them with a smile. Rheland couldn't help but return it regardless of why they were in the cemetery.

“Your majesty shouldn't look so sad,” Phexx said as he cupped Rheland's face. His thumb drifted over Rheland's lips, leaving behind a hot trail that heightened his desire for the werewolf.

Phexx winked at him as if he knew the exact effect he had on Rheland.

“Would you two stop flirting?” Sevyn growled.

“Are you mad because it's not you?” Phexx shot back.

Lynk groaned, and Rheland couldn't agree more. If everyone started bickering, it would never stop. Rheland vamp sped over to Sevyn and yanked him down on his knees. His pupils instantly dilated as he stared up at Rheland.

“Wait till we get him.”

Sevyn licked his lips, his pulse jumping with Rheland's words.

“Okay.”

Rheland bent over and brushed his lips over Sevyn's. "Good boy."

"He's ready," Havyn said, grabbing Rheland's attention.

All of their gazes went to Ace as he pressed his large wolf head against the stone of his brother's grave. Ace shook his fur before heading their way.

Rheland had offered to buy a bigger area and stone, but Ace had refused. He'd taken the money left from the contract and paid for everything himself.

"Ready?" Lynk asked.

Ace barked, and Rheland couldn't help but laugh.

"Who's a good puppy?" Phexx teased.

Ace growled at him, and the others started laughing.

Sounds of breaking bones filled the otherwise quiet area. Ace grunted and panted as he shifted from wolf to man. He bent over, breathing heavily once it was all done.

Rheland vamp sped over to his side. The werewolf leaned heavily on him, his body radiating heat like a furnace.

"You guys couldn't keep it together for longer than a few minutes," Ace teased.

Rheland shrugged. What could he do about a bunch of overly energized werewolves?

Ace flipped Phexx off as the beta wolf handed Ace a change of clothes.

"Fuck you. Next time, I'm biting a finger off," Ace warned playfully.

Phexx's head fell back as he laughed.

“Surrounded by insanity,” Rheland said.

Lynk’s hand rested on the lower half of his back. “But it’s your insanity.”

Rheland’s lips tugged up in a smile. *Yeah, you all are mine.*

“Let’s go home,” Ace said.

Rheland nodded and kissed him one more time before heading toward the cars. Phexx hopped on his bike, and the twins jumped in the car with Lynk. Ace slipped into the car with Rheland, and they all headed toward the mansion.

Returning home, Rheland expected to be bombarded by the children, but they weren’t there. Before panic could rise, Lynk placed a hand on his shoulder.

“They went to Faith’s for a sleepover,” Lynk said.

Rheland’s shoulders dropped instantly. “Oh, okay.”

“We’re going to go eat. Coming?” Lynk asked, heading toward the kitchen.

Havyn and Sevyn had their arms draped around Ace, and Rheland smiled. They were making sure he was okay. The vampire shook his head.

“No, I’m going to go get changed. I hate the way dirt smells.”

Rheland headed to his room and took a quick shower, not wanting to linger now that he had people waiting for him. He looked back on his life and couldn’t understand what he’d done right to end up with five men. No matter what, Rheland had thought he’d accepted being alone.

He sighed, slipped fresh clothes on, and towel-dried his hair. He was about to head downstairs but stopped in his tracks

as he noticed the five heartbeats he kept tabs on at all times were just outside the bathroom door.

“Ah, he came out with clothes on,” Sevyn said.

Rheland walked further into his room and tossed the towel to the side. “What’s going on in here?”

“We’re here to worship you, your majesty,” Phexx said.

All of the guys were in his room, spread out. Phexx lay on Rheland’s bed. Ace sat at the edge, and the twins took up the post on the right side, standing there. Lynk was the last and stood next to the door.

Rheland dragged his eyes to the alpha wolf and cocked a brow. Lynk reached for him, and Rheland went easily as his arms wrapped around Rheland’s waist.

“What is this?” Rheland asked.

“It’s exactly what Phexx said,” Lynk whispered against Rheland’s lips.

The vampire melted instantly upon feeling Lynk’s hands on him.

“Shouldn’t all of you be on your knees then?” Rheland asked.

Sevyn, Havyn, and Phexx dropped down instantly. Rheland groaned as desire pooled in the pits of his stomach. His cock pressed against the confines of his jeans, and he couldn’t fathom why he was still dressed.

Ace moved past the three on their knees, and Rheland held back the laugh. Why wasn’t he surprised by the former human? He was up and out of Lynk’s hold in seconds. His hand wrapped around Ace’s throat and stopped the newly

turned werewolf. He pushed down, and Ace dropped to his knees as well.

“Weren’t you in on the plan?”

Ace smirked at him and pressed more firmly against Rheland’s hand. “I was.”

Rheland lifted a brow at the man waiting for his answers. While Ace waited, he couldn’t help but rub small circles around his pulse, loving how it sped up every single time he applied the tiniest bit of pressure to Ace’s throat.

“I wanted to see if you could still make me,” Ace taunted.

Rheland swallowed his laugh and bent over, tightening his hold on Ace’s neck. “I can more than make you kneel. Just because you’re a dog doesn’t mean I can’t break you if I want.”

Ace’s eyes lit up as need shimmered in their forest green depths. “Go ahead and try.” Ace grinned up at Rheland. “We both know it will be you begging in the end.”

Rheland moved close enough. Their lips were barely a breath away. He kissed the corner of Ace’s mouth. “Maybe I will.” He released Ace just as Phexx attacked.

He’d seen the werewolf move long before he even attacked. “What am I going to do with all of you?” Rheland groaned, his fingers curling under his shirt as he slowly started to lift it. “Five werewolves, one vampire. I have to be insane.”

All their gazes were on him. Rheland could count on his hand how many times he’d ever felt like prey. With his guys, he very much felt like the sheep about to be slaughtered by a pack of wolves.

If his heart could, it would be pounding away as his cock wept with precum. Excitement bubbled up inside Rheland as he pulled the shirt off and tossed it to the side.

“I shouldn’t have to teach a bunch of werewolves how to strip.”

Every single one of them rushed to get out of their clothes. It wasn’t a competition, but they treated it like one. Rheland stifled his laughter as rough hot hands rested on his waist.

“Need help?” Lynk’s deep voice alone nearly made Rheland moan.

“Do I really need to answer?”

The fabric was yanked against his body. The sound of jeans tearing filled the air before cool air brushed against Rheland’s naked ass. The coolness was quickly eaten up as Lynk approached, overheating Rheland instantly.

His words were caught in his throat as it took everything in Rheland not to push back and beg the alpha wolf to take him.

Growls erupted around him. Rheland blinked, remembering he didn’t have just one tonight. Only all five of his men.

“Are you ready?” Lynk asked. He kissed the shell of Rheland’s ear, sending little sparks of pleasure throughout the rest of his body.

“You sound like you’re all about to eat me alive,” Rheland said.

Warm laughter filled the room, but no one denied Rheland’s words. His stomach flipped as excitement made every inch of him tingle.

Lynk picked Rheland up before he could think of something to do. He was placed on the bed and turned around to face Lynk. Their mouths met in a heated rough kiss. Rheland moaned into Lynk's mouth as he was kissed to the point of losing his mind.

More hands touched him over his ass, up his back between his thighs, all of them driving him further insane. Rheland pulled back from the kiss as a hot tongue entered him. It would be simple to look back and see who it was, but Rheland couldn't even get his tongue to work anymore.

Hot mouths attacked him everywhere, leaving little left untouched. He lifted his head and met Lynk's knowing gaze. The alpha wolf grabbed his face and pulled him for another earth-shattering kiss.

Rheland whimpered as a mouth wrapped around his cock, encasing it in wet heat. He tried to move forward to shove his cock in deeper, but hands kept him still. He was nothing more than a meal for them to enjoy.

He mentally laughed at himself as a cry was dragged out from the deepest parts of his soul. Pain shot up his spine from his ass, mixing with the undiluted pleasure that freely pumped through his veins.

Rheland gasped as someone else bit him.

"How does it feel to be the one being bitten?" Ace asked.

Rheland would lose his damn mind before they even started fucking him. Lynk gripped his chin and pushed his head back a little. His mouth descended on Rheland's neck, nipping and sucking.

"Your highness, you're shaking," Phexx teased. His tongue danced along Rheland's ear. "Almost like a rabbit in a trap."

Fingers cupped his balls, and Rheland cried out. He was doomed from the start between the five of them. They would ruin him, and he didn't want to be anywhere else but in their hands.

He smiled and turned his head enough to look at Phexx. "It feels good. Do it some more."

Teeth bit into his inner thigh, and shock waves of pleasure crashed into Rheland, making him buck. Fingers stretched him, preparing him to take their cock.

A shiver worked its way down Rheland's spine as he thought about being fucked not once but five times and knowing his guys wouldn't stop there.

Rheland wiggled in their hold as the pleasure built. He was on the cusp of his orgasm, but he wanted nothing more than to cum with them, at least for the first round.

"I think our king here is in desperate need of a cock," Ace said.

"Is that true, Rheland?" Lynk asked.

What was the use of denying it? "Yes." The word broke free with ease as his need far outweighed any other thought that bounced around in his head.

All of them released him at once, and Rheland felt the loss of their heat. He whimpered, and Lynk kissed him.

"Don't worry, none of them are going to leave. We're all going to have you tonight."

Rheland let his eyes close as he basked in the happiness that filled him. Lynk's cock pressed against his hole, and Rheland's eyes flew open.

He stared into the gorgeous depth of Lynk's brown eyes.

“Say it right here and now,” Lynk said, holding Rheland just shy of his cock.

Rheland wiggled, but there was no give. He didn't have to ask what Lynk wanted. He knew he felt it in the air around them. Rheland draped his arms over Lynk's shoulder and leaned forward as much as he could.

“I love you.”

Lynk growled. Rheland saw the pure love in Lynk's eye as he impaled Rheland on his dick.

Rheland cried out as bliss erupted inside of him. He clenched around the huge cock inside him as spots danced in his vision, and cum shot out of his cock.

“Now that's going to be my next goal,” Phexx moaned.

Rheland blinked his eyes and groaned as Lynk set a punishing pace. He couldn't even ask Phexx what his next goal was, knowing it had everything to do with him.

Lynk's hand wrapped around his cock. Rheland gasped as his overly sensitive cock was stroked until he was hard again.

Rheland's hands were pried off Lynk's back. He fell back suspended in the air, his lower half being fucked by Lynk.

“Open up, Rheland,” Phexx said.

He obeyed, instantly offering his mouth. Phexx slid in the rings on his cock, tickling his tongue. Rheland couldn't wait until they were inside of him. Nothing quite felt like Phexx's pierced cock hitting his prostate.

Rheland moaned around the thick length in his mouth. He reached out and held onto Phexx's thighs as the man fucked his throat. He had one werewolf in his ass and one down his throat.

Lynk's hand disappeared. Rheland shouted around Phexx's cock as it was replaced with one of his men's mouths. They planned on ending him tonight.

His nipples were attacked again, and Rheland was brought to the brink of orgasm once again. He knew before the tingling at the base of his spine started that he would cum again. He was probably going to do it many times.

Lynk growled as hot splashes of cum filled Rheland at once. Rheland screamed around Phexx's cock as his climax zapped through him.

Both men pulled out of him, but Rheland was far from being done. He wouldn't rest any time soon, and the thought brought a smile to his face. Sevyn and Havyn grabbed him, both twins fighting to be inside him.

"One at—" Rheland's head fell back as they shoved in together. Pain and pleasure ripped him apart, and Rheland was left trying to figure up from down.

"Damn, you take two cocks like a whore," Ace moaned. Desire swam in the deep depths of his gaze.

Rheland couldn't come up with any words. Even if he'd tried, it would be nothing more than gibberish. He was moved as the twins worked together, neither one slipping out of Rheland's hole as they went from standing to lying on the bed. Havyn was on top, already rocking into Rheland, making Sevyn and Rheland gasp with every movement.

"Don't forget me," Ace said, grabbing Rheland's attention.

Rheland shook his head as a moan slipped free. There was no way in hell he could forget him or any of them for that matter.

“Promise?” Ace whispered against his lips before kissing him.

A tremble raced down Rheland’s small frame. “I love you, all of you.”

Ace smiled and kissed him again before he backed up a little. He didn’t have to be told. He opened his mouth, and Ace fed him his dick.

Again and again, they changed positions, and Rheland quickly lost himself in his men’s hands. His voice grew hoarse, his body ached all over, and pleasure like no other coursed through his veins.

Rheland opened his mouth and relaxed his throat as Lynk shoved his cock in. Every inch of him was being used, and Rheland couldn’t fathom a better way of life. His hole was stretched to the max around Phexx and Ace’s cocks. His hands were each wrapped around one of the twins’ cock.

They were all treating Rheland as if he was nothing more than a toy to pass around. Hot cum splashed over his hand. It was like a domino effect. One by one, they came inside and outside of Rheland.

Lynk pulled out of his throat just in time to feed Rheland his cum. The vampire greedily lapped it up drop after drop.

No one needed to say anything as they each changed their positions. Lynk kissed him, and Rheland lost track of everyone. Another cock slipped inside of him.

Ecstasy zapped every nerve ending, and Rheland’s vision danced with spots. The sounds of flesh colliding were accompanied by their growls and his moans.

One of them touched his cock, and Rheland shook his head. He couldn’t handle that. Pleasure robbed him of all

thought as he shouted out his release. His eyes rolled to the back of his head as he was forced to cum too many times to keep track of.

Rheland blinked a few times and groaned as he realized he'd passed out.

“Finally, back to the land of the living, huh?” Phexx teased.

Rheland moved and froze instantly as pleasure ripped up his spine. He was too sensitive for anymore. If they kept fucking him, he would shoot nothing but blanks.

Phexx laughed, and Rheland turned around to see who it was. Havyn smiled at him and pulled Rheland back, shoving his cock back in. Rheland gasped for air he didn't need.

He laid back down on Lynk, giving up. Looking into Havyn's eyes was pointless, and Rheland was spreading his legs a bit more.

“You give in too easily,” Lynk said. He pulled Rheland up his chest and kissed him.

“Don't tell me you're all ready to go again?”

Soft snores hit Rheland's ears. He turned to see Ace and Sevyn sound asleep practically on top of each other.

“Not all,” Phexx said. He kissed Rheland next before laying back down.

Havyn kissed Rheland last and laid back on top of him, keeping his cock inside of him.

“We're all tired. We can pick up where we left off later,” Lynk said. He offered his wrist, and Rheland's fangs dropped instantly.

Rheland pushed his fangs into Lynk's arm and groaned at the taste of him. He closed his eyes and drank slowly.

"Rheland," Lynk called.

The vampire hadn't noticed he started to close his eyes. He lapped at Lynk's wrists, closing the wound.

"Hmm?"

"We love you too. Forever."

Rheland turned his head and looked at Lynk. "Good, I won't accept anything less."



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THE DOORBELL RANG, AND RHELAND EXCUSED HIMSELF. HE'D lost a few hands prior. Now he was just watching Sevyn and Ace go back and forth. Even the kids had chosen sides after they lost.

He opened the door, not sure what to expect. One of the human envoys Weston used held out an invitation for him.

“Sir.” He bowed before turning and leaving.

Rheland closed the door holding the hefty envelope. It was pure black with a silver etched design on the corner. A red wax seal that Rheland recognized. Before he knew it, he was back in the living room.

The fancy envelope was in his hands. He didn't even look up before he finally opened it.

“What is it?” Phexx asked.

Rheland's eyes widened, and something close to joy filled his chest.

“What?” Ace asked. “He's smiling. I'm not sure if I should be scared or happy.”

Lynk hit both of them in the back of the head. “Rheland, what is it?”

Rheland passed over the invitation.

“I've been invited to Weston's wedding.”

“Isn't he your son, or you know, whatever vampires call it when you make someone else a vampire?” Ace asked.

Rheland nodded. “We don't have the best of relationships.”

“Who're you taking as your plus one?” Havyn asked.

Rheland smiled. “I am the king of vampires. I will be taking all five of you.”

“Uh, this mean I have to wear a tux?” Ace groaned.

Rheland looked them all over, imagining all of them in tuxedos. His mouth watered. “Most definitely.”

“Does that turn you on, your grace?” Phexx asked.

Rheland was in front of the werewolf in seconds, his fingers tangled in his jet-black hair. “More than you could imagine.”

“Might have to get more than one suit,” Sevyn muttered.

Rheland smirked. “Should get a few. I plan on ripping them off all of you.”

Sevyn’s face went red. Rheland shivered with the need to shove the werewolf down to his knees and make him whimper for him.

“I want to go!” Hazel shouted. She came running their way with the twin boys on her heels.

“Us too, pretty please?” They looked at Lynk and then Rheland.

“The media will be there,” Lynk said.

Rheland took one look at the kids and knew what he wanted.

“It says I can bring my family,” Rheland said.

Hazel jumped up and hugged him. Rheland kissed her on the head as the rest of the kids shouted in excitement. Lynk pulled him close, and Rheland offered his mouth up for a kiss.

This was what he’d been lacking. It took him centuries to know what had been missing in his existence. Maybe others

figured it out sooner. Maybe if Rheland hadn't shut himself off for so many years, he would have found it sooner. However, it wouldn't have been with the people he had now. It was better this way.

Rheland loved his men with every fiber of his being and couldn't wait to spend the remainder of their time together. Besides, what was forever without love?

Author Note

Wow I can't believe I made it to the end of the series. It's both sad and joyous. Rheland finally got his story and of course Lynk got his happy ending with his vampire king. There was so much more to this story than I originally thought and I'm so happy I was able to tell it.

There will be more stories in the blood universe just different series. I hope you enjoyed Rheland's story. If you wouldn't mind leaving a review informing other readers on your honest thoughts about Trading In Blood, I'd greatly appreciate it.

–Brea Alepou



Join the Heart Family

I have a facebook reader group, where we talk about all things that are books. I share early teasers, cover reveals, snippets of WIPs and cat pictures. So come for the books, smexy men, and smexy women but stay for pictures of my cat Bagheera. I'd love for you to join the Heart Family.

Facebook Group: [Brea's Hearts](#)

Blood Series

(Dark Paranormal Romance M/M/M/M+)

[More Than Blood](#) [Audio]

[Holiday Blood](#) (Short)

Spooky Blood (Short)

[Their Blood](#)

[Addicted to His Blood](#)

[Our Blood](#)

Trading in Blood

***Standalone** (In the same universe)*

[Bloody Wishes](#)

About the Author

Keep updated on what Brea Alepou is working on, Subscribe to her [Newsletter](#).

Brea Alepou realized her dream was to write and tell stories after spending five years in college getting a degree. She has since been writing and letting her imagination free. She thought she would only write contemporary at first but soon found her love for making worlds. So now she rights it all. With her wild imagination, expect lots of different stories, from fairies ruling, to vampires killing everyone, to the sweet loving between two men, passion between two fierce women, or the love of multiple partners. She believes that everyone deserves love even if not all of her characters get it right away. Love is passionate, hot, needy, confusing, painful, draining, fulfilling, and all-consuming.

M/M & F/F Romance: Paranormal, Contemporary, Dark, Fantasy, Shifter Mpreg, Shifter Fpreg, & Harem

There will be a book for everyone.

Insanity is Contagious. [Brea Alepou](#)

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