



3 - 28 Freak Out

"Are you okay?" Misty said, looking at a freaked-out Thea.

"I need to—" Thea said, trailing off. She fumbled getting her phone out of her pocket, and her shaking hands dropped it. Before it could shatter on the floor, Xavier caught it mid-air.

"Let me, Luna," Xavier said. "You need to do what?"

"Lizzy. I need to tell Lizzy."

Xavier opened her phone—he had seen her unlock it enough to know the password—and texted Lizzy to meet them. A few moments later, Lizzy joined them.

"What's up?" Lizzy said. "Woah, Xavier's out of his cage. Any murderous bloodlustery yet?" 3

"Not yet," Xavier said wryly.

Lizzy focused on Thea. "You don't look good," Lizzy said.

"I'm," Thea said. "I'm—"

"We're pregnant," Alaric said.

Lizzy's face lit up. She jumped up and down and hugged Thea.

"Careful. We need to be gentle with her," Conri said.

"Right," Lizzy said. She let go of her. "Congratulations! This means I need to get you a whole new wardrobe. Maternity clothes! It's going to go so fast. A nursery, crib, baby

clothes! Oh, my head is spinning.”

“Times it by four,” Thea said.

“What do you mean?” Lizzy said.

“There are four pups.”

Lizzy’s eyes went big. “That explains the deer in the headlights look. Okay, don’t worry about anything, Luna. I will take care of the details. You just take care of you.”

Thea hugged Lizzy.

“How am I supposed to beat the odds with four?” Thea whispered. “You know the stats on multiple births. I don’t want to disappoint the triplets.”

Lizzy looked at the triplets. They shook their heads.

“It’s not coming from us,” Kai said to Lizzy in mind link.

“It’s her self-doubt showing its shadow side,” Alaric added in mind link.

“Boo,” Lizzy said out loud, not quite sure what to say. She could tell Thea was crying.

Xavier put his hand on Thea’s back.

“Even if the pups don’t get enough resources,” Xavier said softly. “You can feel if something is wrong with them and fix them—like you felt something was wrong with me and fixed it. You can feel them the whole time they’re growing inside you, and you can help them grow and boost them if they need it. You can make sure they’re perfect. There are no odds to beat here. You will make sure they’re perfect

because that's what you do. The moon goddess gave you this gift. Use it. Your gift for Life is probably why you're pregnant with four pups. You're made for this." 7

Xavier being the person to comfort and talk sense into Thea when he was incapable of empathy only weeks ago was proof that Thea could make sure her pups grew perfectly. 1

Thea let go of Lizzy and turned, wiping her eyes. She nodded.

"You're right," Thea said. "Thank you." She reached for her mates, and they hugged her, whispering sweet nothings to her. After a moment, she released them. "I'm okay. Freakout is over. You can tell your dad he can make the announcement tonight." They let her go but took their places around her. "Zay, do you feel like you can be out of the dungeon and follow me around all the time? Are you comfortable with that?"

"If it will help you, yes."

Thea nodded. "Thank you. Goddess, I don't know why having a vampire near me calms me."

"A vampire with super-strength, nothing else to do, and complete devotion to the woman who fixed him and gave him a new chance at life," Conri said. "It calms me too."

"Are you okay to start immediately, Zay?" Alaric said. 1

"Yes, Alpha," Xavier said.

Too focused on Thea, no one knew the other people Xavier had hurt were standing around the corner. They didn't mean

to eavesdrop. They knew they shouldn't interrupt, so they waited until the group left.

"That was Xavier Knight," one girl said.

"I can't believe it's the same person," another said.

"I believed Luna Thea and Alessia when they explained it, but hearing him just now—there's no doubt." 2

Alpha Ulric ordered a special dinner that night. He made the announcement, and the pack howled in celebration.

The refugees Xavier had hurt came up to him and told him they forgave him. He didn't know what to say, but the shock and humility in his face were more than enough.

They prepared a room for Xavier next to Thea's. He could sense her through walls and be in her room to help in seconds.

"Safety-wise, there's no difference between the dungeon and any other room at this point," Thea said. "Xavier is strong enough to break through the cell bars whenever he feels like it. If he's close to us, I can stop him from doing anything if he suddenly gets hungry. Though, I doubt that will happen."

"I feel confident that Xavier is not a threat to anyone in the pack," Alaric said.

"I didn't expect this, but I trust him," Kai said.

"Me too," Conri said. "I actually kind of like the guy."