



SIENNA

Everyone was staring as if they, too, were paralyzed by the fact that I was having a full-blown meltdown on live television.

My chest was heaving, and tears were streaming down my face.

“Okay. We’re done here. Enough is enough,” Erica finally said. She tried to come forward, but a cameraman blocked her.

“Hey!” she cried.



“We’re still filming,” Monica said, blocking the exit.

This was a nightmare, and I didn’t know what to do.

If I tried to make a break for it, the cameras would follow me.

“I’m sorry,” I said to Carlene, who was looking at me as if worried I might attack.

“Sienna,” Erica said, ignoring the cameras and taking a step toward me. “It’s okay. Just try to take a deep breath.”



“This is *unbelievable*,” Charlotte Norwood said waspishly. One of the cameras swung over to focus on her. “You are shaming the entire ECP with this horrendous display!”

My whole body started to shake.

I thought my knees would give out, but then my shoulder muscles seized.

The cream-colored sweater I was wearing began to stretch, splitting along the seams.

My body twisted and contorted, but in my mind I felt at peace.

Fiery red fur sprouted all over my body.



My wolf took over, and I didn't resist for an instant.

I tore out of the room, knocking Monica to one side.

She shouted for the cameras to follow me, but I was too quick.

I tore out of the hospital as fast as my paws would take me.

AIDEN



Konstantin looked the same as always in an expensively cut suit, well-groomed hair, and shoes polished to a mirror shine.

A grin spread across his face as he looked at Sayyid and me.

“As much as I’d love to stay and make small talk...” His voice was low and oily, just like I remembered.

Dark shadows crept like tendrils from the corners of his body, twisting around him. “Till next time, Alpha Norwood.”

But I was quicker. Before he could vanish into black smoke, I shifted and I sprang forward, landing on four black paws.



Sayyid followed suit. His wolf was a pale gray, smaller than my own.

Together we stalked toward the vampyre.

Konstantin pulled an object from inside his suit jacket.

I barely had time to register that it was a small handgun, but Sayyid did.

He leapt in front of me.



BANG!

The gun went off. Sayyid crumpled to the ground, a bullet hole in the center of his wolf's head.

I didn't have time to look back. I just reacted, launching myself at Konstantin.

My jaws snapped down on the vampyre's arm, and the gun went skittering down the hallway.

My fangs tore through wool into flesh.

I released the arm and went for his side.



Konstantin was too strong—he threw me off of him, but I'd managed to tear a chunk out of his torso. Black smoke oozed from the wound.

From his other pocket, he withdrew a shining dagger.

He slashed at me, and I dodged, the blade passing so close and so fast that I could feel it stirring the fur on my cheek.

I hurled myself at Konstantin again, and he plunged the blade into my ribcage.

As we rolled, I yelped but didn't let up, mauling his face with my razor-sharp teeth.



He yanked the knife free, and I felt hot blood pour from the wound.

From somewhere close by, I heard shouting.

Sayyid's backup had finally arrived.

But far too late.



I charged Konstantin again, knocking aside the knife.

With one swift motion, I tore out the vampyre's throat.

He fell to his knees, and then collapsed face-first onto the hotel carpet.

For a moment, everything was quiet.

I shifted back to a human, and crouched on one knee.

Crimson blood poured from the wound in my side, and black blood gushed from Konstantin's ruined neck.

His mouth opened and closed, but no sound came out.

A few feet away, Sayyid's gray wolf lay dead.



Then Josh burst into the corridor, the door banging loudly against the wall.

He stared around wildly, taking in the scene.

Sayyid hadn't called Josh.



Where's the backup?

"How are you here?" I asked, dazed.

"What the fuck happened?" he demanded, ignoring my question.

There was a sharp pain in my ribs where Konstantin had stabbed me, but I could already feel the torn tissue knitting itself back together.

I looked down at Sayyid's body, then at Konstantin's.

"They're dead." I couldn't think of anything else to say.

Konstantin was dead, at least.

But so was a good man. A good wolf.

What should have been a victory felt hollow.

I looked back at Josh, who was seething.

How had my Beta known to come?

Right now, watching the blood pool around Sayyid's corpse, I didn't even care.



I was just glad I wasn't alone.

I have to tell everyone. I have to tell Sienna.

At least my mate might sleep better at night knowing that the vampyre who had caused her so much pain was finally dead.

I reached for my phone in the pocket of my shredded coat.

But I already had a text waiting for me.

Erica
Aiden it's Erica

I frowned at the phone. Erica was Sienna's friend. She never texted me.

My heart started racing.

Aiden
what's wrong



Erica

It's Sienna

Erica

She was doing a livestreaming thing for the show and...



Erica

they pushed her too far, aiden

Erica

that cunt of a reporter. And michelle

Erica

Sienna tried...but...

Aiden

erica. get to the point please. I'm worried.

Erica

she shifted and ran off

Aiden

she shifted?

Erica

yeah which is good I guess

Erica

but i dont know where she is

Erica

and she left her phone behind when she shifted

Aiden

ok. Thank you for telling me



Aiden

I'll find her.

Fresh guilt washed over me.

One of my most loyal wolves was dead.

And now my mate was crumbling, and I had barely noticed she was suffering.

I'd left her alone.

You did what you had to do. Konstantin is dead.

Everything will be better now.

Tell that to Sayyid.

I winced.

Scooping my torn clothes off the floor, I turned to Josh. "Can you take charge? Something happened with Sienna."



I saw my Beta clench his teeth, but he nodded. “Of course.”

Leaving the hotel, I shifted back into my wolf.

Jocelyn had warned me. Sienna herself had told me she wasn’t doing well.

The question about her fertility had hit her hard—clearly much harder than I had known.

I had an idea of where my mate might go when she was distraught.

I took off at a run.

JOSH



There he goes, the mighty leader of the East Coast Pack.

The most pussy-whipped Alpha to ever live.

But in a way, Sienna had done me a favor. Whatever drama she was going through this time had distracted Aiden.

He didn’t ask how I had just happened to turn up at the hotel. And if he asked later, I could say I’d heard about it when he’d called for backup.

Because they were arriving now to clean up his mess.

Konstantin's corpse was unmoving.

Is that really it?

*All the searching, the hunting, the uncertainty—
finished with one rip of the Alpha's jaws?*

I couldn't believe it.

Sayyid's body lay in a puddle of blood.

This was Aiden's fault. He should have involved me from the beginning.

Then maybe no one else would have died.

The gunshot wound puzzled me.

Since when do powerful vampyres use guns?

I shook my head, a vein pulsing in my temple.

Something didn't feel right.

Rubbing the skin under my eyes, I crouched down beside the body of the vampyre as it leaked its black blood.



I used a pen to poke at the wound in his throat, but there was no denying it: Konstantin was dead.

It should have been me here.

I should have been the one to kill him!

For Michelle.

A surge of rage coursed through me, and I shoved his dead shoulder.

A key with a little golden tag on it fell from his pocket: number four.

I picked up the key and stood.



When I became Beta, I'd learned investigative procedures and law enforcement protocols.

Maybe it was that which propelled me to use the key and enter Konstantin's hotel room.

What had he been doing here in the Triple Creek Hotel?

Had he returned to Mahiganote to finish what he'd started?

To kill my mate after failing the first time? All in



the name of getting to precious Sienna Mercer?

There was nothing unusual about the room.

The bed was made.

The closet was empty.

There was no suitcase.

Had Konstantin actually stayed in this room?

There was a regular toothbrush lying on the bathroom sink next to a new tube of toothpaste.

This is all too absurd.



How did it come to this?

Well, at least he was dead.

That should have come as a comfort, but my heart clenched with bitterness.

It should have been me, I thought again.

Shaking my head, I went back into the bedroom.

Without much expectation of finding anything, I began pulling drawers

Had it been left by the occupant before Konstantin?



Had he hurt the man it belonged to?

I went to the front desk and plunked the wallet down in front of the old lady there.

She had a wide-eyed look to her that told me she'd been very much aware of the fighting that had just occurred in her hotel.

I opened the wallet and showed her the ID and the photo of the guy with his family.

“Do you recognize this man?”

She blinked at the items, then looked at me before her face became unfocused.

“I think I *have* seen him before,” she said. “But I can’t place him.”

“I believe his name is Ernesto Ruis. Have any guests checked in under that name?”

She made a face and typed.

“Oh,” she said. “Why, yes, he has. But...” She went quiet.



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I leaned in, and she turned the screen so I could see it.

“Ernesto Ruis is the name of the person in room four right now,” she said.

She grimaced and met my eyes. “But it was a Mr. Konstantin, wasn’t it?”

Rubbing a hand over my mouth, I scooped up the wallet to take with me.

I didn’t know for sure what this meant.

Nothing about it made any sense.

The man out there in the courtyard looked like the vampyre Konstantin.

But deep down, instinct told me that all was not as it seemed.

Aiden might think Konstantin had been eliminated, but I wasn’t so sure.

I decided to get to the bottom of this mystery.

To make sure that my mate would be safe from the threat of the vampyre.

Once and for all





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Next Chapter

