

FIVE MILES

Henry

The next morning, after I'd thoroughly briefed Orin and Mr. Fredrick on what would be needed with training, Aires, the kids, and I shared a big family breakfast before we dropped them off at the packhouse and headed for the airport.

Aires decided that she didn't want to shimmer anywhere unless she absolutely had to, and I didn't want her starting a hunt crazed by bloodlust, so I happily purchased our plane tickets.

"So, tell me again how this works. Tyson found Wesley in South Africa eighteen years ago; how will going there now help us find out where he is currently?" I asked.

"We have to start somewhere, Mi Amor. We go to Johannesburg, sniff out members of the vampire community, and see if we can find anyone who remembers him. They might know where he went when he left, and if they do, we hop on the next plane and head there. Then we do it all over again until we find him," she explained.

"That sounds exhausting. And expensive," I said as I took my seat on the plane.

"I told you I could pay for this. I understand all the money that goes into an effective hunt. And it was my decision not to shimmer; you shouldn't have to foot the bill."

"And I told you no. I'm not a millionaire like my gorgeous future wife, but I've got plenty, and I have no problem spending some of it on this. Whatever you need, it's my job to make sure you have it," I replied.

"All I need right now is a nap. I barely slept last night, and this flight is almost twenty-two hours. I won't be able to do anything when we land if I don't take care of myself now," Aires said with a yawn.

We prepared for takeoff, and as soon as we were given the all-clear, Aires lowered her seat back and was quickly in a deep sleep. Watching her be able to fully stretch out to get the best rest possible made springing for the business class over economy tickets, well worth it. When it was all said and done, I knew that this trip would take a toll on her, and I refused to let a bargain flight take any role in that.

So, once I was sure that Aires was comfortable and had enough blankets and pillows, I lowered my seat as well, wrapped my hand around hers, and shut my eyes. I could use a few hours down; besides, anything would be better than sitting still for almost an entire day when I was used to always being on the move. This was going to be torture.

*** Six Hours Later***

"We've got to almost be there by now. We've been in this box for two f****g days," I complained.

"Two days? Really? What's the longest flight you've ever been on?" Aires asked.

"An hour, maybe two. Why?"

"That explains a lot. We're a fourth of the way, sixteen hours left to go."

"Sixteen?! What is going on here? It's 2021; why does it still take sixteen hours to get from one side of the globe to the other? How f****g slow is the pilot going? I'm going to go ask," I said. I threw my blanket back, but before I could stand, Aires laughed and grabbed my wrist.

"You will not! The pilots are busy keeping all of us alive; they don't have time for your foolishness."

"Foolishness? Really, Sunower? I'm going crazy in here, my toes are tingling, and my back hurts from so much sitting. My body can't handle sixteen more hours of this."

"Well, I promise I'll shimmer us home when it's all over, but for now, we just have to wait. Do you want to play a game?"

Aires smiled at me, and when she did, I saw the light gleam off her razor-sharp canine. Since I was pretty confident that she wasn't about to kill me, I knew that this game was going to be hot. And then.

"What kind of game? Monopoly? I didn't bring the board."

"Not monopoly, Mi Amor. This game requires a lot less strategizing. And little, to no, clothes."

I looked around the plane, and it appeared that everyone was asleep. The flight crew had long ago turned down the cabin lights to allow everyone to rest, so I wasn't too worried about being caught. But even if we were, nothing was ever better than the feeling of being inside Aires, and anything was better than sitting here slowly dying.

I reached down in response to her statement and began to unfasten my pants as Aires skillfully shimmied out of her skin-tight jeans and panties.

"You seem like you've done this before. Have anything you want to tell me?" I joked.

"We'll save storytime for the next flight. Right now, we need to be as quiet as possible," she whispered.

I heard another passenger snore in the section in front of us, and it was then that I realized how risky this was. But when Aires stood up, then lowered herself down on me, I no longer cared.

The feeling of her tightly wrapped around my member along with the excitement of the moment allowed a deep moan to escape me, which Aires quickly stilled with a kiss.

"Shh! Silencio Mi Amor; if we get caught, I'm blaming it on you." Aires began to ride up and down, excruciatingly slowly, and drive me wild. My fingers had a firm grip on her waist as I guided her body; all I wanted was for her to go faster, but all she wanted was to tease me. And she did. My woman knew that there was no way that I would be as aggressive as I usually was when we were intimate, not with a plane full of sleeping strangers around, so she took full advantage of the experience to completely break me down.

*** Twelve Hours Since Takeoff ***

"I think we need more wine. This stuff is not strong enough."

"This is human-grade; you can't expect us to get a buzz from it," I replied, looking down into the small glass of Chardonnay.

"They have to know that there are more than just humans who fly. The airlines need a secret supernatural menu, for times like these."

"We can put that in the suggestion box once we land, beautiful. How's the steak?" I asked, reaching over and snagging a piece she'd just cut for herself.

"The ones you make back at home are better, but it's decent and will do the trick until we land, and I can get something not prepared in a microwave."

We had ten hours left; I was so thankful that we were more than halfway there. We were closer to the destination than our starting point, so for me, that was a win.

Aires and I had slept, had sex multiple times, slept again, read, watched movies, and ate. What else was there for us to do at this point? I wasn't sure I would make it with my sanity intact, but I was going to try.

"Will you tell me about your childhood, Sunower. I always knew it wasn't perfect because you never wanted to discuss it, but I'd love to know how things were for you. Please?" I asked.

"It's easier to talk about my time moving with hitmen and staking vampires than it is to talk about not knowing where my next meal was coming from."

Mama worked so hard, but she never quite had enough money. So if the rent was paid, the water probably wasn't. Or the gas or electric. If all the bills were paid and the rent, there was nothing to eat. And whenever we did have food, she always made me eat first; until I was full. As a child, I never understood why, but I'd stuff myself until my belly was close to popping. Then I'd go to sleep while Mama would stay up trying to ease her hunger with the scraps I'd left her and wondering how she could do it all over again the next day.

But she was a good mother, and even if I didn't have everything I wanted, I had love, and I knew it. Every night Mama would sing to me as she tucked me into bed and tell me about how I was meant to do great things, how I was her greatest blessing. And that stuck with me.

So, I made up my mind as a small child that I would one day take care of her the way she took care of me. But I wanted to be sure that Mama never has to struggle or wonder ever again. And I accomplished just that.

When I was tired or sore or just defeated and wanted to give up, I never did because she never did. Mama never quit because she knew I depended on her, so I made sure to keep that same energy when it was my turn.

So, my childhood was hard. And it was tough, but I wouldn't change it. It made me the woman I am, and it taught me about strength. And that could never be seen as a bad thing in my eyes."

"Your mom sounds amazing, and now I see where you get it from. Bella and Isaiah are lucky to have you," I kissed Aires' cheek and said.

This was the first time she'd really opened up about that part of her life, even after all the time we'd been together. I knew that Aires trusted me, there was never a question of that in my mind, but it always nagged at me that there was a piece of her she kept closed off and tucked away.

"I'm lucky to have them; just like Mama said: a child is your greatest blessing. They are a gift from God and should be treated as such. I've always believed that and knew that if I were ever fortunate enough to become a mother, I'd raise my babies with the same love my mother gave me."

"You know, the struggles that you and your mom faced are what built the foundation for everything you accomplished. If things would have been different, and you would have chosen a different path in life, it might have been years until we finally found each other, if ever. It's because of the decision your father made that we're where we are today. Literally and figuratively. Don't forget that once we step off this plane, Wesley may have abandoned you, but in the end, all he did was do you a favor. He did both of us a favor."

"I feel like you're still trying to talk me out of snuggling Wesley out, but it's not going to work, Mi Amor. It's not," Aires repeated as she looked out the small airplane window. At that moment, I knew that there was still hope. I didn't want Aires to hold on to the knowledge that she's killed her father; no one needed to have that burden on their heart. So I set out to find a way to make her see that even though he might have made some dumb decisions in his life, maybe he wasn't all bad. As I drained the last sip of my wine, I prayed that my future father-in-law had some redeeming qualities, or I might just kill him myself.