Chapter 62 Winter Carnival

They looked peaceful as I left, and I covered them in a blanket. I paused in putting on my shoes to check my harvest from the two women and the small gain from Justine in the limo. 47/150. Pandora was there staring at the banner when I checked. She looked at me and didn’t say anything. “So, 45 life essence for about two hours of sex. Well, the limo was from Justine and Mary…I guessed maybe nine from that and thirty-seven from this session,” I voiced my guess.

Pandora responded, “Ten from the limo and thirty-six from the bedroom.” I nodded and smiled. She was an excellent investment.

“If I added a bunch of martial arts books. Do you think you can teach me to fight? I am learning with Kiri, but I could learn faster in here,” I asked Pandora, my mental construct.

Pandora considered, “Yes, it should be possible. You should get a large variety of books on the subject imported in here before we start. That way, I can sort out the best fighting methodology.” I nodded and planned to hit the library and some bookstores.

I returned to the real world and got to my car. It was 3:07 am, and I had a few hours before I needed to pick up Mandy and go to the toy drive Sunday. I parked at Keystone Point near James and Mandy’s house and checked my phones. I sent Rob a text asking how the dance went for him, and he replied a few seconds later with a smiling emoji. Good for Rob!

Iris hadn’t gone to the junior dance, so I didn’t want to go to her house and rub it in. Maybe I could make it up to her on our trip to New York on the 19th.

A text from Mary popped up asking where I was. I responded by saying I needed to get some things for the winter carnival at home. I wasn’t done with Mary and Rose. We still had a number of weight training sessions left.

I drove over to Mandy’s house at 6:45 am. I had told James I would pick her up at 7:00 am. I had only been parked for 5 minutes when she came out. Mandy had a large tray. I got out and opened the door, and Mandy said, “You are an evil little boy for convincing Abigail to quit the cheer squad.”

I was a little off balance by the comment, even though there was not much malice in her words. I noticed the tray was filled with cupcakes. Mandy smirked, “I have two more trays.” She went in the house, and James came out with a tray and then Mandy the 3rd. James gave me a look saying, good luck.

Mandy sat in the passenger seat, and as I drove, I asked cautiously, “So, did Abigail not help bake?”

“She did. She didn’t help decorate the cupcakes or gingerbread men. She went to go find a friend. Someone named Viddah. We were up till midnight finishing everything.” I didn’t care about Mandy’s problems. I checked my phone and no messages about Vida so I assumed everything was fine.

Back on topic, I asked, “You have something for me from Jade.” Mandy’s expression instantly soured again.

She huffed, “I just found out Jade is coming back on the 17th. She is returning earlier than planned. Her standing in the clan has risen. Jade has raised her standing, and Jade now is fourth among all the catkin. All the catkin, Caleb.”

“So that is good?” I asked, somewhat confused.

“She beat a pride alpha Caleb in single combat! She now has the same standing as her mother. Aunt Agatha can not tell her what to do any longer,” she rasped. It sounded like Mandy was jealous of her cousin.

“So why are we here?” I said as I turned down the main road toward the high school.

Mandy was quiet and finally asked, “Do what you did for her to me, Caleb. Please.” She rubbed my thigh suggestively. “Those who rule the catkin control our lives. My husband will be chosen for me. I will be told which college to go to. What job to get after college. How many children to have. Give me the same freedom that you gave Jade.” Her hand was on my inner thigh and giving soft squeezes.

I guessed this might all be a farce by Mandy to get the secret of how I improved Jade’s core. I let Mandy massage my thigh while I drove to the school. She didn’t stop the entire time. When we pulled into the parking lot and parked, I said, “I will ask Jade when I see her again. I have an idea of what might have caused her change, but I need to confirm it with her first, Mandy.”

Jade’s face was clouded with rage briefly before she put on her mask again. “Help me with the cupcakes,” she demanded.

I brought the cupcakes in, and the other cheerleaders were already setting up. The sign said cupcakes $5. That was $5 each! The cheerleaders always raised the most money of any sport, but they ran their bake sales during the entire fall season for the toy drive. This was their final push, and they raised the prices. I dropped my tray and got the 3rd one before locking my car.

The large gym was a fieldhouse the size of a football field. Dozens of teams had booths. Teams selling Christmas trees, decorations, services like house cleaning, baked goods, and the dunk tank, among others. The hockey team was just allowed to print simple coupons for local restaurants as prizes for a successful dunk.

I moved over, and two parents were working on the pair of tanks. I learned one of the heaters was not working. The fieldhouse had air conditioning but not heating. It was maybe 40 degrees in here. Of course, the gymnastics team would get the dunk tank with the working heater. One of the parents was trying to figure out the worst-case scenario. They could keep adding boiling water to ours to keep the water a little warm. I just settled in a chair as I was early. We had a wooden donation box. I looked around, got my wallet, and dropped $1500 into in when no one was paying attention.

The gymnastics team arrived as a group. James came with a large Staples sign showing who was in our drunk booth when and put it up. “So James, if I have to be here all day, what do I do when I am not in the tank?”

“Wander around and scare up customers. We want to raise at least $2,500 this year.” I looked over at the gymnastics team, 14 women and 3 guys. They had white leotards under their warmups. No shame. I pulled out my own white spandex that James got for me and pulled off the tag.

“I’m going to change,” I told James going into the men’s locker room. I came back out wearing the spandex and shorts over it. I had no top on, showing off my chiseled physique. I looked at the gymnastics squad and smiled. I have no shame, either.

Even though the winter carnival didn’t open for another hour, I started yelling that our dunk tank was open. Besides the sports teams, there were dozens of regular vendors setting up tables. I was getting a head start. My first customer was a middle-aged woman who was selling homemade jams and raw honey. No wedding ring and when I took off my shorts to reveal my white spandex with my cock outlined clearly, her eyes got hungry. I climbed up to the drunk tank and stood instead of sitting so I could be on full display.

She paid and missed with every throw but quickly paid again as I announced our dunk tank was open and that I was waiting. Her next ball dunked me, and into the water, I went to cheers. I reset and recovered quickly back on the platform, dripping wet. I challenged anyone to do that again, and a line of mostly women was forming. I knew my penis bulge was clear as day, and maybe the spandex was slightly see-through. I didn’t care. The gymnastics team was going to pull the same stunt and this was kind of fun.

I lightly insulted the throwers when they missed and recovered exceptionally fast when I did go in. I looked at James and pointed, “$10 if you want to cut in line,” I yelled, and the line of eight or nine shifted slightly. “It is for the kids! Every penny you donate will get presents for a family who can not afford it this Christmas!” That broke the ice. I could see the gymnastics team scrambling to set up. Those that were not stealing glances at me, at least.

Even as the Winter Festival opened and my teammates arrived, I waved them off and remained. I bravely said I would remain in the tank until everyone in line who wanted a shot at me had their chance.

I was a bit of a spectacle, yelling loud enough for everyone in the fieldhouse to hear me. The entire day the line never got shorter than six people. The vice-principle, Mr. Callahan was concerned by my brazen display of cock by I saw James talking to him and pointing out the gymnastics team, who had their nipples showing when they were dunked. At 1:00 I announced only six more people would have the opportunity to dunk me, and if someone wanted to cut in line, they could pay for the honor. I think eight more people got a chance, and James was beaming at the haul. I finally left my position after over five hours of being dropped. I heard the next hockey player get dunked, and he swore and climbed out, and ran into the locker room. The water was freezing cold. I hadn’t noticed, and the parents who set up the tanks probably thought it was fixed because I had not complained once.

I patted James on the back and said it was his show. I was going to leave. I had done more than my share. He nodded, and I went into the locker room.

When I exited and was changed, I walked behind the gymnastics dunk tank and their tent. They were talking about me.

“I can’t believe they let him stay up there. It was basically see-through!”

“Hey, you liked the show and kept going back to watch.”

“I saw you using the zoom on your camera.”

“I wonder if it gets bigger.”

“It was fun to look at, but there is no way that would fit!”

“It would be fun to try.”

I stepped around the corner to see four women on the gymnastics team sitting in a small circle. All their hair was wet, so they took their turns in the tank. They froze on seeing me, worried about what I might have heard. Our gymnastics team was one of the best in the state. Most of the team lived in the dorms on campus and were here on some sort of scholarship. The coach was a former Olympian and had a lot of leeway in recruiting.

“Hi, ladies,” I started as I walked past their woman’s circle. I needed to say something cool. “I thought gymnastics women were pretty flexible and could handle anything.” Damn it! Not what I wanted. I kept walking but heard giggles behind me. I didn’t turn around, too embarrassed at what I had said. I had almost escaped when one of the young woman yelled.

“Hey, Caleb!” I turned and saw a red-faced girl come up to me. She seemed to have lost her boldness and stumbled over her words, “Do you…you should…we have a meet on Wednesday. You should come and watch us.” She was 5’6”, tall for a gymnast. I had no clue who she was as they swam in very different pools than me. They practiced every morning before school and after school as well. They didn’t even belong to the jock clique. They just used their skills to get scholarships to college. Most had aspirations of the national team at one point from the school rumors.

“Is the meet here?” I asked.

His face lost some of its red color, “No, it is in our gym on the south side of campus by the residential dorms. You need to get there early as we only have 700 seats.” One of the guys on the gymnastics team had come to investigate.

“If I can make it, I will check it out. What time?” I asked, giving the guy a sidelong glance.

She slapped her head in embarrassment, “Seven, but get here at six so you don’t have to stand on the walkway.” She was smiling a bright smile, and her medium-tone brown, still wet, bobbed with her body.

“And your name is?” I asked, ready to leave.

She slapped her head again and turned red, “Traci. Traci Brewer, I am the team captain this year. I will compete in the all the events except the floor. My knee is a little wanky at the moment.” Her dark blue eyes looked at me with excitement.

“Nice to meet you, Traci,” I said and shook her offered hand. I was actually curious if I could learn gymnastics by watching the event, so I planned to attend as long as nothing came up.

I left the fieldhouse with a number of people recognizing me from the dunk tank. I smiled and waved, unabashed at showing off my manhood. I owned my inner incubus, and maybe I had just fostered some more potential life essence partners.

I drove to Iris’ house and found Vida practicing her magic in the sideyard. Her ice shard was able to penetrate about an inch into the tree before shattering. I walked over to her. “Hey, Vida. How is everything going?” When I was close enough, I felt out the charm thread and reinforced it when our eyes met. It was still intact, and I didn’t sense any degradation, but I wanted to be safe.

“Caleb!” She smiled and moved to hug me, taking me off guard at the show of affection. “Are you here to wrestle Kiri? I am getting close to beating her. Then we can wrestle.”

I pulled her off me and asked, “How is the magic training going?”

“Great! My ice shard is getting stronger, and Abs cast light for the first time yesterday!” Vida said excitedly.

That triggered something, “Did you wander off again looking for pizza?” I remember Abigail had bailed on baking with the cheerleaders.

Vida looked at the ground, “I was in the backyard practicing my spell. I just didn’t tell anyone I went outside.” I nodded, glad the mystery was solved.

“And why are you calling Abigail, Abs?” I inquired.

“That is what you call her?” She was puzzled. “She seemed to like hearing me use the name too. Should I not call her that?”

“No, it is fine. Is everyone home? I wanted to get the documents for Rob’s family and see if there was any trouble with selling the crystal.” I said while walking with Vida to the house.

Eilina and Abigail were in the library studying magic texts. Bedelia was their teacher. “Was is Vida not in here as well?” I asked with some concern in my voice.

Bedelia rolled her eyes at me, “We just got the texts in the elvish language for Eilina at the Bazaar. Vida is still working on learning English. The orcish language is just twenty-three symbols, and they pass knowledge on through a master-apprentice relationship. They don’t have textbooks. Once she learns English, then we can teach her.”

Abigail added, “Vida does not like to study. I can only get her focused for maybe an hour each night.” I looked over at the young orc woman. She looked down again. Should I do the same thing I did to Molly and encourage her with the charm bond? Vida needed to learn English if she was going to make it on Earth.

“Vida.” She looked up and made eye contact. “I want you to practice learning English with Abigail when she asks you for however long she asks,” I felt the weave take hold. That was the best way to describe it. It was like the aether was working on her brain to encourage the suggestion. It wasn’t forcing her…just adding satisfaction and pleasure when she complied.

This also gave me a lot of insight into how more powerful beings resisted such effects. The aether manipulation that I was fruitlessly practicing was not as pointless as I thought. If I could identify foreign aether being directed at me, then I could block it. I was standing there for a good five minutes frozen as I reached my epiphany, and Bedelia started to get worried and shook me.

“I’m fine. Just figured a few things out. Do you have the papers for Rob and his family?” I sat down still going over my new understanding of aether magic. Soon an envelope was placed in front of me. I opened it and went through it. Camila Flores now had dual citenzship. Passports and documents were all there. Rob was now listed as being born in the United States, and all his papers were there. Sophia had the same as Rob. I transferred $18,000 to Bedelia for the paperwork. It cost a little more because they had to do some research on their end.

Iris was upstairs sleeping, and Kiri was out grocery shopping. Abigail wanted to head upstairs, but I told her to study instead. She showed me her light spell, a bright light on her fingertip was the start of her magic. The next step was to be able to place the light. I told her when she achieved that, I would give her a reward.

I left with the papers, excited to get them to Rob. I went to their house, and Rob’s mother couldn’t believe they were real. An actual passport? A driver’s license? She had been too afraid to apply or even learn how to drive. Rob and Sophia were skeptical. They were not as naïve as their mother and knew the grind of government didn’t happen this quickly. I sensed an argument brewing with my best friend, so I left the house and let them puzzle over the documents.

Tomorrow was my two exams at the community college, so I went home to review the material. I didn’t need to. I could just hop into my mind space and ask Pandora if I got stuck, but it was therapeutic reviewing the material in the real world. Like I still had a grip on being human.