Chapter 104

Tuesday’s hockey practice had us working on some new offensive plays and changing our defense to focus on a double zone.  This was very tiring as it required the puck carrier to be attacked constantly and players to rotate in the triangle defense in front of the net.  Our next game was Wednesday night.  The school day was interesting, as in the third period, I was requested to meet with Ms. Henderson, my guidance counselor.

She was a dwarf demi and a nice woman.  Paige had been one of her favorite advisees when she attended the school.  Her treatment of Paige had bled over to me even though I had not been that great of a student until recently.

“Caleb,” she smiled as I entered her office.  “Please sit.  We are trying to clear some things up.”  She pulled some papers and started talking again, “Several students have registered for a large number of AP exams.  You are one of them.  So what are your intentions?”

I thought this was a little unusual.  I went with the truth, “I heard if you got a five on an AP test, you would get academic credit for the class.  So if I take enough tests and get fives, I can skip my senior year.”

Ms. Henderson seemed to think.  She picked up another paper, “Your teachers say you are distracted in class and page through unrelated books.  They also say they can not stump you with questions on the text in class.”  The dwarf woman in my sight sucked her teeth, thinking, “Are you bored, Caleb?”

Was this some type of trap?  I was a late bloomer in my academic prowess, for sure.  I cautiously stated, “A bit.  I have found I just remember everything I read.  So I have been voracious in my reading.”

A smile and smirk appeared on her face, “Ok, Caleb.  We can test that.”  She put four books on the desk.  One was one of my textbooks from class, and the other three were books I had scanned into my mind space in class.  “I will open to random pages in all of these books.  If you can recall the first paragraph word for word, then we can find a way to alleviate your boredom.”

I decided to play her game, and forty minutes later, Ms. Henderson was sitting back in her chair in deep thought.  She finally said, “Ok, Caleb, I have some leeway here.  I would prefer if you did not take the AP exam route to graduate.  It does not make the high school look good.  Instead, I can offer you the opportunity to take final exams in our offered courses.  Say one a week?  You can spend your entire day in the library preparing.  How does that sound?”

“Did you offer this option to the others taking multiple AP exams?”  I asked, leaning forward.

“No, those three did not pass my test for eidetic memory,” Ms. Henderson stated.

I asked,  “Who is the third?  Eilina Faerian and Vida Rorqual and…”  I leaned forward.

“Abigail Hudson,” she replied.  “All friends of yours?”  I nodded.  Why did Abigail want to take the AP exams?  She was already a senior.

I spent the next hour with Ms. Henderson.  My parents would be informed, and starting on Monday, I would start my accelerated, self-taught classes.  Basically, I would be allowed to stay in the library all day and read all the books I wanted, and then on Friday morning, I would take a final exam prepared by the teacher of the subject.  If I scored over 90%, I would be given credit for the subject.  I could even leave school early on Friday after the exam.  It was an ideal scenario—thirteen weeks, thirteen tests, and I would be able to graduate this year.  Like the other seniors, I would even start summer break on May 7th instead of June 2nd with the underclassman.

At lunch, I learned why Abigail was taking the AP exams.  She wanted to have the results on her resume when she applied to medical school.  Vida was upset that she hadn’t passed Ms. Henderson’s test.  She still had a tract to graduate early but would need to take summer classes.  Eilina explained that the school policy had changed.  You could only test out and get credit for a maximum of four classes with AP exam results now.  Vida tried to argue they couldn’t change their own rules in one day like that, it was not fair.

Although I agreed with her, I remained silent.  The school wanted to make sure they were responsible for educating me so that if I did anything exceptional in the future, they could point out that I graduated from their private high school.

I left the study hall early and went to the cabin.  Artica and Lezerath were sitting on the winter wolf pelt, Indian style, and meditating.  Artica opened one eye and greeted me, “I am getting a head start.  We are trying to establish my mind space.”

Lezerath stood in a fluid motion, and I decided to keep my abyssal sight off.  It was going to be hard to focus, looking at her natural form.  “Developing a mind space is the first step on the road to self -enlightenment.  A mind space is also key to being able to defend yourself from mental attacks of creatures like the aboleth.”

“I already have a mind space,” I revealed.

She smiled, “I know, and you can even assimilate real-world items there.  Don’t look shocked.  I can read your aura with my psionic skills.  They do not rely on the aether.  The power of the mind is a lost art for those who have access to aetheric spell weaving.  It is a much harder path.”

“Can you do both?”  I asked.

Lezerath nodded, “I can.  So can others.  Self-discipline and harnessing your mental reserves are required.  Even if I can not teach you psionics in the short time we have, I can at least teach you to recognize its effects.  Then you can fend them off with your aetheric defenses.”

This sounded great to me.  The more defensive magics the better.  “What do you need me to do?”  I sat with them on the comfy pelt.

We started with focus meditation until Iris, Bedelia, Kiri, Eilina, Jade, Carrie, and Vida arrived from school.  Mary had rowing practice after classes, so she couldn’t join us.  Abigail was at track practice.  Bedelia suggested, “Could we start the lessons later so everyone can be here?”

Lezerath considered, “I would advise all of you to forgo your local scholastic education for the interim, but I understand your desire to integrate into your cultural norms.  I do not require sleep, so I can teach you whenever you wish.  As a group, you are quite remarkable for this planet.  You,”  she indicated to Carrie.  “You are more special than you know.  You can see the threads of fate.” She looked at the young woman, “After this aboleth business is done, you may wish to come with me.  I know a teacher who can help you.  Even with your weak core, your ability can be brought to potential by consuming powerful aether crystals.”

Bedelia gave me a self-satisfied look.  She had already told me Carrie was special.  I voiced my opinion, “Carrie, it might not be a bad idea.  Lezerath travels worlds and the layers.  She can show you things and teach you things that you have seen in your visions.”

Carrie shrunk in on herself a bit.  She had been overwhelmed since being made aware of the greater world.  But she was thankful that she was not going insane and that her mother had not been insane either.  But her mother’s visions had driven her to take her own life.  Lezerath rested her hand on Carrie’s shoulder, “You do not need to decide now.  Learn what you can from me in the next weeks.”

Jade asked, “Should we invite Anya?  She has a tier two core as well and can manifest a mind space.  We are going to California this weekend for her figure skating championships.”

Lezerath’s eyebrows rose, “Another female in your court, demon?  Do you not like the company of men?”

“I have male friends…”  I trailed off.  Rob was gone, and my father was going distant.

“I didn’t mean to touch on a sore subject.  Consider it a poor attempt at levity on my part.  Let us continue,” the githerki woman continued.

Mary did arrive with dinner for everyone from Panera, and it was decided that Anya would be invited starting tomorrow.  I did mentally grind my teeth that it had only taken two weeks before my cabin house was known to just about everyone.  The mind defense session lasted until 11 pm. Before I left, Iris corned me in the bathroom for a quick make out and fuck.

Wednesday, I went on a run in the morning with Abigail, 13 miles, at a five-minute pace.  The terrain had been mostly level, though.  She told me she planned to attend the University of Richmond.  It was going to be tough to get into, but it had a good premed track.  She may have to attend community college for a year and transfer, but she was certain she could do it.   It was misting, and our quick session in the woods was almost by two runners.  We both thought it was funnier than anything else.

The hockey game on Wednesday had the two Inquisitors and no Aurora in the stands.  They did not interfere with the game this time, just observed.  I held back, and the game was still a blowout.  6-2 in our favor.  After the game, I returned to the cabin and talked to Bedelia privately after her core-increasing session. She reminded me she offered to reciprocate, but I delayed again for a better time.

“How much progress has your father made in the Aurora situation?”  I asked while cleaning up to join the others already with Lezerath.

She frowned, “Almost none.  There has not been reciprocation from Archbishop Esposito.  Aurora did fly back to Italy on Sunday, though.  Rincewind has more pull than my father, Caleb.  Do you want me to ask him to step in as well?”

“Yes,” I said immediately.  Best not to draw this out and put all the pieces in play.  Maybe the Inquisition was stalling to keep hold of her for more brainwashing.

“You should ask Lezerath to go with Rincewind to confront the Inquisition.  If anyone can break her mental chains, it would be her,”  Bedelia advised.

Why did things get so complicated so fast?  “Ok, I will ask her.  You can call Rincewind.”  Bedelia was giddy as she grabbed her phone.  She obviously still had hero worship for Rincewind.

I asked to talk with Lezerath away from everyone else practicing their meditation.  She was open to traveling to Italy if Rincewind asked her to help.

After we finished Lezerath’s training, Abigail stayed at the cabin on Thursday. She complained our run yesterday morning was not satisfying since we had been interrupted. I didn’t get home till midnight, but my parents did not bother me. I knew the school had informed them about my accelerated courses, but we had not talked about it.

It was not until Friday that Rincewind called Bedelia.  Lezerath was to meet him in Rome on Sunday, and they were to meet with both Archbishop Esposito and High Inquisitor Aurora Esposito.   I paid for first-class tickets for Lezerath to fly out Saturday morning, and Artica would drive her in one of the Bentleys.  At first, I objected to the use of the Bentley, but Artica asked what is the use of having them if they were never going to be driven.

Our group had learned enough to practice our meditation skills as they sought to establish their mind spaces—at least those of them that had tier-two cores.   Anya was also flying out on Friday as the national figure skating championships started in California this weekend.  Jade was going to watch because so was Agatha.  Jade wanted to ensure her mother did not swoop in and try to take Anya.  There was a good chance that Mandy had gotten a read on Anya’s core which I raised to lower tier two, making her a valuable person in catkin society—once she was trained.

The game on Saturday was away, and I was happy not to see the two priests in the stands this time.  We won 5-1, and there were a large number of college scouts in the stands.  I was playing solid games but nothing super-human recently, so seeing the scouts was a bit of a surprise.

James came and sat with me on the bus ride back to our rink.  “Caleb, we have three games left for the year.  If we win out, then we are going to the playoffs.”  He inhaled, “I know you are not giving it your all on the ice.  I know the team is not what it was but have you looked at the articles online?  We are the underdog, and our gutsy play after losing half the team to a scandal is playing out nationally.  Are you with us?”

I was unaware of any of this, but it showed why the scouts had been in the stands in force.  This was probably the most genuine James had ever talked to me.  “I am still playing, and I have not quite on the team.  The credit should go to the coach, though.  He is developing the new players at a phenomenal rate.  I really do not care about getting a Disney movie made from our season James,”  I said with mild irritation.  “What do you want from me?”

James hesitated, “I want to know if we are friends. Are we good?”  He laid it out there, the tension between us on the ice and at school.

I wanted to retort in the negative after everything he had done.  “Then tell me what Agatha is up to.  What has Mandy been doing for her?”  I almost used my charm effect but wanted to hear it from James without cajoling.

James did not say anything for the longest time, and I thought he would not.  He finally started speaking, “Agatha wants Jade to expand her power base in America.  Jade is unwilling, happy to have a small piece of territory.  She has aspirations that Jade will one day lead all the catkin.  I do not know how you tie into all of it, but Mandy has been investigating you.”  James winced, remembering how they had drugged me with aphrodisiacs and I had ravaged Mandy.  I was not fond of the memory either since I had lost control of myself in the act.

“What is Agatha planning for Jade,”  I asked, directly burying the disturbing memory.

James squirmed a little, “I do not know for sure.  But I think she is forcing a confrontation between Jade and another alpha to start.”  He put up his hands, “I do not know if it is true.  That is just what I had inferred from what I overheard.  I think Mandy is going to play a role, but I do not know.  I am free of the catkin politics for the four years I am in college on my hockey scholarship.”

I stewed for a minute, “Fine, James, we are friends.  If you learn anything else, call me immediately.”  I immediately sent Jade a message with Agatha’s plan.  I did not understand catkin politics, but I would try to help Jade if I could.

When I got home, I ate dinner with my parents.  We touched on the accelerated coursework and weekly exams. They thought it was good but told me I did not need to push myself so hard. They also told me Paige was coming home next weekend as her coach gave them Friday through Sunday off.  Damn it, I was going to need to make that decision soon.  Would I give Paige an enhancement?  If I did, she could only take one—did I let her choose?  I drove to the cabin late Saturday, mulling it over, and decided I would give Paige what she wanted.

Only Artica was here, and I was a bit surprised.  “Dropped Lezerath off at the airport. I am the only one here,” she smiled with a calculating appraisal of me. “Hey, Caleb!  Bedelia said my aether core has healed, and you can be more aggressive with me.”  I checked, and her core did look stable and healed.  So it appeared four weeks was how long it took to heal her core. Since she was an adept, she had slightly better healing capabilities, but I did not know if that applied to her aether core.

Artica stripped and transformed into her leopardkin form and dashed away.  “But first, you need to catch me!” she yelled, sprinting past me. She was definitely playing hard to get as she made it outside and started racing up the mountain.  I would have transformed and used my wings if it had been dark. Instead, I raced after her.  The cat girl was faster than me with her enhancements and adept abilities.  My life essence recently passed 200 with late-night sessions with Abigail, Iris, and Bedelia this week.  I had been deciding between Seductive Gaze and Abyssal Speed.  Not wanting to lose to Artica, I selected the speed improvement.

I stumbled as my nerves altered themselves.  I fell hard into the wet leaves and slid a bit as my body failed to respond for a few moments.  Then a grin formed as I regained control.  I continued my pursuit and started to close the gap—a hunter pursuing its prey.  Artica was wide-eyed as I closed on her, and she tried to increase her pace.  The scent of her lust was on the air, though, and I was not going to be denied my prize.

I reached her and grabbed her tail in a playful yank.  She hissed and swung a clawed hand across my chest, cutting my shirt and leaving shallow scratches.  Her eyes went wide in shock at what she had just done.  Her claws were not strong enough to cut deep.  I yanked her tail again as I had not let go, and she mewed in pain and defeat at being caught.

I tackled her to the cold, wet leaves as I pinned her.  Her breathing was labored as she had been going all out. “You know my tail is sensitive!” Her golden eyes gazed at me hatefully, which quickly turned lustful.  I transformed into my larger incubus body as I restrained Artica.  I kept my phallus human-sized as I removed my clothes.  Artica’s sexual heat and smell permeated my senses as I prepared to take her. I dropped my vortex over her core.

Her soft, fluffy catform body had quite struggling as she waited for the inevitable with anticipation. I lowered my hips and lined up with her entrance, which was well-prepared to receive me. She mewed as I penetrated and began a steady rhythm. She was extremely slick and wrapped her legs around me. I released my hands, pinning her arms, and she moved to switch our positions. I resisted for a moment before giving her control.

On top, the catkin rode me with aggressive passion. She grinned, “Your hurt my tail. Now your appendage is going to suffer the same fate.” She clamped down on my shaft and used her body to strain it. It was extremely erotic as she tried to get a reaction from me. She put her clawed hand on my biceps and squeezed, trying to get a reaction. I just smiled. I was in my incubus form, so I slowly increased the size of the shaft she was trying to break.

Artica did not notice for a while as she brought herself to multiple orgasms. She suddenly stopped, realizing what I was doing. I had the be at a good fourteen inches. She gasped, “Bastard. That is not fair!” I was stuck inside her.

I grabbed her whipping, annoyed tail with my hand, her eyes wide in panic. I got to the base of her tail, and she did not resist. When I squeezed the tail, she contracted on my instrument. She suddenly grabbed a stick—no, she had my incubus tail. Her grin reappeared, “Let’s see how you like it!”

As she manipulated the length of my tail, my balls started to ache for release. I forgot how my tail had a mind of its own when. Artica mistook the panic on my face forecasting the pain she might inflict. She stroked my tail teasingly and put the phallic end in her mouth, pretending she was going to bite hard on it. Instead, I erupted into her mouth and pussy simultaneously, surprising her. My mind went blank for a moment as my fluids sprayed her and tried to escape from our bonding.

I started to laugh hysterically at her error as she still had a shocked look on her face. Her long tongue came out and tasted the tail ejaculate, and she smiled as she lapped it up. And then tried to get the rest on her chest, ignoring that we were still coupled. I shrank my phallus, and it gave her more movement as she cleaned herself and then me. The catkin eventually rested on my chest in a low purr.

“That was interesting—unexpected, but interesting. It was sweeter than what comes out your other tail,” she joked. I rubbed her furry back as we lay on the summit of the mountain overlooking the cabin in the dark. The sun had vanished, and we were content.

When we stood and started walking downhill, Artica said, “Oh, there was a package for you today from some museum. It was not very big.”

Those must be the couatl feathers. Guess my day was not quite finished. Pandora would be extremely happy.