

Chapter 11

Dominic

Dark Water falls General Hospital was a small place near the center of town. It only took fifteen minutes to walk there and I enjoyed the sunshine.

I asked about Dominic, and was told Dr. Malice was downstairs in the basement. I chuckled at the name, a bit obvious.

It took me a bit to find it, but finally I found him. He was in a room full of corpses, probably a smorgasbord to a creature like him. Surprisingly, he looked normal, if a bit overweight.

“You Dominic?” I said, approaching him.

He wore dark sunglasses, even though the lights of the lab were pretty subdued. “Who’s asking.”

“My name is Sean, and I’m a friend of Joyce’s.”

He nodded. “Yeah, sad what happened to her.”



“That’s it? That’s all you got to say?”

“It’s rare, and I hate that it happens, but the process of inception into the Cobra Colony can result in unexpected events like that.”

“You can teach her how to return to her human form, can’t you?”

He shook his head and walked over to the wash basin. “All vampires have a bit of *Desmodus Rotundus* or vampire bat. It’s what allows us to be hematophages, and survive from the blood of others.”

“Okay...” I said, struggling to follow.

“But the treatment she’s received should have combined the DNA from *Desmodus* with *Homeo-sapiens*, to create the *Home-Vampiricus* we vampires truly are.”

“And that didn’t work?”

“Sadly, no. Her cells took on all the features of *Desmodus Rotunda*, and instead of bonding with the *homeo sapiens* DNA, it *replaced* the DNA strands. It happened so fast, there was literally nothing I could do except keep her alive. She almost expired.”

“Can’t you just...reverse it?”

“No.” He began walking around, coming closer to me. “Funny thing is, if it had gone truly bat, I could actually transform it back, but

that's a supernatural bat because it has some of my essence inside. So it's stuck like that, a supernatural bat. It's incredibly strong, should be able to fly in extreme weather conditions, and will live a very long time, just like we do."

"But what will it eat?"

He shrugged, moving in closer to me. "Unlike vampires, the bat should be able to live off any living creature."

He had moved to within a few feet of me, and I suddenly realized what he was doing.

"Hey, back off, would ya?" I said, holding up my hands.

He shook his head and grinned. "It's been a long night, and I'm hungry."

I bolted for the door, but he chased after me. He was supernaturally fast and quickly had me pinned up against a wall. He proceeded to smell me, and licked the side of my neck.

"Damn," he said, releasing me.

I rubbed my wrists. "What?"

"You're Mei's handiwork. If I consumed you, I'd risk her wrath. I can smell her wards on you."

I nodded, rubbing my neck. It had been very close.

"So there's nothing you can do for Joyce?"

"Nope." He walked back to one of the corpses and bared his fangs, biting deep into the neck and began to feast.

"What about Mei? Can she change her back?"

After slurping and sucking, he pulled away. "Supernatural bat. Mei can only make changes to the natural world, like you."

I sighed.

"Hey, if it's any consolation, Joyce won't ever turn feral, so you got nothing to worry about with it sucking your blood."

"There's that," I said.

Defeated, I walked out of the morgue.

Back at the motel, I opened the door. The pungent smell of blood and animal filled my nose, and I gagged against the stench.

Turning on the light, I saw Joyce hanging from the ceiling.

DARKWATER FALLS



It gave a soft screech and scratched its head with one of its clawed feet. A pile of fecal matter mixed with a couple of the blood bags lay strewn under it.

“Can you come down from there? It’s weirding me out.”

The bat screeched and fluttered its wings before dropping from the ceiling and righting itself on the floor.

“So good news and bad news,” I said.

The bat nodded.

“Good news is, you’re a supernatural bat. You can drink from any live animal, not just humans like a vampire.”

It nodded its head, giving a soft screech. I could see snot dripping from the thing’s nose.

“He said you’re super strong, and can survive extremes of cold and heat even while flying. He said you’ll have a very long life, like a vampire, and be super strong and healthy.”

“Bad news is, you’re a bat, and going to stay that way unless we can find someone that can transform supernatural creatures.”

It nodded and screeched a mournful sound again.

RAINE MONDAY

“Why don’t we get you in the shower and cleaned up, and then I can hold you on the bed again?”

It nodded, then hopped toward the bathroom.

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A few hours later, it fell asleep peacefully, hanging from the ceiling again.

I had given it a shower. It hated the feeling of the water, like any animal, I suppose, and screeched and clawed quite a bit before settling down and letting me wash it. Then we’d snuggled awhile on the bed, but it was pretty restless and got back up and jumped around trying to fly.

We went outside, and we made good progress. It could fly short distances and was up to about a hundred feet before we came back inside.

I fed it more of the blood, and it snuggled up on the bed again as I dozed. When I awoke, it was hanging from the ceiling, and fast asleep.

Sighing, I cleaned up the mess on the floor under it, then placed some towels to catch any falling excrement. Supernatural ex-human bats could not control bladder and bowel functions, apparently.

I went into the bathroom and started washing my hands.

DARKWATER FALLS



Staring in the mirror, I looked for any more changes. I was still tall, over six feet, and other than my breasts filling out slightly, I was the same.

I thought about poor Joyce having her humanity ripped away and forced to live as a bat. Things could definitely be worse.

I wondered if Mei was okay. I felt a strong urge to return to her, and I fixed my hair absently as I thought about it.

Of the five factions, I supposed the witches offered the least offending. If I could learn to be a witch as powerful as Mei was reported to be, maybe I could survive DarkWater after all.

I still wanted to attempt to get away. I'd been examining the cliff face while Joyce tried to fly and thought I had a way scouted out. If I could get up to the saddle without falling, the rest of the ascent would be cake.

As I replaced the towel on the rack, my head started to hurt.

RAINE MONDAY



Wincing, I wondered if I had any ibuprofen. I went through my backpack, found a bottle of acetaminophen, and took a couple, dry swallowing them.

The pounding in my head did not abate. My vision swam as it worsened; feeling like my head was being squeezed in a vice.

I fell onto the bed, moaning, holding my head with both hands. The squeezing sensation got much worse, and oblivion intruded.