Chapter 94

My parents were recharged after their vacation. My mother even tried to rope me into being her personal trainer, but I deflected by saying I was too busy with school. I went upstairs after a long discussion about colleges. They were clearly pushing me to attend college. I retreated to my room.

After a shower, I started going through my messages, and Abigail asked me to call her. I did so immediately, “Abs, what is up?”

“Caleb, are you coming over? I wanted to talk with you about Vida,” she said seriously. Abigail was rarely serious.

“Is she ok? She wandering off for pizza again?” I asked, exasperated.

“No, she made her own pizza now. It is actually quite good. She has been studying like crazy,” Abigail responded.

“Well, that is good, right? We were worried she would have trouble fitting in. She just learned English,” I said, confused why she was so worried.

Abigail took a deep breath, “Vida has a photographic memory, Caleb.” I was a little shocked to learn this and didn’t understand the implications of it. Abigail continued, “On her tour of the school, she learned that she could be given an A grade in any course that had an AP exam as long as she got a five on the exam.”

“Vida isn’t taking any AP classes,” I said, still confused.

“That is just it! You don’t have to take the class, just get a five on the exam. You promised to make love to her if she passed high school with honors. She signed up for 10 AP tests in May!” Abigail voiced with disbelief.

“She really has a photographic memory?” I asked skeptically, “She had so much trouble learning and prefers to practice her ice shard spell and fight.”

Abigail coughed, “I wasn’t supposed to tell you. She barely studies because she hates learning, but when she does focus, she is like a sponge. Vida was afraid if you knew you would force her to study more.” Abigail sounded uncomfortable as she had revealed a secret.

“Abs, don’t keep secrets from me,” I said, and my mind went back to Andromeda’s words that I couldn’t trust anyone. I sighed, “Let her. If she is that motivated, let her. I will fulfill my end if it happens. That is still five months away.”

I hung up the phone and searched online for the AP exams. They were offered over two weeks in May. I looked at the schedule…maybe I could do the same thing. Chemistry. Psychology. Human Geography. Art History. Calculus. World History: Modern. Latin. I looked through my graduation requirements. That would cover everything I needed with a leeway of two courses. I could skip my senior year if I got fives on five of seven of these exams. With my mind space, I could download the textbooks and have Lilith help during the exam. I should be guaranteed a five on all the exams.

It would mean this would be my last season of hockey which was bittersweet. It had been fun, but as I slowly increased my incubus abilities, it lost its competitive nature.

As I was paging through the process for signing up and taking the AP exams, my Apollyon phone buzzed.  I checked, and it was Dexter.  I answered the phone, “This is Apollyon.”

Dexter’s smooth voice came across, “Thank you for taking my call, Mr. Silverhorn.  I recently received the results of the investigation into the Aboleth.”  I sat up in my bed.  Dexter continued, “Four agents of the creature were confirmed.  We also had one sighting of the monster in the Charles River at 2:18 AM on January 1st.  The lair of the abomination is suspected to be in the inner harbor but has not been found as of yet.”

“So what steps are being taken?”  I asked.  I tried to add unconcernedly, “What happened to the girl that drew my attention to the Aboleth?”  It was my sister’s friend from high school, Lillian Holland.

Dexter paused a moment before answering.  Was there someone else with him?  “Mr. Silverhorn, a finder’s fee has been assigned to this case by the Magus Arcanum.  $250,000.  Do you wish that to be transferred to your regular account?”

“That is fine,” I said, but I was anxious to learn about Lillian.

Dexter continued, “Lillian is still attending classes.  We are watching her situation.  The Magus Arcanum is preparing an assault once we have more details on the Aboleth and its agents.  That is why I am contacting you, Mr. Silverhorn.  I have been tasked with assembling teams for the eventual removal of the creature.  Rincewind has requested you to be assigned to his team.”

I had no words.  I didn’t want to battle the ancient Aboleth.  I calmed and didn’t want my pause to drag out, “I do not think I will have time to participate.”

Instead of Dexter, a familiar voice came through the phone, “This is Rincewind.  I would like the opportunity to meet with you to convince you.  I can travel to DC tomorrow.  Apollyon, this extermination is vital.  We can not let the creature get away and establish elsewhere on Earth.”

I didn’t want to be involved.  I would meet with Rincewind and politely decline to participate.  I would have to make sure Lilith was prepared to defend my mind space from Rincewind’s tricks.  “Fine.  I can meet you at *South Street Brewery* in Charlottesville.  Tomorrow night a 9 PM.”  That would be about a 90-minute drive for me, much better than the four-hour drive to DC.  And maybe it would be too inconvenient for Rincewind.  The only reason I know about the restaurant was that it was where we had eaten lunch when we went to watch one of Paige’s races during her freshman year in college.

Rincewind replied immediately, “Excellent. I look forward to meeting again.”  Well, it looks like I was going to dinner tomorrow.

Dexter came back on, “Unfortunately, Mr. Silverhorn, I cannot join you, but I hope you can be convinced to join the operation.  The funds have been transferred.  Have an excellent evening.”  Dexter disconnected.

I mulled for a while.  Then I called Bedelia.  I invited her to dinner but didn’t tell her we were going to meet the Head Master of her old dungeon academy.  Then I called Jade and got her to also commit to the dinner.  With Artica, that would be three tier 2 allies for the meeting.

I retreated into my mind space to talk with Lilith.  She was reading in the plush library.  She looked up from the book and smiled.  Not a sensual smile like Pandora, just a happy-to-see-you smile.  I had definitely made her too active.  “Do you know what is going on?”  I asked.  I had given her a rolling information feed from my life.

Lilith stood and put the book on the shelf, “Yes, I think it is a brilliant move to test out of your senior year.  It will keep your parents happy, and you will not have to waste your time going to high school.”

“What about my Rincewind problem?”  I asked, realizing Lilith was playing with me.  Lilith didn’t reply and instead went to another shelf and pulled out a book.  She walked over to me and handed me the book.  There were a bunch of pages marked, and I opened it.  I went to all four entries marked Merlin, Nostradamus, Plato, and Rincewind.

“They are all the same person,” Lilith said.  “It took a while to piece it together, but the old man gets around.  Even though he has taken a back seat to human politics, he always has the best interest of humanity in mind.  I suggest we listen to him.  He will most likely try to convince you how imperative it is to help kill the Aboleth.  Get something in return.”

I considered and asked, “What do you suggest I ask for that is worth risking my life?”

Lilith put on a cute knowing smile, “Knowledge.  Ask for access to his personal library.  He has lived at least three thousand years.  I am assuming there has to be some valuable knowledge there.”

I knew Lilith wanted knowledge because she treasured that, but it made too much sense.  I slowly nodded, “Thank you.”

I returned and went to sleep.  I couldn’t afford to sleep in my mind space with my aether being so low.

Monday morning’s hockey practice, I went through the motions. I had nine weeks left. I would finish the season because I was not a quitter. The team was gelling and improving quickly. We only had one more tough opponent on the schedule, so we could win out.

Sitting in the parking lot at school, I found I missed driving Rob to school and shooting the shit with him. Even his sister wasn’t a bad addition to the drive. Now I didn’t even eat lunch with Rob. How could I repair the relationship with him? We only seemed to text once a week now. I was mulling over texting him when someone knocked on my window. It was not someone I expected.

“Hey! Caleb, how are you doing?! You never came to one of our meets,” Traci said with a gleaming smile. Traci was the captain of the gymnastics team.

“Yeah,” I stalled. “How is your knee? You said it was acting up?” I unlocked the door, “Want to come to sit for a bit?”

Traci considered for a moment. I really didn’t have a good reputation. Her deep blue eyes locked with mine. “Ok,” she moved around and got in. “What do you want to talk about?”

I inhaled, and although Traci was in clean clothes, she smelled—musty. She had worked out this morning and hadn’t showered. I could also tell from my incubus senses that she had masturbated last night. I smiled and asked, “How is your season going? Do you have any more meets?”

“We have two intrasquad meets and the conference championships left,” she rubbed her knee absently. “I popped my knee and can’t compete. I needed to stop competing to prevent it from getting worse, or my scholarship offers will be in jeopardy.” Her eyes misted a bit. I was finding I was a sucker for a distressed woman.

“I am sorry to hear that. I wish there were something I could do,” I said with sympathy.

Traci smiled, “What you did for the Kid’s Santa Drive was amazing. The entire team has been trying to figure out a way to thank you for your generosity.” I remembered that I helped outraise the gymnastics team and even added $1500 cash to our own. I then asked James to evenly split the money with the gymnastics team, and James gave me all the credit. Now, Traci was hinting at rewarding my generosity with….

I smiled, “What did you have in mind?” Traci seemed uncertain and thought for a second.

“How about I take you out to dinner?” she finally said. “Saturday night?” Traci seemed uncertain. I know I had a reputation in the school. So I thought she was offering herself up. Maybe she had been thinking about me last night when she was administering to herself.

I needed life essence, “That sounds great! You have my number. Text me your address. The hockey game ends around 7 pm, so I can pick you up after.” I smiled, and her face split as she stumbled out of my car, happy and excited. Well, maybe a bad boy reputation wasn’t a bad thing.

The day flew by, and I spent time getting the textbooks for all the AP classes I planned to take into my mind space.

At lunch, Artica sat across from me.  “Caleb, I wanted to ask about getting a car.  We could get one of the Bentley’s currently in storage, but I think that would draw attention.”  I looked at her as she stirred the food in her tray.  Abigail had handed me a bagged lunch which was more appetizing than what was on her tray.

“Are you having trouble getting get to school from the hotel,” I asked.

“No.  Iris picks me up, but it is out of her way.  You could always pick me up on the way to hockey practice, and I could wait in the car,” she offered hopefully.  No, that was extra time for me, and it was stupid to have her wait for two and a half hours in my car.

I turned it over in my mind.  I finally asked, “What kind of car did you want?”  Artica cracked a grin and slid me her unlocked phone.  I looked at the screen.  It was a White Jeep Rubicon.  The price tag was $92,000.  I raised my eyebrows.

Artica put on her best puppy dog eyes, “You can drive it too.”  I looked at the jeep and imagined the tiny Artica driving it.

“No,” I said, sliding the phone back to her.  Artica looked hurt, trying to play on my emotions.  Iris was on her left and took the phone to look at the vehicle.  Bedelia took the phone next.  Was this going to be a team effort to get me to cave.  Bedelia took out her phone.

“If you are getting an off-road vehicle, you should get something….” She was searching for her phone, “From these guys.”  She gave me her phone.  I looked at the dealership on the screen, *Black Magic Car Dealers*.  “They do mods to help harden it from magical damage and make it more durable.  Some light enchanting work.”  I paged through the list.  The prices were through the roof.  The cheapest vehicle was $192,000.  I slid the phone back to her shaking my head.

“Maybe we can look at this again after I get some money from the estate sale.  I think my dad got in a six-year-old Ford Raptor to the dealership.  It should be around $45,000.  Are you interested?”  I asked Artica.  Her eyes lit up as she went into the phone and looked for the vehicle.  It was a small luxury off-road truck.  Smaller than the Rubicon she wanted but a nice ride.

She looked at me, “Really?  You would get this for me?”  Artica asked, paging through pics.  I realized she hadn’t expected me to actually get her the Rubicon.

“Yeah, you can run the sale through *Silverhorn Consulting* as a company vehicle,”  I said with a smile.  Artica told me she was loyal, and some pampering for her commitment to me was due.  Bedelia promised to help Artica with the paperwork at the dealership but confirmed I would meet her at her apartment this evening before we went to dinner.  Thankfully Eilina wasn’t at our lunch table to remind me about my promise to her as well.  I wondered if maybe she was off somewhere studying with Vida for the AP exams.

In study hall last period, I finished adding all the books for the AP exams. Now Lilith could start working on the prep.  When I was leaving school at the end of the day, I ran into Rob and Yuki in the parking lot.  “Rob!  How is it going?”  I yelled as I approached.  He refused to make eye contact with me.

“Hey, Caleb.  Congrats on your hockey games.  We have to get going,” he said quietly as his sister came and got into the back seat not saying a word to me.  Rob was clearly avoiding me.

“Rob, what is up?  Are you avoiding me?”  I whispered, “Did the IDs not work?”

Rob looked really uncomfortable, “No.  I just can’t talk.  Thanks for the IDs.”

I grabbed his arm and held him in place, “What the hell is going on?”

Rob looked me in the eye, “I can’t risk hanging out with you, Caleb.  You are dealing.  Thanks for the IDs, but my mother and Yuki don’t want you dragging me down.”  My eyes flashed to the Yuki in the driver seat.

“Dealing? I am not dealing,” I said with some resentment.

“Look, Caleb, I don’t want this to become a problem. I still want to be friends, but I can’t risk anything to jeopardize scholarships,” Rob said, deflated.

“What in the hell makes you think I am dealing?” I said, now angry.

“The cash Caleb. You have hired a bodyguard. The flights to Miami. And Sofia saw the letter in your backpack,” Rod said reluctantly. I was too confused and let Rob go. He got in the car and drove off. The letter in the backpack? I went to my car and found the backpack I had taken to Miami in the back. The ticket stubs were there for the flight, and there was a blank envelope. It came back to me in a flash. I was given the cash and a letter from an admirer that I had never opened.

Yuki’s car was already gone, but the nosy Sofia had gone through my things. I opened the letter.

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 I started laughing, and Artica peeked over my shoulder at the letter. The entertainment in the letter was referring to my dick and not drugs. Maybe I should just tell Rob I get my money from being a man whore. I was a drug dealer if you considered my saliva, but all the clues the brilliant Sofia had pieced together were wrong. I would need to figure out a way to salvage my relationship with Rob.

Although if Yuki and his mother were encouraging him to stay away from me, I needed to turn one or both first. And that little snoop Sofia….

Artica was in the passenger seat and shut the door. “Caleb, you have to meet Bedelia and then drive up to meet Rincewind.” She held up her phone. We had shared calendars. Artica had booked Bedelia for two hours in my calendar, and I had entered ‘Rincewind Dinner’ into the calendar myself.

I got into the driver’s seat and brought up the address of where Bedelia was living. As we drove, Artica asked, “Do you need my help for this one again?”

I looked at her, “Up to you. You can always just watch the fun.”

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