Chapter 83

After we learned the female vamp had been extracted from the morgue, I asked, “Artica, what do you think?”

“You should have never helped her,” I could tell her mind was thinking.  “Most likely, she just thinks you are a powerful mage.  If it was the wolfkin pack leader, they would want to discover why their  men turned on them.”

“That is exactly what I am thinking,” I said, thinking about how to proceed.  “We should get your things out of your room at the hotel, and I will get you a room at another hotel under my alias.”

We took a cab back to the hotel and went to her room.  Artica opened the door first and drew a blade out of thin air.  I pushed into the room, ready to fight with her, consequences be damned.  The vamp woman was standing behind a seated man in a pinstripe suit.  The man was pale, thin, and with a slightly sunken face.  I didn’t need my abyssal sight to tell me he was a vamp.

The vamp woman said, “Relax, this is my elder, the sire of my sire.  He was awakened from his hibernation by one of his progeny.”  The man smiled with brilliant white teeth.  I used my abyssal sight, and he was slightly stronger than Rincewind, so he was lower tier three in strength.  His core, though, lacked something.  He had no life essence, just aether.  I confirmed the vamp woman was the same, and after a closer examination, she had a tiny amount of life essence, but it was being—metabolized.  So vamps got life essence from blood and then transformed it into what—death essence?  My thoughts were interrupted by the vamp lord.

He stood and bowed, “William De Roy, at your service.  I am still reviving, but I want to thank you for helping.  Penelope said you tried to help her escape the city.”  His eyes went bloodshot momentarily.  I guessed he was using his version of abyssal eyes.  He sat down heavily, “Oh my!  What is your name?  From where did you come from, sir?”

I guessed he had read my core.  I was a whole tier above him though I lacked the power that went with a lower tier 4 core.  I went with Bedelia’s guess, “Apollyon Silverhorn.  I am just visiting Earth.  It is a fascinating planet.”

I didn’t look at Artica but knew she had a shocked expression.  The vamp lord just looked amused.  He tapped the table, considering, “I would be willing to pay you quite handsomely to get rid of Aberthon Van Holthe for me.  It will take me time to recover from my slumber, and I want to address his transgressions sooner rather than later.”

I pretended to consider his offer, “I am on vacation.  I have already interceded in matters outside my purview.”

William pursed his lips, “That is unfortunate.  Well, I know where the wolfkin and their human partners are holding up.  I must take care of that loose end before they leave the city,” he said, standing.  “If you change your mind,” he handed me a card with a cell number on it with the monogram De Roy.  “That will put you in touch with my secretary.”  He made for the door, and the vamp woman, Penelope, followed.

After the door closed, I released a long breath.  Artica squirmed, “How did you resist his presence?  I felt like a bug and could barely move!”

I raised an eyebrow, “His paralyzing aura.  It is something powerful beings emit to subdue lesser beings.  I couldn’t think straight, use my abilities or even talk!”  She finished clearly shaken from the encounter with the powerful vamp lord.

I don’t think I had such an aura.  Apparently, I did have a lust aura, so maybe that was my equivalent for the vampires.  I would check next time I was in my mind space.  “I will still have you change hotels,” I said, helping Artica pack.

After a search, I got Artica a room in a hotel across the street from my room.  That way, she could keep an eye on me through her window, “I could always stay in your room with you,” Artica said suggestively.  “You know I am your bodyguard, so I should be keeping an eye on your body.”

I laughed, “I am sure we can work things out, but I actually have a friend visiting from Spain tomorrow night.”  Maya was flying in from Madrid late tomorrow.  She was only staying for 36 hours, but I planned to get some life essence.  I did want to make sure this vamp issue was completely cleared up.

Artica was completely on guard, “A friend?  Who?  I should really vet her before she arrives.”  I sensed a slight note of jealousy as well in her voice.  If she was going to be my bodyguard, she was going to need to get comfortable with my relations with other women.

I thought about what to tell her and asked, “Don’t take this wrong, but I need to know how loyal you are.”  Seeing Artica on the verge of being upset, I continued, “I have some secrets.  If I share them with you, I must ensure they remain secrets.”

Artica looked serious and was about to say something, but I held up my hand, “Think on it while I check you into the other hotel.”

We moved Artica to the fourth floor of the hotel across the street.  It took a little cajoling, but it was the best room on that side.  When we arrived, Artica searched the room, pushed me onto the bed, and straddled me, “Ok, Caleb, I have thought on it, and your secrets will never leave my lips.  My contract is not officially yours until you raise my sister’s core, but consider me your loyal guardian.”

I put my hands on her hips and rubbed them while looking up into her eyes, “I gave you more than just a larger aether core.  I gave you an elixir that increased your strength.”

I read her face, excitement, then doubt, “If I hadn’t seen the reader of my core, I would think you are pulling my tail.  How much stronger did you make me?  I have been ridiculously hungry.  Was it your spit?  I felt all tingly from it.”

I was surprised Artica had been so observant when we were having sex.  “No, it was my semen, my seed.”

She looked skeptical, “Caleb is that some bad pickup line.  Let me cum inside you.  My jizz will make you stronger,” she laughed at her joke.  I just shrugged and rubbed her ass and thighs.  “Really?  Let’s go to the gym in the hotel.”  She swung off me with grace, changed to tight spandex workout clothes, and dragged me to the gym.

It was late, and there were a number of people there.  Artica went to the bench press and put 190 lbs on the bar.  “Ok, Caleb.  Last week I hit two reps at this weight without enhancing myself.  If I hit more than four reps, you are going to get a treat tonight.”  A few guys looked on in amusement as the small woman slid underneath the bar.  I stood to spot her.  She unracked and quickly pumped out eight reps and racked the bar.  I looked around the gym, and the half a dozen hotel guests were in shock.

Artica lay there for a few minutes before sitting up.  Without saying a word, she changed the weight to 225 lbs and slid back under the bar.  “Frost can do 19 reps at this weight,” was all she said as she started.  On her 22nd rep, she started to struggle.  On her 25th she pushed and racked the weight.  She had a sheen of sweat and was breathing heavily, and her eyes were locked on mine.  I could guess what she was thinking.

I asked, “Do you want to try anything else?”

“No need,” she said, sitting up.  “Let’s go back to the room.”  Artica was already leaving.  The men in the fitness room looked at me with some jealousy.  I followed her back to the room.

Artica started in on me in the room, “First off, I will want a rematch.  Second, I want dinner sent up. I am starving, and I am no longer watching my figure.  Third, I promised you a treat,” her lips curled into a lecherous grin.

After the meal, my treat was a full body massage followed by a blowjob.  I had an adjacent vortex to just collect aether.  Artica had remained clothed. I was not able to use my saliva because of the fragile core, so she had resisted having sex with me.  It was a pleasurable evening and I had thought of giving Artica the endurance elixir but decided it was best to wait until she acclimated to the changes and her aether core healed.  When I released I hadn’t gathered much aether, but I did have a relaxing and pleasurable evening.

She ordered takeout after the massage with my happy ending.  It was a wide variety of local fare, and we lounged snacking in bed.  Artica asked where she was going to live when we returned to Virginia.  I got my phone and sent her the address of my luxury cabin.  The contractor had just started to work on it, and it was going to take six weeks to complete.  It looked like Amelia had purchased a lot of furniture.  She had sent me notes that it was going to be delivered on January 5th.  It took me a few minutes to see on my Caleb phone that Amelia had asked me to help set up furniture for a customer on January 5th.  So I would be helping move in my own furniture.

“Artica, I will get you a key for the house, and you can move in on January 29th.  That is when the septic should be done.  Until then, I will get you a room at the Marriott Hotel on Route 15,” I told her.  She curled under my arm in the bed, and we looked at pictures of the place on my phone, getting her excited.

It was getting late, and Artica fell asleep nestled under my arm.  I went into my mind space to practice.  Pandora was in the bedroom, watching the sex tapes I had left her.  She looked up excited, “Are you here to train?”

“Yeah, I can do five hours in the dojo, and then I want to experiment with auras,” I said while changing my clothes to a Gi with a thought.

The martial practice went well, and my time with Artica helped a lot.  Not just me but also Pandora had learned a lot and became a much tougher opponent.  I managed to manifest the two aether pistols in the mind space.  I needed to fire them in real life to get a better feeling to simulate them, but at least they looked good.

Finish with the training, I now stood under my banner in my mind space center lobby.  What types of aura could I manifest?

*Demon’s Fear         Tier 0              100 life essence*

*Dominating Aura    Tier 0             500 life essence*

*Intimidating Gaze     Tier 0            100 life essence*

These were the three abilities I could purchase after spending almost an hour trying different things.  The *intimidating gaze* only affected one target, while the *demon’s fear* was an aura.  *Dominating aura* was what the vamp lord had used that was not strong enough to effect me but had cowered Artica.  Maybe I could use an *intimidating gaze*.  *Demon’s fear* was out of the question as I didn’t want to reveal that I was a demon.

I slept in my mind space and woke to find Pandora curled up with me.  I extracted myself and returned to the real world, having only been gone a few minutes.  Artica was still sleeping, and I grabbed my Apollyon phone.

I first checked the Magus Arcanum net to see if the bounties had been claimed on the fugitives.  They hadn’t been claimed but were taken down, which I assumed meant William De Roy had cleaned up the mess.  I switched phones and sent out text messages for a while.  I had some back and forth with Iris concerning her parents.  We decided in the texts to try out the other local transit portal to see if we could reach the elven city of Kealon.  I wasn’t keen on returning to crab cave until I knew it was clear on the beastkin hunters.

Right now, I figured my team would be Bedelia, Artica, Iris, and myself.  We would explore the new portal and orient ourselves.  Even though the transits were close in our town, just two dozen miles apart, they could be hundreds of miles apart in the transit.  When we did make our trip to Kealon, I would need Kiri on the team whether she wanted to come or not as a guide in the foreign elven city.  At least I had a translator ring now. Maybe I should make an elven male form before then as well.

The sense of urgency to find Iris’ parents had lessened since we assumed they had been sent to the planet of Mercanious.  Searching Kealon would be just following up on our lead in the transit.  I was paging through email recruiting contacts from college hockey coaches when I felt myself being watched and immediately went on alert and tried to wake Artica.  She wouldn’t move.  An amorphous gas came through the cracks around the window and quickly formed a body materializing into Lord William De Roy.

“Don’t wake your toy kitten. I have cast a slumber spell on the room, knowing you would be able to resist it.”  He sat in the chair at the end of the bed, “So, Demon Lord what do I owe the pleasure of your visit to my city?”  I maintained an indifferent stare.  “Come now.  I haven’t dealt with your kind in 200 years.  But you don’t do vacations.”  He seemed a little too familiar in his tone, like we were friends.

“I am vacationing whether you choose to believe me or not,” I said plainly.  “Did you take care of the wolfkin and humans?”

He smiled, and I could sense life essence inside the vamp.  He had recently had quite a large amount of blood and was processing it into death essence in his body.  “Yes.  Here.”  He tossed me some trinkets.  “If you want the reward from the Magus Arcanum, you can turn those in.”  I put them down on the end table next to the bed.  “So you are not interested in helping me take down the Lord, causing me such a headache.  Very well.  I still owe you a favor.  What request do you have of me?”

I had just been typing out plans for our transit run, so it was fresh in my mind.  “A question.  Do you know any transits close to the elven city of Kealon in the transit?”  His eyes went up in surprise at my question.

“A demon lord traveling the transits?  I would ask why you bother, but it is not my place,”  he said as a book materialized in his hand.  I didn’t ask how he did that because I didn’t want him to think I was ignorant.  The book looked old with a black leather cover.  He paged through it slowly.  “Kealon…Kealon…Ah, here it is.  There is a portal in Hungry just outside the city.”  He looked up, and I shook my head no.  “Ok.  A portal in Toronto comes out about 24 miles north of the city,” he said after a minute.

I queried, “Anything in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States?”

He looked back into the book and talked while he searched the text, “You know I fought in the Revolutionary War.  For the Brits.  I had an estate in Georgia,” He was trying to make casual conversation, but I wasn’t biting. “Ah, the closest I can find is a portal in North Carolina that should still be active.  It comes out about 60 miles west of Kealon on a lake.  The transit location is in the Great Smokey National Forest.  Is that good enough?”

“Yes, thank you.  So you used to travel the transits yourself?”  I asked. He tore out a piece of paper and wrote coordinates on it.

“No,” he looked at me quizzically. “The transits are toxic to my kind.   We can only spend a day or two before having to leave.”  He closed the book, and it disappeared. He leaned forward and gave me the paper.

I asked, “Dimensional bag?” Indicating the disappearing book. My curiosity had overcome me.

He shook his head, “Personal dimensional space.”  I nodded like that had been my second guess.

“If that will be all, I have some preparations to be made,” he stood, bowed, and went gaseous again.

I immediately went into my mind space and tried to figure out if I could create my own dimensional space to hide items in.