

## Chapter 05

I'm... numb, I think. I can't stop thinking about what happened, what he said. He wants me to live. Why does a demon care if I live or not. He should want me dead. He shouldn't have killed one of his kind to save my life. I finally understand what was in those eyes. It was calm. He was calm right after killing one of his kind.

I'm... feeling something, but I have no idea what it is.

"What happened?" Amanda asks, giving me something else to focus on.

"I... It was an ambush." I'm still wearing the trench coat. I should have changed and gone to see the doctors, but this is too important. They need to know about it.

"D, my man. you need to talk to us." Jason looks worried. He's right. I need to tell them what happened.

"They're smarter than before."

"They?" Amanda frowns.

"There was th... two of them. The first one had two humans captive when I caught up with him. He hadn't eaten them, I think he was using them to make sure I stuck around. We fought, he was as vicious as the others, and I killed him. As he crumpled at my feet the other one dropped behind me. He must have been on the rooftop from the start, I never caught a second scent in the alley."

"It surprised you?" Jason sits straighter.

I nod.

"But you managed to kill it."

"I..." I shake my head. "think I got lucky." that's an understatement. "I don't think it expected me to be as fast as I was." What? why aren't I telling them about the other one?

"He can't have been all that smart then."

"They were working together. There's nothing in the records about demons working this way. Even when they attack in groups, it's always as mindless beasts. The smart ones always work alone."

Amanda and Jason looked at each other. Something pass over their features, worry?

She places a hand on my arm. "It's something new, and it's obvious you're a little rattled. Forget about the tests. Just go to your apartment and rest."

I nod and stand. I stop by the door. I have to tell them about the other one. "There's..."

"Yes?" She looks expectant.

"I... I mean... I think," I shrug in defeat. "It's nothing." Why am I not telling them?

I can't shake the question on my way to my apartment, I also can't come up with an answer. I throw my clothes on the

couch and head for the shower. I throw the water as hot as it gets. Maybe the heat will jar my brain loose. Is something wrong with me that I'm not telling them about the demon who can talk?

There's no records of a demon that smart. He has to be dangerous. My hands start to shake, it spreads to my arms, then all of me is shaking. I'm under scalding water, and yet I'm reacting like when I spent eight hours in the freezer in only my underwear.

I clasps my arms around my chest. I'm having trouble breathing now. I catch motion in the steam and I back away, snarling.

"Jesus man, what are you doing? if you want a sauna we have one downstairs."

I pinpoint the voice, estimate his height to a little smaller than me. I can't figure out his mass, the steam hides too much of him.

"Fuck this thing's hot." The shower stops.

I prepare myself. As soon as I can see him I'll attack before he can.

The steam thins, but he isn't where his voice came from last. I look around trying to find him. Has he left the room? Did I not hear him over the sound of my pounding heart?

"Hey, D. You planning on staying there all day?"

There's someone in the doorway, and I can tell it's Jason. I look around for the enemy, I need to find him before he gets to Jason.

"D, are you okay?" He comes closer. How can he be this calm? doesn't he realize there's a demon in here with us? He puts a hand on my arm and I flinch away. "D, calm down. What's going on with you? Are you? are you scared?"

Of course I'm not scared. I'm a hunter. we kill demons, nothing scares us.

"D, Derick, I need you to breathe, take deep breaths. That's it, another one. There you go, again."

I follow his instructions, and after a few breaths I realize there can't be a demon here, alarms would go off is one managed to find a way in.

"What, what's happening to me?" my teeth are chattering.

"You're feeling fear I'm guessing." he chuckles. "That ambush must really have rattled you."

I shake my head, but I can't get the words to come out. I have to tell him about the third demon.

"Are you feeling better?"

I nod.

"Alright, let's get you dry and in bed. I think what you really need is rest. I'll make sure all the tests are postponed."

I let him dry me, I don't know if I could have pushed him away if I'd wanted to. I feel weak, like when I first woke up, with my body barely obeying me.

Jason leads me to my bed, and tucks me in. He pats my head. "Just go to sleep. I'll see you tomorrow." He leaves.

I close my eyes and when I open them again it's morning. I slept for sixteen hours. I've ever slept this much. At least I'm feeling better.

So that is what fear feels like. It's disconcerting. I lie there for a few more moment, replaying what happened. I don't understand why I was afraid. What about that demon caused that in me, and why didn't it manifest itself sooner.

I take a quick shower, staying aware of how I feel. I don't want to lose control of myself like that again. The only thing that happens is that I clean myself. Then I dry and dress before putting water to boil and starting on breakfast. I'm famishes.

Amanda enters my kitchen as I finish my fourth streak. I still have a large bowl of cut fruits to eat. She takes a few pieces of apples.

"Jason told me you felt fear for the first time."

I nod.

"I suppose it was just a question of time. Do you think it's going to prevent you from hunting them?"

I shake my head and swallow. "No, I don't know what caused me to be afraid." I can't believe how easily the lie comes out. "But I'm not going to let that interfere with protecting people."

She smiles. "I'm glad to hear that." She squeezes my shoulder. "You have tests in an hour in lab fourteen."

"I'll be there."

She leaves and I go back to eating.