

Chapter 17

"What the hell just happened?" Victor asked.

Denton was looking at them, but not really seeing anyone.

"I think He took care of this ceremony too."

"What do you mean, *this* ceremony? He's in his thirties."

"We'll talk about this later, Victor. Right now I need to see to him. Frank, call the men on the list on my desk, let them go they no longer need to come, but if they're already on their way, I'll be happy to host them."

"Sure thing boss." Frank left them.

"Max, I want answers. What have you been doing?"

"Later Victor." Maximilian went to Denton, who was still dazed. He picked him up. "Come on, let's get you washed up."

The cold water shocked Denton enough to realize in was in the cougar's arms. He looked around, and he was back in the shower. He started laughing. He had no idea why he thought this was the funniest thing ever, being back in this shower, in this strong cougar's arms, but he couldn't seem to stop laughing.

Until he realized he was now crying.

He held on to Maximilian as his legs were lowered. Once they touched the floor he tried to support his own weight, but they were sore and wobbly. Maximilian continued to hold him.

Eventually his sobs ebbed.

"Are you alright?" Maximilian asked softly

Denton shook his head.

"Do you remember what happened?"

Denton didn't answer immediately, He knew what had happened, he just had trouble getting his mind to assemble the words to say it.

"I had sex," he finally managed. "I fucked... Him, your God." He thought Maximilian would correct him, but fortunately he didn't. Denton knew that He was his God too, now, had always been, even if he hadn't been aware of it before, but he wasn't ready to say that out loud.

They were silent for a moment.

"Who... who was the cheetah?"

Denton's head snapped up. "you saw that?"

"Yeah, we did." There was some embarrassment in the cougar's voice.

"How... how much did you see?"

"Your last five orgasm."

"Shit." He buried his face in Maximilian's chest. "How did you know something was going on?"

"Not long after you left the table, we started fucking. it got real intense real quick. It was Frank who realized it was like the other night. It took some work, but we managed to untangle ourselves and come see."

Denton's ears burned.

"Hey, you don't have to feel embarrassed about it."

"That's easy for you to say. you weren't the one out of control and fucking his balls out."

"I've been there. We all have. What you went through was the Ceremony of Dominance. It's where you let Him know in no uncertain terms that you're in charge."

Denton pushed himself away. His legs feeling steadier. "But that's a lie, isn't it? He's a God. He could wipe us out with a thought if he wanted to."

Maximilian warmed the water and poured shampoo in his hand. "Turn around. It's not that simple." He lathered Denton's back. "Yes, you're right. He's a God and as such he could decide to remove us from existence, but without us, he'll cease to exist, he needs our worship to keep existing."

"He's the God of fucking. He doesn't need us, everyone fucks." Denton couldn't keep the bitterness out of his voice.

"Fucking isn't worship, not by itself. It needs a reverence for him while you do it. Yes, some people outside our society do have sex in this manner, even if they don't realize it, and as such he could survive if we were gone. But he would be diminished, a pale shadow of his current glory."

He Rubbed the suds in Denton's neck fur, massaging the muscles in the process. he moaned, not realizing how stiff his neck had been. "Then what? this is about building power?"

"I guess. He's a God, I won't pretend to know what motivates him. but what I do know, is that we, in the Society, we are His men. He counts on us to worship him with all out being, not just when we fuck, but every time. and in return, we get access to some of that power. We have abilities other men can't even dream of. We can wield magic."

Maximilian rubbed Denton's back, moving down until he was massaging his ass.

"I guess you're going to fuck me now?" he asked, eyes closed in enjoyment.

"Do you want me to?"

"No, not really." Denton's eyes snapped open.

Maximilian chuckles. "The ceremonies are done, you're back to yourself. Count yourself lucky. You didn't have to go through four years of being everyone's bottom. It can get," he paused, searching for the right word, "tiresome."

"I can imagine. I'd have kicked Colby's ass if I had been able to."

"You know he didn't mean any harm, right?"

"Yeah, I do. but man can he be enthusiastic. We need to install a dial on him and turn it way down."

"That's the spirit." Maximilian hugging him and moved them

under the jet to rinse. He rubbed Denton's chest and stomach, then further down. "Are you sure I can't interest you in fooling around?" He whispered in his ear, rubbing the cheetah's hard cock.

Denton chuckled at his state, but shook his head. "How about we go full bore later? Right now, I need to dry off and eat something."

Maximilian nipped his ear. "Alright" He made sure Denton was soap free and turned the water off. He gave him a towel and used another one to dry Denton's legs. "But you haven't answered my initial question."

Denton stopped rubbing his head for a moment. "He was my father."

Maximilian nodded. "Okay."

"Max, is this normal? You said you had to bring other guys here for the ceremony."

Denton's legs dry, Maximilian stood. "No, it isn't. I've never heard of Him taking a direct part in the Ceremonies."

"Then why?"

"I don't know. Maybe you're special. Maybe because you're the last man of your line He felt he had to take part." He threw the wet towel in the hamper. "In the Society, we don't believe in prophesy. We don't have any, but maybe you have a special role to play in things to come, I don't know. He's the only one who can tell you that, and as you've noticed, talking isn't his strong suit."

"I'm not special," Denton stated. "I'm a decent cop, with a slightly above average arrest record, I'm amazing in bed, but that's the extent of it. I'm no savior, or bringer of justice."

"I have to agree with the bed part." Maximilian headed out of the bathroom.

"Max, who is He?" Denton asked, following.

"He's our God."

"I know that, I mean, what's his name, where does he come from? Is he Pan? or... Hermes I think the name was."

"He comes from ancient time. We don't know how far back. Our ancestors made the compact with him before the time of the Pharaohs. And He was already ancient. If you run across one of the Thinkers, ask them where Gods come from, they'll have theories for you, thousands of them. We, well, I, just accept that he is, and was."

"So there's someone I can ask here, in the Society, I mean."

"Sure, Julius, in Detroit, did a lot of searching, he might know something."

"What's His name?"

"I don't know."

"How can you not know?"

"He's never said it. I... I don't think He knows what it is."

"How is that possible?"

Maximilian was quiet while they went down the stairs. "When He fucked you, did you happen to look into his socket?"

"Of course, I couldn't not look into them."

Maximilian nodded. "Did you happen to notice a spot at the back of them, where there seemed to be this void in the darkness?"

Denton thought back, and he though he knew what Maximilian was referring to.

"I remember noticing it, during my ceremony. I think that's where His name used to be."

"How can a God lose His name?"

"This is just my theory, you understand. I know, through stories I was told, that when our ancestors made the compact with Him, He was very weak. I think that at that point, no one was worshiping him anymore, that he was kept alive just by people fucking. Because they were just doing the act, but not invoking Him, his name just vanished."

Denton had nothing to say about that.

* * * * *

"There you are," Victor said, as they entered the dining room. "Am I going to get my answers now?"

"Only if you follow us to the kitchen. Denton's hungry, which isn't surprising after what he just went through."

"And exactly what did he go through? It looked like the Ceremony of Dominance, but that's impossible, not at his age, and not in a bedroom, alone."

"He wasn't alone. You saw that as well as I did."

Victor snorted. "You expect me to believe that was Him? What the hell makes him so special to get to fuck Him?"

"Nothing," Denton answered, which got him a glare from the otter. "Hey, if you don't want me commenting when you're insulting me, don't do it where I can hear you. You're a good top, but I don't have to take it in silence. I didn't ask for any of this, you know. I was perfectly happy living my life before meeting you guys."

Victor looked from Denton to Maximilian. "What is he talking about?"

"Have a seat." Maximilian took steaks from the fridge. "Dent, will some steaks do?"

"Sure, and veggies, if you have them."

"How much?"

"Well, a salad would be nice."

Maximilian looked at him over his shoulder.

"What? I grew up with bulls, vegetables were a big part of

my diet. I can make it, if you want."

"No, that's okay. You stay there." He took out the pan.

"Alright, this is enough." Victor gritted his teeth. "I want to know how you got him into the police under the church's nose."

"You really don't think much when you're angry, do you Victor?"

"Max," the otter warned.

"His last name, Victor, what's his last name?"

"It's Stenton, so what?" there was a pause. "Wait, you're saying he's *a* Stenton?"

"He's the last one."

Victor stared at the cougar's back. "How? Where have you been hiding him, and how come you never let the rest of us know?"

"I didn't hide him. From what Martin's friends were able to find out from Dent's adoptive family, Alia arranged for some of it, then it was Stanley's initiative, and distrust that kept Denton hidden."

Denton startled. He hadn't hear his mother's name in close to twenty years, ever since the funeral.

"Why would she do that?"

"Why do you think? Half the Stentons had died by the time she did? She wasn't stupid. Jeff didn't keep the Society dealings secret from her, so she knew it was just a question of time until whoever was killing the others came for them. So she made arrangements."

"Stanley, Denton's adoptive father, saw us at the house after the fire, but he didn't trust us."

"Why not? didn't they go as FBI, or the fire department?"

"FBI, as usual, but Stanley had an idea of what happened in Jeff's house. He didn't approve, so when he saw men in black suits show up, he didn't think FBI, he thought mob, and made sure Denton didn't fall in our hands."

"How did, Stanley, was it? have any idea what was happening there?"

Maximilian sighed. "We didn't exactly fit there. You never met Jeffrey, he didn't want to live the Society lifestyle. He wanted a quiet life, without the politicking we engage in. He only wanted to raise his family and leave keeping the Society safe to us. He still worshiped, and as is traditional, he hosted us when it was his turn, and I know guys went to see him at other times. he didn't turn his back on us, if that's what you're thinking Victor. He just wanted a simpler life." he put the steaks on a plate and took random vegetables from the fridge, chopped them and added them to the plate.

Denton didn't comment on the end result, just happy to have

something to eat.

"Anyway, we never considered that people might pass judgment."

"How did that Stanley figure out who you were?"

"He didn't know we were Society. I told you, he thought we were the mob, but that's not what he judged then. What he saw was a man cheating on his wife. That she knew about it made it seem worse to him. Stanley isn't church, but he had a Christian upbringing, so fidelity is important to him."

"What are you going to do about him?"

Denton looked at Victor, but Maximilian spoke first.

"Nothing."

"What do you mean, nothing. He's Christian and he knows about us now."

"I mean nothing, Victor. This is my city, not your fathers. I'm not in the habit of silencing people just because they might have an inkling of what going on here. For fuck's sake Victor, this is 2044, it isn't like people care a bunch of guys are fucking together anymore. So what if Stanley knows we're a bunch of gays. it doesn't mean anything anymore."

"You're asking for trouble," Victor stated.

"Yeah, well my grampa was doing it this way back in the 90s, and things were quiet enough here even back then, so don't come telling me how to do things. Not when you guys still have trouble in St-Louis."

That earned Maximilian a glare.

Denton had half his plate done. He looked at Victor. "I'm going to make it even simpler for you. If anyone touches my family, they are going to pay for it. Right now, it looks like it's that guy who killed off the Stentons and seems to be going after the Lewiston, so we're on the same side, but no one here's earned my loyalty yet. I like Max, Martin, and the guys well enough, but if I'm force to choose, this little society of yours can go fuck itself."

Victor stared at Denton, then looked at Maximilian. "You're going to let him talk like that?"

"Sure, I don't see why not."

"Do you let everyone in this city threatened the Society?"

Maximilian thought it over. "I didn't hear a threat in there. I heard a very clear warning, but no threats."

"Look," Denton said, "I'm not looking to threaten anyone, but I won't let you hurt my family either. They got caught in the cross fire here, they didn't initiate anything. And I don't care what you might think about what my dad might have done after the fire." He stopped Victor's objection before he voiced it. "He was doing what my mother told him to, to the best of his ability. The fact that he was able hide me from the lot of you

says more about the Society than it says about him. I don't care that you're not happy about it. You don't want it to happen again? Fucking learn from it."

"Learn what?" Victor snapped. "We've been doing fine. I don't need some nobody who doesn't even know what we're about telling me how to do things."

There was a long silence, during which Denton went back to eating.

"Then you can leave," Maximilian said.

Victor stared at him.

"You came here to ask for support in getting the other families to increase the security in St-Louis. Except I'm not sure that's the best thing for your city or your family. Hearing how you treat Denton, who has a different way of seeing our world, has convince me not to give you that support. You can report that to your father, and you can also tell him that I will be letting the other elders know of your behavior. I'm sure some will agree with you, but I doubt many will. Goodbye Victor."

The otter's muzzle snapped shut after a moment and he turned to glare at Denton, who looked back at him and shrugged. Victor stormed off.

Frank poked his head in after the otter walked by him. "Is it safe to come in? the smell of food is making us hungry."

"Yes, it is," Maximilian said.

Both lions and the Armadillo entered.

"Except for Colby," Denton said, between bites, without looking up. "I do owe him a few pounding."

Colby's ears folded back.

"Maybe you can do that later?" Maximilian asked. "Right now I'd like to hear your ideas for how we should proceed."