

Chapter 29

"Okay, Bruce, get those memories to Leroy," Martin said as they entered the house. "While you're there, go through the files, pull out anything showing that as far as we knew Denton didn't survive the fire. Also, see if he can get that Adoption certificate made real."

On the drive here, they'd talked over what they needed to do to ensure the church couldn't cause them too much problems. Fred had suggested checking in with Martin's father, but Martin wanted to try to resolve this on their own.

Denton wasn't sure how he felt about falsifying the validity of his adoption, but part of him wanted it to be as real as it'd felt it was all his life.

"Do you need anything special to deal with that?" Martin pointed to the bag Denton was holding.

He looked at it. "Actually, about that." He stopped, "Let's go to the kitchen, I need coffee." He led the way. "By the way, where's Tess?"

"She's at the hotel, with her parents. We went to the clinic this morning. I'd just gotten back here when I Geoffrey called."

Denton put the bag down by a chair before heading to the counter. "She's not staying here?" he got the coffee machine started.

Martin chuckles "Oh no. I doubt she'd be all that comfortable with most of us walking around the house naked."

"I just thought that with you two being married."

"We're not living together. We'll probably move in to raise Esteban, but we'll have different rooms."

Denton didn't say anything. He was really going to have to get use to that, guys in relationship with women they weren't attached to.

When the coffee machine was done he poured two cups, took the vanilla creamer for himself and the amaretto one for Martin. he put the cups and creamer down, then took his gun out of the holster, made sure it the power was off, and put it on the table.

"Look, I'm not saying this so you'll feel you have carte blanche to use your ability, but there was situations where you're justified in doing so."

"Dent..."

"Hear me out Martin. You know what that is?" he nodded to his piece on the table.

"It's a gun."

"Yes, specifically, it's police issue Mareta stunner with hard bullet capability. It has a five bullet cartridge in at the moment, which I guess means that technically it's illegal for me

to have it since I'm not currently a cop, but that's not my point, sorry. It's a crime to kill someone, we have a name for it, murder. The thing is, there are situation, where killing someone is acceptable, we call that self-defense."

Martin looked at him without comprehension.

"Look, You don't have to be afraid of your ability."

"It isn't the same. I get that to protect someone sometime you need to use a lot of force, but what I do, that's coercion."

Denton sighed. "I can twits a guy's arm to get him to give me something. it can still be justifiable."

"But what I do is mental, I'm raping them."

"No it isn't."

"The Orrs..."

"You're not them, Martin. I can see how their ability work. it's strong, it hits hard, and it goes directly for the balls. I don't know if it's because they can't, or wont, use it softly. I've also been at the receiving end of it. we both have. What you do is nothing like it. When you first used it on me, I'm guessing you went pretty hard, considering how surprised you were I broke out of it. Even then, it didn't feel like I was being violated, you were making a promise, you hinting at what I could get if I agreed. I don't think you should use it that strong on normal people, but I've already seen you use it gently, just to get someone to agree. I didn't see them feel hurt or run off to jerk off. Look, all I'm saying is that you need to consider that there are times when using it will be okay, maybe even needed."

"I don't think you get it, Denton."

"Martin, I'm a cop. If I shoot someone in the line of duty, someone else gets to decide if it was right or wrong. I'm at their mercy, same for any time I have to rough up a criminal. Someone then comes down on me for it."

"Have you ever had to do it?"

"Shoot someone? only to stun, but even that could get me in hot water if I use it too much. I'm had to use violence a few times, fortunately for me, it's been judged justified each time, but I always worry about it, after the fact. when it happens, I'm too busy making sure I stop the perp from hurting someone."

"How do you know if you've crossed the line?"

"Well, I have my boss ready to tell me, but for myself, I just had to decide where the line was. How far I was willing to let someone hurt others before I felt I had to intervene."

Martin looked into his still untouched cup. "What you're saying is that it's up to me, I have to decide what I'm willing to live with."

"Yeah. Probably not the most helpful thing, sorry."

"It's okay. At least I have something to think about,

instead of floundering."

"And speaking of thinking." Denton took a long sip. "I think I need to call someone from the outside for help."

"No," Martin stated. "Absolutely not. reaching out to your partner has bitten us in the ass. I'm not risking another one."

"We don't have a choice, Martin. Without Alice, we've lost access to the processing labs. That thing I pulled off the door has prints on it, it was put there after Dexter was killed, so it's either his killer or someone helping him. We need to know who that is."

"Dent, I can't risk it. dad's going to be pissed about her."

"Look, I know we can trust him, for one thing he isn't religious, him or his husband. I've known him for a lot longer than I did Alice, we went to school together, hell he was one of the first guys I fucked."

"That doesn't mean much, there's plenty of gays working for the church."

"Martin, we can't do this alone. There's no way to know if there's anything helpful on those memories. Zee can help us, and I swear, I can keep him from asking questions."

Martin sighed. "I hate not having options." He started on his coffee.

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Denton, Martin, Fred and Bruce attracted a lot of stares as they walked through the Pink Rose. Well, the others were, he doubt anyone noticed him with them around. It was early afternoon, so the place wasn't busy, as he went to Zee's usual table.

"Well, imagine my amazement when *you* asked to meet me here," the buck said as he stood. Today he was wearing a pale green suit. He pulled the chair for Denton. "I'm afraid Denton forgot to mention he was bringing friends, please grabs some chairs."

None of them did. they remained behind Denton as he sat.

"Your friends don't seem to be particularly happy to be here."

Denton looked at them over his shoulder. "This isn't exactly easy for them."

Zee raised an eyebrow and his ears twitched. "Well, you said you needed my help. What can I do?"

"First off, You can't ask questions Zee. I'm sorry, but I don't want to lie to you, so I can't let you ask questions."

"I see." The buck took a sip of his martini. "This is going to be difficult, considering you are supposed to be dead."

Denton sighed. "I know. I'm sorry I didn't contact you before now, although, how come you're not sounding all that

surprise?"

"Your partner called me. She had some pretty choice words about you and wanted to know if I was in on 'it', whatever 'it' is."

Denton ran a hand over his head. What was Alice doing? "I'm sorry for whatever she might have said. The problem is between us, she had no business trying to drag you into it."

"I also see that you managed to track down your two 'FBI' agents." Zee nodded to Martin and Bruce. Both of whom stiffened.

"I didn't think you'd be able to tell."

"Please, Dent, dear. I was a tracker/hunter for four years. I'm an expert at recognizing people from pictures." he took another sip. "Now, about that help you need."

"I need your word first Zee."

Zee thought it over, drumming his fingers on the table. "Alright. I won't ask any question."

Denton breathed easier, for everything he'd told Martin, he had been worried Zee wouldn't have been able to stop himself.

"Alright," he put the bag on the table. "I need you to pull the prints of this. And get me the results."

Zee looked in the bag and frowned. "What is this?"

"According to the search I did, it's called a Filler. It's got a scanning system that detects holes so they can be filled. It's used mostly by people repairing buildings, to reinforce foundations and walls."

"Interesting. What else?"

"Nothing else, I need to know who touched it."

Zee folded his hands on the table and looked straight in Denton's eyes. "I have a question."

"Zee, you promised."

"If you don't answer it with utmost honesty, this whole deal is off."

"Damn it, Zee." The buck's stare didn't waver. "Fine."

"Denton," Martin warned.

"Dent, dear. Are you being coerced by these gentlemen?"

Denton stared at Zee for a moment, then started chuckling, which surprised the buck.

"No, Zee. They aren't forcing me to do anything. They're trying to help me out the best they know how."

"Really? I have to admit I am not exactly impressed. You seem to be in worse shape than when this all started."

"To be honest, I'm the one who made it worse."

"I see." Zee finished his martini. "Well, I will call you when I have the results. Now, I'm going to be ordering another drink, will any of you be wanting something?"

Denton rubbed his arm, to confirm the armband was still there. "We should get back. It isn't a good idea for me to be in

public like this for too long."

"Very well." The buck waved to a waiter, while Denton left.