

## Chapter 34

Denton was standing.

He didn't remember moving. He turned and his body was still sitting inside the circle of glowing sigils. The others were standing around, the light bright within their bodies. From the way they moved, he thought they were talking, but he couldn't hear anything.

As he'd noticed before, there weren't any sound when he was out of his body, except for the tiger. He didn't know why he'd been able to talk with Damian.

Speaking of which. He looked around for the tiger. He wasn't there. It wasn't like he could hide anywhere. like Denton, Damian had glowed, and he'd be visible through the crates or wall. That surprised him, he'd been certain Damian had something to do with the bear having abilities.

Denton looked at Matthew. Like the others, the light was contained within his body, but unlike them the light was dim, almost sickly. The thread was easy to find, now that he knew about them, He thought it would be linked to Damian, but instead it just disappeared in the distance.

He touched it with a finger. He could feel it was there, even though his finger moved through it if he pushed. Had he been wrong? was this thread not connected to Damian like he'd thought? If it wasn't, where did it lead?

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Denton wasn't in the warehouse anymore.

He stood and spun around. He was in a cave, a surprisingly bright one, considering he was still out of his body, and normally the only light available was the one he generated. The light came from the walls he realized. Other than glowing, they looked like normal stone.

How had he gotten here? and where was he, for that matter? He had a sense that he was far, but that was all he could tell. He'd been touching the thread, and wondering where it went. The thread was still there, disappearing into the distance in one direction, and connecting to a tiger, suspended in the middle of the cave.

Denton stared at him, how had he missed him being there? He was kind of conspicuous, immobile, floating in the air like that. Nothing was holding him up, at least, nothing he could see. Maybe it was something in the waking world? Except that normally objects were still slightly visible here. Denton decided it was magic, and left it at that.

He focused on the tiger himself. He was naked, muscular, and somewhere in his late forties. He did look slightly familiar, but Denton didn't know from where. He extended a hand to touch him, maybe he could wake him and he'd have answers.

Instead he touched an invisible wall. The tiger was encased in something he couldn't see. That had to be what was holding him up, except that this box also seemed to be floating, as far as he could make out by touch. Could it be anchored to the ceiling? He couldn't check that.

Alright, so the tiger couldn't help.

He looked at the cave again. More or less circular, now that he paid attention, he could see symbols moving within the walls. sigils maybe? They were too indistinct for him to be able to tell. They were everywhere, except the mouth of the cave, which was a gaping black hole. Denton moved close to it. None of the light crossed the threshold. Weird.

He turned and froze. Damian was standing and the foot of the floating tiger, smiling at Denton.

"Well, I didn't think you'd manage to find my little cave." He took a few steps toward Denton.

Denton stepped aside. "What is this place?" He noticed that the thread now connected to Damian. No, it went through him, and then to the floating tiger. Where they the same person?

"This? this is my world now, it's been it for a while now." he noticed Denton looked behind him and looked over his shoulder. "Yeah, I know. He looks pretty old, but don't worry. Once I'm out of here I'll get that taken care of."

"Out?" Denton kept moving to keep the tiger out of arm's length.

"Yeah. It's just a question of time until I have enough power to breakout of this prison."

Prison? "This is where they buried you."

Damian had a moment of surprise. "That's right, you had a talk with dad." He grinned. "I spied in on that, you know."

"I figured as much." Denton noticed the thread was shimmering. Why was it doing that? No, it wasn't shimmering, he was seeing multiple thread. Was Damian connected to all his agents? was he feeding them all power? where was he getting it from, he couldn't be having sex with anyone in there. "How are you planning on breaking out? you're going to get one of your lackey to do it?"

"In a way, I guess. Once you're dead, all the power that's accumulated in you will be released and come to me. That's going to let me shatter that cage, and then some people are going to pay."

"I'm not dead yet."

"It's just a question of time."

"I wouldn't bet on it." Denton stopped moving, and so did Damian. "We've got the bear, Carmichael, and the two with him ran off. Then the one in San Francisco was caught by the Orr's people. I don't expect he fared well."

"I know. It was so much simpler when I killed them myself, but what can I do, I'm trapped here so I have to use what I can. Which reminds me. How the fuck did you survive! I was careful! I checked everything!"

Denton snorted. "You missed something. My mom got me out of the fire."

Damian narrowed his eyes. "A fire, you would have been a kid back then." His eyes went wide. "You're the garbage man's kid? No fucking way. Everyone in that house died, I felt it." The tiger started pacing. "You couldn't have escaped me... unless. He shielded you somehow? That's impossible; I had spells setup to find anyone who was a Stenton."

Denton watched him pace, not moving. He hadn't thought of himself as a Stenton after the fire. From the moment Stanley had taken him in, he'd been a Brislow. He'd known his last name was Stenton, but it hadn't been *his*, it had been his father's and his mother's. Since he hadn't remembered them, it hadn't seemed important.

Damian laughed. "There's no fucking way that guy did that. He'd turned his back on the power, he worked a dead end job with some girl cooking meals for him." His tone was dismissive.

"Watch what's you're saying about my parents."

Damian waved the warning aside. "Come on. You can't think that highly of them. I mean, what the hell was she staying with him? It wasn't like he was going to get it up for her. What was she getting for putting up with you?"

"Shut up." Denton's hands clenched. He wished they were in the waking world right now so he could punch him.

"But hey, think about it this was. I did you a favor. Parents aren't good for anything but standing in your way." he waved at the floating body. "My father did that because he was jealous of the power I had. Yours would have done worse to you."

Denton wasn't conscious of moving. One moment he was a few steps away from the tiger, the next he was in front of him, clocking him hard enough to send him flying to the ground.

Denton stared at his fist. It had made contact.

"You're solid?" Damian was stunned.

Denton grinned. They could touch? Oh, this was perfect, he was going to give the tiger the pounding of his life. He headed for him.

Damian watched him for a moment. "You're fucking solid. Oh, this is perfect." he extended a hand to Denton, who was sent flying back until he hit the wall.

He felt the impact, but didn't feel any pain. He tried to move, but something was holding him pressed there. his feet didn't reach the floor. moved his legs trying to find purchase to get himself out of this, but couldn't.

Damian stood and walked to him. "You have no idea how long I've waited for this."

"How are you doing this?"

"Oh, I told you this is my world. I control everything in it, which isn't much, I'll grant you that, but you're here, so I can control you." He was right before Denton now. He placed a shaking hand on his chest. "Fuck, you are real." He ran the hand through Denton's fur, made of light. "Do you have any idea how long it's been since I've actually fucked someone?"

No way, no fucking way. He wasn't getting fucked by one of those tigers. Denton managed to raise a leg and kick Damian in the chest, sending him back. Denton fell to the ground. Damian had to focus to hold him in place. That was good to know. He was on his feet and running, arm extended to punch the tiger.

"I don't think so." Damian got up

Denton froze in place. He couldn't move.

"That first time was because you surprised me. I didn't think we could touch each other. I haven't been able to touch anything before. But now that I know, you're not going to surprise me again."

Denton was turned around.

"I wonder what your ass is going to feel like here. Is it going to feel like the real thing? Or does light feel differently? I guess we're going to find out."

No, no, no. He wasn't going to get raped here, out of his body. He needed to get out of here, except the wall had been solid. He had to reach for the thread that had brought him here and follow it back out.

He felt Damian's hands on his back.

"You cheetah are so damn skinny. Couldn't you bulk up your astral form? It doesn't have to match your body you know. You don't see me looking like that wreck."

Denton wanted to scream, but he couldn't get his body to respond. He tried to shake out of the hold and get out of here.

The hand moved lower, and rubbed his ass.

Denton's mind froze. And in that silence, he caught something the tiger had said, this form didn't have to match that of their body, which reminded him Damian's form was connected to his body... so his should be too, right? He couldn't move his eyes, but now that he was focusing on it, he could see it to his right. All he had to do was grasp it somehow, and follow it back to his body.

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Denton was back in the warehouse.

He put as much power as he could spare in his hand and sliced through the bear's thread. It sizzled away, and he dropped to his knees in relief.