

Chapter 35

Denton took a moment to catch his breath. He had no way to be sure, but he hoped this would keep Damian from following him. He stood, turned to head to his body, but stopped. Something was wrong. His friends were standing together between him and... people, eight shadowed forms.

Denton's ran to his body and jumped in, He'd forgotten to asked if there was anything special he needed to do to get back to the waking world, but he couldn't care. Everyone's body language had been tensed.

He opened his eyes with a gasp. He wanted to jump up, but nausea assaulted him. It took a moment for his stomach to settle, then he carefully stood. He had to turn to see who the new people were. Before he'd finished turning he realized the room was lit. The roll door at the front was open, letting it daylight.

Alice was at the front of them. Great, he'd really hoped to be out of here before they connected the dots to this place. He saw concern in her eyes for a moment, then anger.

Behind her was Flint, and six other people. only one of whom was a cop. He could tell by the way the other five fidgeted. They wore gray body armor, with only a black cross as the identifying mark. no names, no badges, and they were all arms with old style shotguns.

What the fuck was going on here?

His legs became steadier in the few steps that took him too them. "Hey Flint." He decided to snub Alice for now, payback for her blowing up at him. "Where's your partner? I'd have expected him to jump at the chance to be here."

"This isn't any of his concern."

Denton's ears tilted. Really? If he'd had to bet, he would have put money on Reilly being Church. "Out of curiosity, how did you find this place?"

"How do you think?" Alice snarled. "Unlike you bunch, we don't need magic to get things done."

Denton rolled his eyes. "Will you come down your high horse? I'm able to run a proper investigation. I'm a cop too."

"No, you're not," Flint snorted. "You're dead, remember?"

Denton waved that aside. "We're going to fix that."

"I don't care," Alice said. "You're never going to be a cop again. I've seen to it."

"What have you done?" Denton asked.

"Me?" The hare assumed an innocent air. "Why, I haven't done anything. You're the one that's on the take. Tampering with evidence, snitching to the mob."

"What?" Denton yelled.

"Don't act all offended. We all know that's why you were in

the force. to protect them!"

Denton took a breath. "Alice. I have never done anything to help the Society in my life. For fuck's sake, I didn't even know they existed."

"Stop fucking lying to me! You're wasting your time! You've been found out, it's over!" Alice's eyes were getting wet. "I don't know how you got the Brislow to go along with this, but I'm going to find out and they're all going to pay."

Denton glared at her silently, and she glared back. his hands were fists.

"Yeah," Flint sneered. "When you come back to 'life' you can spent it fucking your pervert friends."

"Hey watch it!" Frank yelled and took a step forward, to be stopped by Martin.

"Agent Flint," the cougar said. "Before you start accusing us for being perverts, maybe you should see to those pedophile your church is still protecting."

"Yeah," Fred said, a hand on his brother's shoulder. "It's your 'god' who said to make sure your house is clean before commented on other's dirt, right?"

"Those are lies creating by your kind," Alice snarled. "I won't have you disrespecting our priests." She reached for Martin, and Denton decked her. Shotguns were leveled at them.

"Don't you dare lay a hand on my friends," Denton warned. "Don't you dare go after my family. Whatever you think this is, it's between you and me. You're going to leave everyone out of it."

She didn't say anything, rubbing her muzzle.

"Oh, I am so fucking happy you did that," flint said. "You just assaulted an officer. We're going to take you all in and put you through the wringer."

The guys behind Denton shuffled about nervously.

"No you won't, Flint." Denton leveled his gaze at him.

"Ohhhh, you going to scare us with your sex magic?"

Denton shook his head with a chuckle. "I'm not seeing any badges, and you have five civilians. I'd love to see you explain that to the captain. You know what?" He extended his hands. "I've changed my mind. Take me in. the discomfort is going to be worth it just to see Sherman tear you a new one."

Flint's shock was all the response Denton needed. He lowered his hands. He watched Alice stand.

"We're leaving. You're welcome to Carmichael. You won't be able to link him to the Lewiston's murder, but he's their killer." They headed for the opening. "I'm pretty sure he's powerless now, and you shouldn't have to worry about his boss." He added that just to needle her.

"What boss?" she yelled at his back.

"Have fun doing your detective work." He waved at them, then put his hands in his jacket's pocket. His right hand closed on something there and he stopped walking.

"You okay?" Martin asked.

Denton nodded. "You keep going. I'll be right there."

Martin looked at him then nodded.

Denton unclipped his holstered gun. He couldn't give up one and keep the other. He turned and tossed his badge and gun at Alice's feet.

"Since you've seen to it I can't use these, you can have them. But I want you to pass a message along to your superiors, at that church of yours. You tell them that I was willing to work with them. They were this close to have someone from the Society working side by side with them, to solve stuff like this." He indicated the bear. "And then Cooper, you tell them that because of the two of you, I'm never, ever, going to trust the church."

Denton left before he said something he'd really regret. By the time he walked around the building Martin had the car out of the alley and waiting for him. He got in and they left.

They rode in silence for a while, then Denton sighed.

"Well, this screws things up."

"What do you mean?" Frank asked. It was him and his brother in the back.

"We don't have any way to figure out who Matthew really is. That's bound to be another body he stole."

"Maybe not. you did say you cut him off from the power, right?"

"I'm pretty sure. Before I jumped back in my body the light in his was dimming fast. Damian was feeding it to him through some sort of link. And there's more of them."

"Then, that has to be his original body. I did some reading on body thieves. They need constant power to maintain the form. without it, they revert to the original."

"Then Matthew Carmichael somehow got in contact with the tiger?" Martin asked.

"Has to be," Fred replied. "I don't care how powerful he is, there's no way he'd be able to setup a link like that through a third party."

Denton took out his phone. "Then we need to go through his life and see how that happened. Leroy, You need to sift through Carmichael's life. Anything and everything, we're looking for how he got in contact with Damian. Yeah, we'll be there within the hour."

He disconnected, then stared at his phone. With a curse he took out his knife and started unscrewing the back.

"What are you doing?" Martin asked.

"This is a police issued phone." He popped the back. "It doesn't matter what I do to it, they can turn it on remotely. It's a safety feature, in case one of us goes missing or is kidnapped." He looked through the components

"Okay, how is that a problem?"

"Tracking it isn't the only thing they can do. They can turn it into a microphone and listen in on conversations, for intel." He'd booked a girl a few years back who was paranoid. She was certain the government was listening to people's phone calls. She's taught herself how to take out what she thought allowed them to do it. She'd gotten in trouble when she decided she had to protect others and broke into a store to modify all the phones there.

In the car she'd gone on and on about how phones worked, how each part was connected to the other. He hadn't paid that much attention to her, but he remembered the battery. He'd thought it was stupid to put it under so many other components. it would be a lot easier for the repair people to change that if it was on the surface.

He found it and used the tip of his knife to pull it out of the slot, then cut the wires.

"Wouldn't it have been easier to just toss it out the window?" Frank remarked. Which earned him a glare from Denton.