

## CHAPTER 9 Urgent Matter

‘Don’t you miss your father? Does he speak with you at all?’ Ann asked hesitantly.

She felt a pang of pain and a soft whine, swiftly followed by a snarl of anger.

‘He is worse than your father. Constantly silent and never responds my to attempts to link with him. It’s as if he’s dead.’ She snapped. ‘If that’s what he wants, then so be it. A shitty excuse for a father for both of us.’

Ann’s mouth set in a grim line as she focused on the road ahead. Just then her phone rang and the call transferred to the cars in the built infotainment system, linked with the onboard diagnostics HUD screen.

She touched the screen to accept and answered the call.

“Hello?”

“Ann, where are you?” the worried voice of her best friend came through loudly.

Ann flinched and quickly turned the volume down as she answered.

“I’m driving at the minute, is everything okay?”

“I was going to ask you the same thing! Listen, I’m at work at the minute, but I finish in about an hour, do you want to go eat somewhere for lunch?” She asked quietly.

“Sure. It’ll take me about an hour to get back anyway. You’re only on half days today?”

Lexi usually worked like a demon, which was fitting because she was indeed part daemon. An unlikely tryst between a mid-level daemon and a human had resulted in her birth.

Her mother died not long after she was born and the daemon was not able to raise her in his realm as it was simply too dangerous, so she had been taken in by a children’s home that specialized in raising hybrids well in order for them to live well alongside the wider population of other supernatural races and the humans that were mostly oblivious to their existence.

A half day was practically unheard of for her and it made Ann start to wonder what exactly had happened that made her so eager to leave work. She had quite a comfortable job at a small company that dealt with accounting and she had a natural flair for the work.

“Yeah, only because that asshole of a supervisor I have can’t get the formulas for the spreadsheets right. I swear if he fucks up one more...” Lexi sighed heavily, “Sorry, Ann, work is boring. I’ll see you for lunch and you can fill me in on the details that I am so obviously lacking. Love you! See you soon.” Lexi finished and hung up abruptly.

Ann chuckled to herself and found a spot to turn around and head back toward the city.

Lunch dates with Lexi were always an opportunity to let off some steam and she could almost predict exactly the words of comfort that her friend would have for her.

‘More like plans for murder...’ Maeve sniggered.

Ann grinned to herself. Maeve wasn’t wrong in the slightest.

Ann arrived at the cafe they had decided on well before Lexi did. She found a table by the window so that she could people-watch and ordered a chai while she waited.

Even though the weather hadn’t quite changed to the autumnal vibe that she loved so much, the rich smell of the milky chai tea had a homey, almost Christmassy feel to it.

Secretly, Ann was panicking. She had left home, to move in with a man she knew only by reputation and was going to be married to him for the next 5 years. Right now, she wanted the security that the feeling of home gave, and the memories that the smell of chai tea evoked within her were the closest that she would ever come to being wrapped in her mother’s reassuring embrace again.

Ann was acutely aware of the gaze of the cafe’s visitors on her. It was starting to make her feel a little uncomfortable when she saw Lexi jump out of a taxi through the window and hurry inside.

She stood squinting in the doorway, her beautiful golden eyes scouring every face quickly before landing on Ann, and her face split into a huge grin. She lifted her arm and waved, shouting across to her loudly, uncaring of the disapproving glances she was receiving from the other customers.

“Hey! Did you order yet?!” Lexi yelled.

Ann stifled a laugh and grinned back, shaking her head as she lifted her festive-looking glass and pointed to it.

“Chai already?!” She yelled wrinkling her nose in disgust. “Fine, I’ll order a drink for pansies and we’ll decide on food in a sec, okay?” Lexi finished rolling her eyes as she made her way to the counter.

Ann sniggered as an older woman attempted to berate Lexi for being obnoxiously loud and watched with a serene expression as Lexi quickly put her in her place.

She had missed this. Life had been eventful with Lexi at her side through school..they had been inseparable. It was a bonus that she had been as averse to Ada as Ann was, but she had never been sure if it was out of loyalty to Ann or not.

The reasoning didn’t really matter, but she was pleased that even though they were spreading their wings in the world of adulthood, some things never changed.

“Oh my god, what is wrong with some people?” She exclaimed in disbelief as she sat down shaking her head and throwing her bag onto the chair next to them.

“Too human for your liking?” Ann answered dryly.

“She accused me of being obnoxiously loud which she found rude and offensive. When I asked why she was here being offended and not dying in a retirement home somewhere she seemed surprised, and offended again, that I would dream of saying such a thing. She just labeled me as obnoxiously loud, rude, and offensive.... what the fuck did she expect me to say?” She snorted.

Ann resisted the urge to cackle loudly as she shook her head despairingly and sipped on her espresso.

“I don’t know how you can drink those, they’re so bitter,” Ann commented as she gestured to the tiny cup that Lexi held gracefully in her hands.

“Because it’s as black as my soul.” She whispered conspiratorily with a sweet smile.

## Comments (1)