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"I said strip," he repeats, raising an eyebrow at me, daring me to disobey.

I struggle to remove my shirt, trying to cover my bare chest by turning away from him. The girl beside me starts to remove her clothes as well.

"Not you, child. I don't want to see you naked; you're only here to make sure she obeys orders," he says, making me relieved as she pulls her dress strap back up.

I remove my pants, leaving me only in my panties. Using my hands, I cover my breasts before turning around to face them.

The Lycan man steps forward, he licks his lips approvingly making me flinch. "Remove them," he says looking down at my panties.

"Please," I beg, not wanting to remove them.

"Remove them or I kill the child," he says tauntingly. I look at the little girl who darted behind me at his words. I feel my cheeks burn with embarrassment. This was so degrading and humiliating. I pull my panties down before placing one hand over my breasts and the other trying to cover my lady parts. Both men step forward and I step back, nearly tripping over the girl behind me. The Lycan man grabs my wrist, pulling my arm away from my chest, my ample breasts on display for them. I feel a tear run down my cheek as the other man removes my hand from my sensitive parts.

"Why are you crying? You have nothing to be embarrassed about," says the Dragon. How didn't they understand how degrading this is? No one should have to be put through this humiliation. I had never been naked in front of anyone besides my grandmother.

"Open your legs," he growls, stepping closer. The Lycan man peers around me.

"Close your eyes little one," he whispers to the small girl, and I feel a sob leave my lips. When the girl does as she is told, he stands upright. He taps my foot with his, forcing my legs apart. His fingers move to my slit before he shoves his finger inside me quickly before removing it. I cry out at the sudden intrusion. "A virgin like I thought," he murmurs. I watch horrified as he sucks the finger into his mouth and moans loudly.

"You made me strip to see if I was a virgin? What, asking was too hard?" I ask but instantly regret it as they both step closer.

"You can put your clothes back on," he says. The Dragon bent down and picked up my shoes. He looks at them before tossing them in the fireplace. I quickly get dressed.

"Follow us, we will take you to your chambers," the Lycan man says. We follow silently. The Lycan leads the way while the Dragon remains behind us. I can feel his eyes boring into my back, feel the little girl's arms grip my hips tightly.

We stop outside a door on the bottom floor, he opens the door and reveals a small room with a single bed and small fireplace. A desk off to the side in a corner and a round blue rug on the floor. Walking in it seems quite cozy offering warmth and safety from the cold dark nights outside.

I watch mesmerised as the Dragon man walks in and over to the fireplace, he takes a breath in then blows it out of his mouth like he's blowing a kiss. Yet I can feel the heat in the air rising rapidly as the logs start burning catching alight. He turns and winks at me.

I notice off to the side is a bathroom with a shower and toilet. I don't move though, too scared by the men standing in front of me, I don't want to risk angering them.

"You will stay here for now until Silas comes back and verifies you are who we think you are," says the Lycan man, his eyes burning oddly mirroring the flames coming from the fireplace.

"If you need anything knock on the door, someone will hear you. My name is Matitus, this is Dragus," says the man I recognize to be a Dragon. I store their names to memory, hoping I never have to utter them.

They then walk out, closing the door behind them. The little girl tugs at my shirt making me look down at her.

"Are they going to kill us?" she asks, concerned. Now that they are gone, I can really look at her. The poor girl is underweight, not that that is something

unheard of in the city, starvation being the main killer. Her hair which should be blonde is matted and dirty turning it brown in patches. What I thought was a dress is a man's undershirt being worn as a dress, the edges frayed and filthy with holes.

"I don't think so, well I don't think they will kill you anyway," I tell her. Suddenly, there is a knock on the door, and an old woman who I believe is a human walks in with her head down carrying towels and a pile of clothes. Yet something seemed off about her, I just couldn't put my finger on why I felt that way.

"For you," she mutters, her eyes never peering up. She thrusts them forward again and I grab them from her before she hurriedly walks back out. I can sense her fear, like she was told not to talk to linger too long. It would also make sense why she didn't look up and make eye contact. She then shuts the door and I hear the jingle of keys and I know she locked it. I place the clothes on the bed along with the towels.

"What is your name?" I ask the little girl who comes and stands beside me. "Lilith" she whispers, looking at the pile.

"My name is Elora," I tell her.

"Elora?" she repeats, trying out my name and making me smile. I dig through the clothes and find a pair of blue denim jeans and a white shirt as well as a bra and a pair of underwear. With the clothes is also a pair of black pants with woollen underlay and a shirt with a butterfly and a hooded sweater. I know by the size, the black pants and butterfly shirt and the hooded sweater are for the little girl. She touches the butterfly and smiles.

"It's so pretty," she says, caressing the fabric.

I also found two pairs of socks, something I haven't held for so long. The only socks I have held was when I pulled some off a dead man I found in the gutter. I washed them before giving them to my grandmother, her feet always so cold from the weather and her old age.

Lilith got up walking over to the small bathroom. "Do you think it has hot water?" she asked, looking eager to try it.

"Let's find out," I tell her, hopping up and walking to the shower. I turn on the taps and chuckle when I feel the water heat up slowly. I turn to Lilith and pull

her makeshift dress off. I then remove my clothes before adjusting the water temperature and turning the taps on full force. We both step under the showers spray. I flinch when I feel the water run over the lashing mark from the whip. The water is burning it making my skin sting.

Lilith giggles excitedly and it makes me wonder when the last time she felt hot water was, if ever. I find a bar of soap and a small bottle of shampoo and conditioner on the sink basin. I hand her the soap, and she excitedly starts lathering up her body with it. Dirt and grime run down the drain. I put some shampoo in my hands and started scrubbing her hair and messaging her scalp, feeling her relax slightly.

"This is wonderful," she exclaims as the room steams up with the smell of strawberry shampoo and chamomile soap. When I am done washing her hair, I rinse it out letting her condition her own hair while I wash myself, giving myself a good scrub, blood from my back turning the floor red, it stings terribly but I ignore it.

I see Lilith reluctantly hop out and grab a towel, wrapping it around her little body. I quickly wash my hair, scrubbing my scalp as I feel the cleanest I have ever felt in years. I get out when I feel the water temperature drop slightly. I grab my towel and follow Lilith out. She sits on the rug in front of the small fireplace. I quickly get dressed to find the clothes fit perfectly. Despite everything, feeling warm and clean is such a relief. I then help Lilith get dressed. She smiles brightly back at me.

"They are so warm," she whispers, running her hands over the soft fabric. Now that she is clean, her skin is like porcelain, so delicate and pure.

I comb her long blonde hair with my fingers before pulling a hair tie from my wrist. I then braid her hair so it is out of her face. She touches the braid gently not wanting to ruin it.

"What about you?" she says when she realizes, I gave her my only hair tie. I shrug. "I don't need it," I tell her, knowing chances are when this Silas person comes, I will probably be slaughtered. We sit in front of the fire for a while and eventually fall asleep.

I am jolted awake when I hear the door swing open creaking loudly. Matitus, one of the Dragon Kings, is standing in the doorway. I sit up, groggy before recognition hits me and I become anxious.