

Chapter 173 Snake Show

The ground-floor bar was packed, but as Nina pushed forward through the crowd, people started taking notice and parted to make way. “Elektra!” someone shrieked. Others echoed this name in whispers and shouts of all volumes.

Nina glanced around the room, smiling a wicked and cripplingly sexy smile that Kayden had never seen on her face before. The bizarrely dressed, heavily made-up partiers teemed with animal energy. They seemed to all know Nina, and they treated her with a cult-like reverence.

The bartender, a leather-clad bald woman with teardrops tattooed down her cheeks, quickly served Nina a tray of shots. They were electric green and glowed in the blacklight, with wisps of white smoke floating up from them. With an acrobatic movement, Nina suddenly let go of Kayden’s hand, pressed her palms onto the counter and leapt up onto it, twisting gracefully into a seated position with her legs crossed.

The bar crowd roared into applause, gathering attention from the nearby dancefloor and causing even more people to flood the bar area, all calling out “Elektra! Elektra!” while Nina made herself at home on top of the bar.

Then she started a little show. She swallowed down one smoking green shot before then serving the rest to her companions in a rather unique way.

She pulled Kayden in first, wrapping her legs around his waist while he pressed into the bar ledge. Then she threw another shot into her mouth, but this one she didn’t swallow. She held it in her cheeks and then pressed Kayden’s head back and neatly spat it into his mouth, like a momma bird feeding its baby. He tasted black licorice; it was absinthe.

The green liquid dribbled down both their chins. Nina licked up the mess on Kayden’s face, left her own wet and dripping, then pushed Kayden to the side and performed the same trick to serve shots to her four other “dates.”

Kayden found it increasingly difficult to “be cool and go with it” as Nina led them up through the next few floors. Bad Wolf’s attractions and exhibits were the stuff of nightmares, in his opinion... and this was a man who had been to war.

Pierced and tattooed contortionists in various stages of undress crawled upside down and folded themselves along catwalks around the dancefloor, and overhead, giant metal birdcages containing semi-nude dancers wearing beaked, feathered masks over their faces were suspended by steel chains from the ceiling.

Another level of the club had a big round stage in its center, surrounded by steep rows of stadium seating packed with a rowdy audience. The show already in progress here appeared to be the night’s main event. Halogen signs hanging crooked against a red curtain read: SNAKE SHOW!

The petite, raven-haired woman under the spotlight had a live snake, at least seven feet long, wrapped around her shoulders and arms. The snake’s jaw had been sewn shut, crudely stitched with thick, electric yellow string in jagged sutures in a state of scabbed, partial healing.

The performer peeled the snake off her body and... arched her neck back and guided the snake down her open throat, sewn-closed face first... You could see it writhing, increasingly panicked as it suffocated while sliding down her throat, making the small woman’s neck and chest bulge and tremble and quake... The audience was gasping, cheering, cackling sadistically and howling with sick pleasure as she kept shoving it in, swallowing down more and more of that long snake than seemed physically possible...

Kayden could not stop thinking about what the bouncer said. Asking Nina why she wasn’t headlining tonight. His anxious mind wondered desperately what it was that Nina performed here, exactly. It took tremendous effort to focus back on their night’s mission, but he did.

Finally they reached the mezzanine. It was half past one.

Nina played the VIP room bouncer in the same fashion that she did the ones out front. Lightly touching him and engaging in flirtatious chit-chat, until he unclipped the red velvet rope from the stanchion and permitted the six of them to enter.

The VIP area had a circular bar in its center and plush, pillow-covered red velvet couches and booths lining the walls. It was much less crowded than the rest of the club, and much quieter. A DJ in a dark corner was playing slow, bass-heavy music while heavily tattooed, stunningly beautiful dancers worked the laps of all kinds of men and women around the room.

Nina and the soldiers settled into an open booth. A young woman with blonde pigtails, facial piercings and a tightly cinched corset deposited unsolicited bottles of champagne, vodka and mixers to their table before asking Nina what else she could do for her.

The men were hesitant to drink more, but Nina gave them to understand that it was necessary for their cover. She dexterously ascended onto the table and poured vodka straight from the bottle into all of their open mouths. It didn’t take long for her to catch the attention of everyone in the room, and soon men were thronging their booth, begging “Elektra” to feed them shots, too.

She obliged, but made every man sit on his knees at her feet and teased him mercilessly before finally dousing his eager mouth. She kicked them all roughly to the floor, too, after sloppily pouring liquor all over them. They clearly loved every second of it.

Finally, Nina made eye contact with a man from across the room, and immediately ascertained that this was likely to be their target. Everything about him screamed dealer. He sat in the very center of a large group of rough-looking men and cheap-looking women. He gave Nina a look that she took to mean he wanted her attention, but was not going to come over and beg for it like the others.

She would not approach him. She would wait till he changed his mind about that. Till he wanted her more than he wanted to hold onto that pride.

She winked at the man slowly. Licked her messy orange lips. Bent forward to give him a good view of her perfect, sparkly cleavage. And then ignored him.

It took almost an hour, but the dealer finally broke down and came after Nina.

She was up at the circular bar chatting with bartender, with Kayden close behind her, his thumbs hooked into the tiny pockets of leather shorts, when the man appeared beside them.

“I’m Simon,” he said, once Nina finally acknowledged his presence. “And you – you need no introduction.” His green eyes glinted and a lurid smile crept up one side of his face.

“Oh, you’re a fan, huh?” Her tone hinted at condescension.

Simon shrugged, still paying no mind to Kayden. “I liked what I saw.”

“If you’re hoping for a private show, you’re outta luck. It’s my night off. Just here to enjoy.”

He leaned into the bar and sidled up closer. “Nah,” he said, stroking the dark stubble that lined his jaw. “Just wanna treat you to a shot, is all.”

“Is that all? Nothing else?” Nina darted her eyes to Simon’s jacket, an oversized holographic bomber that she suspected contained pockets full of illicit merchandise.

He followed her eyes and understood her meaning. Jerked his head in the direction of the VIP restrooms and said, “I’ll give you anything you need, baby. Just tell me what you want.”

Nina leaned in and whispered into Simon’s ear. His smile broadened while she spoke, and when she pulled back, he nodded curtly and headed for the restroom. Nina then whispered a quick plan to Kayden and told him to communicate it with the others, give her a few seconds’ lead, and then follow.

She sincerely hoped the soldiers all were as athletic as elite warriors ought to be. Because there was a window in this bathroom that led out to a rickety fire escape, and that was how she planned to have two of the Gammas get away with abducting Simon without attracting attention inside the club. By climbing down the back of the building and dropping into a dark alleyway inhabited only by dumpsters. She would then make a cool exit back through the club with Kayden and the others, hoping it would not arouse too much suspicion if onlookers noticed she’d lost a couple members of her harem.

Simon was showing Nina a page of acid-soaked unicorn stickers when the guys entered the bathroom behind them.

Kayden had him choked unconscious before he could even turn around.

Once two of the soldiers were out the window with their deadweight cargo, Nina said a little prayer in her head, hoping they’d make it back to the limo unnoticed, and began her exit with Kayden and the remaining Gammas in tow.

But shortly after they left the VIP room, a hulking presence suddenly blocked Nina’s path and she looked up to find herself face to face with the last person in the world she wanted to see.

A huge, muscle-bound werewolf dressed in all black towered over her. An angry vein was throbbing in his thick neck. His dark, narrow eyes glimmered with rage.

“What are you doing, Ryker?” Nina did her best to hide the fear that took sudden hold of her at the sight of her ex.

He darted his eyes to Kayden and the Gammas, then back to Nina.

Kayden strode forward, stepping between them. “Do we have a problem?”

Ryker answered by snapping a big fist forward, aiming for Kayden’s jaw.