

## Chapter 101 - The Vampire's Servant

[Echo]

When I woke up Saturday morning, Victor wasn't in bed with me and Gray. I saw him pacing in my room. He looked distracted and didn't seem to see me. I watched him for a while.

"What's he pacing about?" Gray whispered next to me.

"I don't know." I answered.

Victor didn't notice us talking either. I was nervous. I didn't like it when he was so in his head that nothing else registered. It had been like this over the last few days.

He was stressing out over the curse. We hadn't gotten any movement on it since. It had only been a couple days, but Victor said he was feeling differently than normal.

"Victor?" I called out.

No response. I got out of bed and tapped his arm. Victor jumped a little. He looked at me like he didn't fully recognize me for a moment.

"Echo? Why are you up?" He asked.

"My alarm went off, Victor. Are you alright?"

"Already. I didn't even hear it. Are you excited for your dance tonight?" Victor smiled.

"Maybe we shouldn't go." Gray said. "It looks like you need Echo here."

I nodded. I was worried about Victor. He was always distracted recently. It was like he couldn't focus on anything else.

"No. You should go. Echo should have this experience. I want her to have fun." Victor responded.

"I don't need to, Victor." I insisted.

"You do. This is just me overthinking. Don't worry. I want to see you in your dress." Victor smiled. "I have a surprise for you later. I want this to be a wonderful evening for you."

“What is it?” I asked, suddenly eager.

“You’ll find out later. Don’t you have training today?” Victor asked with a smile.

“Oh no!” I yipped and rushed to get ready for training.

Once I was dressed, I met the boys downstairs. We headed out for our run and Dillon worked with me while Jean-Claude and Gray sparred. It got me out of my head a little.

Gray had tried to talk them out of training, but I thought it was good for us. Especially me. I was working really hard to be better than before. I didn’t want Victor and Gray to worry about me anymore.

Victor and Finn had breakfast ready for us when we came in. It was really nice to have found our stride as a household. Everything was working smoothly and I wasn’t having any trouble keeping up with the housework now that Gray was helping out around the house.

I went with Victor up to his room when it was time for him to sleep. Soon he would be going to bed before I finished training in the mornings. I would miss having breakfast with him.

As I curled up in his bed with him, I could tell he was tense still. I trailed my hand up and down his stomach, trying to calm him. Though it worked on Gray, it didn’t seem to be working for Victor.

“Are you worried about the curse?” I asked.

“I’m sorry, princess. There’s some invisible, looming deadline hanging over me and we aren’t moving as quickly as I would like. Every night that passes, we get closer to my end, and I can’t shake this feeling of impending doom.” He sighed.

“I know it seems like this is all going slowly, Victor. We’re doing what we can. There are so many people working on it, that I know we’ll see the end before anything happens to you. No one has tried this hard to break the curse before. The light witches are helping even though they know the dark witches are helping too. Everyone who knows about the curse is really focused on ending it. Just have patience.” I said.

“I hissed at Gray this morning. Before you woke up. He rolled over and put an arm around you and I hissed like some angry cat. I didn’t want him touching you. I hated his presence. It was only for a moment, but, I couldn’t help myself. That was part of why I wasn’t in bed when you got up. What if I hurt him? You’d never forgive me.” Victor admitted.

“Don’t tell me what I would feel, Victor. You didn’t hurt him. You pulled yourself together. It may mean working harder on containing your emotions, but I think you can do it. I know you can do it. If there’s an incident, we’ll all work through it. Even if I have to start sleeping alone again.” I insisted.

Victor stopped my hand and brought it up to his lips. “Don’t say that, princess. I love our nights together. I know how much you hated being alone all the time. Even in your sleep, you cling to us. I can’t force you to go back to being alone at night. What if you have a nightmare?”

“I’ll figure it out, Victor. I just want you to know that’s an option I’m willing to explore if we have to. Thank you for being honest with me about your thoughts and feelings. I worry sometimes that you and Gray keep quiet about things so you won’t upset me. That’s not healthy for our relationship. I want to know everything you’re thinking.” I told him.

“I will always tell you my mind, Echo. I promise. I feel the sun tugging at me. I can’t stay awake any longer.” He said softly.

“Close your eyes, Victor. I’ll stay here until you’re asleep. I love you.” I whispered.

“I love you, too, my Echo. I’ll always love you.” Victor murmured as he closed his eyes.

I pulled my hand from his grasp and moved up to kiss him. I wanted him to go to sleep knowing that I was there for him, feeling that I loved him. His kiss was gentle and slowly began to slacken as sleep took him from me.

Tenderly, I ran my fingers through his hair and traced over the curves of his cheek and jaw bones. I managed to keep the tears out of my eyes until he was gone, then I laid my ear over his heart and listened to the slow, muffled beating. He wasn’t dead, just sleeping. I would repeat that phrase throughout the rest of the day.

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A few hours later, I was dusting in the living room when I heard the buzzer for the front gate. I had decided to clean until Harmony would come to get ready for the dance. It helped me stay calm.

Gray had held me for an hour after I let Victor rest. I told him what Victor said about the hissing and what I told him about sleeping alone. Gray agreed with Victor, that we should wait until there was more of a danger to him. I didn’t like it, but it was two against one.

I went to the entry and hit the intercom. It was Harmony. I looked at the clock on the wall. It was only just one in the afternoon. I didn’t know why she was there so early. Maybe she just wanted to hang out with me a little before we got ready. I smiled and opened the gate.

Returning to the living room, I finished the last of my dusting, then put the duster away in the laundry room. The front door opened just as I was coming back. Harmony grinned and entered with the bag that held her dress and another bag with her other things.

Behind her, two women entered the house. I tensed. I didn’t like people I didn’t know in the house.

I recognized one of the women as Opal from the salon. She smiled and wiggled her fingers. Gray came down the stairs and froze for a moment.

“Hiya, I’m Opal. Master Nightshade requested me and Penny come to help the girls get ready for your dance.” She said.

“Right. I didn’t really expect you this early.” Gray replied with a smile.

“You knew about this?” I asked him.

“Victor wanted you to have everything perfect. He said it would be a chance to see what Opal could do, since he’s hired her to help you get ready for his announcement ball next weekend.” Gray said.

“Yeah, no human servants allowed. Well, actually, I guess that’s not true. They asked for volunteers to be servers, but I didn’t want to. If I’m going to a party with my master, I want to be a guest, not a worker bee.” Opal giggled.

“I’m Penny.” The other girl said. “It’s an honor to meet you, Mistress Nightshade.”

I looked at her. She was tall with dark skin and dark curly hair. I didn’t get a bad feeling from her.

“You can call me Echo. I prefer it.” I said.

“Thank you.” She smiled.

“You need a shower.” Harmony told me with a scrunched nose. “You smell like dust and sweat. It makes the vampire smell really weird.”

“Where are we setting up?” Opal asked.

“Why don’t you take them up to your room, Echo? You can have a shower and they’ll help you get ready. Cam and Val will be here around four. We’ll leave by five to get to the restaurant in time for our reservation. That way Victor can see you in your dress before everything get ruined from dancing and having fun.” Gray said.

With a nod, I guided everyone up to my room. Harmony handed me my robe and pushed me toward my bathroom. I’d showered after training, but I guess I’d worked up a sweat cleaning. I shrugged and went in to take my shower while they set up their things and Harmony hung up her dress.

Carefully, I washed, shaved, and rinsed my body. For good measure, I flossed and brushed too. I wrapped the robe around myself tightly and tied the belt before entering my room.

My computer chair and another chair were set out near my desk and dresser. There were a lot of things set out all over the surfaces. Everyone turned to look at me and I was keenly aware of the fact that I was actually nude under the thin cloth.

“Don’t worry, we’re all girls. We do this sort of thing.” Harmony smiled. “Trust me.”

She came over and pulled me to the computer chair before settling herself in the other chair. Opal grabbed a hairbrush and a dryer. I took a deep breath and readied myself.

“You’re not going into battle, sweetie. Chill out.” Opal chuckled.

“If you’re nervous, think of something else. I don’t know what you’re nervous about, though.” Harmony said.

“I’ve never done this before and I don’t really like having people I don’t know in the house while Victor’s sleeping.” I told her.

“I understand those nerves. When I first found out how vulnerable my master was, I got nervous at the mail delivery.” Opal said.

“When Grant first bought me, I was so grateful that I sat at the foot of his bed for three months. He tried setting me free after we went back north. I didn’t know what I’d do with myself. He even offered to give me money and set me up in a shop. I asked to stay with him. He didn’t touch me, except to feed, and he was always kind. I couldn’t imagine a safer place than with him.” Penny murmured.

“How old are you?” Harmony asked.

“I’m nearly two hundred years old. Grant was my second master. He bought me when he heard my previous master’s sons planning something. He never told me what, just that it wasn’t very gentlemanly. I figured it out and was grateful. I didn’t want to be hurt like that again. They weren’t very gentle men at all.” She replied.

“You decided to stay with him forever.” I smiled.

“Yes. I’ve seen so many changes in the world since then. I’ve experienced so much of the world... until we came here. It was only fifty years ago, but we can’t leave. When we tried, Grant started getting weak and hungry. Too hungry.” Penny shivered.

“We’re trying to fix that. Soon you two can start planning to travel again.” I told her.

“I can’t wait. This place is nice, but I’d love to see the south again.” She intimated.

She and Opal started working on our hair. I wanted to free everyone who was stuck here now more than ever. Penny deserved to be able to travel.

Once our hair was in rollers, Penny and Opal talked to us about our dresses and shoes. They decided we needed manicures and pedicures with polish. Harmony was excited.

They had big bags I hadn't noticed and pulled things out, setting out some little folding tables and filling things with water and chemicals. I watched intently. I would tell Victor about all of the things we did. He loved hearing what I did while he was sleeping.

"So, I know you said I didn't have any place in your relationship, but I wanted to ask about something. I hope you'll humor me." Harmony said as we soaked our fingers and toes.

"I guess. I'll tell you if I don't want to answer it and I want you to accept no if that's my response." I told her.

"Fair enough. It's just that.... I think you may actually be more experienced than me now. Tonight Cam and I are going to a hotel after the prom. It's... well... it's our first time and I was wondering if you'd done it yet." Harmony blushed.

The room seemed to go still. I didn't know how I felt about answering that. She wasn't trying to be nosy. She was just nervous about her first time. I certainly wasn't an expert, I'd only been having sex for a week, but I wanted to help her relax.

"I have. Is this your first time ever?" I asked.

"Yeah. I've done other things with him and with some of my ex-boyfriends, but I've never gone all the way. I'm a little nervous. My friends who have done it all act like it's not a big deal, but I heard it hurts." She said.

"It does, but not for long. It feels better as you go. You just need to be relaxed and ready for it. Gray was very sweet and gentle. I bet Cam will be too." I smiled. "You can always say no if you're not ready. He'll understand. He loves you and doesn't want you to feel pressured."

They were similar to the words Amy had told me when I was talking to her about having sex for the first time. She told me about how she had been in control for her first time with Lucien and that he had tried to be as gentle and caring as he could with her. I wanted to reassure my sister that her mate would make her feel good and didn't want to hurt her.

"So your first time was with Gray? I thought it would have been with Victor." Harmony whispered.

"I've been with both of them, but my first was Gray. We decided to be each other's first. It was a good decision. When I was with Victor, it was another first and just as special. I love them both so much." I said softly.

"I'm sorry I was a bitch about it. I just didn't know how you could love them both. It seemed to me that you just didn't understand, but, maybe, I didn't understand. You've always had a lot of

love in you and never got enough of it. Maybe the moon goddess gave you two mates so you would finally get all the love you deserved.” She supposed.

“Thank you for that. I appreciate you making the effort.” I smiled.

“Of course. I’m your sister. I need to try to understand you. But now, you have to spill about your first time. I want all the details. Was it romantic? Did he do anything special for it? What was it like? Beginning to end. Spill.” Harmony insisted.

“I don’t think—” I started.

“It’s the rules, babe. When you’re getting made up you have to share secrets. It’s all part of female bonding. It doesn’t leave this room.” Opal chuckled.

I blushed. “Seriously?”

“It’s very true.” Penny nodded.

Harmony grinned at me and leaned forward. I wanted to have regular girl time with my sister. If I had to sacrifice a couple secrets, I guess I could. I kind of wanted to tell someone anyway.

Prom Night Part 1

## Chapter 102 - The Vampire's Servant

[Gray]

I was actually glad to have Dillon around after Echo went upstairs with the ladies. He distracted me. I was sneaking around, trying to listen in when he found me and scolded me about butting in on girl time.

“That is a sacred time for girls to bond. It’s no place for a pup like you.” He chuckled. “Come on. I’ll teach you some vampire fighting moves. Then you can shower and shave. I really need to get my tweezers and clean up those eyebrows.”

“What’s wrong with my eyebrows!?” I asked.

“They just aren’t as nice as they could be. Come on. Let’s get your jitters out first, then we’ll get you a manicure and some plucking.” Dillon grinned and pulled me outside.

He showed me some moves and we fought using the moves. He was really fast. I wanted to learn to move like that. Maybe I should train with Victor a little. Probably after the curse was broken, though. I didn't want to risk his anger making him hurt me.

When Echo told me that was why he was pacing, I became nervous. The memory of his hypnotism and the fear he had instilled in me came rushing back. I couldn't fight a vampire his age and hope to win.

After we finished fighting, Dillon had me go take a shower and shave. He and Jean-Claude were in my room when I got out of the shower. It was a good thing I had prepared for that possibility and was wearing clean boxers and my robe.

"Damn. Thought we might catch a flash of skin." Dillon joked.

Jean-Claude rolled his eyes. "Stop flirting." He growled.

"I'm not flirting, mon nounours." Dillon winked. "Just trying to get the kid to loosen up around me."

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"You act like I'm some elder who's going to bite your head off if you make a wrong move. Or like I'm judging you. I'm not.... Well, I am, but not the way you think. I judge everyone. It's part of my wonderful personality." Dillon chuckled.

"Sorry. You're just so in control of everything and such a good fighter, I think of you as being a lot older than me." I admitted. "I forget you're only a couple years older."

"I get that. It was like that for me too." Jean-Claude said.

"Sit in the chair. Let's take care of those nails first. I can't believe Echo lets you put those things in her. You really have to take better care of them." Dillon said.

I blushed. "I didn't think they were that bad. I keep them clean."

"Yes, and clipped, I see. Just not nice and not all of them. I can even tell which ones you use, because those are the only ones that are clipped nicely. Now, sit."

Moving to the chair, I did as he said. Dillon and Jean-Claude each took one of my hands and started poking, clipping, and filing. They were pretty intent on their work.

"It's not so bad. You should get this done every two weeks or so. Consider it part of your warrior training." Jean-Claude smirked.

"Warriors need well-manicured nails?" I asked.



“Everyone needs well-manicured nails.” Dillon scoffed. “Now, shush. Unless you’re planning to gossip, I don’t want to hear another word from you.”

‘Seems like you just want to obey older men, don’t you?’ Rex said in my head.

He had been going back and forth as to whether or not he was talking to me. I wasn’t going to take the bait and fight with him. I told him that he needed to mature before I’d engage with him again.

Rex still wanted to mark Echo. He was the one who notified me of Victor’s fangs being out on the first night we were all together. No matter how hard I worked, Rex was the part of me that didn’t want to accept this relationship peacefully.

‘Fuck you, Rex.’ I replied and tried to focus on anything else while they did the manicure and the plucking.

It felt like time just flew by, but it had been about an hour when they deemed me fit to be dressed. It was nearly three-thirty when they left. I didn’t have long before Cam and Val would be there. Luckily, Dillon agreed to get the door when they showed up.

Quickly, I dressed and styled my hair. I was careful to not wrinkle or tear my suit while putting it on. I made sure I looked as perfect as I could, because I didn’t want to make Echo look bad after she went through everything to look good.

Once I was all put together, I went to the living room. Val and Cam were there and so was Marius. He was talking to them and seemed to be unable to take his eyes off Val.

“Sorry about the wait. I had a lot to do.” I said.

“Wow, looking good, Gray.” Cam grinned.

“You too. Both of you. The girls won’t know what hit them.” I chuckled.

“Where is your date, Valor?” Marius asked.

“I’m going stag. There are a lot of girls who didn’t get dates so I’ll have tons of dancing partners.” Val winked.

“That’s my boy.” Marius smirked.

I heard a door open upstairs. The scent of vampire got stronger. Victor. I knew he would be getting straight up to see Echo. With how much she talked about her dress, I knew she was excited and it was making us excited too.

Victor entered the living room. “They’ll be down shortly. I heard them in Echo’s room. I’m glad I didn’t miss it. You boys look wonderful.”

“Thanks, Victor.” I smiled.

We went to the entry so we could see them come down the stairs. Dillon, Jean-Claude, and Talia joined us. Finn didn’t get up until a little while after, but I was betting he would come to see them.

The door to Echo’s room opened. I could hear the women talking. The two beauticians came to the top of the stairs. I started heading up to help them carry their bags. Val joined me and we helped them down.

The women waited in the entry with us. Both girls stood at the top of the stairs. I couldn’t take my eyes off Echo.

Her hair was pinned up and curls trailed from the top of it. Little shiny gems looked like stars in her black hair. Her neck was long and slender. I vaguely noted that Harmony had the same hairstyle and accessories.

Echo’s dress was the most beautiful blue. It really suited her. As she walked down, I could see that it was cut from the hip to the hem, showing off her leg whenever she stepped down. She looked like a movie star going to a swanky party.

Cam stepped up beside me and Victor on the other side. Our women were perfect. Marius cut in front of us as they reached the bottom of the stairs and started fawning over them. Both smiled and hugged him.

“I need a picture of all three of you. If I’m going to show off, then I need to have you looking your best.” Marius said.

“Echo is beautiful no matter what she’s wearing.” I growled.

“So is Harmony.” Cam snarled.

“Of course they’re beautiful, they’re my daughters. But the High Council will expect elegance with that beauty. Come now, children. I want a picture of the three of you.”

Marius gathered all three together and took pictures of them, individually and all together. I offered to take a picture with him in it and he nodded. It was the closest I think I have ever been to Marius liking me.

With the pictures done, I went to my mate and kissed her hand. Dillon told me I should do that. Echo blushed. I led her to Victor, who was smiling.

“You truly look like a princess, Echo.” He murmured and kissed her other hand.

“Thank you. And thank you for having Opal and Penny come. They did really amazing work.” Echo beamed.

“Then they, and their masters, will be rewarded.” Victor winked.

He went to talk to the ladies. Everyone was fawning over the girls. Finn came down and stared at the two of them. He didn’t say anything, just stared. It was a little unnerving.

“The limo to take you to your dinner and dance is here.” Victor said.

“Limo?” I asked.

“I’m the Master of this territory. If I want a limo, they find me one.” He grinned. “Now, go on. I don’t want you to be late.”

Echo gave him a chaste kiss before taking my arm. We led the girls out to the limo. He didn’t get some crappy one either. It was huge and the chauffeur stood by the back door, opening it as we neared.

“I’m Hugh, I’ll be your driver for the night. I have the itinerary for the evening, so you all can just relax and trust me to get you there and home safely.” The driver said.

I shook his hand and thanked him before helping Echo into the car. Once we were all in, Echo twined her fingers in mine. I looked down. She was wearing nail polish. I had never seen her with nail polish on.

“Are you excited, angel?” I asked quietly.

“Yes, Gray. I want to see everything and do everything. I’m so happy I got to get ready with my sister.” She grinned.

“I’m happy I could get ready with you, too, Echo.” Harmony smiled.

“I’m just glad you’re both here right now.” Val said.

They all looked really peaceful and joyful. I loved seeing Echo like this. I made a decision.

“We should all go out sometime. You guys almost never see Echo outside of school. I think it would be fun to do stuff. Especially since the end of the year is coming up and there’s only going to be the bigger projects due.” I offered.

“Sean wants to go bowling with me sometime. I really want to spend time at the place we went to for mini golf. They have rides and games.” Echo said excitedly.

“There’s a water park with slides and stuff. We could all go once they open next month.” Val said.

I thought about Echo in a swimming suit. At first I was imagining a two piece, but then I thought about all the men who could be there. It would be a one piece, because I didn’t want anyone else

seeing that much of my mate. And one of those swimming dress things, no one but me should see Echo like that. Maybe I could talk to Victor about putting a pool in at the house.

“I can hear you, Gray.” Echo giggled.

“Sorry, angel. I really liked the idea until I didn’t.” I blushed.

“We can go to the water park. I will wear whatever bathing suit I pick, and you will wear only swim trunks. People will see far more of you than they will of me.” She smiled.

“You won’t be jealous?” I asked.

“No. You’re mine. They can look all they want. They won’t take you away from me.” Echo said and squeezed my hand.

We arrived at the restaurant shortly after. I promised myself that I wouldn’t be jealous because I needed to trust that no one could steal Echo from me. Victor was the only real threat and he was willing to share her.

There was no real line for the restaurant. We had reservations and this place was werewolf owned. They wouldn’t accept reservations for prom from people without the password. It was so the werewolf students could have a place to safely and affordably eat.

We all trooped to our table and looked over the menu. I could feel Echo worrying. She was really bad with making decisions in restaurants. I already knew what I wanted, so I leaned over and helped her decide.

While we waited for the food, we all talked about school. Val and Harmony were still trying to figure out why Rosario was going to the dance with Sean. They were okay with being his friend, because Echo was, but they couldn’t imagine a girl as pretty as Rosario wanting to go out with him.

“She’s just being a good friend.” Echo insisted.

“I don’t know about that. I would have thought it before this last week, but she’s been acting weird. I know they’ve been in the same classes before, but she never really acknowledged anyone before him. I asked her out a couple years ago and she told me no.” Val said.

“Rosario would have been totally cute with you, Val. It’s her loss. Maybe he’s her type and she’s just been waiting until she got an opening.” Harmony shrugged.

I had a lot of hope that she was wrong. I wanted Sean to be with someone. It would make me feel better about his relationship with Echo, but I couldn’t imagine how heartbroken he would be with the girl he loved breaking up with him because she had a destined mate.

When our food came, the conversation died down. Harmony had started eating more since her wolf came in. It took a lot of energy to be a werewolf and we got the majority of that from food.

After dinner, we packed up into the limo again and headed to the school. We wanted to get there early enough that Harmony and Cam could be seen. They were in the running for prom king and queen.

We met up with Rosario, Sean, Terry, and Elle outside the school. Terry and Elle had a sort of zombie theme in their costume. I guess Terry had won their debate.

“Rosario, you look amazing.” Harmony smiled.

“I love your dress, Elle!” Echo grinned.

They had really never looked more alike than they did right then. It was interesting that the way they held themselves was all it took to make them seem like they weren’t twins. Echo told me they were mirror image twins, that’s why she was left-handed and Harmony was right-handed. Echo did look like a reflection of Harmony in a lot of ways.

“Echo, can I talk to you for a second?” Rosario said.

She nodded and they stepped off to the side. If not for my werewolf hearing, I might not have heard their conversation. I stood back from everyone and listened.

“Here is the recording of everything my mother could say about the curse. She actually talked to Grace before the whole thing went down. I guess she tried to get my mother to enter an alliance with the vampires. It took us the better part of the last seven days to get it all recorded.” Rosario whispered.

“Thank you so much. Please thank your mother for me. Victor will be so happy about this.” Echo replied softly.

“Mother wants this curse ended. It would be nice to know our people could maintain their glamour for more than eight hours and we could hide our home again. Humans have been trying to move into our neighborhood.” Rosario told her.

“That wouldn’t be good for anyone. You should feel safe in your own home. Let her know we’re doing everything we can.”

“Mother would like you to come for lunch next weekend, if you can. She wants to talk with you more and see if she can figure out what kind of fae you’re descended from. She would like you to bring Val and Harmony.” Rosario requested.

“I’ll talk to them about it. Let your mother know that I’ll do my best to make that happen. How has your evening been so far? You haven’t been making Sean uncomfortable, have you?” Echo asked.

Rosario sighed. “I’m not. I’ve been a good little fae and acted like a friend. Tomorrow we’re going to have a lot of fun. I can’t wait.”

“Just remember and don’t hurt him.”

“Stop worrying. Let’s go, I want to dance and I promised his mom we’d get pictures as soon as we got here.” Rosario chuckled.

They returned to the group and we all went in. Echo gazed around the gym. The prom committee did a great job, but Echo was looking around like it was transformed into a castle or something.

I guided her over to the area where people were lined up to get pictures done. She clung to my arm and smiled. I couldn’t wait to get her back home and remove that dress. She was an angel. My angel. And I wanted to have her in my arms again.

Prom Night Part 2

## Chapter 103 - The Vampire's Servant

We got our picture done and I led her out onto the dance floor. A fast song was playing and she seemed lost. I realized that Echo hadn’t really danced before. She looked around and started moving like the other girls she saw.

A grin crossed my face. She was really good at making it seem like she knew what she was doing. I danced with her, showing her other moves she could do. Echo laughed and giggled as I did silly moves and acted like a goofball.

When the slow songs came on, I swept her into my arms and we moved together. She followed my lead at all times. Lots of people I knew would come up to say hi. Most of them had met Echo, but a few didn’t sit with us at lunch and were meeting her for the first time.

While she was talking to a couple of girls, Mason, a guy I knew from track, grinned over at me.

“Got yourself the hot new girl in just a couple weeks. Congrats man. You gonna pop that cherry tonight?” He asked.

“If you ever say anything like that to me again, I’m gonna bust your nose. That’s my girl, you don’t talk about her like she’s a piece of meat.” I growled.

He raised his hands in surrender. “Fair enough. I was just making small talk.”

“Make it somewhere else.” I replied and went to pull Echo to a table.

“You stay here, angel. I’ll go get you a drink. You’re all red faced.” I smiled.

“What was he talking about, Gray? I could hear him. I don’t understand why you got mad.” She said, looking up at me.

I knelt down. “He was being an asshole and asking questions about our relationship that he had no right to know. He was being disrespectful to you.”

“Oh.” Echo sighed.

“Stay here. I’ll be right back.” I told her and went off to get some punch.

The line was a little long, but I finally got the drinks and headed back to the table. Some guy had pulled up a chair close to Echo and was talking to her. He didn’t see me as I came up behind them.

“Come on a walk with me out where it’s cooler. You look all flushed. Your boyfriend won’t mind if you’re gone for a minute. Any fool who would leave a gorgeous woman like you alone isn’t going to worry about you being gone for a short walk.” He murmured.

“Get away from her.” A familiar voice to my right said.

I looked over. It was Val and he looked pissed. The guy turned and saw us both.

“Is one of these guys your date? Damn, you like them big, don’t you princess?” He laughed.

Suddenly, Echo punched him in the face. He reeled back. Val rushed over to pull his sister out of there and I set the drinks down before approaching the guy.

“Stay away from my date and never call her princess again.” I growled, my teeth elongating slightly.

The guy jumped up and scurried away. I went to where Val was holding Echo. He still looked pissed.

“There’s a lot of scummy guys in the school. Next time you need to leave her, get one of us to sit with her.” He warned.

“Sorry. I didn’t realize the line was so long for the juice.” I replied.

Echo pulled away from him and slid into my arms. She wasn’t upset. She smiled at me and gave me a kiss.

“I wasn’t going to go with him. I didn’t like him being near me. He just wouldn’t leave when I told him to.” She said.

“I’m glad you weren’t going to go. I’m pretty sure he had some bad intentions.” I told her.

“He did. I could feel it. That’s why I waited here for you. I didn’t want him to think I was going with him and I was going to scream if he touched me.” Echo confided.

I settled her back in her seat and got her drink for her. We watched everyone dance. Val went over and asked one of the unpopular girls for a dance. He told me it was his intention to dance with every unattached girl there. He was certainly making his way through them.

“Are you enjoying yourself?” I asked.

“Yes. Everything is amazing and I don’t even know where to start telling Victor about things. Actually, I do. Rosario gave me a recording of Maeve telling everything she knows about the curse. I think that will make him happy.” She smiled.

“I know it will. Where are Rosario and Sean, anyway?” I asked.

“There.” She pointed to the dance floor.

Some guy had cut in between them and was pulling her to him. She pushed him out of the way and danced with Sean more, but the guy was persistent. I was just about to go help when two of the troll boys went over and dragged the guy away. Even if they didn’t like other fae that much, they always stuck together.

We sat for a while longer, until Echo was ready to go out and dance some more. We danced with all of our friends until the principal went up to announce the prom king and queen. I leaned over and told Echo that meant the night was nearly over.

“Everyone. Your attention. We’ve calculated all of the votes and are ready to announce your senior prom king and queen. If we can have the prom court up here please.” He said.

Cam led Harmony up. Val followed them. I handed Echo off to Sean.

“Sorry, angel, I was nominated. Stay with Sean. Come on, Rose.” I said.

“My name is Rosario. Not Rose.” She growled at me.

I shrugged and we headed up to the stage. I had been actively encouraging people to vote for Cam instead. I never wanted to be a part of this thing. I wanted it even less since my mate couldn’t be my queen.

“Alright. That’s everyone. Mrs. Kemp, the envelopes.” Principal Olivas said.

We waited as he opened the first envelope.

“The prom queen is.... Harmony Gale!” He announced.



Harmony bounced up and received her crown, scepter, sash, and flowers. She waved at the crowd graciously. I knew she was a shoe-in for queen. Everyone liked Harmony.

“The prom king is.... Cameron Blake.” He grinned.

Cam strutted over and accepted his items. He then grabbed Harmony, dipped her, and kissed her as if his life depended on it. The crowd cheered while the principal scolded him for acting indecently.

Val and I laughed over it. We helped the others clear a space on the floor for them to have their dance. Then they would go over to get their pictures with their sashes, crowns, and stuff. All the little things to make the memories last for them.

I found Echo on the edge of the crowd, watching her sister and Cam dance. She looked so happy. I went to stand by her.

“Harmony hoped for this, even if she and Cam weren’t dating. She really wanted to be named prom queen while he was named prom king. I’m so happy for her.” Echo grinned.

“I’m glad for her too, angel. There are a few more songs after this, will you dance with me, or do you need to rest again?” I asked.

“I’m fine. I’m doing pretty well. I want to dance with you until the end. I think I’m going to need a bath tonight. High heels are horrible things.” She sighed.

I laughed. When the song ended, I pulled Echo onto the dance floor. She seemed to melt into my arms. The last few songs they played were slow and I liked that. I got to have my sweet mate in my arms. Soon, we’d go home and I’d have to share her, but, for now, she was all mine.

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On the way home, I texted Victor. The tub in Echo’s room was a decent size, but the one in Victor’s room was huge. I had him run a bath for her in his room. We would stay in his bed tonight.

When we pulled up in front of the house, I looked down. Echo had fallen asleep leaning against me. I waked her a little, and helped her out of the limo. She winced when she was on her feet, so I picked her up and carried her to the house.

It seemed Victor had been waiting. He opened the door as soon as I got there. We took Echo up to his room and sat her on the armchair there.

Victor and I each took one of her shoes off before we worked to peel the little gems out of her hair and pull out all the bobby pins. Echo tried to help, but we insisted on doing it ourselves.

Once that was done, Victor helped her out of her dress, while I stripped off my suit. When she was naked, I picked her up again. Victor started undressing as he followed us into the bathroom.

He stepped into the tub and took Echo from me. I was right, this thing was big enough for a few people to get in it comfortably. There were cloths and soaps on each end. We settled into the water with Echo and started cleaning her.

She moaned as I washed and rubbed her feet. Victor massaged soap into her shoulders and back. Echo looked blissful as we took care of her.

“Did you have a good time tonight, princess?” Victor murmured.

“I had so much fun. We danced a lot. Harmony was made prom queen. Everyone was happy.” She sighed.

“I’m glad. There may not be as much dancing at my party, but I hope it’s a good time for you as well.” He smiled.

“I’m sure it will be, because you’ll be there.” Echo responded tiredly.

“Our plans for an active evening seem to be fading, Grayson.” Victor chuckled.

“I don’t mind if you don’t. There’s always tomorrow.” I replied.

“Yes. Tomorrow. Tonight, we should just be close to her and let her rest.” He said.

We finished our bath and got out. Victor and I worked to get Echo clean and tucked into bed before we dried ourselves. His bed was huge, compared to the little queen we’d been sleeping in. I actually had some room.

Echo curled up on my chest and pulled Victor to cuddle her from behind. She knew what she wanted. I was enjoying seeing what she wanted next.

She fell asleep quickly. Victor tucked her hair behind her ear and kissed her shoulder. I held her hand and played with the ring on her finger.

“If something happens to me... I want you to take care of her like this all the time. Rub her, bathe her, never let her feel alone.” Victor whispered.

“Nothing’s going to happen to you. I want you to stop talking like that. Echo told me what was worrying you this morning. If we need to, I can stop sleeping with her. I don’t want you to be uncomfortable. Just give me some warning if you’re feeling like that. I want to know when I’m in danger.” I chuckled.

“This isn’t a laughing matter, Grayson. What if it turns to something worse?” He said harshly.

“We’ll handle it. Just keep remembering, I’m your friend and I’m not trying to steal her from you.” I shifted, rolling Echo onto the bed between us so I could look into his eyes. “I trust you to talk to me. Tell me when things get worse. Let me know about all the little changes. I want to take care of you as much as I want to take care of her.”

“You’ve really matured in the last few weeks. Just in time for me to start being the childish one.” He chuckled wryly.

“We’ll get through this together. We have something that the other vampires didn’t. We have friendship, trust, and our Echo. Three things that should keep us grounded.” I insisted, putting my hand on his shoulder.

“Thank you. I’m glad to have you.” Victor said, staring into my eyes intently.

“Now, kiss.” Echo whispered.

We startled and Victor started laughing as I began tickling her. Echo squealed, squirmed, and begged for mercy. She wasn’t letting go of that fantasy, and I would make her pay for it.

Sunday with Sean

## Chapter 104 - The Vampire's Servant

[Sean]

Sunday morning, I woke up excited. Last night had gone great. Sure, there were a lot of guys wanting to dance with my date, but she stayed with me.

Rosario was amazing. She was a great friend. She sat through my parents’ questions and stuff with patience and grace.

For a while, I was actually worried she might be into me. At the end of the night, she gave me a brief hug and told me how much she valued our friendship. Then, she thanked me for not trying anything with her.

If I were any other guy, I might have. She was beautiful, smart, and interesting. I had admired her since we were kids. She was always something of a rival for me.

When we were at the restaurant her neighbor owns, she ordered a few different things so we could share. It made me a little nervous when people there stared at us. It was to be expected though, I was a geek and she was a prom princess. Not the couple you would imagine.

I got out of bed and dressed before having breakfast and doing my chores. My mom and dad were excited that I was going out with Rosario again today. They seemed to already consider her my girlfriend. It actually made me feel worse that I wasn't out to them.

My parents were loving, kind, and understanding. I was sure that they would accept me if I told them I was gay, but I didn't want to risk it. I knew some people who had parents that seemed cool, until they found out.

Around eleven, my dad called me into his workshop. I'd been in there a few times, but mostly to grab things for him. Dad saw his workshop as his escape from everything. I understood. He had a busy work life and liked being on his own.

"What do you need, dad?" I asked.

"Have a seat, Sean. I want to talk to you about some things." He said and waved me over to the little stool in the corner.

"Okay." I said slowly and sat on the stool.

He leaned against the work bench and looked at me. I started feeling a little nervous. I didn't think I had done anything wrong. Did he figure out that I was lying about being accidentally marked absent at school?

"I wanted to talk to you and, well, I probably should have done it earlier. You're a grown man now, and I want to be sure you treat your girlfriend right." Dad started.

"Oh, no." I sighed.

"I know, you're eighteen and you don't think you need this talk. You've never told us about any other girls who weren't just friends, so I don't know how experienced you are. There are things you have to know and this could end up being an uncomfortable talk, that's why we're not talking with your mother in the room."

"Dad, I really don't think I need this talk." I replied.

"So, you have been with a girl then?" He asked.

There was nothing I could really say. If I lied and he asked me questions, I was sure I would be found out. I still wasn't ready to come out to them.

"No, sir." I said.

"Good to know. Now, I got you some condoms, do you know how to use them?"

"They showed us in health class. You really don't have to do this. Rosario is a friend, not my girlfriend. We're not going to sleep together." I insisted.

“Look, you don’t get to be my age without seeing some things, and that girl is totally in love with you. You may think you’re just friends, but she’s probably thinking you’re more than that.” Dad smiled tightly. “If you give in, it’s fine. She’s a beautiful girl. I think you should give her a chance.”

I could practically hear him thinking this was my only chance at a girl like her. I groaned inwardly. This was terrible.

“Dad, she doesn’t like me like that. You’re wrong. She’s just relieved to have a male friend who doesn’t think of ways to get in her pants. That’s all.” I told him.

“So, you’re not into her. What’s wrong with her? She seems like she’s perfect.” He said.

She’s a she, I thought. I shook my head.

“Look, I value my friendship with her. If it ever comes to a physical relationship, I’ll deal with it.” I took the box of condoms he was holding out.

“Keep one in your wallet. Just in case, son. You don’t want to have to try and find something if that situation arises while you’re out.” Dad winked.

The doorbell rang and I was relieved. Dad sat there and raised an eyebrow at me. I sighed and made a show of putting a condom in my wallet. He took the box back.

“You go get the door. I’ll put these in your room after you’ve gone.” He said.

I got up and rushed from the workshop. I couldn’t believe I had to sit through that. I loved my parents, but, sometimes, they were a little too much.

Rosario was standing in the doorway. My mom had gotten there before me. I smiled at her.

She was about my height, 5’11”, with black hair and warm brown skin. Next to my mom, she looked like a supermodel. I was betting she could go to New York and be a model with no issue.

“Hey, Sean. Ready to go?” She asked with a smile.

“Yeah. Thanks for getting the door, mom.” I said.

“Why don’t you two stay for lunch?” Mom asked.

“We’re going out for lunch, mom. I’ll be back around dinner time. Love you!” I waved and pulled Rosario out of the house.

Luckily, Rosario could keep up with my quick pace as we hurried to her car. I didn’t talk until I was buckled and we were pulling away from the house. I shook my head.

“Wow. I didn’t realize you were ashamed of me.” Rosario snickered.

“I’m ashamed of them. I told them you aren’t my girlfriend, but they don’t listen.” I sighed.

“There’s nothing wrong with letting them think that for a while. We’re friends. Friends help each other. If this will get them off your back about going out and dating, then I’m fine with it. I’ll even bat my eyelashes at you.” She laughed.

I laughed, too. “No. They just have to learn to be disappointed in me.”

“My dad could give them lessons in how to be disappointed in your kid. Nothing I do is ever good enough for him.” She said softly.

“Then he’s an idiot.” I replied, looking straight ahead. “Because you’re awesome.”

“You only think that because you’re my friend.” Rosario chuckled.

“I’m only friends with awesome people. That’s why I don’t have many.” I winked at her.

There was something about Rosario that made me really comfortable around her. Like I was with Echo. I was always tense with my friends. Only ever relaxing during game nights. With Echo and Rosario, I felt like that all the time.

Maybe it was the way they treated me. I didn’t know why, but I wanted to be around them. It was what led to my decision to talk to Rosario about Gray and Echo. I trusted her like I trusted Echo. She couldn’t be a hunter.

We pulled up at the restaurant and went in. The host smiled tightly and led us to a booth in a corner. He handed us the menus.

“No one should bother you here, Rosario. Don’t dawdle though.” He warned and left.

“What was that all about?” I asked.

“He’s just being weird. Don’t mind him.” She smiled.

I shrugged and looked over the menu. They had some of the strangest food combinations I’d ever seen and some really normal stuff. They even had things bordering on bland.

“This menu is so weird. What do you recommend today?” I questioned.

“I think light sandwiches should work for the day. If you’ll trust me, I’ll order.” Rosario offered.

“You were right last night, I bet you’ll be right today.” I grinned.

“Smooth boy.” She snorted.

When our waitress came up, she stared at us for a moment before taking our order. She went and talked to someone behind the counter and he stared too. This place was odd, but had good food.

“I wanted to talk to you about something.” I said seriously.

“You’re not about to profess your undying love and desire for me to carry your babies, are you?” Rosario laughed.

“Gross, no.” I chuckled.

“Alright, so what is it?” She asked.

“I’ve talked to you a lot about my game. There are monster hunters in my game, you know?” I said.

“Right.” Rosario eyed me cautiously.

“I just found out a few things from my games are real, including hunters.”

She went still and looked over at the counter slightly. I turned to look and it seemed like the man behind the counter was watching us closely. His eyes almost looked red from a distance. Like not crying red, actually blood red.

“And what are you planning to do with that information?” She asked quietly.

“You don’t seem surprised. I’m guessing that’s why Gray didn’t confirm if you were a supernatural or not.” I replied.

“What did Gray tell you exactly? What started that conversation? What exactly are you getting at?” Rosario whispered.

“I just need to talk to someone. He doesn’t want me telling Echo that I know. You’re the only one I trust enough to talk to. I don’t know why I trust you so much, I just do.”

Rosario smiled a little at that. “So, you found out Gray is a werewolf and Echo is a dhampyr and you want to work through your feelings about it?”

“Pretty much. But now I know you’re something else too. Is it okay to talk to you or will you hate me for not immediately accepting everything?” I sighed.

“I won’t judge you for needing more information. You’re learning. How else will we get more humans on our side, if we don’t talk to them?” She winked.

“What are you?” I asked.

“I’d rather talk about Gray and Echo.” Rosario chuckled.

Our food and drinks were delivered and we ate quietly for a while. I wondered why she didn't want to tell me what she was. Was it something really bad?

"Sorry about that. You just startled me. I'd rather show you than tell you. When we get to the range, okay?" She smiled again.

"I didn't mean to offend you or anything. I actually think all of this is pretty cool. It kind of sucks that I'm not something cool, too. Just a boring human." I sighed.

"You're anything but boring. You seem to attract special people to you."

"No, that's all Echo. She decided she would be my friend and that all of her friends would be friends with me too." I laughed, shaking my head.

"It can't all be Echo. Something about you drew her to you. She didn't have to talk to you or try to be your friend. She didn't do that with any of the other people who sat around her. I saw her on that first day. She seemed all innocent and shy. You were the reason she broke out of her shell. Don't sell yourself short. I don't like it, and Echo doesn't like it." Rosario insisted.

I blushed a little. It didn't feel like she was really talking about me. I never thought I was anything special to begin with. Yeah, I was smart, but not a genius or anything.

"What did you want to know, Sean?"

"Everything. I want to know all of it. The world is so different from the way I thought it was. I don't even know everything that's really out there." I said.

"That's a lot to cover at lunch." She laughed.

"Am I in danger from Gray or Echo?" I asked. "Is she going to feed on me? Has she fed on you?" I questioned.

"The answer to all of that is no. You're only in danger from Gray if you hurt her, and I'd be more afraid of the Master of the territory than I would be of Gray. Echo eats blood foods made with bagged human blood, but she can eat human food too. She's healing from a very bad situation and needs the extra nutrition. Echo has never bitten me and will probably never bite me. I'm pretty sure she's the type that needs permission before doing something like that." Rosario answered.

"I want to trust her. I just don't know." I sighed.

"Trust her until she gives you a reason not to. I know that girl is strange, but she's not malicious and she has been very sweet the whole time I've known her."

I nodded. "Alright. That's a good plan. Thank you, Rosario. I wasn't really thinking straight about all that."



“Are you ready to go?” She asked.

I nodded, finished with my food. We got up and I told her I’d pay my half. Rosario insisted that I didn’t have to, but I wanted to. I pulled out my wallet and the condom popped out with my money.

My eyes widened and met hers. She started laughing as she pulled out her wallet to cover her half.

“Don’t get the wrong idea! I’m not planning anything like that!” I told her, mortified.

“My mom makes me carry one in my wallet too. Just don’t keep it with your bills and that won’t happen.” Rosario laughingly advised me.

I put the condom away and made sure to leave a nice tip for the server. I just wanted to get out of there.

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It didn’t take long to get to the archery range. It was an indoor range, so weather wouldn’t cause any issues with people coming. We parked around back and she grabbed a large bag from the trunk before we headed in.

Rosario turned on all the lights and led me to the area where the targets could be set up. She set her bag down on a table and went around the counter for the targets.

“Here are some wrist guards. I have a right hand bow, so put yours on your left wrist.” She said and jogged off to set up targets.

I did what she said and looked around after I was done. The place was very utilitarian, there were safety posters all over the walls and warning signs with rules. Nothing distracting. I was curious about what exactly we were going to do.

“Let me make sure you have that on right.” Rosario stated and reached for my arm.

She made some adjustments and put on her own guard before going to the bag and opening it. She pulled out a really nice bow. It was one like you would see on the cover of a hunting magazine. I was eager to try it.

“Now, I’m going to shoot a couple arrows. I want you to watch my stance and movements. Then, we’ll start with having you hold the bow.” She said.

“Wait, you were going to show me what you are.” I reminded her.

“Look. I’d really rather not. I understand that you’re still learning about us, but I don’t want you getting strange ideas about why I decided to be your friend.” Rosario replied with a wince.

“What are you?” I asked.

“Are you going to keep bugging me, or do archery?” She sighed.

“I think... both. What are you?” I pressed.

“You know, I think I’m growing to hate you a little.” Rosario chuckled.

“You love me and you know it. Come on. Tell me.” I whined a little, making her laugh more.

“Fine....” She groaned. “I’m a wood elf.”

The Real Rosario

## Chapter 105 - The Vampire's Servant

She was a Sylvan! My geeky little heart leapt. Then I remembered how much I’d talked about them on the bus and how much I liked them in my game. That must be why she didn’t want to tell me.

“Trust me, I don’t have elf girl fantasies.” I chuckled.

“I wasn’t even concerned about that until now.” Rosario snickered.

“I’m gay. You don’t have to worry.” I insisted.

Rosario looked at me, shocked. She smiled warmly. I was growing more hopeful. Maybe my friends would be the support I needed to finally come out of the closet.

“Then.... Do you have elf boy fantasies?” She asked suggestively.

I blushed. Walked right into that one. I won’t lie, I’d had a few Legolas fantasies in the past. Orlando Bloom still hung on my wall.

“So, you do!” She chuckled, practically reading my mind.

“Well, yeah. Who wouldn’t?” I smiled a little.

“I know I have.” Rosario winked.

“I want to see what you really look like.” I insisted.

“You know this is all a glamour. A way to look more human so I can be out in the human world. But, this isn’t really what I look like at all.” She said. “We don’t look like elves do in the movies, either.”

“What do you mean?” I asked.

“For starters, I’m taller than this, and there are a lot of... other things that are different about me.”

“I get it. You’re not like other girls.” I laughed.

Rosario sighed and closed her eyes for a moment. The air around her started quivering, like a moisture mirage. I had to rub my eyes.

When I pulled my hands from my eyes, I saw she was about 6’2” with hair the color of dark tree leaves and skin the shade of rich brown bark. Her eyes were gold and green, like sunlight peeking through the leaves of trees and the color changed like an invisible breeze was moving the leaves.

Her ears were pointed and her jaw was still narrow, but just a little wider and... she had an Adam’s apple. I realized I wasn’t looking at a teenaged girl anymore. I was looking at a man.

He had broad shoulders and a narrow waist. I could see the outline of his muscles faintly under his t-shirt. He was the most beautiful man I’d ever seen. Even more gorgeous than Gray.

I licked my lips and smiled a little. “What’s your real name then?”

“Rosario. My mom read that it was a boy’s name, but every one that I’ve met was a woman. I started using a female glamour when I was in kindergarten. I liked the attention I got from being a pretty girl. I didn’t realize what it would mean for me when I grew into a man. There’s one thing I just can’t mimic.” Rosario said looking down pointedly.

“It must make gym time difficult for you. All those mostly naked girls running around the locker room.” I chuckled.

“Not really. I changed in the bathroom stalls.” He sighed.

“Is that why you never accepted dates from all those guys who hit on you?” I asked.

“Anyway, we should get on with your lesson. Are you okay with me being like this, because of a curse, we can’t keep our glamour on for more than eight hours a day. If I can save it, I’d rather do that.” He smiled, changing the subject.

I nodded. If he wanted to look like that, I was more than happy to let him. I wanted to stare at him all day.

Rosario picked up some arrows and went to the line on the floor. I watched him line up his shot and pull back on the arrow. I was behind him and got a clear view of his ass. It was as beautiful as the rest of him.

Gray had been replaced in my mind. Tonight, I'd be thinking of Rosario. God he was hot.

"You can't see much of my form from back there. Come to the other side." Rosario called out.

I didn't think I could blush any harder. He caught me checking him out. I moved to the other side and saw his muscles straining as he held the bow string tight. Even after he released the arrow, I was staring at his body.

"Are you just going to stare at me all day, or are you going to pay attention?" He chuckled.

I loved the sound of his deep laughter. It made me laugh a little too.

"You caught me. You just look so different, I'm a bit thrown off." I lied.

"Come over here. I'll show you how to stand." He said.

Timidly, I walked over to where he was. Rosario handed me the bow and instructed me on how to hold it. He moved me around, adjusted my arms, my shoulders, my hips.

I swallowed nervously. He was right behind me. I could feel his body against mine. I didn't think a man would touch me after finding out I was gay, at least not a straight man.

"You know." He whispered into my ear. "We may not be as sensitive to smell as a werewolf, but you can't lie to a fae. You were checking me out."

His hips ground into my backside. I managed to stifle a moan and adjusted my glasses. His hands slid from my hips to my stomach and I felt his lips on my ear.

"Don't lie to me again. I only ever want the truth from those sweet lips." Rosario murmured.

"Wh-what are you doing?" I mumbled.

"You have no idea what you do to me, Sean. I've had my share of elf and fae boy fantasies, but I never had a fantasy about a human boy until this week. You consume me. I can't stop thinking of your smile, your eyes, each one of those darling freckles on your face. I can't sleep because I wake up in an even worse state. You invade my dreams. How did I know you for so long without ever really seeing you?" He groaned as he ground himself against me.

"Rosario." I moaned, loving the feeling of his arms around me and his body so close to mine.

“Goddess, I want you so bad, Sean. If I were older, and you weren’t human, I would think you were meant to be my true mate. Part of me wants to bring you over to the fae side and keep you forever. It wouldn’t work if you didn’t have fae blood, though.”

He pulled the bow from my hands and dropped it to the ground. I didn’t have time to worry about it, he spun me around and pulled me to him, one of his hands gripped my ass as he gazed into my eyes. I got a little lost in the movement of his eyes and barely registered him closing the gap between us.

His lips pressed against mine. First it was soft, then became more ardent as I didn’t resist. I started kissing him back and moved my hands to grip his hair.

It was soft and, like the feel of spruce shoots in the spring, a little velvety. I opened my mouth a little and he wasted no time forcing his tongue into my mouth to play with my own.

This was it. My first kiss and it was everything I dreamed of. I didn’t even know how we ended up on the floor, but, when he pulled away, I saw the ceiling behind him. This felt so right and so perfect.

“How do we know if I have fae blood?” I asked in a whisper. “I want to be with you forever. I didn’t know why I was feeling so drawn to a girl, but maybe I could feel you there from the beginning. I always saw you. You were always ranked high with me in grades. I saw you as a friendly rival, but, around puberty, I started thinking you were pretty in a different way than other girls. They were pretty, but you were attractive. It confused me.”

“What if you aren’t my true mate? What if we make this huge change in your life and I leave you when I turn one hundred? I’d hate myself for putting you through this. It’s not an easy process.” Rosario admitted as he started kissing and sucking on my neck.

“I won’t be mad. I’ve always wanted to be special, to be different. Even if I only have eighty years with you, I’ll know they were spent with love in my life and I’ll try to find that again.” I told him honestly.

“That makes my heart hurt. The idea of you loving someone other than me, makes me want to hunt that person down and kill them. You’re mine, Sean. I never want you to belong to someone else.” He said, grinding his erection against my own.

“Then I won’t. I’ll be yours forever. Please. Let me be yours forever.” I sighed.

Rosario started kissing down my neck and growled when he met the collar of my shirt. I reached down and started to pull it off. He grinned and sat up, pulling off his own shirt. I was dazed by his sculpted body.

There was a scar on his chest that pulled me from my reverie. It was jagged and a little wide, like a bullet wound. I traced a finger over it and he shivered.

“What happened?” I asked.

“My father. I don’t want to talk about it right now. I just want to enjoy my afternoon with you.” Rosario smiled.

I looked at him, now I wasn’t wrapped up in the beauty of him, and realized he had a lot of other scars. There were long scars, short scars, burn marks, and something that looked like a brand. I felt anger brewing in my stomach.

“Did he do all of this to you?” I asked.

“Drop it, babe. It was all a long time ago. He hasn’t hurt more than my feelings for years.” He promised.

“I hate him. I don’t need to know anything else about him. I’ll always hate him for this.” I growled.

“Damn, that’s so fucking hot.” Rosario moaned and started kissing over my chest.

He alternated kisses and nibbles. I became so hard, I thought I’d burst. By the time he reached the waist of my jeans, I was groaning and thrusting. I wanted him so badly.

“You’re so hard for me.” He groaned, stroking over the bulge in my pants. “I want our first time to be somewhere better than the floor of the archery range, babe.”

I whimpered a little. I wanted him. I didn’t care where we were.

“Goddess, I love those sounds. You’re trying to tempt me into taking you right here, aren’t you my sweet human boy? So naughty.” Rosario chuckled.

“Please. I’ve waited so long.” I begged.

“I’m sorry I didn’t see you before. We could have had this for the last few years.” He said, unbuttoning my pants. “I’ll give you a little treat for being patient with me. Just tell me one thing.”

“Anything.” I whispered, feeling my fly being unzipped.

“Who do you belong to?” Rosario asked with a growl.

“You. I belong to you, Rosario.” I moaned as he slid his hand into my pants and gripped me.

No one had ever touched me there. My back arched as he started stroking me through my boxers. He freed me from the cloth and I watched as he lowered himself to take me into his mouth.

His tongue was just as velvety and soft as the rest of him. I almost came as soon as he started sucking, licking, and stroking me. I'd never felt anything like it. I managed to control myself and hold back.

I ran my fingers through his hair as he bobbed up and down. I couldn't believe that one of the prettiest girls at school was actually a gorgeous guy and he was mine. He really wanted me.

Soon, I felt my end coming and I couldn't hold back. I tried pulling Rosario's hair, but he growled at me, sending vibrations through me that almost made me lose control.

"I'm... I'm going to cum, Rosario." I murmured, trying to pull him again.

He chuckled and sent more vibrations through me. I couldn't hold on after that. It was impossible. I gripped his hair tightly as I came into his mouth.

When I finished, he pulled back, licking his lips. He kissed his way back up to my mouth and we made out for a while longer. I loved the feeling of his body on mine.

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We were laying together, his arm around me, our fingers intertwined. I couldn't believe how comfortable and happy I was. Then something popped into my head. I fought it, saying Rosario wasn't like that, but it lingered.

"This isn't like Macy Meyers and Keith Cooper, is it?" I asked.

Macy Meyers had been dating Keith Cooper secretly. He was on the football team, and she was basically a nobody. He told her that they would be together as long as she never told anyone. She let it slip to her best friend, who told the whole school.

Keith denied it and Macy ended up getting bullied until she switched schools. He never really liked her, he was seeing several other girls with the same deal. All unpopular, all acting as his own personal harem.

"No. I would never do that to you. Starting tomorrow, you can tell everyone that you're my boyfriend. But, I have to be a girl at school. Will you be okay kissing a girl?" He asked.

"I'll know it's really you. I'll feel you under all that." I promised.

"Good, I'm going to start making it look like I'm wearing heels, so I can be my full height and you won't end up kissing my throat." Rosario chuckled.

"How do you eat like that?" I asked.

“When I sit, I adjust the glamour so it sits on me properly.” He explained. “I want you to meet my mother, but I think it’s important that you talk to Echo and let her know that you know about her first. Will you do that?”

“Yes. I’ll see about talking to her this week. Will she be upset?”

“No. Echo wants you to like her no matter what. If you show her that you do, she’ll be thrilled. We should get going. It’s nearly four. I promised your mom I’d have you home by dinner.” He said.

I sighed. “When can we be together like this again?”

“We’ll find a way. We have your game night on Saturday, how about a date on Friday night? I can pick you up in my mom’s car and we can go to a movie, then out to park somewhere.” Rosario said suggestively.

“That sounds great. I can’t wait.” I grinned.

“Thank you for not pushing me away and running off. I know I come on strong, but I really wanted you. I didn’t even realize how much I wanted you until I saw you staring at me.” He admitted.

“I’m not great at being subtle, or at understanding a lot of subtlety. I’m glad you were blunt with me. Did you need me to...,” I looked down. “Help you finish?”

“No. I’ll think of you in the shower tonight. Replay the look on your face and all the sounds you made. Next time, you can do me.”

I blushed. I was suddenly wishing it was Friday already. I couldn’t wait to tell everyone I was dating Rosario. He was perfect in every way.

The Importance of Family

## Chapter 106 - The Vampire's Servant

[Echo]

Monday morning, Rosario and Sean shocked me by announcing that they were together. I didn’t know what to say. Dillon told me that there was no way to make a gay man straight. I asked after the way she acted last Monday.



I couldn't even tell anyone else what was going on or why their relationship was actually strange. I tried to talk to her mentally, but she just shook her head. It was really frustrating.

Things at home weren't a lot better. Everyone seemed to get more tense as the announcement ball grew close. Marius' lessons had all been on decorum for gatherings. I knew he wanted me to make a good impression on the other vampires, I represented him as much as I represented Victor.

Talia had started training with us in the morning. She was working with me on vampire fighting styles and working up my speed. She wanted me to be able to present myself as close to a vampire as possible.

I was taking extra lessons from her when I trained with her. I had projects to work on for the end of school with presentations, and we still had to study for final exams. Most evenings, Gray was working, so I was alone with Victor.

He was excited about adding Maeve's information to what we had. Talia was writing down and piecing together all of the facts that were brought in, while Finn was researching and trying to find the person who could answer his questions.

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Victor had to go run an errand on Wednesday night. I was in his office, working on my projects for school. Gray wouldn't get home until after eleven. I didn't know when Victor was coming home, because of the nature of his errand.

The office door opened as I was working on the PowerPoint slides for my presentation in English. I looked up and Finn came in. I wasn't as nervous around him as I used to be.

"How can I help you, Finn?" I asked.

"You look so cute. Like a little boss lady." He snickered.

"Finn. I have a lot of school work to do before Marius comes to do my training." I sighed. "If you're wanting to goof off, do it with Dillon and Jean-Claude."

"I wanted to talk to you about something you can do for the curse team." Finn said seriously.

I closed my computer and waved him over to the chairs in front of me. I wanted to help with the curse. I knew I could do something to make it easier. Finn sat in a chair and collected himself.

"What can I do?" I asked.

"I need you to find a way into the nursing home Fenton Aimes III is in. He's the one with no kids, but my senses started going crazy lately. He's the key to finding out how to break the curse.

Only family can go see him. I need you to find an in with one of his sister's grandkids." Finn told me.

"I'll do my best. Gray says people really want to be friends with me. If nothing else, I can get Harmony to hypnotize them into liking her." I grinned.

"Good. I'm getting the info on the kid. I guess his family hides the fact that they used to be witches. You probably can't take that supernatural angle." He supposed.

"I can find a different way. I don't need that." I said.

"You can't tell Vic. He said he doesn't want you doing anything but the bare minimum. I want you working as hard as I do. Most of our good leads have come from you. I don't think that cutting you out will help our cause."

"I'll do anything to help Victor." I confided.

"Don't say that around other vampires. They would have no trouble using you for their own gain by telling you it will help Vic." Finn smirked.

"How do I know you're not just saying you need my help, but actually making me do all your work then?" I asked.

"You don't, but I'm not a power hungry bloodsucker. I'm a chill and relaxed bloodsucker. I have no motivation to use you. I don't want recognition, I don't want territory, I don't want Vic to owe me. I just want to help save his life." He said.

"You're weird." I sighed. "I never know what to make of you."

"Don't try. I'm only here until we save Vic, then I'm moving on. You're going to see me from time to time, but it's best just to write me off as an inconstant person, like Vic does."

"What else can I do?" I asked.

"You have lunch coming up with Maeve, right?"

"On Saturday with my sister and brother, too." I replied.

"I need you to see if she remembers anything about the name of the family Grace married into. I can't find that anywhere. With luck, one of her kids might be alive and able to tell us something. If Fenton made her forget, then she would have gone on with her life after being taken away. Which means there might be someone out there who's a direct descendant of her." Finn told me.

"If she forgot, then there's a good chance that they wouldn't know anything." I reasoned. "If you feel like this won't be a bad lead, I'll see what I can do. Do you need help finding the family here that we're looking for?"

“No. I’m just pulling together all of the info that I can before I set you on the kid. I’ll get you his name as soon as I can.” He said.

My phone started ringing at that moment. I checked it to see if it was Victor or if Gray was calling on his break. It was Harmony.

“My sister is calling. Just give me a minute.”

I answered the phone. “Hello?”

“Our uncles are here at the pack house, Echo! They want to meet you. Trent told them you manifested some of your werewolf blood and they want to see you.” She said quickly.

“Victor’s not here. I can’t really leave.” I told her.

“Have Dillon drive you.” Finn suggested. “You should go meet your uncles.”

“I’ll see what I can do. I’ll text you.” I said to Harmony.

“Okay!” She replied and hung up.

“So many things going on.” I sighed.

“I’ll go get Dillon.” Finn said.

“No. I’ll just travel there myself. I don’t want to cause problems.” I sighed.

“Text Vic. He’ll get freaked out if you’re not here.” He replied and left the room.

I texted Victor, letting him know where I was going and why. I also sent a text to Gray, even though he couldn’t look at his phone during his shift. I didn’t want him getting off early and worrying.

Afterward, I texted Harmony to let her know I would be there in a moment and to make sure no one was standing right next to her. She replied with ‘ok’ and I waited for a moment. I’d been practicing and I knew I should be able to make it to the packhouse without a problem.

Standing, I slipped my shoes back on and closed my eyes. I focused on the packhouse and on my sister. Once I was ready, I did my final steps of traveling, wanting to be there.

There was a collective gasp around me. I opened my eyes and saw Trent, Ben, Mike, Val, Harmony, Cam, and two men I didn’t know. I smiled.

The first man was tall, like Val. He had dark brown hair and light brown eyes. He almost looked like Val, only his features were all wider and it looked like his nose was a little crooked. He smelled like wolf. The other man had black hair and hazel eyes that looked like Val and

Harmony's. He was shorter than the first and slimmer. His scent was the more electric scent I had come to know as witch.

"Here she is!" Harmony grinned.

"Echo inherited the ability to travel to places she's been before from our sire." Val explained.

"Good evening, Alpha Padua. Thank you for having me." I said with a slight bow.

"Glad you could make it, Mistress Nightshade. I hope we're not pulling you from something important." Trent replied.

"Nothing is more important than family." I smiled.

"You look just like your mother." The second man said.

"I'm Samuel Williams. Your father's younger brother." Said the first man.

"I'm Preston Hayes. Your mother's older brother." Said the second.

"I'm Echo Nightshade. It's a pleasure to meet you both." I answered.

"Nightshade is the name of the vampire you live with." Samuel stated.

"Yes. I was his servant until he realized I was also his Solus Amor." I nodded.

"And she's also the mate of Alpha Trent's younger brother." Harmony added.

They looked at me in shock. I blushed. That really didn't need to be said at the moment, but I guessed it was better to be upfront.

I approached the men and put out my hand. The second man accepted it and had a firm handshake. The first looked at me oddly and sniffed the air.

"You smell different. Not wolf, not witch, not vampire. You smell like a mix of the three." He said.

"That's what I've been told by the wolves and vampires I live with." I replied, pulling my hand back.

"You and your sister look like my sister so much." Preston smiled. "And Valor here looks like our father. My grandmother said how much he took after her father. I guess you all got your looks from my sister's side."

"I see some of Adam and my mother in them. Not a lot, but it's there." Samuel said.

“Please, sit down. We have so much to tell you three.” Preston took a seat and indicated the couch across from the chair.

“My Beta, Gamma, and I will clear out to give you all some privacy.” Trent told me.

“Thank you, Alpha Padua. We appreciate it.” I told him and bowed again.

“You’re getting really good at the proper vampire etiquette, Echo. You almost seem like one of them.” Trent winked.

“I just hope I don’t embarrass myself on Saturday.” I chuckled.

He patted my shoulder as he left. I sat between my sister and brother. They each took one of my hands. It was nice to be with them again, even though I just saw them at school.

“Your mother was amazing. She was a triple affinity witch. She refused an arranged marriage after she found out she was the mate of Beta Adam Williams. Melanie was a force to be reckoned with. She wasn’t a wilting flower to go with the flow. Luckily, our parents weren’t the type to force that sort of thing. Our grandmother told them how she came to love her arranged husband, but that it took years. She would rather Melanie have love from the start.” Preston started.

“Daniel Darknight said that water witches told her accepting our father would bring something bad, but she did it anyway.” I replied.

“Yes. I was already in my new home and new coven when she married him. I remember the witches warning. Something dark would come for the family. Ill omens everywhere. They also said their union would result in a supernatural triad unlike any other. With the power to do amazing things that no other triad could.” Preston said.

“So they knew we would exist. Why didn’t they just leave? They had to have known what would happen if they stayed.” Harmony asked.

“Because your father was the Beta of his pack. You would have inherited that title if the vampire hadn’t wiped out our family.” Samuel answered.

“I would rather have had parents who didn’t feed my sister to vampires and turn her into a slave.” Harmony growled slightly.

Samuel snarled. “Selfish things like that are the reason we’re in this situation. You have no idea what kind of man your father was. If he had thought of the pack and made the witch reject him, then my family would still be alive!”

“Don’t talk to my sister like that!” Val shouted. “It’s not our fault that the moon goddess paired our parents up!”

I took a deep breath, closed my eyes, and started rubbing circles on the back of my sister and brother's hands. I thought of calming things and tried to bring a soothing feeling into the room.

"Shh. You're all getting angry. There's no reason to fight." I murmured.

The tension seemed to leave the air. I opened my eyes and stared at the shocked look on Samuel's face. I'd managed to take the fight out of them.

"Mistakes were made. There were no good answers. There are a number of ways that we would have had a good life and our family would still have lived. That doesn't change the facts of where we are and what has happened." I said. "We can fight about it all we want, it won't change anything."

"She has a point. And your family wasn't the only one lost, Samuel. My coven was wiped out just like your pack was. There's no reason to scream at the children. They had to see their sister put in a difficult situation. It's not wrong for Harmony to wish our sister and brother had been there to take care of them. Melanie and Adam would never have let that happen to your sister." Preston assured us.

"I'm sorry. I didn't realize I was still so upset about it. It's been almost eighteen years. I remember my brother sending me pictures of the three of you. He was so happy. He even said that he was proud his daughter would be the Beta of his pack and that it was time for a change." Samuel said quietly.

"Val is a triple affinity witch." I told Preston.

"Really? What are your elements?" Preston asked.

"Fire, water, and plants." Val said.

"Having fire and water is rare. It's certainly a blessing from the goddess." Preston smiled. "Are you willing to entertain the idea of meeting some girls who are double affinity or who carry an affinity you don't?"

"I don't want an arranged marriage, Mr. Hayes. I'll find love like my mother found my father. I don't want to have less than my sisters. They both have destined loves. I bet I do too." Val told him.

"Witches don't have that. My sister did, but that doesn't mean you will." Preston warned.

"If I hit thirty and haven't found a destined mate, I'll start meeting witches. I have hope. I know that it may be a lot to ask, but I want what they have." He shrugged.

"Maybe that's enough for one night. We're here for a couple weeks. I hope you three are open to getting to know us better. We don't want to apply too much pressure, you're all the family we have left." Preston said. "Aside from the families we made ourselves."

“The reasons we weren’t there when the vampire killed everyone we loved. I want to tear him to pieces.” Samuel growled.

“I’ll ask Marius what’s happening with him. I’m sure he’s being tortured. Marius said he would have to torture him for the insult.” I told them.

“I hope he’s suffering.” Samuel said.

“I’ll link Trent. We’ll get you set up with guest rooms. You should rest after your journey.” Harmony smiled.

Soon Trent arrived with a couple omegas to take our uncles to their rooms. I shook both of their hands before they left. I was happy we had some family again. They would grow to understand us eventually.

“I’m sorry, Echo. I didn’t mean to get in a fight with him.” Harmony said.

“I couldn’t handle him yelling at Harmony about something so stupid.” Val said.

“Ranked blood wolves. Even if we don’t have a wolf, we have the ranked blood. Don’t worry.” I smiled.

I hugged my sister and brother tightly. They were holding me tight. I didn’t really want to leave. I wanted to stay with them for the night, but I needed to go home and do my training with Marius. Dinner would be ready soon.

After saying goodbye, I popped back home, only to find Victor’s chair occupied. His arms wrapped around me and I leaned into him.

“You’re back.” I giggled.

“So are you.” He said, hugging me. “How was your visit?”

“Interesting. We could learn a lot from my uncles. I just hope they’re open to sharing more.”

“Dinner is nearly ready. Shall we go help set the table?” Victor asked.

“Mmm. Yes. I still have a lot of work to do to be ready for your ball.” I sighed.

“Don’t overwork yourself, Echo. I’m proud of you no matter what.” He murmured and kissed my back.

I wiggled free and pulled him to stand. We kissed for a little while and then went to the dining room hand in hand. I wouldn’t tell him about Finn’s request. But I was more than happy to tell him about my new uncles.

## Chapter 107 - The Vampire's Servant

[Sean]

It was Friday evening and I was getting ready for my date with Rosario. I decided to wear some slacks and a button down shirt. I also put my contacts in. I didn't wear them often, but I wanted to look good.

This week had been busy at school, so I didn't have much time to catch Echo alone. She seemed preoccupied anyway. I didn't want to bother her too much.

The doorbell rang and I slipped on my shoes before heading to the living room. Dad had snickered when I came home on Sunday with hickeys on my neck. I had to tell him he was right and Rosario wanted to be more than friends.

Mom was thrilled. She told me she worried when I wasn't dating anyone. She wanted me to have every experience that I could while I was young, as long as they weren't dangerous ones.

Rosario was sitting on the couch while my parents sat on the love seat and talked with him. He was in his glamour. I wondered how much time he still had it for. Just school hours had to be putting him near his limit. I needed to get him out of the house before it became a problem.

"Ready to go?" I asked, extending my hand.

"We were thinking you two could have dinner with us before your movie. Instead of going out." Mom said.

"I'd really love to Mrs. Flowers, but we have to go visit with some of our friends before our movie. We're having dinner with them. Why don't I come over early tomorrow, before our game, and we can all have dinner then?" Rosario offered.

"I guess that will have to do. Who are you visiting?" Mom asked.

"We're going to see our friends Gray and Echo. They're at Echo's house. I need to take a message from my mother to her guardian and we just decided that dinner would be easier." Rosario smiled. "Plus, we haven't had a lot of time to talk to Echo and Gray about our relationship. School is busy and we only have so much time at lunch, you know how it is."

"Of course. Well, you kids have fun. We'll see you later." Dad said, shooing us out.



Mom didn't look happy. I knew she wanted to do the grilling thing and find out more about Rosario and our relationship. She would have to wait.

I took Rosario's hand and we left. As soon as we were driving, he dropped his glamour. I looked out the window.

"You didn't have to make something up about a message. You could have just said we were going to see Gray and Echo." I told him.

"I wasn't. My mother found something that Victor needs. I figured this was the perfect time for me to show them what I really look like and for you to tell Echo the truth." He said.

"Gray doesn't know I'm gay. What if he gets weird about it?" I asked.

"Then pretend to throw a ball to distract him." Rosario snickered. "It works on dogs."

"Taunting werewolves is not a healthy habit for humans." I replied.

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We drove for a little while and pulled into a driveway. There was a gate across it. Rosario hit the speaker button and an unfamiliar voice came over the speaker.

"How may I help you?" It asked.

Rosario's voice changed to the female version. "It's Rosario Adair, Maeve Adair's child. I'm here to meet with Master Nightshade."

"I thought you were a dude?" The voice chuckled.

"I'm still in my glamour. Echo hasn't seen the real me yet." Rosario said.

"You must be hitting your limit. I'll have Lady Nightshade out here so she can see you before you lose your grip. It's best if she knows everything about our allies." The voice replied.

The gate opened. Before we reached the end of the driveway, Rosario had his glamour back in place. I was a little confused.

"I thought no one knew you were really a man. Why did he call her 'Lady Nightshade'? Who is Master Nightshade?" I asked.

"This is the home of the Master vampire of the territory. Echo is his Solus Amor. She lives with him. Only humans and people who just know me at school think I'm a girl. That's why everyone at the restaurant was staring at us. It's fae owned. They were wondering why I was out with a human boy." He answered.

I nodded. We pulled up in front of a large house. I took in the sight of it. It was a mansion. I both would and wouldn't have guessed that a vampire lived there.

We got out of the car. Rosario grabbed something out of the back seat and headed up the short steps to the front door. Before we could knock, the door opened. A huge man who looked like a Viking stood there, grinning.

"Hot. Who's the human?" He asked.

"This is Sean Flowers. He's—"

"Sean Fenton Flowers?" The Viking asked, cutting Rosario off.

"Yes?" I replied.

"Vic's gonna love this. I've been looking for him. Good job, elf boy."

"Finn, who is it?" I heard a woman ask.

"Oh, come in. It's dark out here. Sorry about that." Finn moved from the door.

I wondered how he knew my middle name and why he was looking for me. Rosario was looking at me strangely. I didn't understand what was going on.

We walked into the entry way. A small young woman with purple eyes stood on the stairs. I noticed that the Viking... Finn, had the same eyes. Another man came from a hallway. He was tall with dark hair and refined features. He was talking to someone walking beside him and stopped.

He bent down as if he was kissing someone. I saw a woman's hands snake around his waist, pulling him tighter and gripping his back. On the left hand was Echo's ring. That was definitely not Gray she was kissing.

They turned toward us and she didn't even have the decency to look ashamed. She looked curious and pulled the man toward us. I could see now that he also had the purple eyes of the other two.

"What are you doing here?" Echo asked.

"Watching you cheat on Gray, apparently." I said coolly.

"Stop it. I told you already." Rosario hissed. "My apologies, Master Nightshade. I'm Rosario Adair. I came in my glamour because Echo hasn't seen my natural form yet. I only have minutes before I can't hold my glamour anymore. Mistress Nightshade, I would like to show you who I really am."

“I’d love to see who you really are, Rosario.” Echo replied.

She had a sad look on her face now. She should feel sad. I couldn’t believe she would cheat on Gray like this.

Rosario nodded and I watched as his glamour disappeared and he stood in front of me as gorgeous as ever. I slipped my hand in his. He squeezed it.

“I’m glad you found a boy you like who likes you, Sean. Rosario, you should have told me you were a boy. I wouldn’t have worried as much.” She giggled.

“If not for you, I would never have seen him. Thank you, Echo. I’m sorry I lied to you. I wanted you to trust me and this reveal doesn’t exactly scream trust.” He admitted.

“You told him what I am?” Echo asked.

“No. I was backstage last week when you were feeding on Gray.” I responded.

“Princess. Why were you feeding on Grayson at school?” The man asked.

“I’m sorry, Victor. I didn’t eat all my breakfast that day. My fangs were coming out during the break. I needed something to hold me over until lunch time.” Echo blushed. “Sean, I’m sorry you had to find out that way. Why didn’t you say anything?”

“Gray didn’t want me to worry you. He thought I would treat you differently and he wanted you to be able to tell me yourself.” I said coldly.

“Stop acting like this, Sean. I told you, she’s Victor’s Solus Amor. His mate.” Rosario told me sternly.

“Then what is Gray? What the hell is going on here? How did that guy know my middle name?” I asked.

“Gray is my other mate. I have two. I can’t answer your other questions.” Echo said.

“You have something for me, Mr. Adair?” Victor requested.

“My mother found these. They’re journals my father wrote in before he returned to the forest. They have some information on how the curse affects those of us who didn’t decide to live in the human world.” He replied.

“Thank you. I will return these as soon as possible. Talia. More for you to read.” Victor waved the journals at the short woman on the stairs.

“Probably won’t be terribly interesting. Natural fae are boring. No imagination.” She scoffed.

“I smell human.” Said a man at the top of the stairs.

There were so many people in this house. He was tall with dark blond hair and green eyes. He had his arm around a thickly built man with copper hair and light brown eyes.

“Oh! Elf boy!” He grinned and they started down the stairs.

“Rosario, Sean, this is Dillon Metz and his mate Jean-Claude Dubois.” Echo said.

“This is your human friend? He’s cute.” Dillon chuckled.

Rosario pulled me closer to him and glared at the blond man. These must have been the gay friends Echo was talking about. His mate was glaring at him too.

“What did I tell you, mon rêve?” Jean-Claude growled.

“I’m just being friendly! I can’t even compliment cute boys anymore.” Dillon huffed.

Echo came over and smiled at me. I almost forgot I was mad at her. Why did she have two mates? Did everyone? That wouldn’t make sense... or would it?

“I think the most important thing here is that the elf boy found the guy who can get you in to see Aimes.” Finn boomed.

“My great uncle?” I asked.

Echo’s eyes grew wide. “Your great uncle is Fenton Aimes III?”

“Yeah. My middle name is Fenton. It’s a family name.” I told her.

“I told you I didn’t want Echo more involved in this, Finnick.” Victor said with a snarl.

Echo turned to him quickly and put her arms around him. I saw his fangs coming out and felt a chill run through my blood. She just threw herself at an angry vampire.

“Victor, please. I need to help. Don’t be mad. I told Finn I would do anything to save you. I want to do this. Sean was already my friend. He’ll help because it means helping Rosario.” Echo said soothingly.

“What does she mean it will help you?” I asked Rosario.

“Maybe you should take this to the living room or Victor’s office.” Dillon offered. “The entry way isn’t really the place for it.”

“Looks like we might miss our movie.” Rosario said.

“I want to know what this is a lot more than I want to see a movie.” I told him and we followed Victor and Echo to the living room.

She pulled an ottoman up next to a chair and seated herself next to Victor. I sat on the couch with Rosario. Everyone else found seats or perched, in the case of Talia, elsewhere.

“Your ancestor, Fenton Aimes Sr., cast a curse over this region. It affects the fae, the witches, the vampires, and the werewolves.” Victor said.

Echo’s face was impassive, but she stroked his hand like she was trying to soothe him. I wondered at her behavior. She seemed like a different person right now.

“How could he have done that?” I asked.

“He was a powerful witch, the leader of the local coven. So far, we’ve learned that his daughter, Grace, was also a powerful witch. She was the Solus Amor, or only love, of the first vampire Master of this territory. Fenton Aimes had arranged a marriage for her, though, and took her away. Each group was cursed for the part he perceived them playing in trying to get him to give his daughter to her mate instead of the boy he picked.” Victor explained.

“She didn’t love the other boy. She loved Grigori, but her father wouldn’t accept it.” Echo murmured.

There were tears in her eyes. She looked at Victor the same way I saw her looking at Gray. Like he was the most important person in the room.

“Grigori, the first Master, killed himself in an effort to break the curse. It helped relieve it some, but not break it. He lost his life and his love.” Dillon said.

“The fae were cursed because we decided to stay out of the fight altogether.” Rosario told me.

“The vampires and werewolves were cursed because they supported Grigori and Grace.” Finn said.

“The witches were cursed because they tried to convince Fenton to go back to the light side and shun the dark.” Talia said.

“Every Master who has taken over this territory has died.” Echo sniffled. “If we can’t break the curse, Victor will die.”

I looked at all of them. My ancestor caused this? I looked at Rosario. He wouldn’t be able to use his glamour for the rest of the night. He said it was a curse that made it so he could only use it for eight hours a day. This curse?

Victor was murmuring to Echo and kissing her hand. Everyone looked very serious and sad. What Finn said after I confirmed my name struck me.

“You only wanted to use me to break the curse.” I said to Rosario.

“I had no idea until tonight what your connection to Fenton Aimes was. I just fell for you. I swear, Sean.” He pled.

“The only reason Echo became my friend. The only reason you’re with me is to get rid of this curse, then what? I go back to being alone?” I asked and stood.

“Sean. I didn’t know who you were until tonight either. Finn has been looking for someone who can tell us how to break the curse. He says we need to see your great-uncle. If you don’t want to take us, we can find a different way. I don’t want to lose your friendship over this.” Echo told me as she stood as well.

“Rosario. Take me home. I don’t think it’s a good idea to do game night tomorrow. I need space.”

“Why do you need space? Just tell them no. We can still go have a good night.” Rosario said.

“Echo was the only one who knew I was gay. Just two days after I tell her, you start acting interested in me. A week after I tell her, you’re telling me that you’re actually a man and you want me. It seems a little convenient.” I scoffed.

“It’s not like that, babe, I promise.”

“Swear to me that she didn’t tell you I was gay! Your oath of honesty that she didn’t tell you I was gay before you asked me out.” I growled.

He looked at me, then he looked at Echo. She seemed to be imploring him with her eyes. I knew it.

“An oath is very serious business to the fae, Echo. I can’t swear that, Sean. She told me in an attempt to dissuade me from you. She thought I was a girl and wanted me to not pursue you. I will swear an oath of honesty to that fact, and to the fact that Echo has never, ever encouraged me with you. Not until just a few minutes ago. I’ll swear that I love you. I’ll swear that I never want to be without you. And I’ll swear that the life of the Master of this territory doesn’t mean as much to me as you do.” Rosario implored.

“I want to go home. I need time and space. I can’t deal with this right now.” I said and stormed out of the house.

Rosario followed after me. He unlocked the car doors and got in. I looked straight ahead from the passenger’s seat.

“Babe, please. I’m not the bad guy. I didn’t know.” He pled.

“I don’t care. I told you what I need. Just because you’re my only way of getting home, doesn’t mean I’m going to sit here and listen to you begging me to help.”

“I’m not begging you to help, Sean. I’m begging you not to leave me. I was happy for the first time in my life. You accepted me. I thought you loved me.” Rosario whispered.

“Give me time. I feel like you’re just trying to get me to do what you want. It’s all too much right now.”

We pulled up in front of my house. I got out of the car. The window rolled down as I walked away.

“I’ll see you on Monday. Don’t forget that I love you, Sean.” He called out.

I kept walking until I was safely in the house. My parents seemed startled that I was back early. I told them the game, and dinner, was off for tomorrow. Then, I ignored their questions and went to bed. I just wanted to sleep and wake up somewhere else.

Sean's Dream

## Chapter 108 - The Vampire's Servant

I wanted to wake up somewhere else and I did. I was walking down a hallway that led to an arbor. Beyond that, I could see a wooded area.

There was a path that worked its way through the trees. I knew this had to be a dream, because it wasn’t familiar and I felt compelled to walk forward, even though I didn’t know what lay ahead of me. The woods opened up into a clearing.

The moon shined brightly, filling the clearing with light. This was what Gray must have meant when he said it was easier to see on a full moon night. It was almost as bright as day.

A woman sat in the center of the clearing on a stone bench. She looked a lot like Rosario’s glamour, except that her hair was silvery in the moonlight and her blue eyes seemed to glow. Her skin was paler than Rosario’s glamour, too. She had a serene expression on her face as she beckoned me to her.

I went to the center of the clearing. There was a second stone bench not far from where the woman sat. She indicated it and I sat obediently.

“Sean. I’m so glad you were open to joining me tonight. I try not to force my appearance on anyone, so I had been hoping that you would be willing to come.” She said in a gentle voice.

“Who are you?” I asked.

“I am known only as ‘The Goddess’. I have many names, and none. I oversee the lives of supernatural beings, like yourself.” She replied.

I scoffed. “I’m just a normal human.”

“You are a witch without a magic affinity. There’s a difference. You are adept with potions and can even cast spells, but have no element you connect with like other witches.” The goddess said.

I stared at her. I was a witch? It made sense. If my ancestors were witches, I could be one too.

“You aren’t here to try and influence me, are you? I just want to have time to think. It feels like everyone only wants me for this curse thing.”

“Sean, I only influence a few people for things that are really important. Though this curse is important, because it affects many of my children, it isn’t the most important thing right now.” She answered.

“Then why are you here?” I asked.

She sighed. “Most of what I do is work toward the happiness of my people. I create mate bonds, open minds and hearts, and bless families to grow together happily. I want to help you understand that your friends care about you. Rosario cares about you. It has nothing to do with your family. You are only a small link in breaking the curse, but you are so sure that no one really likes you, that you’re harming your relationships.”

“You’re saying they really like me even though I’m not important to them.” I said, shaking my head.

“No. I’m saying you’re important to them, even though you are unimportant to their goal. If you choose to help them, they will succeed faster, if you do not.... They’ll still succeed, but Victor may not survive to see it.” The goddess replied sadly.

“Why should I care about a vampire? Why would you give Echo two mates? Gray deserves someone that loves only him.” I told her.

“He has that... in a way. Echo is full of love. She has the unique background that makes her perfect for him. Echo soothes Grayson’s hot blood. She warms Victor’s cold demeanor. She is fully willing, and capable, of loving both men. She would be a handful for either one alone, they need each other as co-mates, as much as Echo needs both of them. You shouldn’t focus on Echo and her mates, you should be focused on your mate.” She chided.

“My mate? You mean Rosario?” I asked.



“I made sure you two would find each other early, but neither of you seemed to see each other. It took Echo to make you see what you were missing. That love I told you about. The love that she has an abundance of. It’s not just for her mates. It’s for her friends too. Let me show you.” The goddess said.

The area between us started to shimmer like a pond. A large, bright beam of light shone there until the area was white and featureless. I could make out some figures moving.

More color came in as the light dimmed. It was Echo’s living room. She was sitting in Victor’s lap, crying. He was trying to soothe her, but nothing seemed to be working.

“Sean won’t ever want to be my friend again.” She sobbed. “I can’t believe I ruined my first friendship.”

“Hush, princess. Sean will get over it. Finn was excited and we all got carried away with it. Just give him time.” Victor cooed.

“Why would he think I would only want to be his friend to break the curse? I would never do that.” Echo sniffled.

“Echo, it can be hard for some people. Maybe he hasn’t had the best luck with friends. It could be that he was already trying to figure out how he managed to get involved in all of these relationships.” He kissed the side of her head.

“I’m sorry, cookie. I bet he’s smart enough to figure it out. You just need to focus on something else. Claude and I will go start dinner. Why don’t you two go take a walk in the garden? I know how much you love flowers.” Dillon smiled.

“Yes, princess. Let’s go for a walk in your garden. Everything will be much better after you’ve calmed down and then we’ll have dinner and watch a movie until Grayson gets home from work. Then he and I will help you forget you were ever sad today.” Victor murmured.

A small smile curved on Echo’s lips. She squeezed him tightly and got off his lap. She took his hand as he stood and they walked out of the room.

“I didn’t mean to overwhelm the kid.” Finn sighed. “I just wanted to save Vic.”

“I know.” Talia answered. “You’re worried for your broodmate. You should have kept quiet until we could discuss how to use this information. I don’t think any of us could have predicted he would react like that. That young man isn’t very secure in himself. I feel sorry for him. I hope he doesn’t give up that delicious fae over this.”

“I didn’t think he was your type, Talia.” Jean-Claude chuckled.

“Darling, everyone is my type, but not necessarily my preference. Sylvans weren’t one of the species hunted by us, but they are just as tasty as any other fae. It’s a fun bite while enjoying what else they offer.” Talia laughed.

“Enough. I don’t want to hear them talking about Rosario like that.” I growled.

The image faded. I put my hand to my head. I hated them talking about Rosario like he was a piece of meat. He was so much more than that.

“Of course you don’t. He’s yours. I selected him for you especially. You were so open-minded about what else could be out there. I knew you would process and accept him more quickly than anyone else would. You found out about Echo being a dhampyr and Grayson being a werewolf on Friday. By Saturday evening, you were having fun with them and treating them just like you had before you knew.” The goddess said.

“You’re saying that I’m Rosario’s true mate?”

“You were never intended to stay a powerless witch for the rest of your life. I always intended for you to go through the change to be fae. Rosario started being able to sense what you were to him as soon as he started really seeing you. He was always interested in what you were doing, but never truly saw you, just like he never truly saw anyone else. It took Echo waking him up before he was able to really see everyone around him.” She explained.

I could feel the tears in my eyes. He didn’t just want me to break the spell. I really was meant to be his forever?

The goddess waved a hand and the circle started showing a bedroom I didn’t recognize. Rosario sat on the bed, staring at his phone. There were tears in his eyes. The door opened.

A tall woman with the same tree bark skin, leaf green hair, and pointed ears walked in. She stood by the door and crossed her arms. Her expression was pained as he looked up at her.

“Please, Rio. Tell me what makes you cry so. I just want to help you.” She sighed.

“Mama, I think I found my true mate. I know I can’t tell until I’m older, but I love him. I feel my love for him down to my bones.”

His mother crossed the room and sat next to him, taking him into her arms and holding him tightly. Rosario dropped his phone. He turned and wrapped his arms around her waist, resting his head on her shoulder. My heart hurt as I watched him shake.

“It is possible. Is this the human boy Gilead told me you were eating with twice at the restaurant?” She asked.

“Yes. He knows what I am. I thought he loved me, but he didn’t want to talk to me when I took him home tonight. He didn’t even want to yell at me. I would have taken anything.” He sniffled.

“What happened?”

Rosario told her what happened at Echo’s house. His mother got a look that was a mix of anger and sadness. She kissed his temple.

“I can understand being excited for another lead, but they should have waited. I don’t want you to lose your true mate over this. You needed more time with him for him to feel the bond too. Because he’s human, it’s entirely possible you’re feeling the bond early. If he rejects you, we’ll pull our support from the alliance.” His mother assured him.

“Don’t do that. I need to fight for Sean. I need to make him see that I’m still here and I still love him. If I can’t do that, I don’t deserve him. We need to break the curse. We need to have a better relationship with other supernaturals. It’s for our people, mother. I can set aside my heart for the sake of our people if I must.” Rosario said softly.

“You shouldn’t have to do that. Would you like to go stay with your grandmother for a while? Give your love some space? Maybe he will be so sad that he doesn’t get to see you that he’ll realize what he’s missing without you.” She offered.

“No. I need to be there. I need to see him. Sean is so important to me, mother. I just wish he’d call or text and let me know that he loves me too.” He replied.

“He will. I know he will contact you tomorrow and everything will be okay, my sweet boy. Why don’t you go take a shower and try to sleep? You need your rest.” His mother said.

Rosario nodded and gave her another hug before she got up and left the room. He quickly grabbed his phone and checked his messages again, giving a dejected sigh as no new messages appeared. He put the phone on the charger and grabbed his towel off a hook in his room before heading into the bathroom.

The image dissipated and the circle disappeared. I looked up at the goddess. She smiled tightly at me.

“They really want me and not what I can do for them?” I asked.

“Truly. You are what is important to Echo and Rosario. You didn’t seem to hear Echo when she said they could find another way. Please, don’t throw away the people who will support you through your life. Echo’s second life is long and she could be a lifelong friend to you. Someone who knew you from before.” The goddess explained to me.

“I didn’t think about that. Having a longer life than everyone else will make life difficult. I need all the long lived friends I can get. I still haven’t decided about helping, but I’ll let them know I’m not mad at them.” I told her.

“Good. There are a lot of hard times coming. You need as much support as possible and I just know you and Rosario are going to be happy together for the rest of your lives. He’ll guide you

through a world unlike you've ever imagined, and you'll show him the world he was missing out on before he found you." She smiled. "Go back the way you came and you'll find your way back to your bed."

"Thank you. I appreciate you helping me out." I said as I stood.

"You're my child, Sean. I only want your happiness. You'll find that a mother is willing to do a lot to ensure her child's happy future." The goddess winked.

I didn't get a chance to ask what she meant by that, because she seemed to fade into the moonlight. I took a final look around the clearing before heading for the archway. A warm light was at the end of the hallway, and I knew I had slept through the whole night, even though it only felt like I was in the dream for an hour max.

When I opened my eyes, I sighed. I put on my glasses and picked up my phone. It was just after nine in the morning. I had three text messages from Gray telling me to call him and not be an ass. There was a text from Rosario around midnight telling me good night and that he loved me.

After I went to the bathroom and brushed my teeth, I got dressed. I was just heading to the kitchen to grab some cereal and tell my parents there would be a game, though I didn't know about dinner, when the doorbell rang. I wondered who would be here at nine in the morning on a Saturday.

I changed direction to the front door and opened it. A tall woman stood before me. She had long black hair, golden brown skin, and a very judgmental look on her face. Her very familiar face.

"You must be Sean." She said.

My mouth dropped open in shock. It was Rosario's mom. I felt a hand on my shoulder and turned to see my own mother right behind me.

"I'm Sean's mother, Hope. Who are you?" Mom smiled.

"Maeve Adair. Rosario's mother. I'm so glad to find you home. We need to have a chat." Rosario's mom said in a cool voice.

"Please, come in." Mom said.

This couldn't be happening. How did I tell her that my parents didn't know Rosario was a boy? Would she even care or would she out me? She didn't look happy. I knew this would be a difficult visit.

A Meeting of Mothers

## Chapter 109 - The Vampire's Servant

“Brian, Rosario’s mother is here.” Mom called out as she guided her to the living room.

My dad came out from the kitchen. He smiled at Mrs. Adair and stuck out his hand.

“Brian Flowers. It’s nice to meet you. Your daughter is almost as beautiful as you are.” He said.

Rosario’s mom looked at me and raised an eyebrow. I could feel a blush as my stomach dropped. She knew my parents didn’t know Rosario was a boy.

She shook my father’s hand and sat in the chair he indicated. Dad and mom sat on the couch across from her. I needed to come out or she’d do it for me. She looked like she was angry.

“Mr. Flowers. Is your wife aware of your... lineage?” Mrs. Adair asked.

Dad looked shocked. He glanced at me nervously.

“Sean, go to your room.” Dad said.

“He should stay. He already knows what I’m about to say. Or, I assume so based on his expression.” She told him.

“My wife knows everything. My children don’t. Did you tell him?” He asked.

“No. My friends did, dad. Why didn’t you tell me?” I asked, sitting in the chair next to Mrs. Adair.

“Because you shouldn’t have to deal with it. You and your sister shouldn’t have to know that we lost our magic because of what he did.” Dad sighed.

“We were only looking out for you and your sister.” Mom added.

“That isn’t why you have no affinity. Some witches are just born without one. It doesn’t stop you from being able to cast spells or make potions. If the coven were willing to accept your mother, you wouldn’t be so uneducated.” Mrs. Adair scoffed.

“How did you know what we were? Is this why Sean and Rosario fought last night?” Dad asked.

“They fought because of the curse. I’m here to let your son know that he cannot hurt my Rosario and expect there not to be any consequences. I know what you are because I have been watching

over your family ever since the curse was cast. I am Maeve Adair, fae queen for this region.” She replied proudly.

“Fae? Sean? You’re dating a fae?” Dad questioned in disbelief.

“Dad.... I don’t know what to say. I am dating a fae. I think that’s not as important as something else I need to tell you.” I said, taking a deep breath.

“What else? You’re already dating someone who hates our family because of what my great grandfather did.” Dad scoffed.

I winced and looked at Mrs. Adair. She returned my look with a cold expression. I needed to do this.

“Rosario isn’t a girl. Mom, Dad, I’m... I’m gay. Rosario is my boyfriend. He makes himself look like a girl in his glamour, but he’s a guy.” I admitted.

They were quiet. I watched their faces. Dad didn’t look at me, but mom had a soft look in her eyes.

“Why didn’t you tell us earlier?” Mom asked.

“Because I was afraid. I was afraid you wouldn’t accept me. Dad can’t even look at me right now.” I told her.

She looked at my father. He was staring intently at the coffee table. I felt my heart wrench when he didn’t even look at me.

“This is my fault.” He whispered. “If I’d told you. If I hadn’t kept it a secret, you would have felt like you could talk to me. You must have sensed that there was something I was keeping from you and it made you think I wouldn’t talk to you about this.”

“Dad? What are you talking about?”

“They always say ‘if you can’t be honest, no one will be honest with you’. I wasn’t honest with you about my great grandfather, you didn’t think you could be honest about being gay. I accept you. I’m fine with whatever makes you happy. I just wish you had told us sooner. You were probably having such a hard time.” Dad sighed.

“We only ever want you and your sister to be happy. Rosario seems very nice, I’m sure he’s a good boy.” Mom said.

“My son is an amazing young man. There have been multiple offers for him. He hasn’t dated any human, only fae. He has no idea how to handle being in love with someone who doesn’t understand him and won’t talk to him.” Mrs. Adair replied.

Anger shot through me at the thought of Rosario ever being with anyone else. I didn't like how that felt at all. He was mine. The goddess said he was my true mate.

"I understand that you think my son was using you, but he wasn't. I will be having words with the vampires as soon as they wake for the day. Rosario thinks you're his true mate. Do you even understand how much you hurt him last night?"

"You've been around vampires!?" My dad growled. "Did you let anyone bite you? You're grounded."

"That's a little harsh, Brian. At least let him explain."

"I feel that he should answer me first, I am a guest, after all." Mrs. Adair said coldly.

"I know how much I hurt Rosario. I just needed some space and some time to think. I was going to text him after I had time to sort out what I wanted to say. Dad, you can't ground me for this. I didn't even know we were going to see vampires last night. My friend, Echo, is a dhampyr. I didn't realize her guardian was the Master of the territory." I explained.

My dad turned white as a sheet. He looked to Mrs. Adair and she nodded. He gripped my mom's hand tightly.

"Did he threaten you? Did you tell him you don't know anything about the curse? You still didn't say if anyone bit you." He asked.

"No one bit me. They didn't threaten me, they just told me about the curse and what Fenton Aimes did to his daughter." I replied. "Echo is my friend and Rosario was with me. I was safe."

"Your son took mine to see the Master of the territory. Do you realize how dangerous that could have been? The vampires hate our family just as much as the rest of you do. We only stay here because an Aimes needs to hold the land our house was on in order to keep the curse from spreading." Dad insisted.

"My son had no idea who your family was. If he did, he wouldn't have taken Sean into that house last night. There's no telling how a threatened vampire will react and Victor is threatened by the mere existence of this curse." Mrs. Adair explained. "Rosario thinks your son is his true mate, he would never have risked Sean's life."

"It was a man that looked like a Viking who realized who I was. I think he was a vampire. He had purple eyes like Victor and another person, a woman named Talia." I supplied.

"Talia? Copper hair, violet eyes, looks like a child?" Mrs. Adair breathed.

"Yes." I replied.

“The Traveler. I sent my child to the lair of the Traveler. Dear goddess.” She covered her mouth. “She could have killed them both.”

Dad and mom looked alarmed. I put my hands up and drew everyone’s attention.

“All they want is to get rid of the curse. Talia never even looked at us cross-eyed. I think she’s too focused on keeping Victor alive. He had the same eyes as her.” I revealed.

“He’s her childe. She must really care for him if she’s here. I knew there were stories of her in the region, but I didn’t realize she was here now. If he dies, she might not be pleased. She’s one of the oldest vampires in the world and she has a deadly reputation.” Mrs. Adair said.

The doorbell rang again. I stood to get the door, since the parents were all too shocked to have registered it. I didn’t like being in the room.

Talia had seemed a little different, but not deadly. All of the vampires stayed a good distance away from us. I didn’t feel threatened at all, until I thought everyone was using me. Now that I know they weren’t I felt fine.

I opened the door and was faced with Rosario. He was in his glamour and looked worried and a little scared. A pained expression crossed his face for a moment.

“I know you don’t want to see me, but, is my mom here? She left this morning to go run errands, but I looked at her calendar and she didn’t have anything written there except her lunch with Echo.”

I pulled him into my arms and held him tightly. His arms snaked around me and I could feel the real him through the glamour. He smelled fantastic.

“I love you, too. I’m so sorry I got upset, I just needed time to deal with all this.” I whispered.

“Oh, goddess, I’m glad to hear that. I didn’t want to lose you.” He murmured back in his real voice.

“Your mom is in the living room with my parents. My dad was pretty upset that you took me to see vampires last night. Your mom got freaked out when I mentioned Talia. I guess she’s like a really powerful vampire.”

“I’m more than really powerful.” A voice said from behind Rosario.

I stiffened and let him go. We turned to see the small vampire followed by the two larger men we saw last night. I pulled Rosario into the house and closed the door.

“How are they out in the daylight?” I asked.



“The men are werewolves. She’s ancient. I heard that the very old ones can go out for a few hours during the day. What are we going to do? My mom is going to freak.”

“Not nearly as bad as my dad. All he’s been talking about is the fact that all the supernaturals hate our family. A mob of supernaturals is going to make him flip his lid.” I hissed.

There was a knock at the door. I groaned and opened the door a little. Talia looked amused.

“Look, my parents can’t deal with more supernaturals right now.” I told her bluntly.

She bowed a little. “I was only coming to tell you that Echo hopes you will forgive her for harming you. She was crying all night. Nothing anyone can do seems to soothe her. She falls asleep crying and wakes up only to start crying again. She has a very important ball to attend this evening, I need her not to be all puffy faced.”

“I’ll text her once I get Rosario’s mom out of the house. Please, will you leave?” I pled.

“If you promise to message Echo as soon as you can, then I will leave. I would prefer if you sent one right now, so I could witness it, but I will trust in you.” Talia said softly and turned to leave.

I breathed a sigh of relief. That was one situation taken care of. I turned to Rosario after closing the door. He smiled a little.

“Do you have a glamour that will make you look male? Like yourself, but not an elf?” I asked.

“Sure.” He replied and the air around him shimmered until there was a human looking Rosario in front of me.

I pulled him closer and kissed him. It was perfect. I didn’t realize how much I missed kissing him until just then.

Taking his hand, I guided him to the living room with our parents. My mom looked up and her eyes grew large. She nudged my dad who followed her look to me.

“Mom, Dad, this is Rosario with male glamour on. He doesn’t really look like this, but he looks close.” I told them.

“Nice to see you again, Mr. and Mrs. Flowers.” He said.

“My goodness, what a handsome young man. I take it this means you two made up?” Mom asked.

“He came here looking for his mom. We made up just a moment ago. Please, this doesn’t need to go on any longer.” I smiled.

“Is this true, Rio?” Mrs. Adair asked.

“Yes, mother. We talked and everything is fine now. Let’s go home. You have a lunch to prepare for.” He said.

“Are you still coming over for dinner, Rosario?” Mom asked.

He looked at me. I nodded.

“I never officially called off game night. I just figured I would do it in the morning. We can do dinner then game like we planned.” I offered.

“That sounds good.” Rosario smiled.

“We’ll see you tonight.” Mom grinned.

I chuckled. She was just as excited to grill male Rosario as she was female Rosario. Dad helped Mrs. Adair stand and shook her hand.

“Before I go, I wanted you to know, no one holds a grudge against your family except for some members of the coven. We all understand that you can’t be held responsible for the actions of one man before you even existed. I knew Fenton. You’re nothing like him. Neither is your son.” She smiled regally at him.

She really looked like a queen. Rosario certainly looked like a prince. I didn’t know how I would fit in with his family, but I hoped that his mother would be able to accept me. I didn’t really care what his father thought. I really hoped I would be strong by the time I got to meet his father. I wanted to kick his ass.

We said goodbye and waved off Rosario and his mom. We went back in the house and my parents pulled me into the living room for a long talk, where I explained everything that was going on, and dad told me everything he knew about the curse. It was a long and emotional day

.Fairy Lunch

## Chapter 110 - The Vampire's Servant

[Echo]

I stepped out of the shower feeling at least ninety percent better. Half an hour ago, I got a text from Sean saying that he was sorry for overreacting and our friendship was fine. It was a huge relief. I’d been upset all night.

Gray and Victor tried everything they could think of to soothe me. They cuddled me and kissed me and told me everything would be alright. It was almost enough to pull me out of it, but, when I remembered the look on Sean's face, I would start crying again. It was emotionally draining.

We had been so eager we didn't even think of what Sean would feel if he thought we were only using him for the curse. I knew I had to find a different way to get in to see his great uncle. I wasn't going to risk my friendship with Sean. I knew we could find another way to save Victor.

Pushing would only make him less likely to help and would hurt our relationship. I needed all the friends I could get if I lost Victor. The thought of losing him terrified me, but I had to have hope that we would break the curse.

I dressed in a nice, light blue sundress with a pale pink sweater and put my hair up in a ponytail. I thought it was perfect for lunch with Maeve. We were on a bit of a schedule.

Opal would be at the house around three to start getting me ready for the ball. I was told that only single women wore their hair up at vampire events. I would need to wear my hair down so no one would take it as an invitation to try and bite me.

Heading downstairs, I found my sister and brother already waiting for me. Val and Harmony were dressed in nice, but not fancy, outfits. They looked great.

After getting hugs from my sister and brother, I kissed Gray goodbye and we went out to the car. Val had his phone giving him directions to Maeve's house. We rode quietly, but we didn't need to talk, being together made us happy and I could feel it in the car.

"Are you nervous at all?" I asked.

"Rosario is the only fae I know and I've only ever seen her in her glamour. This is so cool. I can't wait to meet her mom!" Harmony said.

I realized they didn't know Rosario was a boy. That made me a little nervous. I didn't know if I should say something or if I should just be quiet. I opted to be quiet and see what Rosario wanted to reveal.

When I saw him with Sean, I couldn't oppose them any longer. I know, Gray said their relationship was not healthy because Rosario was fae, but they seemed really in love. I couldn't break that kind of relationship up. That wasn't my place. I would just be there for Sean when it happened.

We pulled up in front of the house and Val turned off his car. They looked at the place and commented on the yard and how nice the forest seemed. We headed up to the front door. My sister and brother were careful not to step on any of the flowers that hung over the path.

Once we were at the door, we knocked and waited. I held Val and Harmony's hands. I was ready for whatever happened.

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The door opened and Rosario stood there without his glamour. He was taller than Val and looked so much like his mother without her glamour that I could absolutely tell they were related. I smiled at him.

“Hey, Echo, good to see you again.” He grinned.

“Did you work everything out with Sean? He’s not still mad at you, right?” I asked.

“Everything’s perfect again. He came out to his parents and introduced me properly. I’m having dinner with them tonight before game night.” Rosario grinned.

“Are you related to Rosario?” Harmony asked.

“This is Rosario.” I told her.

“Shit. I asked out a dude.” Val groaned.

“I was very flattered. You were the only guy who didn’t tell me you wanted to date me because of how beautiful I was. If not for the fact that I don’t date straight guys, I would have accepted.” Rosario winked.

“So, Sean’s gay?” Harmony gasped. “I was almost certain he had a crush on Echo.”

I laughed. “Gray thought that, too. Like I was telling everyone, Sean is just my friend.”

“Come in! I just realized we’re just standing around chit-chatting. You’re on a timeline. The vampire ball is tonight, isn’t it?” Rosario smiled.

“Yes. I’m a little nervous about it.” I sighed.

“Don’t be. Victor, Finn, Marius, and Talia will be there to protect you and no one would risk Victor’s anger by touching you.” He replied and led us into the house.

We followed him to the dining room. It was elegant and had a beautiful table that seated at least six. Maeve came in with a tray and was settling plates in each spot. All six places were set.

“You should go before your father gets here, Rio.” Maeve smiled at him.

“Right. I have to go to the game shop and buy dice. I’ll think of something else to keep me out of the house until he’s gone.” Rosario replied and kissed his mother on her cheek before putting on his glamour and leaving the house.

“Sorry about that. I try to keep them separated as much as possible.” She said.

“I understand. Rosario told me that his father disapproves of him.” I told her.

“Hollis is a very traditional man. Our other children were very much like him. Rosario is more like me. He likes being out in the world and experiencing other things. Hollis and our eldest daughter, Ivy, will be joining us for this meal. Ivy will take over as the leader of the forest fae one day, just as Rosario will take over as the leader of the human world fae.” Maeve explained. “Since you are already familiar with Rosario, I figured I would just fill him in later.”

“Of course.” I smiled. “I don’t want Rosario to be uncomfortable. Is there anything I can do to help?”

“Just try to keep that smile on your face. Things may get a little tense. Hollis is just a bit overprotective of me and didn’t want me meeting with a dhampyr alone. He didn’t trust Rio to keep me safe.” She shrugged.

Right as she finished putting the last plate on the table, the back doors opened and two people entered. I thought Rosario looked like his mom, but I was wrong. He was almost identical to his father.

Hollis was tall with broad shoulders and was well muscled. His skin was a richer brown than Maeve’s and his hair a slightly lighter green. He looked stern and cold. It reminded me of Victor when I first met him.

Next to him was a pretty woman who looked like Maeve, but slimmer and with fewer curves. She looked almost fragile, but the expression on her face was just as cold as her father’s. She was tall and fierce looking.

“Echo, Valor, Harmony, this is my mate, Hollis Adair and my daughter Ivy Adair. This is Echo Nightshade and her siblings, Valor and Harmony Gale.” Maeve said.

“It is a pleasure to meet the vampiric triad. We were quite eager to see the three of you. Where is Rosario, Maeve? Won’t he be joining us?” Hollis questioned.

“He has errands to run and things to do. He is our liaison with the triad and the Master of the territory. Rio has enough contact, this was just so we could get to know them.” She explained.

“Mother, I don’t know why you insist on coddling him. He needs to learn to put aside his own desires for the sake of his people.” Ivy huffed.

“Please.” I said. “Rosario already knows a great deal about us. It’s redundant to make him sit through a meeting that will mostly go over things he already knows. More work gets done when you work efficiently.”

Ivy and Hollis looked shocked. Like I was an animal who had spoken for the first time ever. He got an indignant look, then shifted his demeanor. I didn’t like him at all.

“You have a point. Of course you would know about what is best when working things like this out. You assist the vampire in running his territory... or you will for as long as he lives to run it.” He smirked.

I raised an eyebrow. He tried to hurt me for nothing more than pointing something out that he hadn't considered. I was used to people trying to hurt me and Marius taught me how to behave if this happened. He told me I was the mistress of this territory and I couldn't back down to other leaders.

I smiled politely. “Yes. For as long as he lives, I am the mistress of this territory. More than that, I am the daughter of Marius Aconitum. I know much about running a territory because he has taught me so well. Though, I prefer my own methods to his.”

Hollis visibly paled. Marius had told me to use him to frighten other leaders whenever necessary. He told me about how differently he ran his territory from how Victor ran his. Marius was cruel, just like Rosario had heard vampires could be.

“You are the children of Death?” Hollis replied softly.

“We are.” I responded.

Val and Harmony were looking at me, but adopted the same chilled presentation. They would follow my lead. I was grateful for them not questioning me.

“I see. I meant no disrespect. It was only an observation.” He said solemnly.

“It was needlessly cruel to point out that my Solus Amor may not survive the curse on this territory. You intended to harm me with it. I would ask that you not do that in the future. I would rather if our meetings were friendly. You don't need to posture with me. I already know that you are a powerful fae. If you feel insecure enough to posture against me... perhaps you should permit your daughter to take over the leadership of your people.” I told him.

“Please. We're here for a meal and to get to know you and your siblings. Hollis has learned his lesson about trying to harm you. You are not as sweet and gentle as you seem.” Maeve chuckled.

“I am precisely as I seem. If I have no reason to defend myself, I am more than happy to be kind, sweet, gentle, and soft. I will not stand for someone insulting or attacking me.” I said.

“There will be no more of that in my home. Everyone here, save me, is a guest. Being rude to a fae host is a dangerous proposition and I am stating now that any attacks on other guests will be seen as rudeness to your host.” She warned.

Everyone nodded. She seated me at the foot of the table, across from her. My sister and brother were on either side of me. Her mate and daughter were on either side of her.

We ate for a little while. Harmony, Val, and I complimented Maeve's cooking. She looked pleased. I was glad everything was going smoothly.

"So, have you figured out what you can do as a triad?" Hollis asked.

"At the moment, I'm still recovering from malnourishment. We haven't had time to explore it." I said.

"What are your abilities, Valor?" Ivy asked.

"I'm a triple affinity witch, with the speed, strength, and healing ability of a werewolf. I don't know yet what I have inherited from my vampire side." He answered.

"And you, Harmony?" Maeve asked.

"I'm an Beta werewolf with the speed, strength, and size that go with it. I can influence others as part of my vampire abilities. As for witch abilities. I tried the witch test to see if I had any of those. When I dropped my blood onto a plant seed, the seed disintegrated. I don't understand it and the witch who gave me the test was confused. No one has ever seen that." Harmony sighed.

I covered her hand with mine and gave it a squeeze. She had told me about that test. Missy had been completely confused and our uncle, Preston, had said he never saw anything like it. Maeve looked shocked.

"That ability has never transferred over to witch children. It's a type of fae magic. The opposite of Echo's ability to heal, instead of giving health, you take it. I can train you how to use it. It's an ability I hold. It's a great defensive ability." She said happily.

"Really!?! Thank you so much!" Harmony grinned.

I saw Hollis and Ivy stiffen. I remembered what Gray said about thanking fae. I hadn't thought to warn Harmony and Val.

"Harmony. You aren't supposed to say thank you to fae. You're supposed to say you appreciate it. Maeve is more relaxed about it than other fae, but you should still be careful when dealing with them." I warned.

She put her hand over her mouth. "I'm so sorry. Cam warned me, but I forgot. I was just so excited."

"Don't worry. I appreciate your enthusiasm. I will not consider this a debt owed. I'm more than happy to help. This is a dangerous ability if it's not handled correctly." Maeve told her.

"I'm very happy that you're willing to teach me. I had no idea what I would do without someone to help me." Harmony said.

“What werewolf abilities do you have, Echo?” Ivy asked.

“I can soothe angry wolves.”

“You might have some animal magic. We should test it. Animal magic is rare among witches. Did you ever notice animals and insects being drawn to you?” Ivy pressed.

“Bees would land on me when I was in the garden. Birds don’t fly away when I get near and squirrels like to chatter at me sometimes.” I responded.

“It sounds like you have an animal affinity. You all probably have it.”

“I’ve never been bitten, even by dogs my friends say bite everyone.” Val answered.

“Me, too.” Harmony said.

“Can you understand them?” Hollis asked. “Does it feel like you can hear words forming in your head?”

“No.” We answered together.

“Then you don’t have the affinity. You would be able to speak to and understand them when they talk to you. It’s probably just the connection with nature that comes from being wolves and the fae part of your witch blood. They don’t feel as threatened as they do with humans.” He replied.

The rest of the lunch went like that. They asked questions and we answered. Maeve showed Harmony a few things she could do with her magic. Ivy worked with Val on meditations that would enhance his plant magic, making vines move to his will. Hollis and I discussed a possible treaty between the vampires and the forest fae.

I knew that Victor would want one. Hollis wanted his people safe and was interested to hear what we might offer. I talked to him about how good Victor was, his skill at leading, and what he had already done in the territory. He was intrigued and accepted Victor’s number to arrange a meeting.

Maeve ended up not knowing much about the family of the witch Fenton had married Grace to. I was sad that we wouldn’t have another lead, but I was also happy with how smoothly everything went. It seemed to be opening up a lot of opportunities for our future.

In all, I felt it was a very good and productive lunch. It gave me a lot of confidence for the night ahead. I’d been worrying all week about the approaching ball, but now I felt I could handle it. If nothing else, the threat of Marius would keep people in line.