

## Chapter 13 - The Vampire's Servant

“Come in, Echo.” Victor called out.

I opened the door and bowed. “The donors have left. Is your office to your liking?”

“Yes. You did fantastically. We looked around downstairs and every room is perfection. You have a wonderful eye.” He beamed.

His praise made me feel amazing. I wanted to make him happy because he gave me so much. He was my friend. Not just the vampire I served.

“Come sit. I have my kit. We can take and test your blood now.” Rosalynn said.

I sat in one of the leather seats across from Victor’s desk. She pulled out a small kit and started unpacking things. There were some rubber strips, needles, tubing, and little containers.

She took my arm and poked around in the bend until she found what she was looking for. I watched her tie a rubber strip around my arm, clean it with an alcohol wipe, and insert a needle. The blood flowed into the tube, which she attached to the little containers one at a time.

“Why are there four containers?” I asked quietly.

“The first two will be solely for determining the level of vampire blood you have. The other two will be for figuring out your sire. We need more blood for that than for the other test.” Victor explained. “Do you want to stay here or do something else while we test it?”

“I want to be here, but I’m afraid I won’t once you start. I want to know what’s going on. Too much of my life has been decided without me having any say.” I whispered.

“We can do the testing, then come to you. We’ll tell you everything. Does that sound acceptable?” Victor asked.

“Please. I really want to know.”

“Well, we’re all done here. You can go get some dinner. It smells like you have low blood sugar. You haven’t eaten much today.” Rosalynn said sternly.

“You need to eat, little one. I want you eating three meals a day.” Victor scolded.

“I was a little busy making the house livable. Next time, I’ll have an apple while I work.” I growled.

“Moody. Go eat something with protein. Being part vampire means you should be eating more meat.” Rosalynn said, turning to Victor and basically dismissing me.

“I’ll be in the kitchen.” I told them and left the room in a huff.

I hoped to have answers. I wanted to sleep and I knew I wouldn’t be able to if I didn’t know. At least, not restfully.

A lot was weighing on my mind as I pulled a ground beef patty from the freezer. Maybe I’d feel better once I did what they said and ate something. I never had a problem before, but I didn’t have the freedom to have an attitude before either.

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[Victor]

Rosy raised an eyebrow at me when Echo left. I’d never seen her get grumpy like that. It had only been a few days though and today was long and difficult.

“You sure you’re prepared to marry that?” She laughed.

“It needs to happen if she’s in danger of being taken. I can’t let her end her life because of something that was out of her control. Depending on what we find tonight, her sire will probably want her.” I replied.

“Are you ready then?”

“As I’ll ever be.” I sighed.

We pulled the rubber cap off the first containers. The smell was intoxicating. I’d never had blood affect me before drinking it. Putting the vial to my lips, I sipped, holding the blood on my tongue and breathing in the potency of it.

Now I understood what Springer was talking about. It wasn’t just the flavor. It was the raw power in her blood that made it addictive.

“More than half. Her sire is powerful and old, Victor. I can already taste his power.” Rosy said.

“I know. It tastes familiar. Let’s have the other one.” I suggested.

We were more eager for this one. Even though I’d fed for the night, I was starving for this. It was the only thing I felt would quell the burning in my stomach.

The second dose of her blood was as electric as the first. I closed my eyes and savored it. There was a power I’d felt before. I focused on it intently. Who was it? Someone I knew. Someone formidable. Someone ancient.

“Death.” Rosy whispered.

Yes, it was Death. I’d only met him a few times. He was rather terrifying. His name was Marius Aconitum.

It was where I got the inspiration to take the surname ‘Nightshade’. Of course, I was referring to belladonna. It only took killing a couple people who called me the ‘lord of produce’, before it was taken more seriously.

Marius was called Death because he was rumored to be as old as death itself. The positive of that was, he owed nothing to anyone. In fact, most vampires in the world owed him. He was one of the most influential members of the council. The head of the high council.

He was cold, cruel, and calculating. His abilities were immeasurable. As we aged, we would gain power, he was ancient. At least as old as my own sire, who was his broodmate. She was frighteningly powerful, too.

I couldn’t fight him. I couldn’t pay him off. I couldn’t kill her, or marry her. If there was a way to undo a marriage bond, he’d know it. Or he’d kill me permanently.

“We need to contact him. What time is it where he’s living?” I asked.

“If you’re hoping for the sun to be up, it won’t help. Like Talia, he only sleeps three hours a day and no one knows what three hours. If he finds out we delayed for any reason....” Rosy trailed off.

If we delayed for any reason, he’d live up to his name. No one lied to Death. No one fooled him. He was already aware of our mission.

Trading in the blood of children was a serious offense and proper resolution was important. Especially when it meant killing so many vampires. He’d taken a special interest in our work. It was in our best interest to not waste time.

Rosy pulled out her phone. “We can make our report directly to him.”

“I want to tell Echo first.”

“No. He may decide to leave it and let you keep her. He has no real use for her. As his child, he can’t breed with her, he owes no one, his alliances are founded on the fear of his name, not what he can provide. This way, we’ll know what you can safely tell her.” She responded and hit a button before setting it on speaker and putting it down on my desk.

“Speak.” A deep, voice growled.

“Master Marius, this is Rosalynn Creper. I am with Victor Nightshade. We have an update on the recent child’s blood incident.” Rosy stated in a businesslike tone.

“According to the last update, all violators have found their final conclusion and the child has been relocated to the care of Master Nightshade. We have your travel forms stating you will be testing the blood of the child for vampire relations. What have you found?” He asked, coolly.

“The child is confirmed a dhampyr. Her blood is over half vampire. We don’t know how that’s possible, though. After testing her for relations, we found... you... are her sire, sir.” Rosy reported.

The silence on the line was deafening. It felt like hours as we waited for his response. It was one of those times when I rather wished we did breathe, then I’d know he was still there, at least.

“Say that last part one more time.” He commanded.

“You are her sire, Master Marius. Both Victor and I could taste it.” She said.

“I have your location. I will be there tomorrow. Make sure the girl is aware.” He ordered and hung up.

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We stared at each other. I hadn’t expected that, and I had expected it all at the same time. He rarely left his home, except to deal with council issues that required his presence. I certainly didn’t realize he’d come all the way to America, or that he could be here in less than two days.

“It had to be done. If we’d gone through normal channels, it could have been intercepted or he could have become enraged. This will give us the best outcome, Victor. He wouldn’t hurt his own child. Not a living one at least. He fought against auctions for them. He was against vampires trying to make living children for the purposes of breeding. I didn’t think he had any children, living or otherwise. Maybe that’s why he’s coming. To check our work.” Rosy offered.

“I’ll go tell her. Why don’t you find out about where your luggage went? You shouldn’t be wearing her clothes.” I said as I got up to leave the office.

“Okay, Victor. Get her calmed and sent to bed. We can talk more after.” She smiled sadly.

I knew it was because she wanted me to be happy. She’d kept on me about getting a new human servant for decades, but I hadn’t found anyone who could take the place of Geoff.

It wasn’t that I hadn’t searched for one. I’d seen dozens of possibilities over the years. None of them were a good fit for me. None of them ever came close to the feeling I had with Geoff.

No one else felt right. Until Echo. How did I get so attached to her?