WarZone Entertainment presents

WarZone

#3: The God of War

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First Printing: USA 2/28/2017

**Prologue**

 It was a cold dark night. The wind was unusually strong this night and all Henry had was his torn-up cloak to protect him from the elements. Life had never been easy or nice to Henry. Once upon a time he had it all, a loving family, a wife and son. A son who looked up to him like a hero. Then war came, and he signed up. Why not, he was a patriot. This country had given him so much, the least he could do was serve.

 His family was so proud of him. He was proud of himself. He was a man now just like his father taught him. War was hell, he was smart enough to know that going in, he just didn't know how bad it was. He saw things over there that he could never unsee. No matter how hard he tried.

 That was nothing next to what happened when he got home. He expected to be treated like a hero, he risked his life for the citizens of this nation and what did he get in return? Divorce papers. His wife had been dating some guy while he was away. Long distance was just too hard for her, she couldn't handle it. Henry couldn't believe what he was hearing. It was hard for her? He had spent the past year being shot at, almost dying and his wife had it hard?

 She took everything in the divorce, even the kid. After all, he hadn't been around for awhile, what with serving his country and everything. The only thing he could do was hit the bottle and he hit it hard. Drinking from the moment he woke up till he went to bed at night. It wasn't long before he was booted from the army.

 He had nothing and before he knew it he was out on the streets, living behind bars, doing whatever he could to get a drink and drown out the pain. All the while some guy was sleeping in his bed, with his wife. Having his son call him dad. It was all too much for Henry to even think about.

 That's why today's score was such a big get for him. A few of the guys from around the neighborhood had got a hold of a few bottles. How? Henry didn't ask and didn't want to know. He prided himself on not being a thief. No matter how hard things got for him out here, he never sunk that low. He was a man. Even if the rest of the world didn't want to remember.

 Things were hard out here for people like him. People would rather spit on him than even acknowledge that he was anything more than a street rat. It made it easier on people, it was the only thing he could figure. Otherwise they wouldn't stick their nose up at him so much.

 “You gonna drink or just stare at the damn bottle?” Jen snapped at him. She was new to the streets but was quickly making up for lost time. In just the three months that Henry had known her she had already aged 10 years. It was sad to see. Henry made it a point not to judge her. He was sure if anyone from his old life saw him they would say the same of him. A life on the streets, filled with drinking had a way of aging you.

 Henry took a big sip from the bottle. It was already warm, there was nothing worse than warm Vodka, yet he still savored every drop. It washed away his pain, washed away his memories. Truth be told, Henry would gladly drink himself into the ground rather than face his family.

 Before he could hand her the bottle she snatched it out of his hand and took a big sip. Jackson slapped Henry on the back, a big toothless grin on his face.

 “Took too long my friend.” Jackson said with a laugh. Henry laughed and nodded.

 “I guess so.” He looked away. Jackson was a nice guy. Always friendly, liked to take everyone under his wing whenever he got the chance, but Henry always had a hard time looking at him. He had craters on his face, the few teeth he had left were bright yellow. Tracks all up and down his arm. As an alcoholic who let booze destroy his life he had no place to judge others and their demons, but he couldn't help but look down on druggies.

 The booze helped a little with the coldness but not enough that Henry didn't feel it. He got up and moved closer to the wall, hoping that it might block off some of the wind. It helped a little but not enough that Henry thought he'd get any sleep tonight. At least not until he got some more to drink. A lot more.

 He looked on to what could only be perceived as a party. Henry let out a sigh, his breath forming before him. It was colder than he thought. He lowered himself to the ground, hoping his own body heat would keep him at least somewhat warm.

 For the life of him he couldn't understand how these people could be having fun. Didn't they know how messed up their lives were? Henry hadn't had a happy moment since his wife left him. The drinking didn't make him happy, it just made him numb. He couldn't be happy about a life without meaning and his stopped having any the second he lost his family.

 A blinding green light erupted in the middle of the alley. Everyone turned to look. Jen dropped the bottle, vodka going everywhere. Henry didn't know what he was seeing, it was almost as if reality itself was ripping open.

 “What the?” Jen said, taking a few steps back. The rip in reality opened wider as something started to come out. Henry sat up, trying to get a better look. His peers didn't seem as interested. A few started screaming and running away. Jen tripped and fell, Jackson took a step forward as the green rip closed behind the man in dark clothes. If that's what they were, he was wearing a leather vest and what could only be called a skirt. Not that he would ever say that out loud to the dark-haired man. He had a fierce look about him and more muscles than Henry had ever seen in his life.

 The man took one look at Jackson and pulled a board sword out of seemingly nowhere, bringing it down on Jackson's head. His blood shot outward, covering Jen. Her screams knocked Henry out of his head. He slowly got to his feet, trying not to stay silent. The leather man took a step forward and kicked Jen, knocking her to the ground. He brought his foot down on her head, hard enough to make it burst. Tears formed up in Henry's eyes. He had never seen anything so horrible in his life. Her blood was everywhere. Her neck ending in his sandal.

 The air left Henry's lungs. Fear paralyzed him as the man turned to face him. Henry's life started flashing before his eyes, faster and faster as the man got closer and closer. He stopped suddenly in front of Henry. Clearing his throat, his eyes seeming to burn into Henry's very soul.

 “You are a solider?” the man asked, a strong Greek accent coming off the man. Henry nodded, trying not to pee his pants as the intent glaze of the man bore its way into his every thought. “Good, I am in need of an army.”

**Chapter 1**

 The moon provided the only light on this old dirt road, and it wasn’t much. Raul could feel his heart racing as he made his way. It had been a few hours since he left the woods, but he had yet to see any sign of civilization. Not so much as a car. The only sound besides his rapid breathing and drumming heart was the occasional howl from the giant wolf that had been hunting him for days.

 “Ahoooooo” The sound of the howl was deafening and seemed to be coming from everywhere at once. Raul picked up speed and started running. Fear filled him to his very core. The howl gives way to the sound of footfalls coming from behind him. Raul spared a glance back just in time to see the giant wolf charging at him. It was the first good look he got at the beast, before all he saw was its eyes. It was enough to stop him in his tracks. But only for a moment before his instincts kicked in and he started running. Faster than he ever had in his life.

-WZ-

 The cool night air was refreshing to Samantha as she exited out the back door of Flanigan’s pup. She hoped no one noticed her sneaking out here. The last thing she needed was another lecture. She knew smoking was bad, hell the boxes themselves told her that. She didn’t need every idiot who thought they were a doctor getting into her business.

 She pulled out a box of cigarettes and pulled one out. She placed it in her mouth and started feeling around in her purse for her lighter. She had to have it in there somewhere, she couldn’t have forgotten it.

 “Need a light?” a man’s voice asked from behind her. She rolled her eyes, just what she needed, some asshole who thought he could get in her pants with nothing more than a lighter. It was such a lame pickup line.

 “Sure.” She said, turning around. “Ahhhh!” She let out a scream the second she saw his face, the cig falling to the ground as the man with deformed face leaned in, his fangs glistening in the moon light. Samantha had never felt so scared in her entire life. She was about to die, she could feel it. But at the last second the man burst into dust and blew away in the wind.

 “Wh. . .what?” Sam asked, words failing her. A beautiful young woman in a leather jacket stood there. The perfect image of a badass.

 “You should run now.” The heroine told her. Sam wasted no time in following the suggestion. She ran and never looked back. The heroine, Christina, smiled to herself. This is what she lived for, helping people. Killing the undead. She was Buffy incarnate.

 “Impressive.” The Irish accent still got to her, after all this time. She turned around to find Gambit standing there smiling at her. She gave him a smile of her own and moved in for a kiss hello.

 “Christina.” Gambit said. She kissed him. It was a nice kiss, warm and comforting. “Christina!” Gambit said louder. “Wake up.” The illusion was broken.

 “Uh huh?” She slowly started to open her eyes as she woke up. She was sleeping on her roof as Gambit shook her awake. “What time is it?” She asked sitting up. How long had she been sleeping?

 “It’s late, why don’t you go inside?” He asked her nicely. “It’s not safe out here. I would have thought the other night would have taught you that.”

 “I didn’t mean to fall asleep. I was just sitting out here enjoying the view and. . .well dozed off.” Christina said, trying to brush off the fact that she fell asleep outside after dark after finding out that vampires were real. How stupid could she be. She was just lucky that Gambit was the one that found her. How did he find her? “Wait, what are you doing here?”

 He smiled at her, that perfect smile of his that made her weak. He was so sexy, she didn’t know what it was about him that she liked so much. Maybe it was the accent, maybe the mystery aura around him or maybe the fact that he saved her and her friends lives. Or maybe it was all of those things put together.

 “I came to check on you.” He said simply. She couldn’t help but smile at that.

 “Really?” She asked, feeling like a school girl with a crush, although, she supposed that was what she was.

 “You went through a hard time. I wanted to make sure you were doing okay.” He told her. She smiled and nodded.

 “I’m . . I’m fine. Thank you.” She told him, wishing she was more in control.

 “I’m glad to hear it.” He told her. “Why don’t you go inside where it is safe.” He told her standing up.

 “Would you like to come in? Maybe we could hang out for a little.” She asked him, she couldn’t believe she just invited this stranger into her room. She just didn’t want him to leave. “We could talk.” She added, not sure why. She smiled and looked down.

 “Not today.” He locked eyes with her and she felt herself melt. “But it was good to see you. Hopefully I see you soon.” With that he turned and hopped off her roof. Her heart skipped a beat and she rushed to the end of her roof to look for any sign of Gambit, but he was gone. Nowhere to be seen.

-WZ-

 The wolf was still behind him. Raul didn’t dare look back, but he could feel him, in his very soul. It was an overwhelming sense of dread that he had never felt before. He knew he was going to die, he didn’t want to. He wanted to live, to make it home. To see his mother and even got yelled at by his father. He longed for the punishment he would get. It would mean he was alive.

 The road seemed well used but empty at the same time. He followed the tire tracks as best he could, hoping against hope that it would lead him to salvation. It took everything he had to keep moving but keep moving he did. He knew the wolf was going to catch up to him at any moment. It was all over, that was until he saw it. Down the road a bit, lights, a truck stop. With trucks! There were people there.

 Raul pushed through the pain and kept running, trying to push himself to make it to the truck stop before the wolf caught him. “ahwoooo” The howl came from right behind him, it scared Raul to the point where he lost his footing and went down hard. He looked behind him as the wolf closed in on him. It’s teeth razor-sharp. Raul crawled backwards, knowing that he would never escape this. The wolf almost seemed to smile, as if he knew as well.

 The wolf lunged at Raul, biting down hard on Raul’s shoulder, almost biting into his neck. He had never felt such all-consuming pain before. He felt himself blacking out, thinking that he would never wake up again.

 The wolf let out another howl as he was about to move in for the killing bite. A blinding white light cuts on right in front of him as a car engine came to life. The wolf looked up and howled at the car before turning and running off down the dirt road.

 A big burly man got out of the truck and rushed over to Raul. He looked at the wolf running down the street before kneeling down next to Raul.

 “Kid, Kid you ok?” He checked for a pulse and felt a weak one. He pulled out his phone and dialed 911.

-WZ-

 Chris’s room was crowded, he was never one for organization. He paced back and forth, his emotions running high. Trinidad sat on his bed watching Chris slowly lose his mind.

 “Will you sit down!” Trinidad snapped. Chris ignored him. Clearly the stress was getting to him. Trinidad couldn’t imagine how hard it must have been for him. Seeing all of those people killed right in front of, being chases through the house by some steroid freak and then having the police lock him in the room and blame him for everything that happened, how could it not get to him?

 “Sit down? Sit down? How the fuck am I supposed to do that?” Chris demanded.

 “Do I really need to explain it?” Trinidad asked. Chris stopped pacing and locked eyes with his best friend. He took a deep breath.

 “You don’t know… you don’t know what it was like!” Chris yelled. Trinidad just lowered his glaze. Not knowing what the right thing to say was. Chris was right, he had no idea what it must have been like.

 “You’re right, but, but I’m sure that the police will catch that guy.” Trinidad said, doing his best to sound reassuring. It wasn’t the right thing to say.

 “He isn’t a *guy!* How many times do I have to tell you that! And the police? God, Trinidad, where the hell have you been? When have we ever been able to trust the police? Do… do you remember what they did to my uncle? Just because he reported someone selling drugs outside our apartment? He didn’t wake up for month, and he never fully recovered from that beating they gave him. The police don’t give a fuck about us. Don’t ever think differently!” Chris yelled, his voice getting louder and louder.

 “I’m sorry. I didn’t mean anything.” Trinidad said, trying to backtrack. Chris shook his head and sat down across from Trinidad.

 “He was a monster. I don’t know what he was, but he wasn’t a man.” Chris said, shaking his head. Talking more to himself than to Trinidad.

 “I know.” He told his friend.

 “No, no you don’t. You think I’m saying he’s a monster for killing all those people.” Chris said, looking up at Trinidad. “He was truly a monster. He wasn’t human.”

 “What do you mean?” Trinidad asked.

 “I mean he wasn’t human.” Chris said.

 “Of course he was! Just a sick, demented human. It’s hard to believe that people like him could exist, but they do.” Trinidad said.

 “You didn’t see his face. He wasn’t human.” Chris said, getting to his feet. “You need to see it for yourself.” He had that look in his eyes, the look he always got when he was about to do something reckless. Trinidad was not looking forward to how this was all going to pay out.

**Chapter 2**

 An alarm went off on Jon’s phone. He reached over and shut it off. He didn’t sleep a wink the whole night. How could he? By time they got back from the warehouse it was already early morning and he was more wound up than ever. It didn’t help that his body was sore. He grew up getting in fights, but he had never been as roughed up as he had the past two days. Humans, no matter how strong had nothing on vampires.

 He got to his feet and looked around the room. It was a reminder of who he was. There were books, DVDs filling multiple book shelves. He had comic long boxes taking far too much of his room up and even a box of toys in the corner that he was ashamed to admit he still played with. It was all stuff that he loved, at least till the other night when he learned what went bump in the night. Suddenly none of this mattered. Any of it. It was all meaningless.

 He threw open his closet and searched around for clothes that at least smelled clean. He wanted to go see Christina. He hadn’t seen or spoken to her since Gambit took her home, took her from him. He had to talk to her, feel her out and see what happened between the two of them. Whatever it was, it couldn’t have been good.

 His mom had already left for work when he made his way to the living room. He was glad of it, ever since the reports of what happened at Kimberly’s party, his mom had been a nightmare. She was always a bit on the overprotective side, but lately she didn’t want him to so much as breath without an armed escort. “Those mad men can come back at any moment!” “What the hell is wrong with you for going there?” Non-stop nagging. It was too much.

 The sun was already up and shining when Jon made his way outside. He wasn’t sure what he was going to say to Christina, he just knew he wanted to talk to her. To get the chance that Gambit stole from him.

 “You get Lex’s text?” Will’s voice came from behind him, just as he was about to walk up the stairs. The truth was that he got the text, Lex had sent it hours ago, but he had chosen to ignore it.

 “What text?” He lied. Will smiled at him, he could always tell when Jon was lying.

 “That’s the story you going with?” Will asked.

 “Why not? You cover for me?” Jon asked.

 “With Lex? You know he’ll throw a fit if you don’t show up. He wants to do this whole training thing to get us ready for our battle against the forces of darkness.” Will said, mocking.

 “And I’m all for that, but after I talk to Christina. I mean come on man, you know how much I like her.” Jon pleaded.

 “That won’t mean a whole lot to Lex.” Will replied.

 “Which is why you don’t let him know I’m awake.” Jon said.

 “He’ll just come over here to wake you up and then it’ll be my ass when you aren’t here. Hell, it’ll be my ass that I didn’t wake you up!” Will said.

 “I have to know where I stand!” Jon told him.

 “Why does it matter? She’s just one girl Jon. There are other girls, girls who are less drama. Girls who haven’t fallen in love with mysterious Irish men.” Will said with a laugh.

 “That’s not funny.” Jon said.

 “It was a bit, but my point stands Jon. Girls want what they can’t have. It’s a universal truth that never changes. You go running to her, trying to get her to notice you and you’ll chase her right into Gambit’s arms. I promise you.” Will told him. Jon knew Will was right, but it didn’t matter. He needed to see Christina. He wouldn’t be able to concentrate until he did.

 “I know you’re right, but it doesn’t matter. I need to see her. Just for a bit. Cover for an hour. One hour.” Jon asked. Will grinned.

 “An hour?” He asked with a laugh.

 “One hour.” Jon reiterated.

 “So, in 61 minutes, I can go and tell Lex you blew off his text to go see some girl?” Will asked. Will knew as well as Jon that that would not go over well. Especially not with what just happened with Cindy.

 “Now I didn’t say that.” Jon said hastily.

 “You wanted this, me and Jax were good pretending that none of this was real. You pushed for this. The least you can do is be there for training.” Will said, it was a good point, one that Jon would agree with. If it wasn’t for one simple fact.

 “It’s Christina.” Was all Jon could think to say.

 “Go.” Will said.

 “You sure?” Jon asked, taking a backwards step up the stairs.

 “I got you.” Will said nodding. Jon turned and ran up the stairs.

 “Thanks! I owe you one!” Jon yelled back.

 “And I’mma hold you to that!” Will said. “One hour!” He yelled after his friend.

-WZ-

 Christina still couldn’t believe that Gambit had come back to check on her. It warmed her heart. He was so dreamy, with that accent and everything. She only hoped that she would get the chance to see him again soon.

 “Christina, someone is here for you.” Her mother called up to her from downstairs. Who could be coming to see her?

 “Coming.” She called down. She hurried down the stairs and past her mother who was heading back into the living room. Christina opened the door and was surprised to find Jon standing there looking the other way. She couldn’t help but feel a bit guilty at seeing him there. They were getting along so well at the party, until the attack happened. He then spent the whole night saving her, risking his life to keep her alive. He was so sweet, so heroic and she hadn’t thought of him once since see met Gambit.

 “Hey you.” She said sweetly. Jon’s heart started racing as he turned around to face her. She was so beautiful, and he could never think straight when she was near.

 “Christina, hey, fancy seeing you here.” He said, trying to play it cool. She couldn’t help but smile.

 “Well, I do spend a lot of time here.” She looked back at her house. “More than I care to admit.”

 “Hey, at least you got a house. A nice one at that.” Jon said, letting out a whistle.

 “Yeah, well, parents.” She said, having no idea where this conversation was going. “So, how are you?” She asked.

 “A little worse for wear, but I’ll live.” He said, he took a deep breath. “But, I just, I wanted to know how you are?” he said. He took a step forward and touched her lightly on the arm. She gave him a smile, he really was sweet.

 “I’m a little shaken but I’m good. Better than yesterday, I couldn’t sleep at all.” She told him.

 “I know what you mean. I kept having nightmares, and then,” He shook his head as he stopped talking, lost in his own thoughts.

 “What happened?” She asked concerned.

 “It’s a long story.” He told her as he sat down on the railing. She took a seat next to him.

 “You can tell me.” She said, she couldn’t help but worry about him. It wasn’t like Jon to be so upset. Something was clearly bothering him.

 “Lex went after the nest that attacked the party.” Jon said, not even looking at Christina.

 “What? Why would he do that? He could have been killed!” Christina yelled panicked. Jon nodded as he looked over at her.

 “He almost did, till the rest of us went to help.” Jon told her, locking eyes with her. She couldn’t believe what she was hearing.

 “You did what?” she asked.

 “I went vampire hunting.” He said, he stopped to think about it for a moment. “Something I never thought I would say, but here you have it.”

 “And you lived?” She asked, the answer staring her in the face.

 “Nah, I’m a ghost come to haunt you.” He said with a smile. She was not amused.

 “That was incredibly stupid Jon! You could have been killed!” she said, throwing herself into a tight hug with him.

 “I didn’t know you cared.” He said, returning the hug. She pulled back.

 “Of course I care! I don’t want people to know I’m friends with a suicidal idiot. Promise me you’ll never do something like that again!” She demanded of him. He gave her his sideways grin.

 “Well, I’m actually supposed to be training right now.” Jon told her. She couldn’t believe her ears.

 “For what?” she demanded, knowing the answer already. He bit his lips.

 “Nothing important, you know, just hunting the undead.” He said, with the fakest smile she had ever seen.

 “You’re insane!” She snapped. He shrugged.

 “A bit, but after seeing what they did to all those people, to all our classmates, how could we do any less?” He asked. It was a fair question. One that she didn’t have an answer to.

 “You’re going to end up dead.” She said.

 “Not with training!” He replied with a smile.

 “But you aren’t training!” She said.

 “Well, ok I’m not, but only because I wanted to check on you. I was worried. You had a horrible night.” He looked away, shaking his head. “Everything you went through. It must have been hell for you.”

 “For me? You risked your life for me! More than once.” She pointed out. He took her hand.

 “And I would gladly do it again. I just want you to be safe.” He told her, she couldn’t help but smile. He was so sweet.

-WZ-

 “What do you mean he isn’t with you? Where the hell is he?” Lex asked. He was not happy, not that that surprised Will. He told Jon this wasn’t going to sit well with Lex.

 “If Jon doesn’t have to be here, why do I?” Jax asked, his voice whiney. Lex shot him a look that shut Jax up quickly. “Sorry I asked.”

 “He said he wanted to do this. He made a commitment.” Lex said.

 “I know, and he does. He’ll be here, you know he will. He just. . .He.” Will didn’t know what to say. He said he would cover for Jon, but he never really figured out what to say when asked.

 “You know where he is.” Jax said. Lex just shook his head.

 “So help me, he better not be with Christina.” Lex said. Will shifted uncomfortably.

 “Are we going to train or what?” Will asked, trying his best not to give anything away.

 “He’s with Christina.” Jax said. Will shot him a dirty look.

 “No shit!” Lex said. “Let’s get to work.”

 “Wait, shouldn’t we go find Jon? I think he should be here! You know he’s most likely at Christina’s. That isn’t far from here. We can just head on over there, give him a stern talking to and then go have lunch to show there are no hard feelings. Huh guys? What do you say?” Jax asked, far too quickly. Lex and Will just looked at him like he was insane. He let out a low sigh.

 “So, what is this work out you have planned Lex?” Will asked, ignoring Jax altogether.

 “I figure if we want to enter the warzone we are going to need to be in top shape and have the stamina to keep going. I’m thinking some martial arts, boxing and some parkour.” Lex said.

 “Is that all?” Jax asked, sarcastically.

 “It isn’t as hard as it sounds. We just have to take it one step at a time. We work hard at it every day and we’ll get where we need to be.” Lex said, making it sound far simpler than it really was. He knew what he was suggesting was going to be a lot harder than he was making it out to be.

 “So, does that mean we don’t hunt till we are masters of all of that shit?” Jax said, feeling hope for the first time.

 “Of course not! Look, we get up at 4 every morning to train. I stayed up all night working on a plan and a diet for all of us. We train till school starts, after school we study, as much as we can. A strong body is nothing without a strong mind.” Lex said.

 “Study?” Jax asked. “We learn about vampires being real and this is when you decide to start taking school seriously?”

 “What? No! Not study as in homework! I mean we study up on vampires and the like. We learn everything we can about them. The more we know, the better prepared we will be to fight them.” Lex replied.

 “That’s a lot.” Will said.

 “It’s the only way we can get better, the only way we can stay alive.” Lex said.

 “Fuck my life.” Jax whispered to himself.

 “And once the sun goes down we hunt.” He told them.

 “Every night?” Jax asked.

 “What about dates?” Will asked.

 “Of course that is what you would be worried about.” Jax shot back.

 “Can we please start? We have a busy day.” Lex interrupted them.

 “Why not.” Will said.

 “I never agreed to no diet.” Jax said.

-WZ-

 “I’m glad you came.” Christina told Jon. There weren’t a lot of sweet guys at Madison. It was rare to find a guy who actually cared about her. On top of that he was brave, the way he just threw himself at the vampires to save her and Will. It was amazing.

 “I am too. I know I should have come yesterday but,” he started to say but she just shook her head.

 “Don’t. I know you had a lot going on. I understand.” She told him, leaning in towards him. The other night they had a kiss interrupted and she wasn’t about to let that happen again. This time she was going to get her kiss. He looked at her, his nerves etched into his face. He was terrified, and it made her all the more excited, he’s been trying to talk to her for months, she pretended not to notice, it made it fun for her. He was no mystery man like Gambit, but he was real and obtainable. Was obtainable what she wanted? Was kissing Jon settling?

 An alarm from both of their cell phones went off at the same time. She pulled her phone out as fast as she could, thankful for the excuse to put off her decision a little longer. She liked Jon, he was a sweet kid, but he wasn’t Gambit. But who was Gambit? She didn’t know the first thing about him. It was all so confusing.

 Next to her Jon looked a bit disappointed. He leaned back a bit and just looked off into the distance as if he didn’t notice anything strange. As if he wasn’t looking forward to the kiss as much as she was, if not more. Most likely more.

 Glancing down on her phone she saw an Amber alert for a Raul Gonzalez age 15. That name sounded familiar. She looked over at Jon, she couldn’t be sure, but she thought that short guy that always ran around with Jon and Lex was named Raul.

 “Don’t you know a Raul?” She asked showing him the phone.

 “What?” Jon asked, looking back at her. He looked down at the phone and his eyes went wide. He jumped up to his feet. “I got to go.”

 “What?” She asked, startled as he started down her walkway.

 “He was at the party!” Jon said, he took off at a run, leaving Christina there alone. She let out a sigh as she sat back down, deep in thought. She had to make a choice, Jon or Gambit. She liked both of them, but she didn’t know what she really wanted.

-WZ-

 “Who is he?” Sager asked. He had been an EMT for about 3 months now and had never seen a wolf attack before. The kid before him had a chunk of his shoulder missing. It seemed the bone was intact so hopefully they could help him, if he didn’t bleed out first.

 Behind him he could hear Ammar loading the poor kid into the ambulance. He was thankful for his training officer taking the lead on this one. Just looking at the poor kid made him sick to his stomach. It made him question if this was really what he wanted to do for a living.

 He made his way over to the truck with the lights on. The man inside, Steven, was the man who found the boy. He called it in, but he seemed so shaken that nothing he said made a lot of sense.

 “Mr. uh. . . Steven?” Sager said, not recalling the man’s last name. Steven exited the car, his face looking hollow.

 “You the EMT?” Steven asked. Sager nodded. “Is he going to be ok?”

 “That we won’t know until we get him to the hospital. I just need to know what happened. Any information can be of assistance.” Sager said, he pulled out his notepad and pen.

 “I was getting ready to hit the road. Had a long trip ahead of me and, I kicked the lights on and this. . .this giant wolf looked up at me. Almost through me. I’ve” He seemed shaken to his very core. “I’ve never seen anything like it. I’ve never been so scared in my entire life.” Sager couldn’t imagine seeing a wolf locking eyes with you. That sounded so surreal.

 “He looked at you?” Sager repeated back to him.

 “He looked through me. Like he knew me, or like he was marking me.” Steven said.

 “Then what happened?” Sager asked.

 “The wolf turned and ran off. Every instinct I had told me to run, but that’s when I saw him. Laying there, not moving. I ran out to make sure he was okay and called you guys.” Steven said. All this had taken a large toll on him.

 “He’ll be okay. You did good.” Sager told him. He wasn’t sure if it was the truth, but he knew it was what Steven needed to hear.

**Chapter 3**

Large buildings loomed over Henry as he showed the large Greek man around. The two of them had hardly spoken a word to each other, but when the Greek man did, Henry listened. He felt that it was his place to serve this man that appeared out of thin air. He couldn’t explain it, but he knew he had to.

 “What are these monuments for?” The Greek asked.

 “Monuments?” Henry asked, looking around. It took him a moment to realize that the Greek was speaking about the skyscrapers. “Oh, the skyscrapers? They’re just office buildings. Nothing special.”

 “Office buildings?” The Greek asked, confused.

 “Yeah, you know, where people work. Lawyers, stock market traders. People who make more money than they could ever hope to spend.” Henry said, a bit of the bitterness he felt in his soul seeping out.

 “Useless people. Where are the warriors?” The Greek demanded.

 “Spread out among everyone else? I mean there is a Marine base near by.” Henry said, remembering Camp Pendleton where he trained.

 “That is where you were honed?” The Greek asked.

 “Yes sir.” Henry said. The Greek nodded.

 “I see, that will be a good place to recruit. Where is the leader of this land?” The Greek demanded.

 “Leader? You mean the President? He’s in D.C.” Henry said.

 “D.C.?” The Greek asked.

 “Yeah, it’s a,” Henry stops to think of the word. “Well it’s basically a city on the other coast. Where the President lives and works.”

 “How far on foot?”

 “On foot?” Henry asked, he had no idea how far that was. Who the hell walked from the West Coast to the East Coast? “That’s far too great a distance to walk. We can take a car.”

 “A car?” The Greek asked.

 “One of those.” Henry said as a Honda sped past.

 “This land bores me. I shall raze it all and rebuild it in my image. At long last I shall step out from behind my father’s shadow and people will once more fear the name Ares, God of War!” The Greek, Ares, said. The sound of thunder accompanying his words. Henry couldn’t explain it, it was a sunny Californian day, not a cloud in the sky.

 “You’re. . .you’re Ares?” Henry said in disbelief. The Greek Gods were myths and legends, they weren’t real. In the blink of an eye, the second the name Ares was out of Henry’s mouth than Are’s hand was around his neck, lifting him off of the ground.

 “You dare to speak my name? I am your Lord! Your God and you will address me as such. Is that understood?” Ares said, a fire seemed to dance in his eyes. Henry had never seen anything like it.

 “I understand my Lord.” Henry forced himself to say. It was almost impossible for him to breath, talking was torture. Ares dropped him, and Henry fell to the ground grasping for breath.

 “Find me others like yourself Henry. You shall be the first of my army.” Ares said. He turned and started walking away. Henry stayed on the ground and watched his new God walk away, his throat burning from Ares’s touch.

-WZ-

 Jon showed up about halfway through Lex’s planned training session with the news that Raul was missing. The others checked their phones and all noticed they had the Amber alerts as well. Needless to say, training for the day ended then and there. They had to find Raul.

 They couldn’t agree where to go first, except that they all agreed that Kimberly’s house was out. If Raul was there the police would have find him.

 “I don’t care Jon! If you want to be a part of this, you need to train. You need to be committed!” Lex told Jon for the twentieth time.

 “I just had to see her. It’s not that big a deal Lex. You know damn well I’m with you!” Jon snapped back, not taking any of Lex’s shit. Will couldn’t help but feel impressed, Jon never talked back to Lex. This was a big step in his growth.

 “Guys, come on! Raul is out there. He could be hurt or. . .” Jax didn’t finish his thought. They all knew what he was about to say but none of them wanted to hear it said out loud. None of them wanted to jinx it into being true.

 “He’s out there. I can feel it.” Jon said, almost as if he was trying to convince himself.

 “You don’t know that.” Jax said. Will could feel the sense of dread seeping through all of them. He felt it too. He wasn’t as close to Raul as Lex and Jax were but he did like the guy.

 “So where do we look?” Will asked.

 “Last time we saw him he was headed back to his place for some beer.” Jax said.

 “So, do we think he made it home.” Jon asked.

 “If he made it home there wouldn’t be an Amber alert for him.” Jax said as if Jon was the biggest idiot in the world. Jon just shook his head, he understood Jax was stressed and that he wasn’t thinking, but he couldn’t let it go.

 “Really? Well shit there goes my idea.” Jon said, sarcasm dripping into every word.

 “Jax, he was asking if we think he went missing on the way to his house or on the way back to Kimberly’s.” Lex said matter-of-factly.

 “Oh.” Jax said, feeling stupid.

 “Does it matter?” Will asked. “It’s the same path both ways. Raul’s is closer, lets start there and head to Kimberly’s.” The others nodded in agreement.

-WZ-

 The day was passing Chris by. His parents were hovering around him. It wasn’t that they believed that he killed those people, it was more that they were worried the cops would blame it on him anyways. It wasn’t an unfounded concern; the police around here were known to take the easy way out.

 “You should never have gone to that party.” His mother said, running her hand through her hair. He wouldn’t be surprised if she started to pull it out. She hadn’t slept a wink since she picked him up from the police station. The whole time that Trinidad was here he could hear her in her room crying. It pained him to see her like this. Pained him even more to know it was all his fault. He told her that he was spending the night at Trinidad’s house. The lie he told her caused her almost as much pain. His mother put a lot trust in him and he betrayed it.

 “Ungrateful little brat.” His dad said from the kitchen as he took a sip of his beer. Chris swallowed hard. He was never close to his dad, but he still hated seeing him so upset. He knew the only thing that kept his father from taking off his belt right now was how worried his mother was about him. She didn’t want what could be Chris’s last night at home to be one filled with a beating, no matter how much he deserved it. He almost wished he got the beating, it would have been better than the guilt.

 “Ray! Don’t say that!” His mother snapped at his father. Chris looked down at the floor, he didn’t want to cause a fight between the two of them. He just wanted to be alone, but the second Trinidad went home his mother insisted that he came out to the living room for some family time. Part of him believed it was just that they didn’t trust him to be alone. It was fair, he was planning on sneaking out the second the sun went down. He just had to get them to let him go back to his room.

 “He coulda gotten killed.” His father said again. The thought made him shudder. His father had no idea just how true that statement was. The giant of a man had chased him through the house after tossing Kimberly out of the window, if he had caught Chris, it would have been the end of him.

 “Don’t say that! I don’t want to hear it.” His mother jumped to her feet and stormed out of the room, leaving Chris alone with his father. This was the moment Chris feared the most, being alone with his father.

 SLAM!

 The door to his parent’s bedroom slammed shut. Chris swallowed hard, glancing up at his father who tossed his empty bottle into the trash. He pulled out a new bottle and popped it open. He looked over at Chris, locking eyes with him. Chris didn’t know what to think, his father had a horrible temper and that was without him getting arrested.

 His father walked over to Chris, each step filling Chris with more and more dread. He was going to get a beating for sure.

 “Here,” His dad told him extending the open beer to his son. “You probably need this more than me.” Chris took the beer as his father went back to the fridge to get himself one. Chris was beyond confused. His father had never offered him a beer before, it was so out of character.

 “Thank you.” Chris said, he took a sip of it and pretended to hate the taste. His father smiled at him as he opened his own and walked back towards his son.

 “Quite the actor.” His father said before taking a sip. He nodded for Chris to do the same. Chris took another sip, a nice long one this time. “I’m really glad you’re okay. You know me and your mother love you.” Chris nodded. “Good, get some sleep. I have a feeling we are going to have a stressful few days ahead of us.”

 Chris took another sip of his beer as he watched his father leave, heading towards his bedroom. Leaving Chris alone with his thoughts. At least now he wouldn’t have a problem sneaking out of the apartment.

**Chapter 4**

 They had been back and forth from Kimberly’s house to Raul’s no less than three times and had seen no sign of him. Jon was starting to get worried and he could tell the others were feeling much the same.

 “How many times are we going to just go back and forth?” Will asked, the fatigue was getting to him, like it was getting to all of them.

 “I’m sorry if this is interrupting something for you, but our friend is missing.” Jax yelled. If Jon didn’t know better, he would have sworn that Jax was getting ready to take a swing at Will. That wouldn’t end well for Jax and everyone knew it.

 “Did I say I wanted to leave?” Will snapped back, stepping into Jax’s face. “All I’m saying is that he isn’t here, not on this fucking path! We have to start thinking of somewhere else he could be.” He made a good point. They all knew it.

 “What would you purpose?” Lex asked. Lex could feel the pressure starting to get to him. He had this picture in his mind of training his friends into a well-oiled machine and taking on the forces of evil on his terms, but now Raul, one of his best friends, was missing. Everything was already messed up and they just started down this path. Lex was losing his way and didn’t know how to get them back on track.

 “You the leader boss man.” Jon said, stepping in for Will when he saw him put on the spot. Lex let out a low sigh as he tried to think.

 “We need to retrace his steps.” Lex said, more to himself than to the others.

 “Isn’t that what we’ve been doing?” Jax said.

 “And with no luck.” Will joined in. Lex ignored them all.

 “He left the party to go get beer from his house.” He told himself, he looked up at his friends. “How long does it take to get to his house from the party?” Jon and Will looked at each other lost. Neither one of them had any idea.

 “I don’t know, 10 minutes.” Jax said shrugging. Lex nodded, thinking to himself.

 “Ok, so add in a few minutes to get the beer.” Lex said to himself.

 “He would have got back just after we all took off.” Jax said.

 “Maybe around the time the police started showing up?” Will asked.

 “If the cops had him they wouldn’t have put out the Amber Alert.” Jax pointed out.

 “Who said anything about the cops having him? If you saw the cops at a party what would you do?” Will asked.

 “Take off.” Jon nodded, seeing where Will was going with this.

 “He could be anywhere.” Lex said, shaking his head. This was all too much, too fast.

 “We need to find him!” Jax yelled. He didn’t understand why everyone was acting like it was over. As if they would never see Raul again. They had to find him, they couldn’t just leave him out there alone.

-WZ-

 Chris checked for the umpteenth time that his parent’s door was still closed before finally taking off. Closing the house door as silently as he could so as to not tip them off that he was leaving. His father’s show of support made all of this harder for him. The last thing he wanted to do was let them down again or get himself in worse trouble. But he knew what he saw, and he couldn’t handle the thought of no one else knowing.

 He looked around for Trinidad, he was supposed to be here. They agreed to meet up as soon as it got dark, so Chris could prove what he saw. He better not have backed out. It would be just like him, always backing out anytime he thought he would get in trouble.

 “Chris. Hey!” Trinidad called out to him as he exited his apartment on the second story across from him.

 “Shut up!” Chris snapped, looking back at his apartment for any sign that his parents heard. “Let’s go!” He said through gritted teeth.

 “Sorry.” Trinidad said catching up with him. “So where are we headed?”

 “To prove what I saw!” Chris said. It was the only answer he had. He wasn’t sure what he saw, he wasn’t sure what it meant. And he damn sure didn’t have any idea where to take Trinidad to prove it.

 “So where is that?” Trinidad asked, Chris took a deep breath and started walking faster, forcing Trinidad to walk faster to keep up.

-WZ-

 Lawrence “Law” Henderson was 13 going on 30, or at least that’s what his mother always told him. Every time the school called and told her that he misbehaved or stepped out of line she told him he’d end up behind bars till he was 30, or for 30 years. He never really paid much attention to what she said.

 He braced himself as Cole hit him. He went down hard, and it only took a few moments for everyone else to jump in. He was getting jumped in, proving himself to his new family. It was a right of passage, one that he was honored to be apart of. And one that he wanted to end quickly. He imagined that it would hurt but never this bad.

 The beating only lasted a few minutes, but it felt like an eternity. Every part of him hurt, it took all his strength not to cry. He slowly pushed himself up.

 “Walk off it.” Cole told him. A sense of pride in his voice. He didn’t think the kid had it in him.

 “You did good!” Malcolm said, patting him on the back as he did so. Law smiled to himself, proud of what he accomplished. He looked around at the looks of approval from his new family and it filled his heart with pride. He was a man now.

 “Welcome to the family kid.” Cole said, pulling him into a hug. It made him feel good. He always looked up to Cole, ever since he was kid. The man was his hero. As he pulled back from the embrace he saw the strangest sight he’d ever seen. A full-grown man in a dress. He couldn’t help but laugh.

 “What’s so funny?” Malcolm asked. Law pointed at the freak.

 “Looky there.” Law said with a laugh. The others turned to look as the man in the dress walked towards them.

 “Aw, the smell of blood lust.” The man said with the strangest accent that Law had ever heard.

 “Say again?” Cole said. The other members of the gang flanking him on either side. They were 12 strong, 13 when Law remembered to count himself.

 “You shall be my warmup.” The strange man cracked his knuckles as he looked at them.

“Look old man.” Cole said as he took a step towards the new comer. “This is our park.” Without missing a beat the man swatted at Cole, removing Cole’s head from his body. That’s when shit hit the fan.

-WZ-

 The sounds of screaming pulled Lex out of his head. The day had long since given way to night and his friends were starting to give up hope, but Lex kept insisting they moved forward. Refusing to admit he was as lost as the rest of them.

 “You hear that?” Jon asked, his voice a little shaky. This is why he wanted them to train every day. It was going to be a while before they would be ready to run into battle, right now they were all still a little timid.

 “Nope, I didn’t hear jack shit. Neither did you. We don’t need to head towards the shit we didn’t hear.” Jax said.

 “Braver words were never said.” Jon said with a laugh.

 “Come on you guys, it could be Raul.” Lex said, worry starting to set in. There was so much screaming.

 “It doesn’t sound like Raul.” Will said.

 “Does it matter?” Jon asked. “We all agreed that we need to help people, whoever is screaming, they need our help.”

 “What about Raul?” Jax asked, he wasn’t about to worry more about strangers than one of his closest friends.

 “We can still look for him, but we need to help whoever that is first.” Lex said, doing his best to sound in control.

 “Well let’s go.” Will said, sounding as if he wanted to do anything else. Jon couldn’t blame him, they didn’t even bring weapons with them, this wasn’t going to go well for them if it came to a fight. Jax reluctantly followed suit.

 It didn’t take them long to follow the sounds of the screams. It led them to a park full of dismembered kids who couldn’t be more than a year or two older than them. Standing in the middle of the blood and guts stood a giant of a man wearing what looked to be an old gladiator outfit.

 “Do you guys see that?” Jax said, scared out of his mind.

 “No, none of us see the giant man in a dress standing in the middle of bloody corpses.” Will said. Jon couldn’t help but chuckle, it was cut short once Lex shot him a dirty look.

 “Sorry.” Jon said. The gladiator looked over at them as Jon spoke.

 “Warriors.” The man said, smiling at the four friends. “Four of you, a unit perhaps?” Jax and Will exchanged confused looks.

 “Waaaarrrrrrriors, come out and pllllllaaaaaaaayyyyyy” Jon said, during his best impersonation of the movie Warriors. The others looked at him. “Sorry, couldn’t help it.” Lex shook his head and turned to look at the gladiator.

 “What. . .wait, who. . .what are you?” Lex asked, clearly having no idea how he was supposed to act. Very unintimidating.

 “You forgot why.” Jon said. Lex told Jon to shut up with his eyes, Jon shrugged guiltily.

 “I am your God. Now that my father is gone from this world, I shall rule it. Tear it down and rebuild it in my own image.” The Gladiator said, a manic smile gracing his face.

 “Someone has a Messiah Complex.” Jax said with a laugh.

 “Isn’t a Messiah Complex someone who wants to be a savior? You know like Jesus.” Jon replied.

 “Whatever, you know what I mean.” Jax said bitterly.

 “Pretty big talk for a vampire.” Lex said.

 “A what?” The gladiator asked. “What do you think I am?”

 “A vampire. You know a blood sucking freak.” Will said.

 “A demon? I am no demon boy, I am an Olympian. And you,” He locked eyes with Lex. “Are one of the purest warriors I’ve ever laid eyes on. You shall make a great addition to my army.” He scanned the rest of them. “The rest of you can stay with your leader. You all have the scent of a warrior.” His glaze landed on Jax. “Even if it is buried under the stench of fear.”

 “Why are you looking at me?” Jax asked, knowing full well why.

 “Am I the only one wishing we had some weapons?” Jon said under his breath.

 “An Olympian? As in Greek Gods?” Lex said, not believing a word of it.

 “Greek? Who are these Greeks? I am their God, just as I am yours and will soon be this worlds.” The gladiator said. His ego knowing no bounds.

 “I’m with you.” Will said, leaning in towards Jon. Jon nodded.

 “I don’t mean to interrupt.” Jax said. “But uh, did you do all this with yourself.” He pointed at all the body parts thrown around the park.

 “This,” He pointed around the park. “Was a simple warm up. A test to get my blood flowing. Unfortunately for me, I found them lacking.”

 “I see, well uh, Lex, I . . .I uh, think I left the stove on, so maybe we should go.” Jax said, trying to mask his fear behind humor. It wasn’t his strong suit.

 “Don’t let the fear rule you boy. You must tame it.” The gladiator said. “Least it tames you.” Jax swallowed hard. Lex stepped forward, blocking the gladiators path.

 “Why don’t you guys go get those weapons you were talking about. I’ll hold him off.” Lex said. His voice determined. Jon looked around the blood-stained park.

 “Not going to happen.” Jon said, stepping up next to Lex.

 “We got your back. I’d be up there with you guys but uh yeah my legs aren’t working.” Will said.

 “I don’t want to die.” Jax said, his voice shaking. The gladiator smiled.

 “Aw, I love loyalty among warriors. There is no greater honor than dying with your brothers. Is that what you four wish? I had hoped to join you to my ranks, but I’d be willing to grant your last wish.” The gladiator said.

 “I don’t know if I said that last thing out loud, but uh yeah, I don’t want to die.” Jax said.

 “We can take him.” Jon said, lying to himself.

 “By all means, ‘take me’. I won’t resist.” The gladiator egged Jon on.

 “We need to leave. Now.” Will said.

 “I’m good with that!” Jax said.

 “By all means, leave. Fetch any weapons you think you shall need for our combat. I will wait.” The gladiator turned and took a seat amongst the tattered body parts. The four friends looked at each other confused, the gladiator looked up. “I would hurry. I am not well known for my patience.” He said, his voice sounding firm and commanding.

 “We should go.” Jax said.

 “Wait here! We’ll be back.” Lex yelled at the gladiator as the friends left the park.

 “Are we sure it’s a good idea to talk shit to the power mad God?” Jax asked.

 “He isn’t a god. I don’t know what he is, but it isn’t a god.” Jon said.

 “Does it matter right now? Whatever he is, he tore those people apart. How do we fight that?” Will asked.

 “We need weapons. Weapons are a good start.” Jon said.

 “I have some knifes. They worked on vampires.” Lex said.

 “Look man, I’ve been in some fights with vampires. And they can hit, let me tell you, but, and I can’t stress this enough, I lived. They weren’t strong enough to tear my head off. This guy, yeah he did that.” Will said, clearly shaken.

 “So what do you suggest?” Lex asked. “We have to do something.”

 “But we don’t have to die!” Will said. Jon nodded in agreement.

 “So how do we stop him without him stopping us?” Jon asked.

 “It would help if we knew what he was.” Lex said.

 “Yeah… or had any idea about anything. We found out vampires were real and decided to just up and become the next Van Helsing. We have no idea what we are doing.” Jon pointed out.

 “So we should just throw in the towel?” Lex asked, clearly wanting the answer to be no.

 “I’m not saying that.” Jon said.

 “So what are you saying?” Lex asked, getting in Jon’s face.

 “Let’s all just step back.” Will said. Lex and Jon paid him no mind.

 “I’m saying, maybe instead of just worrying about getting in shape, we should try and find out about this new world we are jumping into.” Jon said, not backing down from Lex.

 “And how do you suggest we do that?” Lex asked, not liking someone questioning him.

 “Beats the hell out of me. But we have to know what we are getting into. This. . .this gladiator, he isn’t a vampire.” Jon said.

 “Clearly.” Lex said. “But how do we find out more about a world that until a few days ago we thought was nothing more than myths?”

 “Now that is a good question.” Will said.

 “That’s just something we have to figure out.” Jon said.

 “Agreed. Know your enemy. We’re on the same page Jon.” Lex said, the tension dying down a bit. Will let out a sigh of relief.

 “Good.” Jon said.

 “But that doesn’t help us now.” Lex pointed out. Jon nodded in agreement.

 “So what do we do boss man?” Jon asked. “I don’t think knifes and wooden stakes are going to do a whole lot.”

 “I don’t know!” Lex admitted.

 “I really don’t think we have a lot of time to figure this out. I mean, it’ll take an army to stop that guy.” Will said.

 “An army? Like the army? Can we call them?” Jon said, everyone shot him a dirty look. “Never mind, stupid question.”

 “Ya think.” Will said.

 “I have a plan.” Jax said, stepping up for the first time. They all turned to look at him, shocked.

**Chapter 5**

 The night was growing late and Chris still had no idea what he was trying to prove. Trinidad was getting antsy and Chris couldn’t blame him. He was right there with him. His parents could go to check on him any moment and notice that he was gone. It would kill them, they were putting so much faith in him. Trying so hard to support him through all of this and he repaid them by running out of the house.

 “Chris, man, how long are we going to keep walking around?” Trinidad asked. The night was getting late.

 “Till I can show you what happened.” Chris said, sounding more sure than he felt.

 “And how do you suppose we do that?” Trinidad asked. It was a fair question. “You plan on tracking down that guy who massacred that party? Almost killed you!”

 “There were others at the party.” Chris said, thinking to himself. “Where would you go to find a lot of people?”

 “Like a party?” Trinidad asked.

 “What else?” He asked, what were they odds they would find another party so soon. Then it hit him. “Flanagan’s!”

 “The bar?” Trinidad asked. “Why would your monsters be at a bar?”

 “Okay, first of all, they aren’t my monsters, they are just monsters. I don’t own them. Second, they want to kill people. What better place to find easy pray?” Chris said, feeling far too proud of himself.

 “Little problem with that.” Trinidad said.

 “What?” Chris asked.

 “We’re 11, can’t exactly get into any bars, now can we?” Trinidad asked.

 “But we can hang out behind the place till we see something.” Chris pointed out. Trinidad didn’t seem happy at that idea.

 “Are you out of your mind!” He demanded.

 “Just trust me. You’ll see. I’m right.” Chris said. He didn’t wait for an answer, instead he took off for the bar at once. Trinidad let out a low sigh and reluctantly followed his friend.

-WZ-

 A rancid smell overtook Jon as he made his way back towards the park. If it wasn’t for his fried nerves he would have gagged. He forced himself to ignore it and continue on. Sitting in the middle of the park was the Olympian humming to himself.

 “Hey yo, uh, Olympian.” Jon called out to the gladiator, trying to sound braver than he felt. The gladiator looked up at him. “Olympian, like the Greek Gods? So which one are you?” The gladiator got to his feet, an unhappy look on his face. “If I had to guess, I’d go with Aphrodite.”

 “You find yourself amusing boy?” the gladiator asked, his voice filled with fire.

 “I like to think so.” Jon said with a smirk.

 “I am not deity over something as binary as lust. I command the very nature of man. I am Ares God of War.” Lighting struck down from the sky as he said his name. The world seemed to get darker as he spoke and yet Ares was easier to see, as if an inner glow had taken hold inside him. He radiated power, far more than Jon had ever seen.

 “Ares, right. Well you’re no Kevin Smith, but not many of us are.” Jon said. “Look man, I don’t know where Kevin Sorbo is but my boy Lex, yeah he’s ready to face you if you’re still up for the challenge.”

 “He awaits me? I am not some child to be summoned. I am a God and shall be respected as such!” Ares said, his pride clearly hurt. Jon shrugged.

 “Suit yourself.” Jon turned and started to walk away, trying to act cool and in control but every part of him filled with terror. There was nothing stopping Ares from killing him, it wouldn’t even be hard.

 “Wait.” Ares commanded him. Jon stopped, a small smile gracing his lips. It was gone by time he turned around. He had a task to perform.

 “Yeah?” Jon asked.

 “If the fight doesn’t wet my appetite, I shall kill you all.” Ares said. Jon nodded, terrified.

 “Sounds like a plan.” Jon said, praying that the real plan worked.

-WZ-

 “So, what are we looking for?” Trinidad asked as they made it to Flanagan’s. It was late, and the bar seemed to be doing alright business. There were plenty of cars out front. The bar itself was a rusty old place, with a beat up old sign that was only half lit.

 “I’ll know it when I see it.” Chris said, using the most useless answer he knew.

 “So you have no idea.” Trinidad said, not seeming amused. “It’s getting late Chris. I want to go home.”

 “Just give me a min. . .” Chris started, but his thought was cut short when he saw a man and woman sneak out the back door of the bar. The man’s face wasn’t normal as he went in for a kiss. “There! Look right there!” Chris yelled as he forced Trinidad to look.

 “Get off me!” Trinidad snapped, pushing Chris off but looking anyways. “What am I looking at? That couple making out?” he asked, but the answer became clear when the man’s head came up and his face was twisted, crunched up, almost like a bat. He had blood running down from his mouth as he dropped the woman and she fell to the floor dead. “Oh.”

 “Yeah, oh. I told you that guy wasn’t human! Here’s proof!” Chris said, proud beyond measure at being proven right. The pride went away quickly as the vampire spotted them. “Maybe we should go.”

 “You think?” Trinidad replied as he turned and ran. Chris followed right behind him. The vampire let out a hearty laugh before following after.

-WZ-

 Mesa college was a decent size community college. Jon hadn’t been there in a while, not since his mom graduated, but he still remembered how to get there. Ares followed behind him silently. Once or twice on the way here Jon tried to pull him into a conversation, but Ares was having none of it.

 Standing outside of the entrance was Will. He looked as if he was about to piss his pants. Jon had never seen him look so nervous before, it didn’t help reassure him. A lot of the plan was relying on Will keeping his cool. Normally that was Will’s strong suit, but the dead mutilated bodies got under Will’s skin in a way that Jon had never seen before.

 “That is not the pure one. Where is the one I aim to battle with?” Ares spoke at last. Jon swallowed hard, taking a minute to get control of himself. He turned to face Ares.

 “He’s inside. My partner over there, names Will. He’ll lead you the rest of the way.” Jon said, trying to sound cocky but not sure if he pulled it off. The look on Ares’s face confirmed that he didn’t.

 “I am not amused.” Ares said. It took every ounce of self control not to turn and run.

 “Not sure why you would be. Sir Lex is our commander. He fights on his terms or not at all. If you want the honor, no the privilege, of doing combat with him than you follow our procedures. Simple as that.” Jon said, trying to play off Ares ego. He knew this was sensitive work, but it was the job he volunteered for.

 “You think me so easily manipulated?” Ares asked, fire in his eyes shining bright. It wasn’t so much determination or anger, but literal fire that shined in his eyes. It chilled Jon to his core. He couldn’t think let alone talk.

 “Hey!” Will called up to them, pulling Jon out of his head. “He coming or what?” Will sounded braver than he had to be feeling, Jon had never been so thankful in his life for the save.

 “I don’t think so. Tell Lex that Ares isn’t up for. . .” Jon couldn’t even finish his thought before Ares had his hand around Jon’s throat. He felt himself lifted off the ground. He couldn’t breath, this was how he died, he could feel it.

 “I cower from no man.” Ares said. With that he flung Jon away from him. Jon flew across the parking lot and hit the side of the dumpster on the far side. A deafening thump echoing through the parking lot as he did so. The world going black as he hit the ground.

 “Lead the way.” Ares said turning to face Will.

-WZ-

 “Is he still behind us?” Trinidad asked as the two of them stopped to catch their breath, hiding behind a nearby building. It was a good question, one that Chris was terrified of finding out.

 “Maybe? Do you really want me to go check? Or should we maybe just go?” Chris asked, not waiting for an answer before taking off.

 “Wait for me!” Trinidad said running after Chris.

-WZ-

 The interior of the school was vast, almost maze like. Will prayed that he remembered how to get to the room they set up. The gladiator didn’t seem like the type of guy to have an abundance of patience.

 “How much further?” the gladiator asked. Clearly growing tired of this game.

 “Just up ahead.” Will said, almost positive that he was correct.

 “I grow wary of your games.” The gladiator said. He sounded like he was going to explode at any minute. Will had never been soo terrified in his entire life. He started to worry that he was going the wrong way. He knew that one misstep would mean his life.

 He rounded the next corner, his heart pounding so loud that he was sure his companion could hear it. It was a welcome relief when he saw the door to the classroom he was supposed to lead the gladiator to. He smiled to himself as he prepared himself for the hard part.

 “Right in here.” He told the gladiator without turning around. He opened the door and motioned for him to enter the room. Careful to avoid meeting the giant’s eyes.

 “If I so much as sense deception I will devour you.” The gladiator said.

 “Devour? As in eat?” Will said.

 “Through here?” He asked, locking eyes with Will, looking into his very soul. Will couldn’t find words. He just nodded his head slowly. “Don’t go far.” With that he entered through the door.

 The classroom was a large auditorium. It slanted downward towards the teacher’s desk. A projector screen was pulled down where a video of Lex standing there was playing. Ares seemed confused by it for a moment before Will slammed the door shut.

 He leaned back against the wall for a moment, his breathing rapid. A small triumph smile on his face. He pushed himself off the wall and ran down the hall.

-WZ-

 They sped past the street signs far too quickly for Chris to see where they were at. He was running blind, Trinidad at his side. He couldn’t even be sure that the vampire was following them, but he didn’t want to slow down to check. One wrong move and it could all be over.

 Out of the corner of his eye he saw Trinidad spring backwards. Before he could look back to see what happened he felt something pull him back. He was lifted off the ground and spun around to find himself face to face with the vampire, in full vamp face. Chris was filled with a terror he didn’t know was possible.

 “I don’t normally feed on veal, but for you I’ll make an exception.” The vampire opened his mouth, baring his fangs.

-WZ-

 Will ran down the hall, not slowing down even for an instant. He made it to the end of the hall and turned left where he almost ran head first into Lex.

 “We gotta go!” Will yelled. Lex nodded and fell into step with Lex.

 “Where’s Jon?” Lex asked, asking the question that Will had been afraid to ask himself. He stopped for a moment to catch his breath, the question took the wind out of him. “Will! You okay?” Will looked up at Lex, tears welling up in his eyes.

 “I don’t know. That. . .that man tossed him across the parking lot. I couldn’t check on him.” Will said, the words sounding hollow even to him. How could he not go and check on his best friend. What kind of person was he?

 “Did… did he knock him out of the blast radius?” Lex asked.

 “What?” Will asked, not following the question.

 “If he lived? Will the blast get him?” Lex asked.

 “I. . .I don’t know.” Will admitted.

 “Well we need to find out.” Lex said. Before anything else could be said the wall behind them exploded as the gladiator busted through. He did not look happy.

 “Run!” Will screamed. Lex didn’t need to be told twice.

-WZ-

 Chris could feel the vampire’s hot breath on his neck. Chris knew if he didn’t find a way out of this and quickly than everything would end here and now. He pulled his legs in towards himself as tight as he could and kicked forward, knocking the vampire back. Chris fell to the floor hard, knocking the breath out of himself.

 It took only an instant for the vampire to be back on his feet. Chris crawled back a few feet, wishing he could get to his feet but his lower back was in too much pain. Trinidad got to his feet, he looked as if he wanted to bolt but stopped to glance at Chris, clearly worried about his friend. The vampire’s head snapped around to face Trinidad, who froze in place. The vampire smiled a fang filled smile and moved with a speed and swiftness that Chris never would have thought possible.

 Knocking Trinidad to the ground and jumping on top of him. Trinidad whimpered as the vampire let out a hiss that quickly turned into a blood curling scream as he caught on fire. He jumped to his feet and tried to out run the fire that quickly consumed him and reduced him to ashes.

 Chris couldn’t believe his eyes. One second his best friend was about to be slaughtered by the blood sucker and the next poof, he went up in flames and Trinidad was laying on the ground perfectly fine.

 “Wha. . .what just happened?” Chris asked, his mind hardly working. Trinidad slowly got to his feet, a sad smile on his face.

 “I don’t know. I guess I was just lucky.” Trinidad said. That wasn’t it. There was no stake, in fact he caught on fire. Fire, not dust.

 “No.” Chris said.

 “No? What do you mean no?” Trinidad asked. “That vampire was about to kill me and it went up in flames. If that isn’t lucky I don’t know what is.” Trinidad forced himself to laugh. Chris shook his head.

 “What did you say?” Chris asked.

 “Huh?” Trinidad asked.

 “When the vampire attacked you, you said something. You said something and then he went up in flames. What did you say?” Chris demanded.

 “Nothing.” Trinidad said, lying.

 “I can always tell when you’re lying Trinidad. I know you too well.” Chris said, pissed off that his best friend was lying to him.

-WZ-

 The sound of the gladiator bursting through wall after wall was growing louder as he got closer and closer to Lex and Will. Lex’s mind was racing. Jon might be dead, he and Will were moments away from joining him and if they didn’t give Jax the signal, would he blow the school? If he didn’t, who knows how many people this so called Olympian would kill. They had to make it out of the school alive to give the signal. They had to.

 They exited out into the main lobby of the school. It was a vast room with couches and a staircase leading to the upper level. Will nodded towards the stairs and Lex shifted directions. They made their way up the stairs as quickly as they could. Their only hope was to make it up stairs before the Olympian saw them. Otherwise it would all be over.

 They made it to the top of the stairs and moments later the Olympian landed in front of them. He had jumped up from the floor below. Lex’s heart jumped up to his throat. He wasn’t afraid for himself, he was afraid for what would happen if they didn’t stop him.

 “Fuck!” Will yelled! Lex grabbed him by the arm and pulled him with him. They went down the hallway, the Olympian let out a low laugh as he started towards him.

 They made it to the end of a hallway that split up in two different directions. Will stopped and Lex stopped next to him. He knew what he had to do, he just wasn’t sure if Will would go along with it.

 “We need to split up.” Lex said. Will’s expression made it clear he didn’t agree.

 “No! We can’t!” Will pleaded.

 “We have to! One of us needs to get to Jax and have him blow up the school!” Lex said, praying that Will understood.

 “What about the other one?” Will asked, already knowing the answer.

 “You go that way, I’ll go this one. Hurry!” Lex yelled, he turned and started down the hall, glancing back to make sure that Will ran down the other hall. Once he saw Will take off, Lex stopped. He watched his friend running to safety and he couldn’t help but smile. It wasn’t a happy smile but rather a resigned smile.

 Lex was determined that Will was the one that made it. He was going to wait here for the Olympian, luckily he didn’t have to wait long. The Olympian showed up moments later and Lex turned and ran for it the second he caught sight of him. He glanced back to make sure that the Olympian was following him, he was. Lex felt relief wash over him. Will was safe and would make it to Jax and end this.

-WZ-

 “Tell me what the fuck you said!” Chris screamed. Trinidad backed up a step, clearly afraid of his friend. He lowered his eyes, held out his right hand.

 “Ignis” Trinidad said. A small ball of fire appeared in his hand. Chris almost fainted but managed to stay on his feet.

 “Wha. . .What the fuck are you?” Chris demanded, not sure if he wanted to know the answer to that question.

 “Your friend.” Trinidad said, closing his hand and putting out the flame.

 “I mean, how did you do that? That’s not normal!” Chris said.

 “What’s normal?” Trinidad asked, sounding defeated.

 “Not starting fire with a simple word. You a demon?” Chris asked, wanting to know. Trinidad seemed shocked at the accusation.

 “What? Of course not! I’m, well, I’m Trinidad.” Trinidad said. Chris couldn’t help but laugh but he clamped down on his laugh quickly.

 “So, all Trinidad’s have that power? Tell me the truth!” Chris demanded.

 “My mom, she’s a wiccan. She taught me some simple spells.” Trinidad said, a weight being lifted off his shoulders as the words left his lips.

 “Wiccan? Like a witch?” Chris asked, more confused than ever.

-WZ-

 The school was a maze, a labyrinth if you will. Will turned a corner and was confronted with a dead end. He cursed under his breath as he slowly backtracked. His heart was pounding as he made his way back the way he came. Worried that he would run into the gladiator at any moment but was surprised to find the path clear. Maybe he would make it out of here alive after all, he only hoped Lex was as lucky.

-WZ-

 “Can you teach me?” Chris asked, his mind racing with possibilities.

 “It’s not that easy. My mom has been teaching me since before I could remember, and that spell was one of the few I can actually do.” Trinidad said, feeling ashamed at how pitiful his studies had been coming along.

 “That’s not a problem. I’m a hard worker. I can make it work man. Just show me in the right direction.” Chris said. Trinidad looked down at his feet, every fiber of his being telling him not to agree to this.

 “Fine.” He said instead. Chris smiled.

-WZ-

 Lex turned into a hallway lined with closed doors. He could hear the Olympian close behind him. Lex rushed to the first door and tried to open it, only to find it locked. He tried the next door, locked, a third door. Once more it was locked.

 “Fuck!” Lex yelled to himself. He ran to the fourth door and this time it opened. He hurried inside where he found himself alone in a small classroom. He looked around for another way out but there was no other door but for the one he came in through. The wall on the other side of the classroom was lined with windows. Lex tried to think of what floor he was on, he knew it wasn’t the ground floor.

 BAM!

 Lex looked back at closed door as if he could see through it. That must have been the Olympian busting down the first door. Lex was running out of time. He had to make a choice and he had to do it quickly.

 BAM!

 There went the second door. Lex took a deep breath and then looked up, he put one foot in front of the other and broke out into a run. Diving through the window.

 BAM!

 The third door turned to splinters as Lex flew through the air with shards of glass all around him. He landed hard on the ground, went into a roll and jumped to his feet and started running. Every bone in his body hurting worst than he ever thought possible.

 BAM!

 Lex heard the last door burst open as he ran as fast as he could towards Jax. He kept expecting the school to blow any second, but it never came. It didn’t take long for him to find Jax sitting there next to his self-made trigger, looking terrified.

 “Where is Will?” Lex yelled as he came to a stop. Jax looked at him confused.

 “Isn’t he with you? And what about Jon?” Jax asked, clearly shaken. Lex shook his head, trying to clear his thoughts.

 “Will was supposed to be here by now. We don’t have time to wait.” Lex said, his mind racing as he tried to figure out how much time he had to go back to look for Will.

 “Sorry, had to go back for this dumbass.” Will’s voice came from behind them. Lex turned around to find Will helping Jon walk towards them.

 “Hey now!” Jon said with a laugh.

 “You made it!” Lex said, feeling relieved.

 “Never doubt me. So, did you guys blow up Ares yet?” Jon asked.

 “Ares?” Lex asked.

 “As in the god of war?” Jax asked, his hands shaking.

 “One in the same. So, cut me a little slack for you know, getting my ass kicked!” Jon said.

 “That’s an understatement.” Will said with a laugh. “Couldn’t even stand on his own.”

 “I’m fine!” Jon said, pulling away from Will. Seconds later he started to fall but was caught by Will.

 “Watch it!” Will yelled.

 “Thanks.” Jon said. Feeling embarrassed.

 “You know, I’m glad everyone made it and everything, but could we maybe finish the plan before celebrating?” Lex said.

 “Oh shit.” Jax said running towards his self-made triggering device. Moments later a loud blast went off as the school went up in a giant explosion.

 “Woah” Jon said.

 “God damn.” Will said. Jax started packing up his supplies.

 “Uh guys, maybe we should get out of here before the cops show up.” Jax said. Lex nodded as Will and Jon followed Jax, he watched the school collapse in on itself for a moment before turning to follow his friends.

-WZ-

 Standing atop a parking garage across the street from the school was Henry. Behind him, a dozen or so homeless men, all with a fire and hunger in their eyes. Henry watched the four friends take off in the distance.

 “We must hurry. Our lord Ares is down in the rubble. Dig him out before the authorities arrive.” Henry shouted to his men. They wasted no time in rushing down the parking garage.

 Henry’s eyes never wavier from the four friends.

The End