Warzone #4:

The Manuscript

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Other Books in WarZone

Dawn of War

Mario Chronicles

Relics

Tales

Chronicles

**Chapter One:**

**Jon**

 “Jon, you’re not making any sense!” Christina said to him in a loud whisper. Glancing back over her shoulder towards the door as she did. Making sure her parents didn’t overhear them talking. After all, he had just climbed into her bedroom in the middle of the night and recounted the events of the evening. Starting with the search of a still missing Raul and leading to not only meeting Ares, the God of War, but blowing him up inside of Mesa College.

 “It was incredible, I’m telling you Christina! I was there, and I can’t even believe it.” Jon said, a smile etched on his face. His entire body was one big sore, and yet he had never been happier, never felt more alive. He came face to face with the God of War and lived to tell the tale. A tale he ran all the way over to Christina’s house to tell.

 “Gods aren’t real. Just some myths that old white dudes made up, a long time ago.” Christina said. Jon shook his head, she didn’t understand, she wasn’t there.

 “He said he was! He said he was Ares!” Jon said, knowing that didn’t really prove it and yet knowing that it was true.

 “I could say that, doesn’t mean it’s true!” Christina rightfully pointed out.

 “It was the way he said it. You could… could just feel it.” Jon said, thinking back to the first meeting he had with him at the park. Ares standing over the dead bodies of those kids. He shuddered at the memory. “He had power.”

 “Like vampires?” She asked, clearly remembering Kimberly’s party. Jon shook his head.

 “No, vampires are nothing to this guy.” Jon said. “You just have to believe me. He was the God of War. Not someone pretending, it was him. He said it, and you just felt it was true. As true as anything else you have ever known.” Jon said. “You had to have been there.” He said finally, when he resigned to the fact that she wasn’t going to believe him, no matter how hard he tried to convince her.

 “I should have been there.” She said after a long silence. Jon looked up, confused. Not sure where she was going with this.

 “What do you mean?” Jon asked.

 “I want to hunt with you guys! I was with you during the attack. I survived it, same as the rest of you. Why do the *boys* get to go out and play Van Helsing, but I have to stay home and hear the stories second hand?” She demanded. “Hell, if a Kevin Smith look alike was running around town, I’d have loved to have seen him!”

 “Silent Bob? The filmmaker?” Jon asked, confused out of his mind.

 “No! Ares, from Xena!” Christina shot back. A slight smile on her face.

 “God, you’re nerdier than me!” Jon said.

 “That’s not possible. I just always loved Xena. Warrior woman and all. She’s a badass, I’d kill to be a badass like her.” She said.

 “You are.” Jon said. Feeling stupid as soon as he said it. She smiled.

 “So, can I come with you guys next time?” She asked, and Jon felt his heart sink. The guys were already upset with him for picking her over training. There was no way they were going to go for allowing her to join their little group. Especially right after they blew up the school. Lex wasn’t going to want anyone to enter their little circle right now. It was a trust thing.

 “I’d love that.” Jon said before he could stop himself. “Let me just talk to the guys, get them on board.” He added quickly.

 “What? You don’t think they would want me to fight by your side? A girl can’t kick ass?” Christina asked.

 “I never said that. It’s just, well after Mesa, they’re all on edge. I’m telling you Christina, walking home…” he trailed off, his mind flashing back to the solemn march back to the Stratton apartments. No one wanted to talk about what they had just done. “it was like someone died.” He finished.

 “Well they don’t need to know I know. We can just tell them that I’ve been talking about going after the vampires ever since the party. I mean, isn’t that what Lex did?” Christina asked, throwing his own story back at him.

 “I’ll get them to come around.” Jon said, just wanting to make her happy. Besides, the thought of having Christina by his side, seeing him be all heroic, excited him.

 “You better, or I’ll do it myself.” She said with a grin. Jon loved her smile. He got to his feet, his leg almost giving out under him.

 “I got you. Just give me a few days.” He started towards the window. “Hell, I’ll prolly need a few days just to recover enough to get out of bed.” He said with a laugh as he exited her room.

 The walk home was a long painful one. The more he walked the more he felt the bruises that were just starting to show up after being tossed around like a rag doll by Ares. He couldn’t help but wonder if he had survived. He was a god after all. One little explosion couldn’t have stopped him. It was only a matter of time till he returned, and when he did he would be after them. Jon just hoped they could be as lucky next time.

**Chapter Two:**

**Jax**

 “As of yet there are no suspects, but one cannot believe that this event and the massacre at the Jones’ residence are not connected.” The news anchor said, looking right into the camera, attempting to give off the impression that he knew what he was talking about. “Sources inside the police department reported to this reporter that the Feds have taken a personal interest in these terrorist activities. All that is known for sure, is that these monsters will be hunted down and made an example of.”

 Jax was on the edge of his chair, his nerves on edge as he tried to listen for any clue to just how much they knew. He had the volume turned up to the max to drown out his older sister, Tabitha and her boyfriend, flirting in the kitchen. If their mother wasn’t on vacation this latest victim of his sisters would have already been booted out of here. It was going on 1 in the morning. Although, to be fair, if his mother was home, his ass would be in a world of trouble for showing up past curfew.

 “Why are you watching the news?” His little sister, Eliza, sat down next to him, still in her PJ’s, rubbing her eyes. Clearly having just woken up.

 “Learning about the world outside. It’s what grown people do. You’ll learn.” Jax said, his focus locked onto the newscast, even though they had moved onto a story about cats helping people deal with trauma.

 “You’re not grown. You’re just fat.” She said, hitting a sore spot with him. Going out of her way to hurt him, as only a little sister could.

 “Shouldn’t you be in bed?” Jax snapped.

 “Shouldn’t you?” She shot back. She was only a few years younger, in the same grade as his friend Chris. He couldn’t help wondering how he was doing, if the police were still looking into him for the massacre? If they would try to pin this bombing, the bombing he did, on the kid too? He could only hope not.

 “Go to bed Eliza.” Jax said, as he flipped through the channels, looking for anyone talking about the bombing. A community college was just blown up, you would think that it would be bigger news.

 “I was! But,” She nodded behind them to Tabitha and her boyfriend. “The love birds won’t shut up.” She sounded as annoyed as he felt.

 “I wish he’d leave already.” Jax said, shutting off the TV.

 “I just hope they don’t wake Becca up.” Eliza said, looking towards the hallway. Becca was their youngest sister, all of five and already a know it all. She swore she was the smartest person in the family, Jax always tried to take her under his wing and show her his experiments. He was always building things, fixing things. He kind of figured that he would be an engineer one day, if everything went the way he hoped, and he didn’t end up in prison.

 “She better not. That’s the last thing we need, her running around. We’ll never get her back to sleep.” Jax said.

 “And she’ll tell mom.” Eliza said, pointing out the fact that Becca was a bit of a tattletale.

 “Maybe we should wake her up.” Jax said, getting to his feet. He was beat, wanting nothing more than to get some sleep. Although, he wasn’t sure if sleep was something that would come easy tonight. Not after what just happened, what he just did. The only comfort he had was that there were no bodies recovered in the ruble. Although, he wasn’t sure if that was good news. It also meant that Ares had escaped. He blew up the school for nothing.

**Chapter Three:**

**Detective Jared Singer**

 The whiteboard was far too empty for Jared’s taste. It had been a week since the massacre and he only had two leads, the first was Chris Johnson, the kid who was found in the house the following morning. So far, his story had checked out, but he had to know something that he wasn’t telling. There was no way that he hid in there through everything and saw nothing. The second was a Raul Gonzalez. He had been missing since the night of the party. His father reported a 6-pack missing from his garage fridge, leading to the theory that he was at the party, only his body was never found.

 “What am I missing?” He asked himself. Nothing was adding up. Just piles and piles of bodies with blood everywhere. Holes in everyone’s necks. Who would do this? Why would they do this? None of it made any sense.

 “That’s all you got after a week of investigations?” A voice said from behind him. His face flashed red. This was his investigation, he would be damned if he was going to let some beat cop shame him. He turned around, getting ready to bite the speaker’s head off when he stopped in his tracks. It wasn’t a beat cop, or even another detective, it was a Fed. With a fancy suit, that they all wore just to show up detectives. It made them feel powerful, it was as transparent as could be.

 “You here for the bombing I presume?” Detective Singer asked, already knowing the answer. Why else would the Feds send someone down here?

 “For starters.” The Fed said, a smug grin forming at the edge of his lips.

 “Is that supposed to mean something to me?” Detective Singer asked, not in the mood for games.

 “I’m Special Agent Tim Ostrander, and as you figured out, I’m running the investigation on the bombing of Mesa College.” The agent said.

 “So, what I just said. But I bet you feel better about yourself now that you said it, huh? That’s a good Fed. Now you can go set up down the hall.” Detective Singer said, turning away from the man.

 “It’s my belief that your massacre is connected to my bombing.” Special Agent Ostrander said, his voice smug. There it was. This jackass was stealing his case.

 “Based on what?” He asked, without even looking back. It took all he had not to lose his temper. He just kept his eyes transfixed on the whiteboard.

 “Two events, that could only be described as terroristic, happening within a week of each other, blocks apart. That doesn’t sound like a coincidence to me.” Special Agent Ostrander stated his case, waiting only a moment before putting forth the question. “Does it to you?”

 Detective Singer turned around and locked eyes with Special Agent Ostrander. “The Jones house and Mesa College are more than a few blocks apart.” As soon as he said it, it sounded hollow.

 “What leads do you have?” Ostrander said, stepping past Singer to look at the board. “Two kids. You really believe that two kids could have done all this?” He motioned to the pictures of all the dead bodies. Singer had nothing to say. He was being moved out, just what his career needed.

 “Those are potential witnesses. Not suspects. Johnson is the only known survivor and Gonzalez has been missing ever since.” Singer said. Giving up the only information he had.

 “So, we’re thinking Gonzalez killed these people, blew up the school and is currently hiding? Interesting.” Ostrander said, not really listening to Singer. “You’ll follow my lead on this case. Understood?”

 “Whatever you say boss.” Singer said, not at all happy about this new turn of events.

**Chapter Four:**

**Lex**

 “What the hell are you doing?” Will called up to Lex, who was doing sit-ups while his legs were wrapped around monkey bars.

 “Working out, what does it look like?” Lex asked, grabbing the bar and pulling himself loose so he could drop to the ground.

 “We’re at a playground.” Will pointed out. Lex couldn’t help but laugh.

 “What better place to work out? They got everything you need here.” He said, pointing at the bars.

 “If you say so.” Will said, avoiding eye contact with Lex. Something he only did when he was nervous.

 “How’d you know I was here?” Lex asked.

 “Your sister told me you were out here.” Will answered.

 “So, what’s up?” Lex asked, not sure what could be so important that Will had to track him down. Will shifted his feet, his eyes locked onto them as if they were the most interesting things in the world.

 “Spit it out Will. You being all nervous is weirding me out.” Lex said with a nervous laugh. Will was one of the most confident people that Lex had ever met. This wasn’t like him at all.

 “So, uh…well uh, it’s nothing. Really.” Will said, he took a step back. “You know what, I’mma take off.” Will turned around and started to walk off.

 “Hold up!” Lex called out to him. Will stopped but didn’t look back. “What’s up?” Will shook his head and took another step. “Will!” Lex shouted at him. Will stopped in his tracks and turned around, looking defeated.

 “I can’t do this man.” Will spit out, talking way too fast.

 “It’s me. You can just tell me. Whatever it is, I’m your boy. I’m here for you.” Lex said, taking a step towards his friend. His mind racing with all the different possibilities about what could be bothering his friend, who just looked confused.

 “I just did. Right now, that was me telling you. Was I not clear?” Will said, sounding more like Jon than himself.

 “You spend far too much time with Jon. What are you talking about? What can’t you do?” Lex asked.

 “Last night. I can’t do that again. Jon almost died. I dragged him away from an explosion. We blew up the school my mom goes to.” Will said, his voice breaking with panic.

 “We didn’t have a choice. Ares was going to kill us. It was him or the school.” Lex said, thinking back to the night before and their close call.

 “It just so much. Vampires, gods, what’s next man?” Will asked.

 “Clowns? How the fuck should I know?” Lex joked, Will didn’t seem to find the humor in it. “This stuff is real man. We’ve seen it with our own eyes. If we didn’t stop Ares, who knows what he would have done. Who could have been hurt. If we don’t do this, who will?”

 Will shook his head. “Why is it on us?”

 “Because we went passed the veil. We know what’s out there.” Lex replied.

 “I don’t want to die. I don’t want you to die, or Jon, or even Jax! But that is what’s going to happen if we keep on this path!” Will said.

 “So, work out! Train!” Lex said, motioning the bars he was just working out on.

 “It doesn’t matter how hard we train, we will never be as strong as a vampire. They’re fucking supernatural. We’re teenagers.” Will said, pointing out a fact that Lex had been trying to ignore. They were out matched.

 “So, we train harder! People will die if we don’t step up. So, we are going to step up. I expect you by myside Will.” Lex said, using his commanding voice. “I can’t handle Jon on my own. I need someone to rein him in.”

 Will couldn’t help but laugh. Lex was the only guy who could turn a fight on its head with a joke. “Fine, I’m in, but only to protect Jon. Once he wises up and leaves you to your slow painful death, I’m out.”

 “Deal!” Lex laughed.

**Chapter Five:**

**Chris**

 The events of the other night were still fresh in Chris’s mind. A vampire burst into flames right in front of his face. He was living inside a Blade movie. Well, he was the night before. This morning he was sitting in the kitchen as his mother and their new attorney, Bill Rosenberg, lectured him on what to expect moving forward. The police hadn’t pressed any charges against him yet, or even reached out to him since releasing him a few days ago, but his mother was convinced it was only a matter of time before they came for him. She was so convinced that she took out a loan on their car. Something that his father was not happy about. He came home last night to them screaming at each other and his father storming out.

 It was a bad fight, not surprising since they were a one car family and those car loans never seemed to end well for anyone. Chris was smart enough to know that his mom basically just gave away their car to afford a lawyer they may not even need. Rosenberg sure liked to talk, but Chris wasn’t paying any attention. He would just nod his head a lot and answer yes when his mother asked him if he was listening. She on the other hand was fully engaged with every word he spoke, as if it was the gospel itself. Meanwhile his father, who Chris had found sleeping on the couch when he woke up the next morning, was in the same spot he had slept in, watching TV and occasionally shooting them dirty looks.

 Chris didn’t take it personally. He knew it wasn’t that his dad didn’t care or want to help. It was that he, like Chris, was hoping that this would all blow over. It was just too much to think about, and what could a two-bit lawyer really do to help? It wasn’t like Chris could tell them the truth, no one would believe him. This was all just to make his mother feel better, and for her shake he was willing to play pretend. As long as it didn’t go on too much longer. Trinidad had promised to teach him that fire trick he used on the vampire, but he hadn’t responded to any of Chris’s text messages since he woke up this morning. There was no way in hell he was going to let him out of this.

 “Sara! Stop, you’re stressing the boy out. Chris go outside.” His father said, standing up at last. His mother and Rosenberg turned to look at him. He could sense another fight coming.

 “He needs to hear this. I’m not going to lose him.” His mother said, panic coming through with every word.

 “And *we* won’t. Not by the cops and not by taking away his youth too soon. He’s a child and I won’t have him worrying about things outside his control.” His father said, in his stern commanding voice. He turned to look at Chris. “I told you to go outside.”

 Chris started to get up when his mom’s head spun around, giving him the look of death. He swallowed hard and sat back down. He was stuck, if he went his mom would be pissed at him and if he stayed his dad would. This was one of those no-win situations and all he wanted was out.

 “Now!” His father said as he turned toward Mr. Rosenberg. “You can go too. Me and my wife have a lot to talk about.”

 “Yes, we do. But not right now. Not when Chris can be taken from us at any moment.” She seemed to be on the verge of tears even as she screamed. Mr. Rosenberg took a step towards her.

 “Right now, the important thing is for everyone to remain calm. The police are still investigating, and now with the bombing on top of everything. We have some time before they come for him. Not to mention the fact that he is a minor. They can’t ask him any questions without one of us there.” He turned to look at Chris. “That isn’t to say they won’t try, but just make sure you *remind* them your age.” He turned back towards Chris’s mother. “But I don’t see any reason we should keep Chris locked up. He should unwind with his friends, just…just stay out of trouble. Don’t do anything that will get people to notice you, and don’t talk about anything that happened that night. No matter how much your friends may ask. Don’t say a word.”

 “I wasn’t planning to. Can…can I really go?” Chris asked, fearing the answer.

 “Yes!” His father said at the same moment his mother all but screamed “No.” Chris nodded, not knowing which one would end worse for him.

 “Right, well uh, I’ll be at Trinidad’s.” He said as he ran out of the room. He didn’t want to give them a chance to get on the same page in case it went sideways for him. He could hear the yelling start back up mere seconds after the door slammed shut. For a moment he stopped in his tracks, wanting to listen to what they were saying. The feeling only lasted a moment before he shook it off. He had better things to do than listen in on whatever fate his parents decided for him.

 He took the stairs in front of Trinidad’s 2nd story apartment two at a time. He couldn’t wait to start training. If only Trinidad could answer the door with the same haste. As Chris stood waiting in front of the door, he could hear movement coming from inside. Hushed voices arguing. He did not have time for this.

 “Come on Trinidad! Open the door!” He called out, attempting to rush his friend. Abruptly the voices stopped. “Dude, come on!” Chris yelled. He wasn’t an idiot, he knew he was in there.

 After what felt like an eternity the door slowly opened, only it wasn’t Trinidad standing there. Instead it was Aria, Trinidad’s little sister. She was only a year younger than Trinidad, which meant she was only a year younger than Chris. A fact that did little to keep his heart from racing every time he saw her. She was so pretty that he couldn’t keep focus on anything else.

 “What are you banging on the door for?” She snapped at him. Chris tried to play it off but, couldn’t help but feel a bit chastised.

 “Sorry, uh, is uh, is Trinidad here? We were supposed to…to hang out.” Chris said lamely. He didn’t want to come right out and say anything about the training. No point in getting Trinidad in trouble if it’s a touchy subject around the house.

 “He isn’t home.” She said while taking a step back and attempting to shut the door. He put his hand up, preventing the door from shutting.

 “Didn’t I just hear you talking to him?” Chris asked. She looked at his hand and back at him. Not happy in the least.

 “You calling me a liar? In my own doorway! Are serious right now?” She said, her tone telling him in very clear terms, to back down.

 “Yeah, yeah I am.” He said, knowing this wasn’t going to win him any points with her. He pushed past her, into the apartment and sure enough a few feet back stood Trinidad. An awkward smile on his face. He knew he was caught.

 “Hey Chris. How are you?” Trinidad asked, clearly worried about the answer. Aria rolled her eyes and shut the door.

 “This is the last time you involve me in your guy’s issues.” She snapped at her brother as she headed down the hall towards her room. Chris watched her go, wondering to himself how angry with him she was. He turned towards Trinidad and couldn’t help but blow up.

 “What the hell is wrong with you?” He snapped at his friend in an angry hushed whisper.

 “No…nothing. I uh, I heard you talking and was coming to see you, but my sister, she just beat me to the door.” Trinidad said, clearly lying.

 “Oh, so you didn’t tell her to lie to me?” Chris asked, knowing the answer.

 “No, of course not!” Trinidad said, showing Chris once again how bad a liar he really was.

 “He’s full of shit!” Aria yelled out from her room. Trinidad just lowered his head, looking at the ground. Clearly in shame.

 “What the fuck man?” Chris asked.

 “I can’t do it. I just can’t.” Trinidad said, sounding as if he was about to cry. He was never the bravest guy. It was one of the reasons that when Chris would go out with the older kids, Trinidad would stay at home. It was the main reason that while Chris was a person of interest in a massacre, Trinidad was one of the few people who didn’t even know there was a party, until he saw it on the news. They may be best friends, but they were very different people. Something that Chris wasn’t about to let get in the way of the future he saw for himself.

 “Do what? What can’t you do?” Chris demanded.

 “This! What…” He looked back at the hallway door to make sure his little sister wasn’t in listening distance. “What we did last night. I’m not brave like you Chris. I can’t…I can’t face something like that again. I just can’t.” He said, tears flowing down his cheeks.

 “No one is asking you too! All I’m asking is to… is to help me do it!” Chris said. Trinidad shifted uneasily.

 “It’s dangerous.” Trinidad said.

 “That’s my problem. Mine, not yours. I’m not asking for your help, out there, or your permission. I’m just asking you to help give me the tools I need, to stay alive.” Chris pleaded.

 “But, if…if I teach you and you get killed, than it is my fault.” Trinidad said, scared.

 “I’m going out there, no matter what. Either with the power to create fire out of thin air, or with a piece of wood. That’s up to you. But if you don’t help me, and I die, than that is your fault.” Chris said. Attempting to guilt his friend into keeping his word.

 “We can’t do it here.” Trinidad said, shifting his feet. Defeat in his voice. Chris couldn’t help but smile.

**Chapter Six:**

**James Conroy**

 James sat alone in his dark security booth, his eyes glued to his laptop where old episodes of Gilligan’s Island were playing. He gave a good laugh as the Skipper slapped Gilligan on the back of the head with his hat. With a smile still etched on his face, James leaned back and pulled a Dr. Pepper out of the mini fridge.

 He popped open the can as he looked around the tiny booth, it was extremely bare but for a small work table he sat at, which was filled with important looking binders and his laptop. Clearly his employers didn’t care too much for the comfort of their employees, but what could you expect? It had been James’ experience that most companies didn’t care a great deal about the people who worked for them, as long as they did their job. The second you made a mistake they would care, a great deal. Not a day would go by when his supervisor wouldn’t write in the logs the threat of write ups over the most arbitrary of offensives. As if he was supposed to live in enteral fear of a piece of paper.

 He pressed play on the next episode, far more interested in the adventures of Gilligan and his pals than the trucking yard that lay outside the tiny booth. He had been working at this post for just shy of a year and nothing had ever happened. It was the very definition of uneventful.

 The only part of his job that he enjoyed was the isolation of it all. He was left completely alone all night. With no one for company but for the characters of whichever show he decided to watch that night. For the past few nights it had been Gilligan’s Island. It was a throwback to a simpler time, one that James almost wished he lived in. He wasn’t a fan of people, they tended to rub him the wrong way and he was never one to turn the other cheek as it were. So, a job where he could be alone and watch TV was the perfect fit. But as perfect as it was, it didn’t stop it from boring him to no end.

 He tossed the empty Dr. Pepper can in the tiny trashcan by his side. A tiny ding as the now empty can landed on the mound of other empty cans. He had a problem with caffeine. Something his many rounds with kidney stones had taught him.

 Kidney stones weren’t the only issue that drinking a 12 pack a day gave him. He let out an annoyed grumble as he paused his laptop and got to his feet. The only restroom he had was a porta potty. It was a tiny little thing that smelled far worse than it should have, but when you had to go, you had to go.

 He only made it about half way when he heard the rattling of the fence from behind some of the trucks. It wasn’t uncommon on nights with a lot of wind, but tonight wasn’t one of those nights. If anything, it was a little dry by San Diego standards. James let out an annoyed sigh as he looked back along the row of trucks. All he wanted to do was get back to the tiny little island and maybe pop open another can of Dr. Pepper, but at the same time his job was to walk the yard and make sure everything was clear. It was a job that he hadn’t really done in a few weeks. Nothing ever happened, so what was the point?

 He started towards the trucks, he figured the point was it was his job after all and the last thing he wanted was to lose such a cushy job because some punk kid decided to tag up some trucks on a dare.

 He started passed the trucks, praying that it was just the wind, so he could use the restroom and get back to his shows, but as he neared the end of the trucks he could hear talking. Nothing loud enough to make out what anyone was saying.

 “Fuck.” James said under his breath. He reached into his pocket for his phone, only to find it empty. It was sitting next to his laptop, it’s hotspot turned on. He mentally kicked himself, how could he have forgotten it? As a security guard he didn’t have a lot of authority, his main job was to call the police if anything went wrong. A job that was very hard to do without a phone.

 He shrugged off his concerns, after all, it was just a bunch of kids who would probably run the second they saw him. He wouldn’t need his phone. He couldn’t have been more wrong.

 He neared the voices, which had moved away from the gate and started towards the warehouse. They weren’t kids, they were grown men and they did not look friendly. It was clear they were trying to get into the warehouse and for the first time since James had started working there he found himself wondering what was housed here.

 James had taken two steps back before he found himself bumping into someone. He turned slowly around to find a giant of a man with a face that would have given him nightmares for years to come, that is, if he was given the chance. The giant man let out an angry growl as he bared what could only be described as fangs and moved in for the kill. James let out a whimper as his life flowed out of his body. His only thought, that he should have just continued towards the porta potty and went back to his show. He was never going to find out how Gilligan screwed up this time.

**Chapter Seven:**

**Will**

 The sun was just starting to come up as Will made his way to the secret spot. A stupid name for a little clearing in the middle of the densest part of Frog Pond, a wooded area that the sewers let out to. It had been the go to spot for him and his friends since they were kids. Jax and Lex would come out here almost every day to get high, Will and Jon joining in from time to time.

 The other major activity that always went down in Frog Pond were the war games. Dirt clod or BB gun, it didn’t matter. They were fun and gave you a rush. At least they did back in middle school, but Will had dates to go on now. He couldn’t be coming out here and risking damage to his face. It’s what got him dates and those were far more important than stupid games.

 Only this time he wasn’t headed out here, at the crack of dawn no less, to play games or even to get high. He got a phone call, or well, many phone calls this morning, until he woke up, from Lex ordering him down him for training. Training. At the crack of dawn, as if they were in the military or something. It was insane, and just another reason Will wanted out of this.

 He pushed past the branches that hid the secret spot from view and was surprised to see Jax and Jon sitting there. Neither one looked all that happy to be there. Jax was staring off into the distance, deep in thought, while Jon was sitting on a small boulder, his leg shaking, clearly nervous.

 “Will! You made it!” Jon said, as he looked up. He jumped to his feet, hiding the nervousness he was just expressing.

 “Lex wouldn’t stop calling me till I answered.” Will said annoyed. He wasn’t awake enough for a conversation, much less training. “Speaking of which, where is he?” He said looking around and seeing no sight of the man.

 “Not here.” Jax said looking up. He seemed shaken, and understandably so after what happened at the school.

 “How you holding up?” Will asked. Jax just shook his head.

 “He hasn’t been in much of a talking mood since I got here.” Jon said in a low whisper. Will nodded, not knowing what answer he really expected. All he heard anyone talking about yesterday was the bombing at Mesa, it must be terrifying for Jax, knowing that at any moment the authorities could figure out it was him. His whole life could be over.

 “So why did Lex keep bugging me to show up if he wasn’t even going to show?” Will asked annoyed.

 “I think we about to find out.” Jon said, motioning at a ruffling sound coming from behind them. Will turned around just as Lex made his way into the clearing. His face lit up like the fourth of July.

 “You look happy.” Jax said.

 “A security guard was found murdered just a few hours ago.” Lex said, far too happy for giving such sad news.

 “Uh, Lex my man, that’s uh, that’s not something to be excited about. It’s kind of bad news. Like the dude died.” Jon said.

 “He had bite marks on his neck, but there was no blood!” Lex said, his grin growing even wider. “Plus, the door was torn open, who could do that?”

 “And how did you come by this information?” Will asked, not sure he wanted the answer. Lex looked over at Jax who just looked down. Will no longer needed an answer. Jax was great with computers. If information was needed and it was online, Jax was the man to see.

 “I just got it, do we really need to know anything more?” Lex said.

 “So, do we check it out?” Jon asked, far too excited at the prospect of visiting a crime scene.

 “We have to. I mean, vampires robbing a warehouse, how insane is that? We need to find out what they were after!” Lex said. All thoughts of training clearly driven from his mind.

 “They didn’t say what was stolen?” Jax asked. Lex shook his head.

 “No luck, and I listened for a while. It’s why I was late.” Lex replied.

 “The place has to be crawling with police.” Will pointed out, hoping his friends would see sense. No such luck.

 “That’s what makes this fun.” Jon said. A grin on his face. Will glanced back at Jax, who seemed more resigned than anything else. Lex had a gleam in his eyes that never ended well for them. Will couldn’t help wishing he stayed in bed this morning.

**Chapter Eight:**

**Trinidad**

 “Iggis!” Chris screamed as he waved his hand around wildly. Trinidad shook his head, he had been against this training from the start, for all kinds of reasons, none of which had to do with just how bad a student Chris was. He knew he wasn’t a great student in class, but Trinidad had always thought it was because he was bored with the subjects, but here he was, studying something he was desperate to learn, and he was still a bad student.

 “Ignis.” Trinidad said calmly as he held his hand in front of him. Fire sprang to life in the palm of his hand. Chris did not look happy.

 “Why can’t I get it to work?” Chris demanded.

 “Well, for starters, you aren’t saying the word right. It’s Ig-nis, not Igg-is. Ig-nis. Just practice saying it a few times.” Trinidad said, in his least condescending voice.

 “You don’t need to be so fucking condescending.” Chris snapped, showing Trinidad that he failed.

 “I’m not trying to be. Look, just once you get the word right, we can move on to drawing the magic into yourself. I’ve been training since before I could remember, it’s not easy.” Trinidad said, trying to reassure his friend, despite the fact that he was rapidly losing faith in his skills.

 “No kidding. We all weren’t taught to speak Wiccan as babies.” Chris said. Trinidad didn’t know whether to laugh or scream.

 “It’s not *Wiccan,* it’s *Latin.*” Trinidad pointed out.

 “I’m not Catholic. I don’t speak dead tongues and shit. Tell me the English translation and maybe I can just use that.” Chris said.

 “Fire. Saying fire is not going to create fire.” Trinidad said, stating an obvious fact.

 “Fair enough, but can’t you say Ignna without creating fire?” Chris asked, once more saying the word wrong.

 “Easily, since the word is Ignis and not Ignna.” Trinidad said, Chris smiled in response.

 “And there is no fire. So, it isn’t the word that creates it. It’s intent.” Chris said excitedly as if he just figured out the key piece of the puzzle. “What do you think about when you make the fire? What are you drawing on? That’s what I need to learn.” He went on. Talking faster and faster as he did so.

 “It’s more of a desire, a need for the spell to come true, mixed with the word that brings it to life. You need both.” Trinidad explained. Chris nodded, more to himself than to Trinidad.

 “Right, so I need to want it. Need to need it. I will it into being. Simple.” Chris said to himself, once again missing the point.

 “No, it’s far from simple. Chris, if you want to learn, you have to take this seriously.” Trinidad pleaded with his friend, who clearly wasn’t listening. Chris closed his eyes, concentrating as hard as he could. Trinidad felt almost bad for him, it wasn’t going to work, no matter how hard he tried. You can’t just rewrite spells to make it easier on yourself. Chris opened his eyes, a bright smile crossing his lips.

 “Fire!” He said as he waved his hand in front of him. For a moment Trinidad thought nothing happened, but a moment later a small fire appeared in his hand.

 “How the hell?” Trinidad asked, completely at a loss.

 “It’s like you said! Just, want it.” Chris said, shaking his hand and making the fire vanish.

 “Fire!” Trinidad said waving his hand in front of him just like Chris did, yet nothing happened. “Ignis.” He said, and fire sprung up. He waved it away and looked up at Chris. “How did you do that?

 “No idea, but it was cool!” He said excitedly. He held his hand out in front of him, his eyes transfixed on it. “I just wanted it to happen and…” He let out a scream as fire appeared in his hand. “What the hell? I didn’t even say the word.” Chris said as the fire vanished, he was clearly confused, but Trinidad finally figured it out. Chris didn’t manage to make the fire spell work with English, he was using nonverbal magic and just happened to say the translation as he did so. It was a skill that Trinidad could never master. Even his mother who had trained her whole life could only use it intermittently. This made no sense, and Trinidad couldn’t help but feel slightly afraid.

**Chapter Nine:**

**Jon**

 “Are we sure this is a smart idea?” Will asked, not for the first time. Jon couldn’t understand Will’s problem. When they were younger they use to enjoy going out and messing with cops, just trying to stay one step ahead of them. It was a rush. True they haven’t had a midnight mission in a long time, but it was almost a return to something lost. Just the thought of it made Jon feel alive, as if his very skin was vibrating from excitement.

 “We need to find out what they were after. It could be important.” Lex pointed out. It made sense to Jon. Know your enemy and you could conquer them.

 “I get that, but even if we find out what they stole, how does that help us?” Jax asked. He hadn’t had much to say since he showed up in the secret spot. Jon tried to make small talk, but Jax just didn’t seem into it. His answers were all so short. Not in a rude way, more in a distracted sense. Jon knew this all must be so much for him to deal with and he wanted to assure him that everything would be okay, but he knew it would just sound hollow. He had no way of knowing how all of this would turn out. None of them did.

 “We figure that out when we figure out what they stole.” Lex said. He stopped and turned to face the three of them. “Look, if we aren’t all on board with this, let’s figure that out now. Because if we aren’t, we need to know now, not in the middle of some shit.”

 “I’m in.” Jon said, not missing a beat. Will looked over at Jon and let out a low sigh.

 “I’m not saying I don’t want to do this Lex. I just…I just meant, shouldn’t we be looking for the vampires, not playing catch up?” Will said. Something about the way he said it made Jon think he wasn’t being sincere.

 “We need a lead. Something to help point us towards them. This is the last place we know they were, so this is where we start.” Lex said.

 “But, if they stole a painting, or a map, or an orb, or a whatever the fuck, we don’t know anything about any of that. We will be just as lost as we are now.” Jax said, not making eye contact with Lex.

 “That’s what I’m saying.” Will said, jumping on the assist.

 “We just have to hope that we find some clues. Why are you guys so against this?” Lex demanded.

 “I just want to know the plan ahead of time.” Will said. It was a fair request.

 “Go home Will. You too Jax. Me and Jon got this.” Lex said, turning around and heading away from the group.

 “We aren’t done talking.” Will called out to him. Lex stopped and turned around.

 “We are. This… this whatever the fuck it is, is just wasting time. The vamps are getting away. We need to move now!” Lex snapped.

 “It’s day light. Where would they go?” Jon said, jumping in for the first time. Lex stopped to think for a moment.

 “We can go looking for nests. I’m sure we can even find some. But, I… I want to face down something. I want to be a hunter, you know? That’s not just killing Joe Schmo vampire. That’s making a difference. A real difference. That’s what I want from us, for us. So, this…this whatever it is they stole, it could be something. It could be the start of an adventure that gives our lives meaning. That gets us out of this hellhole and keeps us from…from just being…from reliving our parent’s mistakes. I don’t know about any of you, but I don’t plan on working some 9 to 5 bullshit job while I struggle pay check to pay check. I want a purpose. I want my life to have meaning. This… this might be our only chance to have that. To be something. Even if just for a moment. I’m not passing that up. Are you? Any of you?” Lex said, he was almost shaking as he said it. Jon had never seen him so worked up before. Will and Jax exchanged looks. Jon knew what they were thinking. None of them wanted to just exist. Or worse, to struggle the way their mothers did. Lex had a point.

 “Again, I’m in. But thanks for making me feel shitty about my life.” Jon said, looking away.

 “Okay, so we find out what was stolen then figure out what it means. What are we standing around for?” Will asked, still not sounding convinced.

 “Fuck it, I’m sure we can google whatever we find out. The internet has to be good for something besides porn, right?” Jax said with a laugh. He still looked uneasy at the thought. Lex either didn’t seem to notice or just didn’t care. He smiled brightly and turned back around, once more leading them towards the warehouse.

 The walk there was quiet. A bit too quiet for Jon’s liking. Each of them seemed to be in their own heads, dealing with their own inner demons. It unnerved Jon a great deal. He always liked to talk to distract himself from his own inner demons. He was, what his friends affectionally/annoyingly called a nervous talker. He would talk about nonsense to avoid silence much like this one.

 “So, I was talking to Christina yesterday.” Jon said, just as the warehouse came into view. Even more noticeable than the warehouse itself was the score of police cars parked around the street. They were definitely at the right place.

 “No one cares about you and your little girlfriend.” Jax said.

 “She’s not my…wait…do you think she would be? Cause, I mean, I wouldn’t be opposed to that…I mean if…” Jon was saying before Lex’s arm shot up, his hand in a fist, motioning for them to stop.

 “This is the place.” Lex said. Jon barely heard him. All he could think about was what Jax had said and why he had said it. Was there a chance that Christina liked Jon? Did she say something to Jax? Did no one else notice her crazy chemistry with Gambit? Or was that just in Jon’s head? What did this all mean?

 “Jon!” a voice called out, shaking Jon out of his thoughts. His friends were all a ways down the street. For the life of him, he couldn’t figure out who had called his name, not that it mattered. He ran forward to catch up to them.

 “You good with this plan?” Will asked in a low whisper. Jon had no idea what plan he was referring to, so he just nodded. It was the simplest way to deal with the question and not admit that he zoned out.

 The truckyard in front of the warehouse was crawling with cops, but even so, Jon could make out the body near the torn off door. All thoughts of Christina were driven from his mind as he fought to keep his lunch down.

 “We go around back. Stay low, and don’t make a sound.” Lex said, he started along the side, careful to stay out of sight. Jax and Will followed him. Jon looked back at the body being circled by cops. Suddenly this all didn’t seem so fun anymore.

**Chapter Ten:**

**Will**

 “Up there.” Lex said as he stopped next to the fence and pointed to the top of the warehouse. Near the top there was a small window open.

 “And how do you suppose we get up there?” Jax asked. A question Will wanted an answer to himself. Lex didn’t answer, instead he just started to climb the fence in front of them. When he made it to the top, instead of going over he slowly got to his feet, carefully maintaining his balance and reached over to the low roof. Slowly he pulled himself up, it was a feat of upper body strength that Will was unsure if he could pull off but knew for a fact that Jax and Jon couldn’t.

 “I don’t think I could do that.” Jon said.

 “I know I can’t.” Jax said, looking down at his out of shape body. “Whose he kidding?” Jax asked looking at Will, who could only shrug.

 “What do we do?” Jon asked as Lex looked down and motioned for them to hurry.

 “Climb?” Will said, hopelessly. He started towards the fence as Jon and Jax followed. The chain-link fence was easy enough to climb, until he made it to the top.

 “Come on.” Lex said, holding out his hand. Will nodded and reached upward, grabbing hold of the side of the building and allowing Lex to pull him up. His arms were killing him as recovered for a few seconds before Lex motioned him forward to help pull up Jon. Jax came up behind him, the three of them pulled him up with some effort.

 “Now what?” Jon asked. Lex motioned for the window.

 “We find out what was stolen.” Lex said, hurrying into the open window. Jon flashed Will a quick smile before following after. Jax merely shook his head.

 “Are we really doing this?” Jax asked. Will shrugged.

 “We already here right?” Will said, turning and following his friends. He could hear Jax letting out a sigh before following after. They made their way inside, keeping balance on small steel beams that crossed the length of the warehouse.

 Will risked a glance down, almost at once wishing he hadn’t. He wasn’t afraid of heights, but that didn’t mean he was a fan of them either.

 “Up ahead.” Lex whispered. Will took a steadying breath before following Lex’s gesture. The police were down below talking to a man in an old looking suit. The man clearly was trying to dress the part but lacked the funds.

 “Think he’s in charge?” Jon asked.

 “That would be my guess.” Jax said. His voice shaking as he spoke.

 “How do we get down there to find out what was stolen?” Jon asked. Lex stopped and looked around. Deep in thought.

 “I go in through the office and make my way down there. It’s the only way.” Lex said.

 “You are out of your mind!” Will snapped.

 “You have a better idea?” Lex asked, for once it sounded like he really wanted to know. It made Will feel a bit better knowing his friend wasn’t suicidal.

 “So, what’s the plan?” Jax asked.

**Chapter Eleven:**

**Lex**

 “That’s all that was stolen? Are you sure?” The detective asked the nerdy looking man in the run-down suit. Lex glanced up from his hiding spot to make sure his friends were still out of sight up in the rafters.

 “That’s all? That’s all!” The man screamed at the cop, he seemed to be at his wits end. “That is a manuscript predating the birth of Rome. The birth of Rome! To say it is one of a kind is an understatement. There is nothing else on this planet more valuable.” The unhinged man screamed.

 “Really? What’s on it?” The detective asked, seeming to be genuinely interested for the first time. The unhinged man deflated a bit.

 “No one knows. It was being shipped to the university for a Dr. Geller. He believes he could translate it. It should have been in his office a few weeks ago but one of our drivers got sidetracked on another delivery. . . it’s not important. What is important is that we need it back, now!” The man told the detective.

 “Dr. Geller? He teaches at the university?” The detective asked.

 “Yes, I’ve been trying to get ahold of him, but he is out of the country on work. He had hoped to bring it with him, but like I said” The man was saying before the cop cut him off.

 “The driver was late. Yeah, yeah.” The detective said, back to not caring.

 Lex motioned for his friends to meet him outside and he quickly made his way outside to the meet up spot. They were already there waiting for him.

 “So, what did you learn?” Jon asked, excited.

 “They stole some old manuscript. Shit was old and in some untranslatable language. Why would vampires want that? Why would anyone want that?” Lex asked, unsure.

 “Why would it come here?” Jax asked.

 “They were storing it for this Doctor…. un Gilbert? Giller?” Lex said, not recalling the name.

 “Geller?” Will asked.

 “That’s it! How’d you know?” Lex asked.

 “He’s in Egypt. He’s not even here.” Will said, seeming to know more about this case than he’s let on.

 “How do you know that?” Lex asked. “The guy in there did say the dude was out of the country.”

 “Oh uh,” Will said, his face turning a shade of red that Lex had never seen on anyone other than Jon before. “Well… Cordelia is on an internship with the guy. She’s there all summer.”

 “And I thought I was bad when it came to the ladies.” Jon said, with a laugh. Will hit him hard in the arm. “Ouch!” Jon said, holding his sore arm.

 “Shut up.” Will said annoyed. “I just like her is all, alright. Just chill.” Lex couldn’t believe it. Will wasn’t the type of guy to fall for a girl, they tended to fall for him. He liked to have his fun and move on. This was a side of Will Lex had never seen before.

 “Okay, so the manuscript was here and the guy who is supposed to pick it up is out of town. What did he want it for? That’s where we start.” Jax said. Finally adding in.

 “To translate it.” Lex said.

 “Well that doesn’t help us.” Jon said. Letting out a sigh.

 “No, it doesn’t.” Lex said, feeling defeated.

 “Yes, it does.” Jax replied.

 “How?” Lex asked.

 “If this is some unknown language and this Geller guy was needed to translate it, I’d imagine there aren’t a lot of others who could do it. We find someone else who can, and that’s where the vampires show up next.” Jax said, making far too much sense. Lex couldn’t help but smile. They had a plan, they just needed to find a translator.

**Chapter Twelve:**

**Christina**

 The sun started to set as Christina watched from her rooftop. A sense of anxiety eating away at her. She glanced at her phone for what had to have been the millionth time that hour. Still nothing. When Jon had left he had seemed so on board with her joining the team, why hadn’t she heard from him?

 Only, the more she thought about it, the more she realized he hadn’t. He told her that the others might not be onboard. That it might take him awhile. She was just so eager she didn’t pay him any mind when he said that. When she was pushing him to get the others to sign off on her going with them on their little missions, she wasn’t thinking about how Jon felt, or if it would cause problems between him and his friends. All she was thinking about was getting the chance to run into Gambit again. She had tried to tell herself it wasn’t just about Gambit, that it was also about spending time with Jon, and to a degree it was, but she really just wanted to see Gambit. They had had no contact since he had woken her from her sleep and declined her invitation inside. He must have thought she was so pushy, she didn’t mean to invite him into her bedroom, she was just so excited to see him that the words came out before she could stop herself. She just wanted to see him and clear the air, that was all. Jon would understand, he was a sweet kid. A sweet kid she maybe had feelings for?

 She let out a sigh as she crawled back into her room. Emotions were confusing and if you thought about them too long they just caused you more and more problems. She had never been someone to sit by and let other people dictate what she could and couldn’t do. She was going to march right over to Jon’s apartment and find out what the others said. If Jon had yet to ask, she would ask them herself and if they said no? Fuck it, she would go out on her own. She didn’t need anyone.

 As she made her way down the block she questioned her thinking. She had always been very independent but going after vampires solo didn’t seem like the smartest of ideas. She could do it, but help would be nice.

 It didn’t take her long to make it to the Stratton. It was only once she got there that she realized that she had no idea what apartment he lived in. They hadn’t really been close for that long, really only since the massacre. How was she to demand something from him when she had no way to find him?

 Determined she pulled her phone out once again and sent him what must have been the 100th text demanding to know where he was. Putting her phone away she took a seat on a small ledge that separated the sidewalk from a nice patch of glass. She laid back, looking into the now dark night sky. The stars up above shining down like little beacons of hope. Each one the promise of what tomorrow could bring.

 BUZZ

 She reached into her pocket and pulled out her phone. Jon had finally text her back. #3855 B, be there in 10. She sat up. Finally, she would have answers. She found her heart racing and mind going wild with questions and possible outcomes. No matter what Jon said, she was one step closer to finding Gambit. *Not that it matters one way or the other.* She thought to herself, knowing full well that it did matter.

 She waited at the top of the stairs, his apartment down below, for any sign of Jon. After what felt like an eternity, it could very well have been the ten minutes, she finally saw Jon, Will and Jax walking down the steep street that was the center of the apartments. Jax turned off, heading to what she could only guess was his apartment as Will and Jon headed towards her. As they got closer, she could see just how tired and worn out they both looked. Will shot Jon an annoyed look before flashing her his trademark grin and heading down the stairs towards his own apartment. It seems Will and Jon lived next door to each other.

 “You look rough.” Christina said as Jon sat next to her.

 “Gee thanks.” Jon said, half smiling.

 “What happened?”

 “Rough day. We spent most of it training. Not my favorite activity.” Jon said, running his hand through his messy hair.

 “You guys plan on training like this every day?” She asked, concerned. She didn’t like seeing Jon like this.

 “If Lex has his way. I never thought I’d be so jealous of Jax, but here I am.” He said, laughing at his own joke.

 “Why? Didn’t he train today too?” She asked, wanting to know what she was in store for once she was on the team.

 “A bit, but Lex had work for him. Mr. I’m good at Computers, was too busy to train with the grunts. Fuck man, this is too much.” Jon said, slumping over, as if his body was too heavy for him to hold up. “I don’t know how long I can keep this up, and we just started.” He said, his voice full of defeat.

 “You’ll get used to it. I have faith in you.” Christina said, rubbing his arm as she spoke. Jon smiled up at her.

 “Thanks.” He said. “I’m sorry I haven’t returned any of your messages, just you know, crazy day.” He said.

 “It’s fine. I understand. I was just excited to find out what the others said.” She said, trying hard to keep from sounding too excited but knowing she failed.

 “Said?” He said weakly. She knew that he knew full well what she was talking about, his tone gave her all the answer she needed.

 “You didn’t even ask, did you?” She said, disappointed.

 “I tried, I did, I’m sorry. This morning, I kept trying to bring it up but…Lex….this morning was crazy.” Jon said. She could tell he was struggling with how much to tell her.

 “What happened?” She asked, hoping he would open up.

 “A warehouse was broken into. Lex thought we should investigate. We ended up watching the cops investigate from the damn rafters. Lex even went down there to find out what was going on. I thought for sure we were going to get caught. And as soon as we were done there, Lex starting training me and Will while Jax looked for a translator. There was just so much going on. I’ll ask them, I promise. I just…like I said crazy day.” Jon said.

 “Translator for what? Who broke into the warehouse? What was stolen?” Christina asked, her mind racing with more and more questions. Jon looked uneasy, as if he had said a bit too much already.

 “Um.” He said, not knowing how to answer.

 “Tell me Jon, we’re friends, aren’t we?” She asked, knowing that would encourage him to talk.

 “Of course!” He said.

 “So, tell me, you can trust me.” She said, smiling reassuringly. It worked, he told her everything he knew. About the manuscript and how the only person who could translate it was out of the country. He told her about how Jax had been unable to find anyone who could help them.

 “Lex seemed pretty upset. Kind of like the air had been let out of him. I don’t know what our next step is, but we have training at 6 am, so I should head in.” Jon said, getting to his feet. “I like that I can talk to you about all this. It’s…it’s kind of a lot, you know?” He asked. She gave him a hug and told him that he could talk to her anytime.

 As he headed inside she rushed home, she had an idea to get asked onto the team, she just hoped she could pull it off.

**Chapter Thirteen:**

**Chris**

 Chris had never felt so sore in his entire life. It was as if every inch of his body was on fire, but it was worth it. He had learned so much in one day. He could literally create fire out of thin air. Something he never thought was possible.

 “Can we go yet?” Trinidad said, sounding just as exhausted.

 “Just a bit more practice. I feel like I’m just starting to get the hang of all this.” Chris said, fully intending to stay out there all night if he had to.

 “Starting to? It took me my whole life to get the level control you have, not to mention nonverbal magic, it’s insane! How much more do you need to learn tonight?” Trinidad demanded.

 “How much more is there?” Chris asked, completely seriously.

 “Chris, I said I’ll help you, and I have, and I’ll keep on helping you, but I’m supposed to be in by time the street lights come on. My mom is going to kill me. I have to go!” Trinidad said, it was a fair point. One Chris might have thought of himself if he wasn’t so busy trying to avoid being home.

 He couldn’t help but wonder if his parents were still fighting with each other, or which one came out on top if they had stopped. He had intentionally left his phone at home before coming out to avoid the chance of being called home. He just didn’t want to deal with it anymore, it was all just too much.

 “Chris!” Trinidad snapped. “Are you even listening to me?” He asked. Chris nodded.

 “Yeah, sorry, we should go.” Chris said back, feeling guilty for potentially getting his friend in trouble when all he was trying to do was help him.

 “Thank you!” Trinidad said, turning towards home, his mood lightening up considerably. “You know, you did manage to learn a lot. A hell of a lot more than I thought I could ever teach you.” Trinidad said, smiling for the first time since Chris forced him out of his apartment that morning.

 “Thanks, but this is just the start. If I’m going to be going out there and doing battle with who knows what, I’m going to have to learn a shit ton more.” Chris said, his mind racing with thoughts of himself as a badass hunter like Van Helsing or Blade, or even the slayer herself, Buffy Summers.

 The walk home was a blur of conversation between the two friends as Trinidad told Chris all about different powers and spells that his mother had shown him over the years. There was so much to learn, Chris just hoped he could pick up the rest of it with the ease that he picked up fire creation.

 It wasn’t until he parted ways with Trinidad that time seemed to slow down. Each step taking a life time. Part of him contemplated turning around and heading back to the woods to train some more. Or seeing if he could spend the night at Trinidad’s. Hell, he’d spend another night in Kimberly’s closet during a massacre if it kept him from walking into his apartment and facing his parents, but he knew it was hopeless. He just had to bite the bullet and do it.

 With a deep breath and a heavy heart, he made his way to his front door, he could hear the faint sounds of heated conversation seeping through the door before he even thought about opening it. With a heavy heart he turned the knob and pushed his door open.

 “There you are!” His mother yelled at him the second he walked in. His father shook his head and headed into the kitchen. Something happened while Chris was gone, it was clear as day, the only thing unclear, was what it was.

 “Sorry, I lost track of time.” Chris said, weakly.

 “And your phone.” His dad said motioning at Chris’s phone on the table, as he came back into the room, a beer in hand. He took a sip, he seemed far more stressed out than when Chris had left.

 “Uh yeah, I didn’t even realize that till I saw how dark it had gotten and tried to call you.” Chris said, hoping his parents let it go.

 “How could you be so irresponsible? You know what is going on, your whole future could be on the line and you decide to go off the radar, is this a joke to you Christopher Martin Johnson? Is it? Because it is not funny!” His mother screamed, letting Chris know who won the fight. Nothing good ever came from his mother using his full name. That only meant shit was about to hit the fan.

 “I just wanted a break from all of this. Do you know how hard it is on me? It’s not like anything happened while I was gone!” Chris shot back, he figured he was already dead, he mind-as-well go down swinging. Maybe he could garner some sympathy and avoid the hellish night he was in for.

 “It’s about to get a lot harder. The Detective called.” His father said, as he took another sip of his beer. His face awash in despair. Chris felt his heart sink, what could the Detective want with him? Were they bringing him back to jail, did they decide he was guilty?

 “Wh…what did he want?” Chris asked, his voice shaking. All the joy and excitement that he felt while mastering fire spells with Trinidad were driven from his mind. Things just got real for him.

 “He needs you to come in and answer some questions.” His mother said, she was franticly looking for her purse. “Where the hell did I put it?” She screamed to herself.

 “Questions? I answered millions of their stupid questions already! What else could they ask me?” Chris asked, his heart pounding in his chest.

 “I don’t know! Don’t you think I’d tell you if I knew! Just…just get ready we have to go!” His mother cried out. Chris’s father walked up and pulled her into a hug. “Stop! Just find my purse.” She said as she tried to pull away.

 “Shhh.” He told her. “It’s going to be okay. Chris is going to be fine.” He locked eyes with her. “I’ll take Chris to the station, you just get Rosenbud to meet us there and you just get some rest. It’s going to be okay.”

 “Rosenberg.” Chris’s mother said, smiling weakly. “And just help me find my purse and I’ll come with. I need to be there.”

 “Okay, so let’s find your purse.” His father said, showing a level of compassion that Chris had rarely seen from him. It just served to illustrate to Chris just how much trouble he was really in.

 “Rosenberg is going to be there right?” Chris asked, his voice shaking. His father nodded as he hugged his wife tighter.

**Chapter Fourteen:**

**Lex**

 The hum of the computers was still something that Lex was trying to get used to. His fort was an old sewer entrance that was long ago sealed off. All that was left was the lone shaft leading down to a small room with all the tunnels closed off. The sewer head was long since missing, being replaced with the roof of an old yellow Volkswagen beetle. Lex had stumbled across the place when he was a kid and started using it to hide away stuff from his mom. As he got older he hid knifes and BB guns in here. Yesterday while training with Will and Jon, he had Jax setting this place up with computers and radios.

 The added tech made the already tight quarters even tighter, where as it could once fit three people comfortably, now having two down here would be pushing it. But they didn’t need multiple people down here, this was going to be Lex’s command center, from which he would figure out where they were needed and plan their missions. It was perfect.

 Lex had set the guys home hours ago, he could tell they were beat. Neither one of them had ever worked out that hard in their lives. While they had gone home to rest, he had come here, to his bunker, his command center and got to work. He poured over all of the research that Jax had pulled up for him, Lex wasn’t good with computers. He had all the reports of not only the warehouse but the massacre at Kimberly’s house as well as the bombing of Mesa College. It was a lot to go over, and the police didn’t seem to think there was a connection between the warehouse and the other two incidents. The massacre was marked as an open investigation, with the only people of interest being Chris Johnson and Raul Gonzalez, who was still missing.

 Lex felt a ping of guilt upon seeing Raul’s name on there. They had gone out looking for him the night before but got side tracked with their battle with Ares. Then he found out about the killing at the warehouse and dived headfirst into that, all thoughts of Raul driven from his mind. Some friend he turned out to be.

 “Okay Lex, we add that to our to-do list. We need to find a translator, find out if Ares survived and find Raul. If he’s even still alive.” Lex said to himself, trying to voice his thoughts so they wouldn’t run away with him. Saying it out loud gave him power over them, let him control them. Or at least that is what he told himself.

 “You need to get a whiteboard down here or something. You know so you could write out your to-do list instead of just telling them to yourself like some weirdo.” Jon’s voice said from the top of the ladder. Lex looked up to see his friend climbing down, it was time to see just how cramped this place could get.

 “What are you doing here Jon?” Lex asked, scooting over so as to allow his friend some space to get down.

 “You weren’t at home or your treehouse, so I took a gamble, seems to have paid off.” Jon said as he got off the ladder.

 “It would seem so.” Lex said, a bit annoyed that he was being interrupted during his first night at his new command center.

 “When did you do all this?” Jon asked, looking with amazement at the row of monitors lining the wall.

 “Jax did it, while we were training.” Lex told his friend. Jon nodded as he looked at the information on the screens.

 “Any point in me asking how you have power down here?” Jon asked, a question that Lex never even thought to ask.

 “I was more curious with how he got wifi down here.” Lex answered honestly.

 “I mean, my phone is a portable hotspot, I figured that would be a walk in the park, but we in the middle of nowhere, electricity don’t grow on trees.” Jon said, avoiding whatever reason he came here for.

 “Middle of nowhere? There’s an apartment complex like two minutes from here. Frog pond is just on the other side of the fence and there are houses all around it. This is far from the middle of nowhere.” Lex pointed out. Jon shrugged.

 “I guess.” Jon said, avoiding eye contact with Lex.

 “Why are you here?” Lex asked, tired of the games. Jon wanted something and was wasting time.

 “Why didn’t you tell me and Will about this place? Is this how it’s going to be? You and Jax knowing everything while me and Will just do as we’re told?” Jon demanded, he seemed really upset by all this. Lex never really stopped to think how they would handle this, in truth it wasn’t anything personal, this was something Lex wanted and Jax was the only one who could make it a reality.

 “I was planning on telling you guys, tomorrow. I wanted to get the hang of it first.” Lex said, looking around at his command center. “It’s a lot more complicated than it looks.”

 “That’s saying a lot, cause it looks fucking complicated.” Jon said, taking it all in.

 “Is that why you came here? Because you feel like me and Jax are keeping secrets?” Lex asked, trying to keep his voice even. Getting annoyed wasn’t going to do either one of them any good.

 “I *feel* like you are keeping secrets? What the fuck does that mean? You *are* keeping secrets. First attacking the warehouse, now this. Are we a team, or is this all about your ego?” Jon asked, trying to sound angry, but lacking any real conviction. Something else was going on here, Lex just couldn’t figure out what.

 “Ego? Look, ever since the night of the massacre, this is all I’ve thought about. I didn’t tell you guys about the warehouse because I didn’t want you to get hurt. This… this was something…”Lex felt himself losing steam as he spoke. “Maybe it is ego. You’re right, we are supposed to be a team and I’m acting like it’s all about me. That’s not a team. I’m sorry.” Lex held out his hand, after all, Jon had a point. Lex hadn’t been treating his friends like partners, he had been treating them like sidekicks. People he could use in *his* war. But they were all there that night. No one went through more that first night than Jon. Besides, this wasn’t the battle Jon was here for, not really and the sooner Lex got this argument out of the way the quicker they could get to the real point and Lex could get back to his work.

 “That’s all I ask.” Jon said, taking Lex’s hand. Lex had to keep himself from smiling at the uneasy look on Jon’s face, he could tell that he was expecting this to escalate a lot more.

 “Good, now are you going to tell me why you are really here, or can I get back to work?” Lex asked, cutting to the chase. Jon’s face was priceless, the shock was clear. “Oh, I’m sorry, were you not ready to get the point?”

 “I’m that obvious?” Jon asked.

 “Understatement.” Lex replied.

 “Fine, look,” Jon took a deep breath, steadying himself. “The point stands, we are supposed to be a team and you haven’t been acting like we are. You’ve been calling all the shots, keeping us in the dark.”

 “I owned up to that already!” Lex cut him off.

 “You did, but I uh, I kind of had an argument planned out that built off of that one, you owning up to it so soon, kind of threw me off.” Jon admitted. Lex couldn’t help but shake his head.

 “You practiced our argument?” Lex asked, not sure how to take that. “Who does that?”

 “Well yeah, I figured I could win that one.” Jon said.

 “Which you did.” Lex pointed out.

 “Yeah, and that would lead into our next one, which might be a bit harder, but you feeling all shitty would help out, but you just owned up to it and apologized and I just somehow don’t feel like I have the upper hand anymore. This is really not how it went in my head.” Jon said, in the most Jon like way.

 “Jon, you know I love you, but you are a weird, weird guy. I worry about you.” Lex told him.

 “I worry about me too. I tend to be worrisome.” Jon said, avoiding eye contact with Lex.

 “That you are.” Lex said. “So, I take it, you wanted to point out that me and Jax seem to be running everything and not giving the two of you a say in anything, in order to guilt me into letting you decide something. So, what is it? What is so important that you thought you’d have to come here and emotionally manipulate your best friend in order to get it?” Lex asked, laying on a little guilt himself, just to get a little pay back on Jon. He was an easy target.

 “Well, this really didn’t go the way I planned.” Jon said, a little nervous laughter added in.

 “Maybe don’t plan arguments with your friends? Not the healthiest thing.” Lex said.

 “Fair enough, so Band-Aid time. Christina…yeah she wants on the team.” Jon said, looking down as if he was about to get hit.

 “She does?” Lex asked. “Why?” Jon looked up at him, slowly, as if expecting a trap.

 “I guess the same reason me and you want to do this. She hasn’t stopped thinking about that night. She can’t just go back to pretending all this doesn’t exist. She wants to do something to help people, to prevent something like Kimberly’s from happening again.” Jon said. Putting into words what Lex had been feeling since that night. What Jon must have been feeling as well. He knew that Jax and Will didn’t feel the same way, they both just wanted to bury their heads into the sand and pretend it didn’t exist, but Jon, and apparently Christina, felt the same way that Lex did, that they had a responsibility to do something about what they learned.

 “You tell her about the training?” Lex asked. Jon nodded. “She’s okay with it? Not going to bitch and moan like you and Will?” Lex asked, with a smile.

 “Nah, she tough. Besides, if she is there I won’t be bitch and moan either. At least not in front of her.” Jon said with a laugh.

 “Look, I’m not going to keep someone out of this who wants to help. You just…just make sure she knows this could be dangerous. That this isn’t a game, it’s life or death.” Lex told Jon, trying to convey to his friend just how scary all of this could get.

 “She knows.” Jon replied.

 “Than she is in. Tell her to be at training at 6 sharp.” Lex said. Jon grinned ear to ear.

 “I’ll tell her, thanks man!” Jon said, throwing himself into a full-on hug with Lex, something neither one of them was used to.

 “Okay, that’s enough. Get the fuck off me.” Lex said, pushing Jon off of him.

 “Sorry.” Jon said.

 “You must have really wanted this.” Lex said.

 “You have no idea.” Jon said. He turned towards the ladder. “I’ll leave you to your work boss man.” He said as he started up the ladder. Lex turned back to the monitors before looking up at his friend.

 “Jon!” He called up to him. Jon stopped and looked down at him.

 “What’s up?” He called back down.

 “She can’t find out about our involvement with the bombing. That’s for her protection as much as ours.” Lex said, and it was the truth. Jon nodded and continued towards the top. He didn’t know Christina that well, adding her to the team was an unknown variable that could prove disastrous, but that was a problem for tomorrow, Lex still had a lot of work to get done tonight.

**Chapter Fifteen:**

**Christina**

 The moon was high overhead as Christina made her way to the University. This seemed like such a great idea as she left Jon’s apartment not long before. Find any notes Dr. Geller had on the manuscript and bring it to the guys during their training the next day. They would have no choice but to admit they needed her. That she could come through for them in a clutch. But as she closed in on the school she started to doubt herself. If she got caught she would be in a world of trouble. Even more so with the bombing at Mesa College. The security here would be crazy, she just knew it.

 As she made it to campus she was surprised to find just how empty it was. There were no students. She was sure that coming while it was so dark would mean that most of the students would have left for the day, but she never dreamed she would have the campus to herself. It made her uneasy, part of her plan was to blend in and look like just another student, but if there were no other students than that wouldn’t work. Not getting caught just got a lot harder.

 She made her way through the campus, looking for the building that Dr. Geller was housed in, all the while being careful not to be seen. She pulled out a small note pad that she had written his office number on. Room 105 in the history building. It was only then that she noticed she didn’t write down what building that was. She silently cursed herself as she franticly started looking for a college directory. She knew they had to have one around here somewhere.

 Near the middle of the school she found the directory, right in front of a cautioned off building. There was police tape all around it and one of the main windows was broken outward, as if something or someone inside had been thrown out of it.

 Christina looked around and saw no one. Her heart started pounding harder and harder as she closed in on the directory. It would seem that Mesa wasn’t the only college in town that had an attack. She needed to finish this task quickly, getting caught was getting riskier and riskier.

 It didn’t take her long to find the right building on the directory, it was only a few buildings down. She let out a sigh of relief. She was about to start towards her destination when she heard people talking. Her heart nearly stopped. She ran and dived behind a nearby bush in front of the entrance.

 “What the hell is going on Mike? It’s like one thing after another in this fucking city!” an angry voice said. Christina slowly peeked out over the bush to find two Police Officers walking past.

 “Tell me about it. First that party with all those fucking kids, just being slaughtered, then the bombing and now this terrorist attack. I mean who attacks a school?” The second guard, named Mike said.

 Terrorist attack? Christina didn’t hear about any attack at SDSU. It must have just happened, on the very day she decided to come and break in no less. This was not good. Her heart was pounding so loud she was almost positive the officers could hear her. She ducked down again, praying they didn’t see her.

 “Did you see the caf? The place was littered with bodies. What kind of monster could do something like this?” The officer said, his voice cracking as he spoke. Christina couldn’t believe what she was hearing, there was another massacre, so soon after the one at Kimberly’s house.

 “The survivors were out of their minds. Talking about one of the terrorist turning to dust.” Mike said.

 “They must have snapped, could you blame them?” The first guard asked, he sounded broken as he spoke. Almost as if just thinking about what those people went through was too much for him.

 The conversation kept going but she could no longer hear them, they had moved too far away. Christina slowly got out from behind the bush, her mind racing at a million miles a second. One of the people who attacked the school turned to dust. The cops wrote it off as a survivor of a horrible ordeal snapping, but Christina knew the truth. The school was attacked by vampires, just like Kimberly’s party. Two massive vampire attacks within the same week. Something was happening, and she had to let the guys know.

 But first, first she had to check the office. She had come here for a reason after all. She hurried towards the history building. Going as fast as she could without running. She didn’t want to stay on this campus any longer than necessary.

 She slowly made her way inside the building, thankful for the lights being shut off. She was about to pull out her phone when the lights in the hallway cut on. Momentarily blinding her. She cursed herself under her breath, the lights must be set up to a motion sensor.

 This just got harder and she knew it. She started down the hall as quickly as she could, looking for room 105. She wanted this over with as quickly as possible.

 111,109,107.

 She spotted the numbers moving downward, her heart lifting a bit. She was almost there. She turned a corner and found the office, room 105. The door wide open with caution tape blocking the entrance. Her heart sank. The vampires had already been here. This office must have been why they attacked the school. She was too late.

 “I’m telling you! Someone is in here. These lights just don’t turn on by themselves!” Mike said out loud. Panic filled Christina with dread, the two officers must have seen the lights cut on. They were here and she was trapped!

Chapter Sixteen:

Detective Jared Singer

 Detective Singer took a deep steadying breath as he prepared to enter the interrogation room where Special Agent Ostrander was questioning Chris Johnson. It took all the self-control he had not to burst through the door and bite the Fed’s head off.

 Jared was half way home when he got a call that the kid showed up as requested. He never called him in, that could only mean Ostrander did. On top of that he waited until Jared left for the day to do so. It was bad enough that he took over the investigation, but now he was interviewing his witnesses without him there. Something that was bad enough if it was any old witness, but this was some kid who had witnessed countless deaths and was then brought back and questioned by cop after cop, all forgetting the law. You can’t question a minor without a guardian present. Jared wanted to protect this kid, something the Fed could care less about.

 Once Jared was sure he could enter the room without losing his cool he pushed the door open. Sure enough Special Agent Ostrander was sitting on one side of the table, a smug look on his face as Chris Johnson and a person who could only be his attorney sat on the other side. His parents were standing behind him, looking extremely stressed out. Jared was relieved that they at least had the sense to hire an attorney, it was always the smartest move when dealing with people like this Special Agent Ostrander.

 “Detective? May I help you with something?” Ostrander asked, his voice smug. “In case you haven’t noticed, I’m in the middle of an interrogation.”

 “I noticed. Why wasn’t I informed? This is my case.” Jared snapped at Ostrander. He wasn’t going to let this overpaid suit push him around.

 “Was.” Ostrander said. A sadist grin on his face.

 “Excuse me?” Jared demanded.

 “I said was. As in this was your case. In case you forgot, I took this case over this morning.” Ostrander said. His tone hard and firm, despite the smile glued to his face. He was playing with Jared, putting him in his place in front of the Johnsons.

 “I’m not leaving the case. This is my city and I’ll be damned if some out of towner, who knows nothing about it, comes in and takes over.” Jared said, locking eyes with Ostrander. He was playing a dangerous game. He had no authority to keep himself on this case, but he wasn’t going to go down without a fight.

 “Than have a seat. Young Chris here… or well, his attorney, was just telling us how Chris was out playing while the massacre at SDSU was going on. Awfully convenient, you being alone outside while yet another attack on Mr. Singer here’s city occurred.” Ostrander said, using Jared as a prop. This was not the reason that Jared came here, to be used to set up the poor kid.

 “There are witnesses, Special Agent Ostrander, none of which mentioned a preteen being there, let alone doing the killing. Or did I miss something?” Jared asked, cutting the attorney off before he could interject. Ostrander didn’t miss a beat.

 “You missed a lot. That’s why they called me in.” Ostrander said. Acting as if he was holding all the cards.

 “We have had about enough of this. My client has been extremely cooperative, answering all of your questions, even after this department violated his civil rights, by questioning him, alone, without a guardian present. Now, you either charge my client, or we are leaving.” The attorney demanded. Trying his best to seem intimidating but failing.

 “In that case, I’m placing Mr. Johnson here under arrest.” Ostrander said, getting to his feet.

 “On what grounds?” The attorney demanded. Chris’s mother let out a wail as her husband pulled her in for a hug.

 “I’d like to know that as well.” Jared said, following Ostrander’s lead, by getting to his feet.

 “Simple, we all know that this *child* didn’t do all of this, the massacre at the pool party, the bombing of Mesa College, the murder of the security guard at the warehouse down by the bay, or the massacre at SDSU today, that was all a cover to break into Dr. Geller’s office. But just as we all know this to be true, we also know, that he knows who did. He’s covering for someone. And as far as I’m concerned, that makes him an accessory.” Ostrander said, turning to face the family. “And I’m going to pull every string I have to make sure he is tried as an adult. Unless… unless he gives me names. He has 24 hours. Not a second more.”

 No one in the room said a thing as Ostrander strolled out of the room. Not a care in the world. Jared watched him go, standing there in stunned silence. He could hear the family talking but he didn’t pay attention to anything they were saying. He was too in shock. He entered into law enforcement to prevent abuses of the system like this one. Like the one that was done to his brother. A 19-year-old kid, who was picked up at the wrong place at the wrong time and locked in a room and questioned until he confessed to something he didn’t do.

 It didn’t matter that he swore up and down that he didn’t do it during his trial, or that he had a sound proof alibi. The jury didn’t care. What made matters worse, he was 2 years into his sentence when the real culprit confessed as part of a plea deal. The DA on his brother’s case didn’t care. He had a victory that he wasn’t about to give up just because some guy was wasting away behind bars for something he didn’t do. Jared’s brother never made it to the end of his five-year sentence. He was killed in prison. All because someone else had robbed a liquor store and he was in the wrong place.

 Jared swore he would never allow another family to go through what his brother went through. It wasn’t easy, and certainly didn’t make him well liked among his fellow officers, but he didn’t care. Right was right, and he knew deep in his heart that this kid was innocent. He wasn’t going to let him get railroaded, not if he could help it.

 Without saying a word to the family, he followed Ostrander out of the room. He was going to get to the bottom of this. No matter what.

Chapter Seventeen:

Jax

 Jax could feel sweat pouring down his face as he tried to keep from passing out. The sun was just coming up, but they had already been training for what felt like decades. Jax knew that in reality it was likely only an hour, if that. For the life of him, Jax couldn’t figure out how Jon and Will survived this the day before. True they were in better shape than he was, but not by much. They were just as lazy as he was, if not more so.

 Sure enough, Jax looked over and saw Jon fall while doing yet another push up. Lex was in front of them having the time of his life doing the same damn work out as them. It made no sense to Jax. Human beings were not made to do this much physical activity. It wasn’t natural.

 “That’s a good warm up guys! It’s about time to get started.” Lex said, jumping to his feet. He was in his element. Jon let out a moan as he slowly got to his feet. Will got up, looking mildly annoyed.

 “Warm up? That was just the warm up?” Jax asked, trying to get to his feet but failing. Jon gave him a sad smile while holding out his hand to help Jax up.

 “Trust me, this is nothing. I half suspect Lex is trying to kill us.” Jon said, only half joking. Jax took his hand and got to his feet.

 “I’m trying to save you guys. What we are going up against, we need to be ready. They won’t go easy on us. I promise you.” Lex said. Sounding as if he believed every word. Part of Jax knew he was right, but this was all getting to be too much for him. He wanted out, he just didn’t know how.

 “Is that…” Will started to say, pointing off behind Jax. Before he could finish his sentence, Jon’s face lit up and he finished the thought for him.

 “Christina!” Jon shouted! Lex turned to look, he didn’t seem thrilled, nor did he seem confused.

 “If you expect to be a part of this team, you show up on time. Is that understood?” Lex said, using his best command voice.

 “A part of this team?” Jax asked, he must have heard that wrong. There was no way Lex was letting Jon bring his crush onto the team. Not right after they blew up the school. If she found out, his whole life could be over. There was no reason for her to keep this secret. He could feel himself start to panic.

 “Jax.” Will said, shaking his head no, in a silent attempt to tell him not to say anything. That was easy for him to ask, he wasn’t being hunted for by the FBI. A massacre, with dozens of kids slaughtered, a college blown up and a hostage situation at a University all in the same week, the Government was going to send everyone they had to figure all this out. Hell, the National Guard was probably already on the way. Jax felt his breath catch in his chest. He started to feel light headed as he thought about everything.

 “It’s her first day Lex, lay off.” Jon said, coming to Christina’s rescue. From the looks of her, it was a badly needed rescue. She looked worse than Jax felt. Her hear was a mess, her clothes were wrinkled, her face had what Jax hoped was dirt on it. As Jax started to take in her state of being, he found himself starting to relax a bit. He just had to focus on something other than himself.

 “That’s not how this works Jon. And you know it.” Lex said, turning to face Jon.

 “I’m sorry, you’re right. It won’t happen again, I just…” She started to say as Lex turned back to her, the expression on his face telegraphing the lecture he was about to jump into when Christina hurried and cut him off. “Not that it’s an excuse, but I fell asleep behind a dumpster at SDSU, and well, over slept a bit. It will never happen again.”

 “Behind a dumpster?” Jon asked, the shock coming through in his voice.

 “At SDSU?” Lex asked. “What were you doing there?”

 “There was just a terrorist attack there! It must have been crawling with police!” Will said, dumbfounded.

 “A bit of information that I wish I had known before going, but hey I found out pretty quick when I got there.” She said with a forced laugh. Jax couldn’t figure out how she could laugh about something like that. He had been on the edge of a nervous breakdown thinking about the police catching him, yet here she was laughing off almost getting caught. She was as bad as Lex.

 “Oh god, are you okay?” Jon asked. Jax couldn’t help but roll his eyes. She was going to mess up the group dynamic, he could feel it already.

 “I’m fine.” She said.

 “Good! What were you doing there?” Jon asked, concerned.

 “That’s a question, a better one is, why did you sleep behind a dumpster?” Will asked, grossed out by the whole thing.

 “I was hiding from the cops.” Christina answered. Jax felt his heart start to speed up. The last thing they needed was police attention.

 “You went to Dr. Geller’s office, didn’t you?” Lex asked, nodding. “I had planned on doing the same thing, well, until the terrorist attack. Going to jail doesn’t help anyone.”

 “Which is why I hid, but I learned something interesting.” She said with a coy smile. Jax couldn’t help but feel annoyed. Her joining the team was going to make this all the more annoying for him. Yet another person who wanted to be here. Who pushed them to take unnecessary risks. “The terrorists were vampires. I overheard one of the cops talking about survivors reporting that one of them burst into flames. Then when I got to Dr. Geller’s office, it was ransacked.” She told them, proud of herself.

 “They beat us there.” Lex said, almost as if he was disappointed in himself.

 “Thank you, Christina, that helps us a lot.” Jon said, Jax couldn’t help but scoff. Everyone turned to look at him, he was going to have to say something.

 “How does that help us? We figured out that Dr. Geller was the person the manuscript was heading to and we only just found out about the damn thing. They knew what it was to begin with, besides, Dr. Geller never saw the damn thing. What makes anyone think that anything in that office could help us?” Jax asked. Feeling like an asshole even as he said it.

 “They thought there might be. Besides, why was it headed to this Dr. Geller guy?” Christina asked. Showing the others that she wasn’t going to let anyone push her around.

 “Because he is a famous translator?” Will asked, guessing at an answer.

 “But I’m sure there are hundreds of translators who work on lost languages. There has to be something about this guy that made them think he was the best one to work on it.” Jon said, thinking it through.

 “Which would mean he most likely translated something similar already!” Lex said, catching on. Jax let out a sigh, Christina really did help them out, and he treated her like shit for it.

 “If we can get our hands on it, we can use it to translate the manuscript!” Jax said.

 “Well I guess you getting out of training again.” Lex said with a smile.

 “I’m on it. You guys have fun.” Jax said as he started to make his way to the command center he set up for Lex. Silently thankful for the excuse to get out of the training. He was already going to be sore for a few days.

 “So, am I in?” He heard Christina ask from behind him.

 “Welcome to the team, hope you survive the experience.” Lex said with a slight chuckle.

 “Oh shit son! Did Lex just reference X-Men?” Jon said with a laugh.

 “God, I need better friends.” Will said with a sigh. Jax couldn’t help but laugh.

Chapter Eighteen:

Chris

 Chris was sitting at his kitchen table, a spot he hadn’t moved from since they had left the police station. He was shocked they allowed him to come home since the Federal agent had placed him under arrest. His attorney had explained to Chris and his parents that officially he was still a free man until the 24 hours expired. Once that time had passed he would be officially under arrest, unless he gave them the name or names of the real killers.

 Chris tried to explain to everyone that he had already told the police everything he knew, that didn’t seem to go over well. Rosenberg kept telling him that that wasn’t going to be enough, not for this agent. He had something to prove and was going to use Chris to prove to his superiors that he was making headway in the case. It didn’t matter to him that Chris was just a victim in all this, as much as the party goers who had died.

 For the first time since Chris left the police station that first night he felt like he really might end up in prison. All thoughts of vampires and magic were gone from his mind. The real world had caught up with him, and there was nothing he could do about it. This agent was determined to get a name from Chris, something that Chris couldn’t give him even if he wanted to. He didn’t know the name of the man, not that it would help anyone if he did. The man wasn’t a man, he was a monster. A vampire. No way the Fed would accept that.

 “Chris, sweetie, just tell them what they want to know. Please!” His mother asked him for the billionth time.

 “I told them everything mom! I promise!” Chris said yet again. He was growing tired of repeating himself over and over again. He didn’t know what else to tell them.

 “Mr. Rosenberg, my son doesn’t know what they want. What is going to happen?” His dad asked, attempting to put an end of this endless line of questioning. His mother threw her face into her hands as she started crying again. He let out a sigh and put his hand on his wife’s back before turning to look at the attorney once again. Chris turned to look at Rosenberg again.

 “Well, they have to prove he knows more than he is telling. That he is in fact attempting to protect someone. It’s a hard case, one that I don’t think they can win.” Mr. Rosenberg said, he didn’t sound as sure as he was trying to come across.

 “So why would they go forward with the arrest? If it won’t hold up?” His dad asked, sounding as confused as Chris felt.

 “My best guess, he’s bluffing. Attempting to get Chris to give him a name, even if it’s made up. It means he’s desperate.” Mr. Rosenberg said.

 “Can he do that? Will that get him out of this?” His mother said, sounding hopeful for the first time since they came home from the police station.

 “No! He isn’t going to ruin someone else’s life just to make this fraud’s career.” His dad said. “We will find another way to get out of this!”

 “But what if this is his only hope?” His mother pleaded.

 “We won’t put anyone else through what we are going through. Mr. Rosenberg, we are paying you a lot of money. Please, save my son.”

 “I’ll do my best.” Mr. Rosenberg said nodding. Chris’s heart sank. That didn’t sound promising. Before anyone could respond there was a banging on the door.

 “Open up! It’s the police.” An officer shouted out.

 “They’re early. Why would they come early?” Chris’s mother cried out.

 “It’s okay. Everything is going to be okay.” His father said, not sounding sure. Chris didn’t know what to do but nod his head. His whole world was coming screaming to an end.

Chapter Nineteen:

Jon

 The training seemed to have lasted forever. By time they were done for the day, Jon felt like he was going to die. He looked over at Christina, who looked just as tired and worn out as he felt, but also happy. An emotion Jon would never have associated with training.

 “That was intense.” She said with a laugh.

 “Intense? You outta your mind.” Will said, as he got to his feet. Letting out a groan as he did. They were all feeling it. Well, the three of them did. Lex was standing a few feet away from them, all smiles. He always seemed to be in a great mood after a workout.

 “I don’t know. Don’t you enjoy getting the blood flowing?” She said with a sly smile. Will couldn’t help but offer up a small grin in return. He/ turned to look over at Lex.

 “So, we done for the day? Can I go home and die now?” Will asked Lex. Jon got to his feet, trying not to act like he was in too much pain. He didn’t want to look weak in front of Christina.

 “Yeah, at least until Jax gets back to me. But, be ready. As soon as he finds out what they are after we need to move out. We can’t let them get ahead of us.” Lex said, all business.

 “Good! Hopefully he takes his sweet ass time, cause I’m going to go pass out.” Jon said. No sooner were the words out of his mouth than Jax came into the clearing. “Fuck my life.”

 “Jax! You’re back already, what do you have for us?” Lex said, excitement in his voice.

 “I did. This Dr. Geller guy, he found some document, as far as I can tell, from around the same time period as the manuscript the vamps just stole. It took him years, but he managed to not only translate it, but create a…a Rosetta Stone type deal with it. The experts in the field think it can be used to translate any of these ancient languages.” Jax told them.

 “So that’s what they stole from his office?” Christina asked.

 “I think that’s what they were after, yeah, but they didn’t get it. He loaned this Rosetta Stone deal, to the National History Museum downtown.” Jax said, giving them their first sense of hope.

 “But what about the document he translated to create that Rosetta Stone?” Jon asked, figuring out the gap Jax left for them to figure out.

 “That’s what took me so long. I haven’t been able to find out what happened to it. As far as I can tell, he still has it.” Jax said.

 “Do you think they have it? Are we too late?” Will asked.

 “I don’t. About a week after he loaned the Rosetta Stone document to the museum, he planned a school trip to Egypt. It seems he was extremely insistent on it. His personnel file said he used his own salary to pay for the trip. His salary for the next five years. He’s banking on finding something. My guess, it’s whatever is on that document.” Jax told them.

 “Which means he has it with him. Might even have a copy of this Rosetta Stone with him. The vampires didn’t find anything in his office. They are going to move on the museum, we have to beat them there.” Lex told his friends.

 “Now?” Jon asked. Lex glared at him.

 “We can’t wait till tonight when they are going to make a move, now can we?” Lex asked, as if it was obvious.

 “Fair, but uh, how are we going to steal this Rosetta Stone from a museum full of people?” Jon asked, pointing out what Lex seemed to be overlooking.

 “True, because it’ll be so much easier to steal it after closing, you know, because of all our jewel robbing skills. Oh wait!” Jax said.

 “You both make good points. Anyone else want to throw sarcasm around instead of being helpful?” Lex demanded, not at all happy that both Jon and Jax poked holes in his grand plan of just go and take it.

 “Let’s just go scope the place out. We don’t even know where they are keeping this thing. We have no real info to make a plan. Once we figure that out, then these two can use sarcasm to ruin all our hopes and dreams.” Christina said with a laugh.

 “It is what we do.” Jon said, with a slight smile.

 “Fine. But this isn’t a game. We don’t know what is on those papers, it could be…no it is important. These vampires are making big moves to get ahold of them. It has to be for a reason.” Lex said, not at all amused by them.

 “We know Lex. I’m sorry if you think we aren’t taking this seriously. It’s just…well, it’s intense. We are just trying to blow off steam.” Jon said, trying to get Lex off their back.

 “I’m well aware Jon, but we have to be on guard.” Lex said. “Now let’s go.”

 “One issue.” Will said, jumping into the conversation.

 “And that would be?” Lex snapped.

 “We can’t go like this.” He said simply. Jon looked around at his friends, not understanding what Will was talking about.

 “And why not?” Lex demanded, clearly on the same page as Jon.

 “Have you looked at us? We look like we just got done working out.” Will said.

 “We did.” Jon pointed out.

 “What Will is trying to say, without hurting your delicate feelings, they won’t let us through the door dressed like this. It’s a museum, we have to be dressed up.” Christina said, jumping in to agree with Will.

 “Not to mention, we all need to shower. We reek.” Will added.

 “Fine! One hour, go home, shower and change and we meet there. All of us. Understood?” Lex asked. They all nodded before turning and heading home. They didn’t talk much as they walked. They were all tired and worn out. None of them excited for the prospect of casing a museum.

Chapter Twenty:

Trinidad

 “What did you and Chris do?” Aria asked, from the doorway. Trinidad looked up from his book.

 “Nothing. Why?” Trinidad asked, trying not to panic. There was no way she could know what they had spent all day yesterday working on.

 “What kind of trouble is he in? You can tell me.” She said, seeming very concerned.

 “He’s fine. I’m sure he didn’t get in too much trouble for us getting home late last night.” Trinidad replied, not sure why his sister was acting so weird.

 “What? No, I’m talking about the police taking him away.” She said, looking at him like he was an idiot. Trinidad sat up straight in his bed. His mind racing a million miles an hour.

 “What are you talking about?” He demanded.

 “They just marched him out of the apartment, he was cuffed. What did you guys do last night?” She asked. Trinidad shook his head. This was not something he was going to get into right now.

 “Nothing. They…they were looking into him for the massacre at that party.” He told her, too in shock to really think anything through.

 “What? They can’t possibly think he had anything to do with that!” She yelled, expressing the same thought that Trinidad was having.

 “He kept telling me that they let him go. That he was just a witness, nothing more. Why would they take him away in cuffs?” He asked himself.

 “A witness? Was he there?” She asked, in shock. Trinidad didn’t know what to say, so he just nodded. He needed to get help, he just didn’t know from where, or from who. Chris had told him that his mother had hired them an attorney so that was good, in theory. But what could an attorney do when the real bad guys were mythical creatures. The only human there that they could blame was Chris. He was going to take the fall for all of this, and there was nothing Trinidad could do.

 He got to his feet, determined to do something. His sister looked at him confused and just a little scared. It was disconcerting, she never got scared.

 “Where are you going?” She asked, her voice cracking up.

 “Out. Don’t tell mom.” He said, pushing past her, not listening as she called after him. He needed to find someone to help, someone who knew what happened at the party. He needed to find Lex and the others.

Chapter Twenty-one:

Lex

 The museum was far too crowded for Lex’s liking. If he was being honest with himself, he wasn’t sure what he was expecting, or even what he really wanted to find when he got there, but this wasn’t it.

 After Jax had informed them that the vampires were after an old document that was housed in this museum Lex had rushed home, showered and made it there within 20 minutes. He then waited impatiently for the others to show up. Jon and Will showed up late, as was to be expected. They were never responsible. At least not to Lex’s standards. He loved his friends, he did, but they weren’t as invested in all of this as he was.

 Once everyone had arrived they made their way inside and split up in an attempt to find the document. It didn’t help that Jax was the only one who really knew what they were looking for. He explained it to the rest of them and sent them all pictures, but it was still a great deal like poking around in the dark.

 Lex had been up and down the whole place, looking for any sign of the document. So far he had had no luck. Everyone had orders to text the others the second they found anything. The fact that his phone hadn’t gone off could only mean the others weren’t having any more luck.

 As he made his third round through the museum people started to give him odd looks. It wasn’t every day that a teenager showed up at history museum and made laps around the place. It had to be very suspicious. Even more so if they noticed the others walking around as well. If they didn’t figure something out soon, it was all going to come crashing down around them.

 “Lex!” Jax called out from behind him. Lex turned around to find the others had all come together. Not at all in accordance with the plan.

 “What’s going on? Did you guys find it?” Lex asked, knowing the answer before he even asked. He only asked it in an attempt to shame them.

 “I think so.” Jax said, surprising Lex.

 “You do?” Lex asked.

 “It’s in the director’s office.” Jax replied.

 “How do you know?” Lex asked, not sure how they could know that.

 “We’ve been around this place time and again. It’s not here.” Jon said. Pointing out what Lex already knew but didn’t want to admit.

 “The only thing that makes sense is that it’s up in his office.” Will said.

 “I mean, it’s not like there is a whole lot of excitement from looking at a paper that no one can read. The use of it comes from using it.” Christina said, she thought about it for a moment before adding. “If that makes sense.”

 “It does. So where is his office?” Lex asked. His mind working overtime on how to come out of this on top. He had spent the whole time here trying to figure out how to rob this place, stealing from an office had to be a lot easier.

Chapter Twenty-Two:

Jax

 Jax stood impatiently behind Lex as he picked the lock on the Museum Director’s office door. Jon and Will were elsewhere in the museum causing a distraction. What it was, Jax didn’t want to know. He just hoped they didn’t get caught. The last thing they needed was the police to get involved. Christina was at the end of the hall, keeping look out. Jax thought it was kind of pointless having her there. It wasn’t like she would have much time to warn them if someone was coming, but Lex figured any amount of time was better than none.

 “Got it.” Lex said as he pushed open the door to the office. Jax made his way inside, it was small and cramped. Clearly the place didn’t pay much.

 “One of these days you’re going to have to teach me that.” Jax said.

 “One day.” Lex said with a chuckle. “Now hurry up, we don’t have much time.” Lex said, moving from his old playful self back to his new found serious self. It was a change that Jax and the others weren’t too fond of. Ever since the pool party Lex just hadn’t been himself.

 “On it.” Jax said, moving towards the desk. It was full of paper, all with scribble notes. This was going to take a while. Jax sat at the desk and started shifting through them. Most of the paperwork seemed to be administration stuff. Nothing that they cared about. The Rosetta Stone didn’t seem to be here.

 Lex was standing at the door way looking out. Jax let out a sigh, this was taking far longer than he had hoped. He knew the longer he took, the more likely the others would get caught.

 “Any luck?” Lex asked.

 “It’s not here.” Jax said frustrated.

 “It has to be! Just keep looking!” Lex snapped at him. Jax rolled his eyes in frustration as he looked around. It clearly wasn’t on the desk, so where else would he put it. There was a filing cabinet against the back wall that stacked all the way up to the celling. That was going to take all day to go through.

 He sat back in his chair, taking a moment to collect himself before getting up. He noticed the drawers on the desk. He knew that the odds were that it wasn’t going to be in any of them, but he also knew he had nothing to lose. He opened the main drawer and sure enough there was nothing in there besides some pens and stables and office supplies. He tried the first one on the left and a large vanilla folder was sitting there with the word *Translations* written on it. He picked it up and opened it. It was filled with many pages of old text with translations scribbled next to it. The last page was the only one typed with a letter attached from Dr. Geller.

 “Oh shit.” Jax said to himself. Lex looked up and rushed over.

 “Did you find it?” Lex asked, his voice full of hope. Jax lifted it up to show him.

 “It’s right here!” Jax said, feeling proud of himself.

 “Good job! Let’s go!” Lex said.

 “Run!” Jon’s voice came from outside of the room. Lex and Jax looked at each other, confused. Jon wasn’t supposed to be here. They rushed out to the hallway only to spot Jon, Will and Christina running towards them.

 “What are you guys doing here?” Lex demanded.

 “Seriously! Distracting them isn’t leading them right to us!” Jax added. The others stopped right in front of them.

 “You’re right. Maybe we should all stand around and discuss how we fucked up.” Jon said, he then pointed behind him. “Think they’ll wait for us?” Jax followed his gesture, at the end of the hall were two giant men with faces that weren’t at all human growling as they ran towards them.

 “Run!” Lex yelled. They all turned and started running down the hallway.

 “It’s broad daylight!” Jax shouted as they ran.

 “That didn’t stop them from attacking the university! These vamps don’t play.” Christina said.

 “I thought sunlight killed them?” Jon asked as they turned the corner, a stairway coming up ahead.

 “Maybe they’re immune?” Jax tossed out.

 “Or, maybe they just don’t care!” Lex said as he pulled open the door to the stairwell. They all took a step back as three more vampires were standing in front of them. Full vamp face on.

 “It’s you!” Jon said next to them, his voice cracking as he said it. Jax turned to look as his friend’s face split in pure terror. The main vampire in front of them smiled.

 “Aw, you remember me? I’m touched. You made great use of that head start we gave you. Too bad that time is up.” The main vampire said, almost as if he was having the time of his life.

 “You know this clown?” Lex asked.

 “You okay?” Will asked Jon.

 “He…he was at the massacre.” Jon answered.

 “He almost killed you.” Christina said, sounding truly frightened.

 “I seem to recall sparing him. Because I liked his spunk. Name’s Fury.” Fury said.

 “Fury? That’s a name? Why?” Jax asked, mocking the lead vampire. He knew it wasn’t a good idea, but the name was just too stupid not to mock.

 “Seems your friends have some spunk too. Ah would you look at that? It would appear my friends have joined the party as well.” Fury said, looking past them. Jax spared a look behind him to spot not just the two vampires that were chasing them but an additional two vampires as well.

 “What do you want?” Lex demanded. Fury looked down at the folder in Jax’s hand.

 “I think you all know.” Fury answered. Jax gripped the folder harder. He didn’t want to just hand it over. The vampires went all out to try and get it, whatever was on it must have been important.

 “Too bad, we got it first.” Lex said as he pulled a wooden stake out from his shirt sleeve, he swung it back and staked the nearest vampire to him. He went up in a blast of dust.

 “Get them!” Fury screamed.

 “Were we supposed to bring Stakes?” Jon demanded. Will just looked at him and shrugged.

 “You guys are useless.” Lex said as he tossed a second stake to Will, who caught it. Before he had a chance to use it, a vampire hit him right in the face, knocking him to the floor. The stake went flying. Another vampire picked Christina up as a third made to grab Jon, who ducked under his hands and rammed him. The vampire fell back, Jon dived forward and scooped up the stake, bouncing back to his feet and staking the vampire who tried to stake him.

 “Run!” Jon ordered Jax, who didn’t need to be told twice. He took off down the hall, spotting Will tripping one of the vampires who tried to follow him. He heard Lex let out a moan, but he was too terrified to look back.

 Jax ran faster than he had ever run before. He was just about to enter the stairway that they came up when a hand grabbed him from behind and pulled him back. Slamming him hard onto the ground. Jax hit his head hard on the ground. His vision went blurry for a few seconds before the world started to come back into focus. The lead vampire, Fury was standing over him. His face had turned human, he had a grin on his face that sent chills down Jax’s spine.

 “I’ll take that.” He bent down and pulled the folder out of his hand. Jax tried to hold onto it but couldn’t. Fury was too strong for him. He took a second to look behind him. “And it seems my friends are keeping yours busy.” Fury turned to look back at Jax, his face morphing to its vampire form. “Gives me just enough time for a snack.”

 Fury started to move in for the kill when suddenly he stopped and spun around. Jax did his best to follow his movements but they were far too fast for his eyes. One second he was leaning over Jax for the kill the next he was lifting Christina off the ground by her neck. She grabbed onto his hands, trying to keep herself from choking.

Chapter Twenty-Three:

Jon

 The adrenaline was pouring through Jon as he staked yet another vampire. Christina had run off to help Jax, a fact that filled Jon with a flood of emotions from jealousy to terror. He couldn’t let anything happen to her. He looked over in time to see Lex stake the vampire he was battling. On his other side he saw Will kick a vampire off of himself. Lex had only brought two stakes, leaving Will to fight by hand.

 “Catch!” Jon said as he tossed the stake to Will, who caught it and used it on the vampire moving in on him. He went up in a puff of dust as Will nodded his thanks at Jon. “I’m going after Christina and Jax!” Jon said, taking off before either one of them could respond.

 It didn’t take him long to catch up to them. At the end of the third hallway he found Jax attempting to get up, while Fury held Christina up by the neck.

 “Hey!” Jon yelled, causing them all to turn and look in his direction. “Put her down! Now!” He said in his most commanding voice. He wasn’t sure how well he pulled it off.

 “You really do have a death wish, don’t you?” Fury asked with a grin. Jon shrugged.

 “Maybe, what you going to do about it?” He asked, completely at a loss as to why he would ask something so stupid. Fury laughed and tossed Christina aside, knocking her into the wall. She slid down, not moving.

 “I like you.” Fury said, taking a step towards Jon. The file in his hand. Out of the corner of his eyes, Jon saw Jax get to his feet.

 “Wish I could say the feeling was mutual.” Jon said, trying not to look at Jax.

 “You’d make a great vampire, you know that?” Fury asked, just as Jax moved into position.

 “And you’d make a great pile of dust, if only we could make that happen.” Jon said. Just as Jax was about to make his move, Fury swung his arm up, his fist hitting Jax right in the face. Jax fell to the ground hard, ruining any real hope Jon had of getting out of this alive.

 “Sorry, he was invading my personal space. You were saying.” Fury said, enjoying every moment of it.

 “I was saying, you have something that belongs to me. Hand it over!” Jon demanded, taking a step towards the vampire. His mind racing as he tried to figure out a plan. It kept coming up empty. He had nothing. Fury smiled and held up the folder for Jon.

 “This? This is what you’re after?” Fury asked, in an almost taunting voice.

 “Hand it over!” Jon demanded, reaching for it. Fury pulled it back and in the blink of an eye his hand was around Jon’s neck, lifting him off the ground and slamming him into the wall. Jon tried to catch his breath, but Fury’s grip was too tight.

 “Struggle all you want.” Fury said, moving in for the bite. Jon tried to break free, but Fury was too strong. He could feel the vampire’s hot breath on his neck as he was about to bite. Jon brought his knee up, hitting Fury in the gut.

 “Ahh!” The vampire yelled out as he took a step back, grabbing his stomach. Jon fell to the floor, attempting to catch his breath.

 “Jon!” Jax called out. Jon started to look up when he was grabbed from behind and lifted off the ground. Someone was holding him up by his arms, leaving him powerless to do anything.

 “What the fuck!” Jon screamed out. Fury turned to look at him, rage filling every inch of his face.

 “You’ll pay for that!” Fury screamed.

 “Well, I hate to break it to you, but I don’t have any cash on me. Rain check?” Jon said, trying his best to sound in control. Knowing that dangling from the arms of a giant vampire couldn’t possibly help that image any.

 “Kill him!” Fury ordered. Hate seeping through every word.

 “You sure?” the vampire holding Jon asked, seeming confused. Jon couldn’t help but wonder why the vampire would question the order to kill some kid. Before he could think about it any farther, Fury roared.

 “Now!” He screamed, spit flying out of his mouth as he yelled. The vampire didn’t need to be told a third time, he slammed Jon, back first onto the ground. Knocking all the air from Jon’s lungs.

 “Jon!” Jax called out.

 BAM!

 Jon heard Jax scream out as his body hit the wall. Fury must have knocked him out cold again. Jon couldn’t worry about that yet, he had his own vampire moving in for the kill. Just as it was about to bite him, he turned to dust. Standing behind him with a stupid smirk was Gambit. The mystery man from the night of the pool party.

 “You okay?” Gambit asked, holding out a hand to help Jon up. Jon swatted it away and got up. Looking around for any sign of Fury. Christina was sitting against the wall, she shook her head.

 “He ran off the second he saw Gambit coming down the hall. He has the folder.” She told him, seeming disappointed in herself. Lex and Will ran towards them.

 “What happened? Is everyone okay?” Lex asked. Jon looked over at Jax, who was just starting to move. He was at least alive.

 “Everyone is fine. It’s good to see you again Lex.” Gambit said, his accent grinding Jon’s last nerve.

 “Gambit, what are you doing here?” Lex asked. Will looked over at Jon, a worried look on his face. Jon just shook his head, he didn’t want to deal with this right now.

 “I saw the museum heist on the news. Thought I recognized one of Fury’s men. Figured I’d come down and see if I couldn’t take care of the situation. Found the lad here about to be a fang snack.” Gambit said.

 “Thanks for the save.” Lex said. “Again.”

 “It’s what we do.” Gambit said.

 “What about the folder? Did we save it?” Will asked.

 “What folder?” Gambit asked.

 “They were after…it’s not important. We just need to get it back.” Lex said. The frustration clear as day in his voice.

 “That’s going to have to wait boyo. The police have the place surrounded. Any minute now they are going to storm this place. We need to get out of here and now!” Gambit told them.

 “Great plan. How do you suppose we go about that?” Jon asked.

 “I have my ways. Follow me.” Gambit said, a lopsided grin on his face.

Chapter Twenty-Four:

Will

 Gambit lead the friends down into the sewers. There was a service entrance in the basement. Behind them they could hear the police storming into the building. They had made it out of there just in the nick of time.

Will stayed near the back of the small group with a grumpy Jon. He loved him like a brother, but he was taking this jealousy thing a bit too far. To be fair, it was always hard watching the girl you were crushing on, crush on someone else, but this someone else just saved all their lives again. And that was after he dusted a vampire that was seconds away from feeding on Jon. He needed to get over it.

 “You doing okay?” Will whispered to Jon, trying to break the ice.

 “What do you think?” Jon snapped. Not attempting to keep his voice down. The others turned to look, but no one said anything. Gambit was in the lead, with Lex at his side. The two of them were talking strategy while Jax and Christina followed close behind them. Will overheard Jax thanking her for saving his life. It seemed they were starting to get along.

 “Hey, at least we got out of there in one piece, right?” Will said, trying to look on the bright side.

 “Is that supposed to cheer me up?” Jon asked, the bitterness seeping through his voice.

 “A bit?” Will said, not sure what he was supposed to say to cheer up his friend. He hated seeing him like this.

 “Well it doesn’t. Because we…I, only made it out of there alive, because of him.” Jon said.

 “So, can we maybe like him? If this is something we really want to do, fight vampires, he seems like a good guy to know.” Will said. Trying to point out what Lex seemed to already know.

 “No. Not as long as…as Christina likes him.” Jon said, his voice barely above a whisper. It was hitting him hard.

 “It’s her loss.” Will said, clapping Jon on the back. Jon just shook his head and started walking faster, in an attempt to get away from the conversation. This was going to be a long walk.

 “That’s the exit right up ahead.” Gambit called back to them. Sure enough, there was light coming from not far up ahead.

 “Thank god, my phone was about to die.” Lex said, shutting off his phone’s flashlight.

 “I can’t believe we made it out of there.” Jax said.

 “Thank you, Gambit.” Christina said, turning to where Gambit was standing just moments before.

 “He’s gone.” Will said, looking around for any sight of their savor.

 “Why am I not surprised.” Jon said, turning and starting towards the light.

 “That’s kind of badass.” Jax said. “Just up and vanishing like that.”

 “Kind of like Angel.” Christina said.

 “Like an Angel?” Will asked.

 “No! Angel, from the TV show. You know, Buffy’s boyfriend. He was a…nevermind. He just did that a lot.” Christina said.

 “Right, well let’s go home.” Will said, following after Jon.

 “Don’t have to tell me twice.” Jax said, following his lead.

 “I can’t believe all of this was for nothing. Fury got everything he wanted.” Will heard Lex tell Christina.

 “At least we got away. I mean it might not be much, but it is a victory.” She replied. Will couldn’t help thinking that maybe having her on the team was going to be a good thing.

Chapter Twenty-Five:

Sager

 Sager arrived at the hospital after a long day of work. It seemed like every day was getting more and more hectic. It was insane. The first 3 months on the job were more or less a breeze compared to the last few days. It all started with the day they picked up the poor kid with the wolf bite.

 It was almost as if San Diego was becoming more and more crazy. People were being killed left and right. Attacks on people with the only markings being small bites on the neck. Everyone was trying to figure out what was causing it, but so far no one had any leads.

 Between the wide spread deaths and the multiple terrorist attacks throughout the city, there was talks of martial law being put into place. The National Guard was on alert. The possibility of all this wasn’t main stream yet, but Sager had over heard some of the cops talking about it after the attack on SDSU. It was a horrible sight to see. There were bodies everywhere. A great deal of them were just stacked up on top of each other. It took everything he had not to lose his lunch.

 He always wanted to help people. It was the main reason he pursued this career path, but he was starting to second guess it. It was one thing when he was picking up sick people and taking them to the hospital, but all the death was taking a toll on him. It was costing him the little sleep he was used to. He would toss and turn for hours just trying to fall asleep, and whenever he would finally doze off it would be sort lived. He’d wake up screaming from horrible nightmares. Going back to sleep afterwards was never going to be an option.

 It was one of the main reasons he had taken such an emotional interest in the John Doe that they had brought in with the bite to the shoulder. He was one of the last people that they had brought in who hadn’t died right away. Currently he was laying in a bed, deep in a coma. The doctors had no idea when he would wake, if he even would. Sager couldn’t begin to imagine how terrified the kids family must be. Their son was missing and short of walking past his room, there wasn’t much chance of them finding him. Unless he woke up.

 Sager would go by his room every night before going home to see if there was any change in his condition, but so far there was none. In his head he had started to link his career with the kid’s health. If he woke up, Sager would stay with this job, but if the poor kid went south and passed, well, Sager was out.

 He knew that it was a stupid way to decide his future, but it took all of the pressure off of him. There was nothing he could do to help the kid, so tying this choice that he didn’t want to make to him, took it out of his hands. It was a cowardly act, and not at all fair to this poor kid who was in need of miracle, but no one would ever know. His father had always told him that life was hard and cruel, and your only job in life was to find a way to survive. This was the way he found.

 Maybe karma would come back to bite him in the ass at some later date, but until then, this was getting him through the day. It was a risk he was going to have to take, because if the Government really enacted Martial Law, than the past few days were going to seem like a happy memory. Nothing good ever came from clamping down on people’s rights. Even when it was for their own protection.

 As he looked in on the John Doe, Sager couldn’t help but wonder if perhaps the kid was better off. Sleeping through whatever happened next.

The End