Warzone #6:

A Night in Lockdown

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**Chapter One**

San Diego was a warzone, an honest to god warzone. Complete with people dying, in a battle between the military and the homeless army of Ares, the god of war. It didn’t take long for the government to declare a lockdown. They were under a strict curfew, no one was to be out after dark, unless they were working an essential job. The curfew was being enforced by the local police, who were taking great pleasure in their newfound authority.

“We gotta get home.” Troy said, not for the first time. His older brother, Anton, ignored him. He was a man on a mission. He was chasing after some girl he had been seeing for the past few weeks and she was going to a fuck the lockdown party. Just the type of party that Anton lived for. The truth was, it sounded fun to Troy as well. If it wasn’t for the fact that their mother was an EMT. She was out there in the middle of this warzone, putting her life at risk. Troy didn’t want to disobey her, not right now. Not while there was a chance, they could lose her.

The problem was, he couldn’t leave Anton out here by himself. He may be an asshole, but he was the only brother that Troy had, and he wasn’t going to lose him. He was going to stick with him, until they were both at home.

“No one is stopping you.” Anton said, as they made their way towards this mystical party.

“Mom wants us home.”

“She going to be there?” Anton asked, knowing the answer.

“No.”

“You gonna tell her?” Anton demanded, once again knowing the answer.

“Of course not.”

“So, how the fuck she going to know?”

“What if they raid the party?” Troy asked, playing out a scene of their mother kicking their asses after she found out that they were out past curfew.

“Look, Troy, I’m not going to play what if, with you. I’m going to go have fun, get laid, and get drunk. Now, if you want to have a good time, come with. If you gonna bitch and act like mom, than take your ass home.”

“I’ll shut up.” Troy said. He wasn’t about to go home and take the beating alone if mom came home before Anton.

The brothers made it to the party, which was far more packed than Troy would have thought. It seemed that no one, except for him was caring about the lockdown. Anton wasted no time in finding his friends and having a few drinks before looking for his lady friend. Troy on the other hand was miserable. He got himself a drink and kept Anton in his sight. He was ready to run out of there at a moments notice. He couldn’t help but wonder if this is what everyone felt at Kimberly’s party before the killings started.

“You look like your having fun.” Eric, a friend of Troy’s from school said sarcastically, coming up to him with a drink of his own.

“I’m having fun!” Troy said defensively.

“This is you having fun?” Eric said, with a laugh. “Could have fooled me.”

“Yeah, well, you’re easy to fool. Besides, I can’t believe you coming here and bothering me is your idea of fun.” Troy said.

“What can I say, I’m easily amused” Eric said with a laugh.

“Fools normally are.” Troy said, taking a sip. This was going to be a long night; Troy could feel it in his bones. The only way he was going to get through it was to lighten up a little bit. If Anton and Eric and everyone else was having a good time, he mine as well join them. With that in mind, he downed the rest of his drink and got himself another one. After all, Anton was now upstairs with his lady friend, there was no way they were going to beat their mother home. If he was going to die, he mine as enjoy himself first.

No sooner had Troy started to relax than shit hit the fan. The front door to the house was kicked open as heavily armored police in riot gear stormed the house, shouting for everyone to freeze. Which of course led to the exact opposite.

“Fuck!” Eric said, dropping his drink and running for the back door. He motioned for Troy to follow him, which every instinct in his body told him to. It was the smart, rational thing to do, so of course he ignored it and headed for the stairs.

“Anton!” He yelled out as he ran up the stairs, doing his best to drown out the sounds of the police shouting at the others down below and the screaming of other kids. The one sound he couldn’t drown out was the pounding of his heart. He had never been so terrified in his life. At the top of the stairs, he found himself at the end of a hallway with four rooms, all the doors were shut. He had no idea where to start. Not that it mattered once the shooting started.

Anton and his girl rushed out of the third door on the left, half naked. Their eyes wide. Anton took one look at Troy and nodded, motioning for him to follow. Troy followed them back into the room, before closing the door and moving a dresser in front of it. Anton and the girl hurried and put their clothes on.

“Out the window!” Anton snapped. Troy nodded. Outside the sun had already gone down, curfew was upon them.

**Chapter Two**

Chris still couldn’t believe his luck, one moment he was sitting in a jail cell, the next he was being let go. Eyewitnesses had come forward and gave the cops everything they needed. All charges were dropped. His parents had never been happier. They went out to celebrate that whole weekend, and it was a good thing that they had, the whole city locked down not long after.

After decades of abuse and neglect, the homeless population rose up and the city burned. They went after the military first, taking control of a number of bases before anyone even knew what was happening. There was a real sense of doom in the air, as if this was the end. As if the united homeless population of San Diego was going to really overthrow the government. Chris couldn’t believe it, until he finally spoke to Trinidad, who filled him in. Ares, the god of war was the front of the homeless army.

He wasn’t sure what freaked him out more, the fact that his city was burning, or that the Greek god of war was real. Either way, he was free and for the first time in his life, Lex was letting him be involved. It seemed that Trinidad had shown them some of his magic, and they figured it could come in handy in their war with the vampires.

He couldn’t believe his luck when he stood inside their new headquarters in the middle of the sewer at the edge of Frog pond. The center of the sewer had a large opening that was large enough to fit a tiny apartment. The whole place was tagged up, showing that it wasn’t a well-kept secret. Normally that would make for a terrible hideout, but when you have not one, but two guys in your team who can do magic, there are ways to make it work.

Trinidad was the one who figured it out, his mother had taught him a spell to hide things from all but those you wish to find it. With Chris’s help they managed to perform the spell. No one but their little group, Lex, Jax, Will, Jon, Christina, Gambit, Trinidad and Chris himself, would be able to find this location now.

Jax wasted no time in moving their gear over to their new hideout, while Lex moved the weapons over. Jon and Jax went about finding a couch and some old lazy boy chairs, to make the place feel a bit cozier. Chris couldn’t help but feeling they were onto something, as they sat around on the rescued furniture, listening to Lex’s big idea on how to keep hunting for the vampire named Fury.

“This is crazy.” Jax said, not for the first time. He wanted to go home and keep his head down until the war for their city was over. He seemed to be alone in his wish. Everyone else there was getting antsy. They had spent too long locked inside.

“You know I’m all in,” Jon started. “But I got to be honest, it’s getting harder and harder to get out of the house. “

“Yeah, my parents freak out anytime I get near the door.” Christina added. The truth was, none of them were having much luck getting out of the house. Everyone was scared, the parents most of all. After all, when was the last time America was losing a war on their own soil?

“I get it, everyone is on edge. My mom is too, but we all agreed to be apart of something. To try and make a difference. We know what’s out there, we have to try and help people.” Lex said.

“So, what’s your plan?” Will said, sounding just as on edge as Jax.

“You have a plan, right?” Gambit asked. Chris still didn’t know how he felt about the man. He was a lot older than the rest of them, and seemed to know more about the occult than any of their number. Even Trinidad. Yet Chris still couldn’t wrap his head around why he would want to hang out with a bunch of kids, not to mention the weird chemistry that seemed to exist between him and Christina.

“I do.” Lex said, pulling Chris’s thoughts back to the task at hand. “We break into teams of two. We know Fury is up to something, and if we don’t stop him, no one will. At the same time, there is a war on, and the last thing we want to do is get caught up in the middle.”

“That about sums it up. Can we go home now?” Jax asked. Chris had to admit, it was weird seeing him sass Lex. Normally, Jax was sucking up to the man. It just went to underline how stressed out everyone was.

“No, no we can’t.” Lex said, an edge in his voice telling them not to interrupt again. “I want us all to stay clear of Ares and his army, with that in mind, I think each team should have a member who faced him last time.”

Chris had only heard part of the story, before Jax cut it short. He knew it had something to do with the explosion at Mesa college, he just wasn’t sure what.

“Jax, you go with Trinidad, check out the nearby graveyards. See if they have any new blood. Will, you take Chris and go and check out the warehouse district. We’ve faced off with them there before, might be worth checking out. Jon, you and Christina stay close to home. Make sure there isn’t any fanged freaks coming after anyone we swore to protect. It’s hard enough out there without the vamps making it harder.”

“What about you and Gambit?” Christina asked, eyeing the older man with a look that once more made Chris uncomfortable.

“The two of us are going to be out looking for Fury. The sooner we find him, the sooner we can put all of this behind us.”

**Chapter Three**

The cool night air sent a chill down Trinidad’s spine. He was still getting used to this whole hunting thing. The notion that he was being tasked with putting his life on the line to hunt the forces of darkness. The truth was, he only joined up with Lex and the others to try and help Chris, and then he only stayed because Chris asked him to. After all, you don’t let friends slay vampires alone. But the truth was, he wanted no part of this. He just wanted to run home and lock the door, not walk around graveyards looking for blood sucking vampires while the whole city was burning in the midst of a war with a god. The god of war no less.

“This is just great.” Jax said, he seemed just as miserable as Trinidad felt. “If the fucking vamps we’re hunting don’t get us, the army of bums will, or the cops, or the military, or our fucking parents.” Jax said.

“When you put it like that. . .” Trinidad started, but Jax cut him off.

“It sounds about as bad as it is.” Jax said, leaning against a crypt that had an old broken angel atop it. “I can’t believe Lex sent us out here.”

“We’re going to be okay. He wouldn’t have sent us if he didn’t think we could handle it, right?” Trinidad asked, hoping Jax would agree.

“Look man, I love Lex, I do, but has too much faith in his friends. He really thinks the lot of us are cut out for saving the world.” Jax said, shaking his head.

“Maybe he’s right?” Trinidad asked, feeling like an idiot for saying it. There was no way he would ever be apart of saving the world. He was useless. The truth was, he had never been apart of anything worthwhile in his life.

“Come off it, we’re kids. You really think we have a chance against Fury? I mean, shit, you really think we’ll even have a chance to find out what Fury is after, with a fucking war going on?” Jax said, jumping off the crypt.

“No.” Trinidad answered, just as gun fire started off in the distance. No longer an unusual sound.

“This is fucked up.” Jax said, kicking the crypt.

“They’re close!” Trinidad said, his eyes scanning the edge of the graveyard for any sign of the ongoing battle. Jax takes a deep breath, as if he was getting ready to do something drastic.

“Want to go play Smackdown at my crib and just tell Lex we spent the night hunting?” Jax asked, a mix between worry and pleading in his voice. Trinidad had never heard such a beautiful idea in his life.

“Yes!” He all but shouted.

“Can you really do magic?” Will asked, disbelief in his voice as they neared the warehouse district. Which in and of itself, wasn’t easy. There were numerous battles between their apartments and the warehouses. Not to mention police patrols.

“You have no problem believing in vampires, but magic is beyond the pale.” Chris said as he held his right hand in front of him and a ball of flames came to life in the palm of his hand.

“That’s pretty cool.” Will said, flashing his trademark smile. “And, I’d imagine it’ll come in pretty handy if we come face to face with some. . .” he stopped midsentence as they spotted a gang of vampires attacking a young couple. “Of those.” He finished he pulled out a stake and turned to look at Chris. “Care to put that to use?”

“Thought you’d never ask!” Chris said, as he tossed the fire ball up in the air, caught it and then threw it at the nearest vampire, causing them to burst into flames. Will charged at the remaining 4 vampires, as the young couple ran for their lives. Chris summoned a second fire ball, before throwing it at another of the blood suckers.

“I can’t believe we got stuck on the home front.” Jon said bitterly, as he kicked a rock down the street. They were a few blocks away from the Stratton. Christina let out a laugh as she followed behind him.

“What, you wanted to be on the front lines?” Christina asked.

“Kinda, yeah. You don’t?” Jon asked.

“I mean, aren’t you scared? Not just of vampires, but there’s a war going on.” Christina said, almost as a response to the sound of gun fire off in the distance. A sound that has become the norm over the last few days.

“Of course, but I want to help. I want to do more than just sit by and watch it all unfold on the news. I want to. . .be important.” Jon said, almost ashamed to be admitting it. Christina smiled and patted his arm.

“You are important!” He blushed as she said it.

“You know what I mean!”

“I do, but we’re doing our part. I mean, we’re out here, past curfew, looking for any vamp activity. That’s something.” She said, in an attempt to make him feel better. The truth was, she was kind of glad to be close to home. While she wanted to be part of the team, and prove to Gambit, and to Jon, that she was brave, she didn’t want to die. She had plans in this life, like going to college and joining her father’s law firm. She was going to make a difference.

“We’re not going to find vampires here, in the middle of the city, while the military is fighting the god of war’s army.” Jon said. Kicking the rock once more. “Besides, who knows what Fury is up to, we should be trying to stop Ares.”

“He’s a god, Jon. We can’t stop him!” She said.

“We did!” Jon said. “We blew a fucking school up on top of him!”

“Masa?” She asked.

“If that can’t stop him, what can?” He asked, but before Christina could answer, they were forced to duck behind a car as a squad of police in riot gear approached. “Fuck!”

“What do we do?” She asked, her voice in a low hushed voice.

“Just stay low. If we get caught. . .” He didn’t finish the thought. He just let it hang in the air, as the officers walked past. They were armed to the teeth.

“I’m itching to find someone breaking curfew.” One of the cops said, an eagerness in his voice.

“With orders to shoot on sight, shit me too!” another cop said. They started chuckling.

“Are they laughing about shooting someone?” Christina asked.

“You’re surprised?” Jon asked, bitterly.

**Chapter Four**

Lex waited until he and Gambit were well away from their new HQ and the others before letting the older man in on his real intentions. They weren’t setting off in search of Fury, though part of him knew that was the responsible thing to do. No, they were setting off to play hero. Lex wanted another shot at Ares. He couldn’t believe that they had failed to stop him last time. That bringing a whole building down around his head wasn’t enough.

If you watched the news and stayed up to date with the war effort, it was starting to seem that even the full might of the US military wasn’t enough to stop the power mad god. All the more reason for Lex and his high school friends to stay the hell out of it. What good could they do? How could they help the war effort? All perfectly good and valid questions, for which he had no answer. There was no reason to set off in search of the war god, but he just felt, deep down inside, that they had to. He had to be on the front lines. He always dreamed of joining the Marines when he got old enough, why not now. Maybe he couldn’t enlist yet, but he could join the war effort, even if it was in his own small way.

Bringing Gambit along made a kind of sense to him. The man had been battling the forces of darkness a lot longer than Lex had. He might know some things, have some advice that he could use. Or at least that was the hope. Truth be told, Lex wasn’t sure how Gambit was going to react when Lex told him the real plan.

He took it surprisingly well. Almost as if he was relieved. “I’ve run across my fair share of demons and monsters and you name its, but an actually, honest to god. . .well, god. Never thought I’d see the day.” Gambit confessed to Lex. It had the effect of both making Lex feel better, knowing that he wasn’t the only one in uncharted water, and also feeling a lot worse. The man who he thought was going to have some advice for him, was just as in the dark.

“I figure his army is made of homeless people. We look for different camps, see if we can’t catch ourselves an invite.” Lex said. He knew his plan seemed a little light on its feet, but they would improvise. He’s read enough books on war to know that no plan ever survived first contact with the enemy, so why bother having one? Just figure it out as you go along.

“It’s as good a plan as any, but what happens once we find them?” Gambit asked. “We have a plan, right?”

“Of course, what kind of idiot would go into an enemy camp without a plan.” Lex lied, feeling kind of stupid for not putting more thought into what they were about to do. “Just trust me, I know what I’m doing.” He said with as much false bravado as he could muster.

“Ahhhhh!!!!” A vampire with dyed green hair screams out as he bursts into flames. A smiling Chris watches on with a sense of pride. He was really starting to get the hang of this whole magic vampire hunting.

“Fuck!” Will yelled from behind him. The scream was accompanied by a loud crashing sound. Chris turned around to find Will falling to floor after slamming into one of the nearby warehouses. The largest of the vampire gang they stumbled across, and the only one still among the undead, was marching towards him. His fangs reflecting the light from high above as he moved in for the kill.

Will struggled to get to his feet, he was clearly hurt. Chris wasted no time in summoning another fire ball, only to find himself surprised at how much more difficult it was this time around. He had never used his new found magic this much before. He was starting to feel drained. He pushed aside the sense of exhaustion and threw the fireball with all the strength he had left, just as the vampire stopped in front of Will and picked him up.

The fireball hit him right in the arm, catching it on fire, but the vampire just shook it off. Chris’s magic was too weak to do any real damage. “Fuck!” He screamed as he rushed towards his friend.

“That’s the best you got?” The large vampire sneered at Chris who scooped down to pick up a dropped stake.

“Let him go!” Chris yelled, Will started trying to struggle out of vampire’s grip.

“Don’t worry, you’re next!” The vampire growled. He turned back towards Will, opening his teeth, ready to bite when out of nowhere Will pulled out a stake and rammed it through his chest, causing the large vampire to burst into dust. Will fell to the ground, hard, letting out a low grunt in pain.

“You okay?” Chris asked, holding out his hand to help Will up.

“Real talk, been better.” Will said, letting Chris help him up. Out of nowhere he started laughing, as he looked around the battlefield. “Can you believe we did that?” Chris looked around, the dust that used to be vampires, now lost to the wind. The couple they saved, long since gone. Anyone who was just walking by would never have known what had just happened here.

“No.” Chris said, letting out a laugh of his own. “No, no I can’t.”

“This way!” Anton said. He was running, while holding onto Salena’s hand. She had stayed with them since they climbed out the window to avoid the police. Troy was so exhausted that even the adrenaline that was surging through him was starting to give way.

“Where are we going?” Troy asked, not a hundred precent sure he really wanted to know the answer.

“Are they still behind us?” Salena asked, her voice shaking.

“I don’t know! Answers both questions at once, alright. Just shut up and follow me!” Anton snapped. Troy had never seen him so stressed out before. He was always so calm and in control. Seeing him this freaked out, just made Troy even more stressed out.

“Why don’t we just go home?” Troy asked, finally stopping. His side was splitting, he could hardly breath. The notion of continuing to run was out of the question.

“And lead them to mom? Are you fucking crazy?” Anton said, he had stopped running as well, pulling his hand free of Salena as he yelled at his little brother. “Maybe you don’t really grasp what is going on, but they can’t find us. Cops don’t have much patience for us black men in the best of times little brother, but right now, this is the fucking wild west. There are no rules, not even the pretend laws they normally go by. We get caught; we die.”

Troy felt himself sink before his brother’s glaze, the words hitting home just what was at stake. Behind Anton, Salena let out a low whimper. Off in the distance, police sirens could be heard, answering the question of whether or not they lost them.

“Run!” A loud voice called out from a few streets over. Besides him, Jon noticed Christina shiver as she looked over. Living in a warzone wasn’t fun. It wasn’t something you ever really got used to. Every day was some fresh hell.

For a moment, Jon was so focused on Christina’s reaction, that he didn’t even place the voice. It wasn’t a voice he heard often, or even in a long while, but it was one he wasn’t likely to forget. It belonged to one of his childhood bullies. A kid named Anton who was a few years older and used to always pick on him. More than once, kicked his ass and sent him home crying. He also happened to be the older brother of one of Jon’s good friends, Troy. If he was in trouble, as much as he didn’t like the guy, he had to do something.

“I know that voice!” Jon said, attempting to mentally prepare himself to do something stupid.

“You do?” She asked, her voice cracking as she spoke. Jon just nodded.

“Wait here! I’m going to go see if I can help.” Jon said, his voice growing smaller as he spoke, for it was at that same moment that the gun fire started. She grabbed his arm, for a moment he thought it was to stop him, but then she moved to follow him. He wanted to tell her to wait for him, that it was too dangerous, but the truth was, she was here to help, same as him. She had just as much right to risk her life in service of others as he did. Besides, he really didn’t want to go alone.

The gun shots drowned out most other noise, but the occasional scream could be heard over it. One of which, Jon was sure was Troy’s. He hadn’t really hung out with him since before the pool party. They were friends, but not the hang out every day, know everything about each other friends. More the, I’ll see you when I see you friends, but that didn’t mean Jon didn’t care about him. Didn’t mean he wasn’t going to do everything he could to help him.

They turned the corner onto a dark alleyway, between a fence blocking out houses and a string of stores. Troy had backed up against the stone wall of one of the stores as a cop, with a look of pure rage on his face.

“Where the fuck they go?” The cop demanded. His voice shaking with the rage that was on full display, the gun inches from Troy’s face. Even from this distance, in the low light, Jon could see the tears in his eyes.

“Hey! What the fuck are you doing?” Jon yelled, running toward the situation, not sure what he was doing, or even what he meant to do next.

“Jon!” Christina screamed after him, her voice full of the fear that Jon should be feeling and would be in the moments to come. The startled cop, turned to look at the sounds of screaming, and without warning, turned and fired his gun, just as Troy rammed forward, knocking the gun from his hand.

In the blink of an eye, the whole world went out of focus for Jon as his shoulder erupted into searing pain. He let out a howl of pain as the whole world went black.

**Chapter Five**

“You’ll pay for that you little. . .” the cop shouted, never finishing his threat when it was interrupted by part of the building exploding. Rubble from the destroyed store rained down on them. The officer ran for cover, throwing his arms over his head and screaming out. Troy wasted no time, scooping up the gun and running towards the out cold Jon and the distraught Christina.

“Is he okay?” He asked, putting the gun into his pant waist. He wanted to make sure he could protect himself in case anything else happened. This night was not at all what he had been expecting. He just wanted to get out of the house for a couple of hours with his older brother and be home before curfew or his mother. Nice and easy.

“He won’t wake up!” Christina yelled, shaking Jon for the umpteenth time.

“Is he. . .is he breathing?” Troy asked, his words getting caught in his throat. Jon was an old friend. They practically grew up together. It had been a while since they had really hung out, but that didn’t mean they weren’t still close, or at least close adjacent. He definitely didn’t want him to die on his behalf.

Christina checked to make sure he was still of the living before nodding. That was a weight off his shoulders, but not much of one. The building being attacked meant the battle was close at hand. Add to that the fact that it was only a matter of time before that cop came back, more than likely with friends, meant they had to get the hell out of dodge and quick.

“We need to go!” He said, taking a quick look around to make sure they were still alone.

“But Jon?” She said, lifting his head off the ground and holding him close to her.

“We just got to take him with us!” Troy said, as he did his best to lift Jon up. Holding him under one arm while Christina put the other arm around herself.

It took Lex and Gambit a bit longer than Lex had planned to find a homeless camp that seemed to have any connection with the war god. In fact, most homeless people they came across, seemed to be scared out of their minds. Lex heard more than a few stories of police showing up and killing people, indiscriminately. From the way they spoke, it wasn’t a war between the United States and Ares, but a war between the United States and homeless people.

It made Lex feel sick to his stomach. Gambit on the other hand, seemed to be taking it all in stride. He wasn’t the least bit surprised that the reaction to a few homeless people lashing out would be to attack them all. It seemed par the course for how America handles its problems. A fact that Lex had a hard time arguing against.

When they finally did find a camp that seemed armed and ready for combat, Lex put his plan into motion. The idea was to just seem like you were apart of the whole. Blend in as it were. He figured there would be too many people there for them to notice one or two new ones.

Lex’s plan seemed to work. It didn’t take long for people to put weapons in their hands and told them to get ready to move out. They were on their way to meet up with some man named Henry, who was the war god’s right hand. They were going into battle.

**Chapter Six**

“Fuck that man!” Jax said with a laugh, as Liu Kang bicycle kicked Batman, knocking him through a wall, before Batman gets up and starts shaking back and forth, “Finish him!” the tv called out. “You really think I was gonna let you win? Me? Bitch have you met me!”

“Fuck!” Trinidad said, putting the controller down and shaking his head. “I really thought I had you!” Sure enough, Liu Kang’s life bar was damn near zero as well. It was indeed a close fight.

“You did good man, real talk.” Jax said as he looked through the characters trying to decide who to win with next.

“I almost had you!” Trinidad said, picking up the controller. The truth was, he didn’t care that he lost, he was just glad that he was getting the chance to play. He didn’t have a lot of friends. He was always a bit of a loner, but Jax welcoming him in and treating him like an equal meant the world to him.

“You’re a hell of a lot better than Jon, I’ll give you that.” Jax said with a laugh as he selected the Joker. “So, who you got?” Trinidad scrolled through the characters before stopping on Scorpion.

“Let’s see if I do any better this time.” He said as the match started. He didn’t do much better this time. In fact, he didn’t even beat him in a single match.

“See, isn’t this a lot better than running around risking our lives” Jax said, as he won yet again, this time using Sub-Zero against Trinidad’s Lex Luthor.

“Is Lex going to be mad?” Trinidad asked, his voice shaking a bit as he asked. He was finally apart of something bigger than himself and as much as he didn’t want to be out on the streets risking his life, but he also didn’t want to lose his position on the team.

“Shit, not as mad as this Lex after he gets his ass beat!” Jax said with a laugh as Sub-Zero rams an ice sword through his gut.

Will and Chris spent another thirty minutes or so walking around the warehouse, never finding another vampire, something that they couldn’t decide if they were happy about or not. They had both really enjoyed the battle, but neither one knew if they really wanted to test their luck again.

Once or twice, Chris would test his power, creating fire out of nothing just to make sure that he still could. It worked every time, but not always as strong as he would have hoped. He still had a lot to learn in the world of magic. A prospect that he was surprised to find himself excited by. He was never one to enjoy school, so the fact that he wanted to spend time studying and learning was a new experience for him.

“Think the others are having any luck?” Will asked, he kicked a lone rock on the ground and watched it bounce down the street.

“Depends, would luck be finding vamps or not?” Chris asked.

“Well, who we talking about? Because if we’re talking about Jax, a nice quiet night would be his idea of luck.” Will said with a laugh.

“In that case they partnered him up with the right guy. Trinidad is freaked out by this whole vampire thing. Damn near pissed his pants when we found the vampire behind the bar.” Chris said, thinking back to the other day, before his arrest, when Chris was teaching him magic.

“And how do you feel about the whole, “vampire” thing?” A voice from behind them said. They both turned around in a panic. They found themselves surrounded by vampires, with none other than Fury himself standing front and center. It was him who had asked the question.

“Who’s this clown?” Chris said, summoning a fireball. Will took a step back.

“Fury!” He yelled as he pulled out his stake. “We’ve been looking for you.”

“I’m shaking in my boots.” Fury said with a sneer. “Kill them.” On his command the vampires charged. As the nearest vampire went to hit Will, he ducked under the punch and came up with the stake, right to the heart, pulling it out before the vampire went to dust. He took a second to feel pride in himself, it was a moment too long. A second vampire hit him right in the face. He went down hard.

The vampire picked him up by the back of his shirt and kicked him hard in the gut. Will felt all the air knocked out of him. He attempted to hit the vampire, but he couldn’t reach and even if he could, he didn’t have the strength left to do any real damage.

On the other side of the battle, Chris was keeping a handful of vampires at bay with his fireballs, but none of them had the power to incinerate any of the blood suckers. Just keep them at bay. Each fireball cost him a great deal of energy. He could feel himself getting weaker and weaker and the fireballs were showing the strain. It wouldn’t be long before the vampires were completely unaffected by the fireballs.

“I’m disappointed. I thought you kids would last longer.” Fury said, before pointing out four vampires. “You four, with me. Russo’s little warehouse has to be around him somewhere. I’m sure of it.”

The four vampires moved to follow him. One, a red headed vampire with a scar above his right eye stepped to Fury’s right as they walked. “Really think we’ll find the Dreamer’s chest there? I mean, I know that’s what Ga. . .” his words were cut short as Fury elbowed him in the neck, spun around grabbing him by the throat and lifting him off his feet as he kicked up the stake that Will had dropped and ran it threw his heart before tossing aside the stake into the ocean and starting back on his way, the others following, but none being so stupid as to ask more questions.

Will forced himself to his feet as his dance partner closed in on him. Will’s only weapon lost beneath the surface of the water. In a move of pure desperation, he lunged out, grabbed the vampire’s leg and pulled it, knocking him onto his back. The crash drew the attention of more than a few of the remaining vampires.

“Run!” Chris yelled out as his latest fireball failed to travel even a few feet. He didn’t wait for an answer before taking off sprinting away from the vampires who immediately gave chase. Will did his best to catch his breath before running after Chris. He could hear the vampires right behind him. He was sure they were catching up to him, but he didn’t dare look back. He just wanted to make it home. To see his mother and little brother again. Not to mention tell the others that Fury was looking for something called the Dreamer’s chest in some guy named Russo’s warehouse.

That name rang a bell in his head, but he couldn’t place where he heard it before. A hand got ahold of his arm, forcing him to swing backwards, connecting with a vampire’s face, before he pulled free and started running again. The mystery of the name driven out of his head.

**Chapter Seven**

“What now?” Troy asked, his breathing was rapid, he was sure anyone passing by their hiding spot would overhear it. They had taken cover inside the drive-through market, after Troy had busted the lock off with a nearby rock. They had hurried inside and closed the gate behind them. Christina was sitting near the freezer section, with Jon’s head resting on her knees. She was on the verge of tears.

“How should I know?” She demanded. Her voice cracking. “You think I’ve ever been through anything like this before?”

“How’s he doing?” Troy asked, changing the subject. He wanted to get her mind off of what was happening. If they were going to have any hope of getting out of here alive, they had to be calm and collected. They couldn’t start panicking. Which in large part, was why he didn’t tell her about the car he saw parked over by the burger king next door. It should have been closed, and all of the lights were off, so there was no reason for anyone to be there, yet sure enough, there was an old black Honda sitting right there in the parking lot. Troy couldn’t help but feeling a bit of worry at the thought of it. What if there had been someone inside?

“He’s breathing. We need to get him to a hospital before. . .” She said, leaving the rest of the sentence unsaid.

“He’s been shot.” Troy pointed out. “They’ll ask questions, even call the police.”

“So? There’s a fucking war on. Only one cop saw him, and I doubt he even got a good look, it was dark.” Christina pointed out. “We just say some homeless guy shot him on the way home. Maybe we get in trouble for breaking curfew, but it’s better than him dying!”

Troy nodded; he knew she was right. The truth was, he was just scared. Scared of going back out there. Scared of the cops finding them again. Scared of Jon dying because of him. Scared to find out that anything happened to Anton. Scared to face his mother, who even now must be home worried sick. Scared to find himself in the middle of the actual war that was going on. The truth was, he had never been so scared in his life.

“You ready?” He asked, doing his best to hide the fact that he was anything but. She didn’t say anything, just nodded.

Henry was an impressive looking man. Clearly ex-military. He knew how to handle himself and how to inspire his men. He explained the mission. Ares was expanding his boarders. He was pushing out, and that meant taking out the three police stations and 4 military encampments that were in the expansion zone.

Henry laid out the whole plan, never once worried that two members of his new army were spies out to kill the god of war himself. He was full of confidence. Lex couldn’t help but admire him. It didn’t change anything. He was still going to take down Ares, no matter what got in his way, but he was starting to understand the other side of this war. The homeless had a legitimate reason to be pissed. A legitimate reason to fight this war. The United States had failed them, it had a lot to answer for.

“Any questions?” Henry asked, he was answered with a deathly silence. Either no one had any questions, or no one was brave enough to question a god or his messenger. “Good. Let’s get to work!”

“What now?” Gambit asked in a whisper. Going off to war wasn’t exactly what Lex had proposed. The plan was to get near to Ares, not his second in command. Lex had to think of something, he was just drawing a blank at the moment.

“We stay the course.” He replied. “For now.”

“This is kind of creepy.” Trinidad said as he followed Jax into the sewer towards their new base. He didn’t understand why they had to hide out in a sewer of all things. He got that it was isolated, but it was dark and scary. Even more so in the middle of the night. The gun fire off in the distance didn’t make it any better.

“Who you telling.” Jax said. “But the others should be back soon. We have to play the part that we did our job. Come on, it’ll be fine” Jax was talking to himself as much as Trinidad. The truth was he much rather be anywhere but here. This whole thing was freaking him out, and he honestly had no faith in Chris and Trinidad and their ‘magic’.

It didn’t take them long to get to the center of the sewer where they had started setting up their new base, since leaving the old one behind. He had liked the little tunnel they were hiding out in, but it was way too small with their growing team. Trinidad made himself at home on an old couch that they had brought in, in an attempt to make the place feel more like home.

“Anyone here?” Jax’s head turned as he heard Will’s voice call out. He jumped up to his feet just as Will and Chris made their way into the room proper. They looked beat to hell. Their clothes were torn and they were bloody and bruised.

“What the fuck happened to you guys?” Jax demanded.

“Chris?” Trinidad asked, his voice cracking.

“We found Fury.” Will said, lowering himself onto the couch that Trinidad had just gotten up from.

“Not a nice guy.” Chris said leaning against the wall. “Where’s everyone else?”

“They aren’t back yet.” Was the only answer Jax could give.

To be continued in The War for San Diego #2