

VANITY HORROR: **THE STARLIGHTER CURSE**

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Prologue

Soaring over the monastery that sat in the middle of the ocean, soldiers that sat in the choppers were well equipped with armor and weaponry. They glared out of the countless men and woman that stood on top of the roof. White tops and white jeans, clothing that rendered them as prisoners, ran in scrambles at the sight of the approaching choppers.

As they descended closer to the wide monastery, the choppers fired missiles towards the roof of the building, the prisoners ran in all directions to hide so they wouldn't be seen by the oncoming choppers that would choose their targets.

Attached by rig wires, the soldiers descended and fired.

"Get out of here now!" Victor yelled to Kirk. "It's not safe for the boy to be here. Keep him away!"

Kirk hesitated. "NO! Come with me! This isn't a battle we could win here, It's useless!"

"If I go with you, they'll follow us! It's me they're after, not you! Take the baby and go! We haven't much time!"

"I'm not leaving you to fend them off by yourself!"

"You have too! No one has knowledge of the boy! We have to keep it that way!"

Kirk was still hesitant, but he knew Victor was right.

"Go now! I got this!"

Kirk's eyes were fixed still on the violet suited warrior, watching his short hair in the shape of a mohawk blowing through the wind of the ocean breeze. Although he couldn't bring himself

to remove his eyes away from the sorcerer, Kirk stepped away slowly backward, his baby in his arms, he turned and faced away.

As kirk turned, Victor rose his hand, whispering an incantation, electric energy cackled in his grasp. Where Kirk stood, he saw the energy form in midair in the shape of swirling clouds, creating a vortex. With teary eyes, Kirk held on to his baby for dear life and darted toward the portal, the clouds swallowed him whole, and Victor gestured his hands in a push, the portal closed off and dissipated like smoke.

Victor stood in confidence, although remorse took hold as more of his allies were dying, His anger won the dominance to keep himself steady. Victor took two magnums from his side braces and shot violently at the oncoming soldiers that landed upon the roof of the building. As their guns raised, they quickly forced themselves to ceasefire at the sight of Victor Song. Victor's rage in the form of bullets soaring from his firearm, pierced the soldier's internal organs, causing them to fall back and yell in agony. His guns blazing toward the countless soldiers, one by one they fell on the floor dying.

The many prisoners, who were blocked off by the entrance of the large monastery, were blocked off by the oncoming bombs that sprinted their way until there was none left alive.

Realizing that the numbers of soldiers were decreasing, Victor put away the one empty gun, as well as the loaded one, he rose his soldora, a spellcaster's blade that not only works as a sword in defense, but an object to magnify a spellcaster's powers, like a wand that can cast a powerful and solidifying spell. Bolts of lightning struck out from his fingertips and out across the sky towards the soldiers still descending onto the roof of the building. The lightning struck towards

them and then the choppers who were caught in Victor's magic, as well as the crossfire, began to sink and lose power sinking into the ocean.

Realizing that all his allies had fallen and were no more, Victor swung his soldora, summoning more bolts of lightning to strike at what was left of the soldiers on the roof. One by one, each soldier began to collapse on the ground until there was none left standing.

He glanced up at the chopper above him. A dark figure, whose face was identical to Victor's, stood on the edge of the chopper's cargo entrance, ready to jump onto the building. Victor grabbed his gun once more and fired at the figure, his face, eyes and rage identical to the man he once stared at in the mirror, had a mind of fueled hatred and descended. The bullets in which Victor fired, struck away from the Starlighter and into the air above.

When the Starlighter got closer to landing on the roof, Victor walked a little further still firing. As the Starlighter landed on the roof, he rolled over to find cover when Victor came closer. The Starlighter stood at the side of the chimney tower.

Victor fired toward him, then he heard one of the choppers fire rockets towards his way, and as he turned to see behind him he teleported aside and back after the rocket hit the ground farther from victor.

Victor looked farther toward the edge of the roof to find a rocket launcher. A thought struck him and thought it would be safe to take down the chopper with the heavy weapon. Victor cautiously raised the rocket launcher towards the chopper, aimed locked and then ... fired.

Victor watched as the rocket flew towards the chopper. It blasted into shards of fire and by the looks of it, left no survivors.

But Victor lost focus of the Starlighter. Victor turned around in time to be stung in the chest by the Starlighter himself.

Victor fell to the floor stunned and weak. Struggling to rise, The Starlighter stunned Victor once again nearly blinding him. The Spark burst and blasted Victor leaving him backing away towards the edge. He bent backward upon the railing of the roof's edge, falling off the building and into the Ocean.

Hurrying towards the railing, the starlighter watched as the sorcerer sank into the ocean below. With a sly smirk, he sighed in relief. "Farwell, brother!"

Chapter 1

19 Years Later

It was an early Saturday morning; the streets of Manhattan were busy and fast paced. Jason was among the many pedestrians walking through Tompkins Square Park. Its trees were yellow, red, and finally brown, falling steadily at its own pace of the autumn season. November never felt so bleak, perhaps it was because the trees were ready to fall and die before the snow's emergence. The winds were strong but not strong enough to blow through Jason's low-profile hair, it's length longer in the middle but he wouldn't feel a thing unless it hit his bare skin of the face.

Jason exited the park, making it one avenue over until he could reach The Bean Café.

Jason arrived. After ordering his coffee and paying the cashier, he hurried to grab a table and pull two seats nearby for which his friends, Joseph and Michael would join him in the coming moments. Jason settled himself down and sat at the seat facing the entrance of the café where he'd seen his friends arrive.

At last, Joseph entered through the doorway and looking about.

"Hey," Jason waved. "Over here."

Joseph walked over and sat opposite of Jason and gave a tedious sigh. "So, tell me again, why I had to wake up so early?" Joseph began. "He already knows about the party. That we took the day off, the savings for the décor, all of it. What more does Michael need?"

Jason smiled "I for one, do not know! And if I did, I'd save us the trouble to coming here in the first place!"

"No, you wouldn't." Joseph protested. "I'm pretty sure you'd end up wandering the streets now anyway!"

"True."

"So, Michael wants to spend the Saturday with just friends at a bar in the West Village." said Joseph leaning back on his seat.

Jason grew annoyed. "Of course, he does. But it's less of a responsibility on our part. And if Michael wants to spend his birthday at a local bar, then who are we to stop him?"

"Would you want to do that on your Birthday?"

"Not really, No." Jason shrugged. "But trust me, it can't be that bad."

“Remember last year when we went to a night club and he left us stranded to go with some other guy he found on the dance floor.”

“Michael is promiscuous, he’s young, he enjoys being with other guys.” Jason took a sip of his coffee.

“Yes, but what I’m saying is that we should be cautious of Michael’s actions. I don’t want to end up in the depths of the Hudson River because he can’t control his hormones!”

Jason thought hard for a minute. His mind drifted and he felt empty. Within seconds his mind wandered out of the café.

“What’s wrong?” Joseph asked.

Jason shook his head at Joseph’s sudden tone of voice “What do you mean?”

“You were staring into space like a mad man!” Joseph looked at Jason with concern.

“Oh, it’s nothing. I just thought about a dream I had last night that’s all.”

“Was it a bad dream?”

“No but it was kind of weird. It was like a déjà vu. As if I had experienced this moment. And this wasn’t the first time. It’s happened before.”

“Really,” Joseph perched his lips. “I think I had one of those.”

“It wasn’t a big deal at first. But now I feel like it may mean something.”

“Like what about, they don’t really mean anything they’re just a reflection of your day put into your own perception.”

“I don’t know, I feel a sudden tension coming from the dream when I think about it.” Jason sighed.

The bell to the café door had rung. Jason and Joseph looked up to see Michael entering through the doorway.

Quickly Jason grabbed Joseph by the arm. “Don’t tell Michael about this. At least not yet, he won’t take these things seriously. He’ll laugh and immediately dismiss everything I say. It’s in his nature.”

“You think!” said Joseph sarcastically. “Don’t worry, I won’t say a word.”

They both looked up at Michael and smiled to assure they weren’t talking about anything of consequence.

“Hey!” said Joseph.

Jason nodded.

Michael pulled up a chair and sat closest to Joseph. “So, as you may well know, my birthday party is going to be at Boots & Saddles on Christopher St. So, do not spend money on the décor, the drinks, the food, or any other trifles because the bar is reserved for the guys only.”

“I figured it be at the Village.” Joseph said sarcastically and looked at Jason.

“I didn’t doubt anything for that sort.” said Jason.

“What’s wrong with the West Village?” Michael asked.

“No, nothing.” Jason said quickly. “It’s just I thought you wanted to celebrate the party at your house, or just someplace bigger. I mean think about the amount of people you’re going to invite. Most of them are going to end up wanting just outside the bar and sing happy birthday to you from afar.”

“What are you trying to say?” Michael asked. “Not a lot of people are going to come; it’s very much going to be us three and a couple of handsome strangers from college.” He winked at Joseph.

Joseph smiled weakly.

“Well that’s all good and games.” Jason said cautiously. “Don’t you want your family to be a part of the celebration? What about your mom? It was her idea, in fact she called us!”

“Most of them are going to be stuck at home, watching novellas.” said Michael. “You think I want to stick around with them all day?”

“What about your sister?”

“What about her? She’ll just get drunk and ruin the party for all of us when she throws up on the dance floor! I’d much rather save us the trouble of bringing my family into it! Oh, and before you say, what about my dad! You know full well he doesn’t want to be surrounded by guys that are groping his son and giving hard looks at his daughter! It’s not crickets, I’m sure he’d rather watch the game on a Saturday night!”

“Why couldn’t you let us plan it?” said Joseph. “We wouldn’t have to worry about petty things like that.”

“Petty?!” Michael gave a look of disgust.

Looking from Michael to Joseph, Jason knew the tension between the two of them were always brief, but the idea of this made him uncomfortable, he wasn't sure if Joseph was going to win the argument, somehow Jason knew it.

"I guess I am being a little over sensitive!" Joseph admitted.

"Really?! I had not noticed!" said Michael.

"I'm just saying one of us wants to kick it in a different setting. I'm not really going to pick up a whole lot of numbers in a bar in the West Village."

"What are you talking about? They're will be girls there?"

"That's not what I'm saying! It's the eyes of the crowd that will set me off. They'll give those glares I use to get whenever a new semester starts, and I'm suddenly the center of attention, the meat on the poultry display."

Jason sighed and without realizing, it broke the tension. "Maybe he's right! There's plenty of other places we can go and check out."

Michael crossed his arms "You can't be serious!"

"But I am!"

"Jay, you don't have to bail out because of me!" Michael assured him.

"I'm not! I just feel that perhaps it would be best to kick it in a setting that we're most comfortable with! All of us!"

“Hold up! Guys, this is my birthday party, this is what I want to do! Why are we even debating as to whether it’s a good idea or not! It’s settled. Jason, you’re supposed to have my back on this one!”

Jason gave no reply.

“And Joseph, you know full well your protesting because you feel you won’t bag any numbers, or even get a person to talk to you, but trust me, girls will be there, think about all those sports bars Jason and I had to put up with! Surrounded by the LCD T. V’s, that nearly made my head explode from all the yelling, whenever a score was announced!”

“You have to admit the Happy Hour was pretty decent.” Said Jason, although immediately regretting it.

Michael shot a look. “Yeah, until we had our I.D taken away. We could’ve gotten arrested.”

“But we didn’t!”

“Point is - -. Just this once, Joseph. I want you to be there. Make this sacrifice for me! Then we could go to some lame bar and pay that ridiculous cover charge for happy hour on your birthday.”

Jason sighed, he glared from Michael to Joseph, whose expression was nothing but blank.

“Fine!”

Jason slapped his legs rubbing them as if preparing for another go to counter argue. “Well guys I have to go.”

Michael leaned back stunned “Why?” he asked. “I just got here.”

“My dad has been M.I.A again.”

“Again? Damn his job must really take a toll, huh?” Michael and Joseph glanced at each other for a moment.

Joseph looked back at Jason and gave a sad look. “I’ll see you tomorrow then!” he said afterward.

“Will do!” Jason grabbed his coffee off from the table. “I’ll see you guys later.”

Michael gave a short wave.

Jason walked past the table and darted toward the front entrance.

Jason arrived at his East Village apartment, locked the door behind him, he dropped the keys on the table by the television and started for the kitchen to get something to drink. He opened the refrigerator to grab a bottle of water.

“Where were you?”

Startled, Jason turned to see the source of the voice.

“Dad!” said Jason aloud. “I was with my friends. Why didn’t you come home yesterday like you said you would?”

Kirk emerged from the hallway and turned to face his son, he wore black jeans and a loose tank top that were ripped at its sides and a bloodied scratch that was above his hip and visible

through the shirt. Kirk was a man of his early forties, his black hair slicked back, and a tired face that showed wrinkles on his forehead.

“Dad!”

“It doesn’t matter now!” Kirk limped toward the dining table and pulled a chair from out of it to have a seat. “Pass me the hemostat that’s in the right cabinet next to the fridge.”

Jason opened the cabinet to find the hemostat on the bottom shelf; he took it, closed the cabinet, and started toward to the table to sit across from Kirk at the dining table. Handing Kirk, the hemostat.

“I know you’re worried,” Kirk said suddenly “But you needn’t worry about me, it’s just having to deal with the forklift and picking up boxes all day takes a toll.”

“That doesn’t explain the - -.”

“I said I’m fine.” Kirk interrupted. “And that’s all that matters.”

Kirk was impatient and angry. Jason saw that in his eyes but didn’t dare ask why.

Kirk gave him a look that was almost apologetic.

Kirk gently asked, “So what were you doing with your friends so early in the morning?”

Jason was careful enough to not sound eager to upset him.

“It’s Michael’s birthday this Saturday, Joseph and I were talking about how we were going to plan and set it up. But plans had changed. Michael’s family isn’t going!”

Kirk shook his head. “I see, but why don’t they want to go? Where does Michael want to have it?”

“He wants to have it at a bar in the West Village.”

“Typical Michael.” said Kirk.

“That’s what Joseph and I thought.” Jason said aloud. “Of all places, he chooses a small-time bar called Boots & Saddles.”

“I know that one.” said Kirk. “But I would’ve thought that was for an older and more mature crowd. Has Michael ever been there?”

“I think so. I didn’t ask!”

Kirk’s smile quickly vanished as he was about to speak. “I know you question my work every time I come home, looking like I broke into a fight. But trust me, Jason,” He paused for a moment, grabbing the hemostat and stood up. “You have nothing to worry about!” Kirk turned, weakly walking out of the kitchen, he started for the bedroom and locked himself inside.

Chapter 2

Although the bedroom window was open, the space was dim. Kirk sat by the bedside, He opened the drawer to reveal a small portrait of Victor Song, his baggy button down, loosened under his leather jacket, with a baseball cap hung backwards. Kirk remembered when he took the picture. He couldn’t believe how quickly the time had passed since he had last seen him. Neither could he believe how much Jason had resembled him, his short hair whose length were but only a centimeter

or two, his olive skin complexion, as well as the shape head and face, the only thing Jason shared of Kirk's were his eyes, big and dark brown, accompanied by his long eyelashes. Nevertheless, Jason was a spitting image of Victor Song.

"Where are you?" Kirk rose from his bed; painfully his arm throbbed from the heavy swords he carried while in training the entire night. If he were to go up against any evils, he had to make certain, he was prepared for it.

Kirk considered the mirror before him beside the window. He looked down at his hands. He massaged his left, where the enchanted ring was.

Kirk had never taken it off... until now. He slid it off his finger.

As the ring came off his finger, Kirk felt a jolt of energy within his body. When Kirk looked in the mirror, he considered his reflection, his face. Kirk watched as the wrinkles across his big brown eyes and olive cheeks dissolve. The gray smooth hairs on his head started to blacken and spike up. His body started to glow and brighten up and resemble that of a thirty-year-old man. The enchantment dissipated, and he became the man he once was when left with the choice to care for his son alone.

The cell phone rang, Kirk was startled by the sudden vibration in his jean pocket, he lifted his tank top that covered his pocket and grabbed the phone. "Kirk, here!"

"It's me!" said a feminine voice. "It's time we meet!"

"Stephanie!"

"Meet me tomorrow morning! At the Church!"

“I told you! I want nothing to do with you!”

“You will! It’s important that you meet me at the church!”

Kirk sighed in anger, the wizard in which he hadn’t spoken to in years had always brought trouble where he was concerned. Stephanie was a lot older than he was, but she resembled a woman in her early twenties. “I told you! I want nothing to do with you!”

“If you don’t meet me, you will never know the danger that you’re in, you and your son will face trouble greater than you can bear!”

“What are you talking about? Who?”

“I can’t say who! But I can show you!” Stephanie cleared her throat. “Tomorrow morning! Eleven A.M! Don’t be late!”

Hours passed, and while it was a slow Saturday, Jason arrived at the West Village, he sat on the grass of the pier of the Hudson River. The mild November sun was accompanied by the winds that let the wooden boardwalk warm up at the touch. Although the river tides were keeping the winds cool, it did motion aggressively enough for Jason to not keep his sketchpad level in his hands.

Once again, he decided to draw a still life of the One World Trade Center and the surrounding skyscrapers that rose tall in the Manhattan cityscape. The structures from where he sat were inspiring. Overlooking the high elevations of buildings that struck out beneath the blue

tinted sky. Its color resembling the prelude of dusk that would surely consume the clouds in the coming hour.

Drawing was one of the many things he loved to do when there was nothing else, no worries of any sort, like his father Kirk disappearing for days without so much as a text or a call. Especially on a day where there was no one around. Most people would stay home to a windy weather like this, but for Jason; this was a beneficial matter, a relaxant for the day.

He looked out at the river surrounding the downtown edges. The water was Jason's favorite of all imagery. He could relate to the water in every way. He could swim in at the end and never get drained of swimming in the deepest pool or beach. The water was his ally. He couldn't explain it, but given that his sign is an Aquarius, he thought that somehow there could be a link to his zodiac and his physical connection to the waters, but although, after all, he is only human.

As the sky was darkening, Jason packed up his sketchbook, his belongings and jacket and started toward the exit of the piers.

His home was crosstown and the path he decided to take would be the one block he'd walk straight towards, with no turns or detours blocking his way. It was a long walk, but this was by far the best part of the day. His headphones in his ears, strutting proudly towards home as he listened to his favorite jams.

Walking towards Washington Square Park, the sky was getting darker by the minute and Jason looked about suspiciously. "That's Odd!" He pulled off the earphones, sticking them in his shirt and they hung about.

The street was in total silence. There were no people, no cars, and no sound as if the world was shunned. All he could hear were his footsteps, as well as his breathing. For a city that never sleeps he was suddenly in fear to realize that the street could be this quiet.

A bang came abroad, Jason jumped, quickly turning around at the sound that came from behind him, a noise shaking from afar but there was nothing in sight. Nothing that may have caused that horrific noise like a sudden slam of two large metals clanked against each other, like the metal pole slamming against the concrete during construction. “I must be hearing things!”

As Jason started forward, no longer minding the noise behind him, the air started to mist, fog began to form, covering the streets and buildings, everywhere he turned were patches of fog covering the tinted sky. He could still make out the path he took to go home and there were the streetlights to take him forward but the silence that surrounded him everywhere he turned was making it much more difficult to keep his vision. “I don’t recall it was going to rain today!” he thought to himself, in fact he felt certain that the weather gave no indication of precipitation.

He walked quickly, certain that this was not a dream, his mind focused solely on returning home.

“What the hell!” Jason paused, straight ahead, a figure outlined itself, appearing out of the smoke. A figure whose face could not be seen, no hints of skin to indicate his ethnicity nor his stature, no way of telling if it were a man or a woman. The body completely covered by an old dark brown trench coat, from where he stood, he could tell the coat looked rippled or perhaps ripped. The figure faced the direction in which Jason were about to walk towards.

As the figure started toward Jason in urgency, Jason turned around to look for a clear path. Up the block he passed from where he came, he darted up the direction without looking back.

“Oh, come on!” he said, as his earphones fell out from his shirt, dragging upon the sidewalk. He ripped them out of his IPod, preventing himself from tripping as he ran, his bag was light enough in weight for him to carry and thankfully, he did not carry much.

Making it upon the sidewalk of McDougall Street, he refused to turn, neither walk the direction in which the figure emerged. Still in shock to see that there were no other people in view, he stopped to catch his breath, something about the cloaked figure startled him, no face, no skin to show that it was a human under the façade. If a horror movie taught Jason anything, it’s that the survivor of such an ordeal would have to run the other way, especially if you hadn’t a weapon in hand, or if you had no indication what you were up against.

Turning around, the figure was nowhere in sight, he stood against a scale like wall of the building. Desperately he wanted to yell for help, but the idea daunted on him that he didn’t want to attract the wrong attention. Helplessly he had his head down trying to gather everything in his mindset. “What the hell is happening?”

The sky had gotten darker, at last revealing the night quicker than Jason had expected. He reached for his cellphone in his jean pocket, the screen lit up. Scrolling through the contacts he looked for Kirk’s number, but realized the bars were missing. “No Service! Damn it!” He sighed angrily, in a fit of panic he felt his heart beat faster, and he, panting quicker.

He leaned against a shadow, a wall in which Jason could not decipher, for it was dark and the street lights were dim only casting a spotlight upon the small patches of the black streets. Trying to slow his breathing, he paused for a moment, he heard movement as his breath steadied,

and felt the wall in which he leaned against, move. Its texture was like scales and he felt it abandon the sidewalk, almost making him fall backward.

Quickly pushing himself up off the supposed wall, he glared up and watched it shift horizontally, a shadow came overhead from the side. “What the Hell!”

Its body rising and slithered away from Jason, as the serpent’s head presented itself and glared at him with vicious yellow eyes.

“Oh my - -!” Jason started forward toward McDougall St, the vibration of the street in which he ran upon told him that the serpent was following him. The snake like creature stood watching as Jason ran towards the lit streetlamp. He tripped and fell over on the middle of the black road. He turned around to see that the snake slithered towards him. “Get Back!”

“It is unwise to travel the lonely streets, young sorcerer!” The snake hissed. “You will suffer my wrath. Beg for mercy, if you dare!”

“Did he say sorcerer?” Jason thought to himself, he glared at the serpent in a panic. “Get back!” he yelled.

“No god can save you!” hissed the snake.

“This can’t be happening!” Jason stood up to run again. The snake lunged forward towards Jason but missed. Jason dodged and fell on the sidewalk “What the hell do you want?”

“Your death at my hands! There is no escape!”

A blue light shown above the both. Within the foggy mist, that shape of a man took hold. The snake had drawn back away from the light.

Dressed in a leather vest shirt with the hood attached, covering the top of his face, the man raised his hand, and in his grasp, were a blade, a sword the length of a samurai sword. He raised it towards the snake and uttered in an ancient language that Jason couldn't understand. A blue lightning of energy shot out of the man's hands and hit the serpent, sending the creature flying and back on the ground.

"What the hell!" Jason said aloud.

The snake was still moving and began to shrink, only to take shape of a human. He looked exactly like the figure in the cloak that darted toward Jason, his brown ripped cloak, his gloves and his olive skin now seen by the heat of the street lamp. "Curse you, wizard!" said the cloak figure. His hand burst as he raised his arm and shot metal like tentacles at his opponent.

The wizard dodged away, to Jason's amazement he saw the wizard disappear into thin air. Within a second the wizard reappeared behind his opponent. The man in the cloak turned around in time for the wizard to punch him in the face. The man fell back but got up quickly to strike a blow at the wizard but dodged again in time to punch him once more. The cloaked man almost fell again but stood up to shoot more metal like tentacles at his opponent. The tentacles were soaring at him but at last he raised his hand to shoot more of the electric current from his fingertips and aimed at the tentacles.

The tentacles fried and cackled, almost reaching to the cloaked man's shoulder pad, he let the tentacles slide out of his arm. His flesh and hands then grew back.

"You've lost, Glenico!" said the wizard.

The flesh taking the form of a hand once more, as well as the bloodied fabric of Glenico's trench coat sleeve grew.

Jason stared at Glenico in horror.

"Next time you won't be so lucky to win!" Glenico hissed. "Get in my way again and I will peel the flesh off your bones!" He looked from the wizard to Jason who sat under the street lamp.

Jason picked up that the accent in which Glenico possessed was that of a man who was from the southern part of North America. An accent he rarely heard from where he was from. Concluding that Glenico wasn't from here, he studied Glenico, fascinated at the man who tried to kill him, he couldn't help but feel like this guy's quarrel was not out of baseless mishap.

"You aren't going far," said the wizard. "By order of The Cobra Entity, you will face a trial!"

"And how are you going to stop me?" Glenico rose his arms, the metallic tentacles consumed his body shape and he vanished, disintegrating into the concrete street.

The wizard was about to run after him, until he turned to face Jason who glared at him in horror.

As all the fog began to disappear, Jason rose up in time to see the night clouds take shape and the street lights paved a way once more. Relieved to hear traffic in the far distance, that relief shattered his senses, and suddenly he felt weak in the knees, he turned once more to find the hooded wizard facing him, standing confident as Jason collapsed onto the ground, his consciousness abandoned, he fainted.

Chapter 3

Opening his eyes, Jason awoke after what felt like forever, only to realize that he had no dream, but the extent and the length of unconsciousness seemed distant. Realizing that he was in bed with the same clothes on, is when he finally recollected what had transpired. “Oh my god!”

He glared out his window and saw the sun, almost blurring his vision. His alarm clock had just reached ten A.M. Jason rose up from the bed and quickly darted towards the doorway out the bedroom. “Dad!” he called. “Dad, you here?”

Silence. It was often that Kirk wouldn’t be home. But after what he witnessed, he couldn’t bring himself to be alone. He needed somebody around. Jason wondered if he should call Michael or Joseph and tell them what happened last night. Although perhaps they wouldn’t believe him, or anyone would believe him for that matter. But he didn’t know what to do. He couldn’t believe what had occurred last night. Could it have all been a dream that he’s just waking up from? But then how would that explain him leaving the West Village? How would that explain him not having any memory of ever coming home?

But no, this wasn’t a dream, he was sure of it; Jason was certain several questions had to be answered. Who was Glenico? And why did one want to kill him and the other to go through so much trouble to save him.

Jason made a pot of coffee and sat at the kitchen table. He wondered of his past and thought about whether there was a link to it and to what he experienced yesterday. He couldn’t think of anything.

He called Joseph and Michael, asking them to come over around the afternoon. He knew the pot of coffee would be done by the time they came by. Hopefully with that he'll have the words and the energy to tell them what happened yesterday. He showered, changed his clothes, although his body was shaking in horror, his head aching from all the thoughts running amok, like watching cars sway in opposite directions off the highway.

He hoped that Kirk would come home soon, but he wasn't sure how to tell him what had happened last night, not sure if Kirk would believe every word. For now, he rather his father remains ignorant of the situation, he didn't want to hear another lecture or give Kirk the impression that he had consumed drugs, and risk having to hear Kirk avoid the situation by putting him in a home. Kirk was dominating but stubborn, seeing everything in black or white, no other color exists in the eyes of Kirk. Jason knew this, and whether Kirk choose to believe that Jason was attacked by an unknown and protected by another, is moot.

Finally, Michael, Joseph, and Rebecca, a high school friend with whom Jason knew as for as long as Michael and Joseph, arrived at the apartment. All three of them had a seat at the kitchen table each of them with a cup of coffee in hand. With a steady breath, Jason started his story, ready for the sighs and faces of disbelief, coming from his three closest friends.

Both Michael and Joseph looked at Jason with blank faces. Rebecca sipped her coffee, hiding the smirk, she felt would irritate Jason.

"Let me get this straight." Michael started. "On your way home last night you encountered a big ass snake near Washington Square Park? And some guy with electricity coming out of his hands threw a blow at the snake that then afterward became a person and started some mutant technique on each other?"

Jason cringed at the end of Michael's sentence. "I know this sounds crazy." said Jason. "But you have to believe me. I wouldn't lie to you about something like this."

"I believe you." said Joseph suddenly.

Michael gave him a blank look. "Jason, have you been smoking?"

Rebecca shifted, lifting her light brown highlights from her brown eyes. "Wait, you've been doing recreational drugs? My, my, where do I sign up?"

"No!" Jason said quickly.

"Have you been exposed to any drugs?" Rebecca went on. "I've seen this type of thing before. Trust me, it's not pretty!"

"What are you a cop now?"

"No. But I take it you admit it then?" Michael glared at him in shock.

"No, I don't. Listen guys I know this sounds absurd but one of them were trying to kill me and I feel this quarrel that Glenico has with me, isn't going to end here."

"Who's Glenico?" Joseph asked. "And why would he have a quarrel with you?"

"He's the guy who went from a snake to a human or at least I thought he was human. But I know for a fact that he was trying to kill me!"

Joseph looked worried.

"And what about the other guy, the one who was trying to save you?"

"I...I Don't know!" Jason replied. "I didn't get his name!"

“And you have no idea where they came from? Did you not call the police?”

“No, I called you guys first thing, because if I told the police they wouldn’t believe me.”

“The part where these two were shooting magical shards at each other would be unbelievable but the other part where you say they were trying to kill you? The police have to take some action into that matter.”

“Can I be honest?” said Michael sounding annoyed. “It’s not that I don’t believe you Jason, It’s just that... Well... Oh what the hell, I don’t believe you. Do you hear the stuff that you’re telling us? I mean say it out loud again and tell me if this time sounds at all accurate.”

“Michael stop.” shot Rebecca. “This is serious!”

Jason raised his head. “No, it’s cool. I think if Michael thinks I’m crazy suddenly, then so be it. I won’t argue.”

“Well that concludes my stay!” Michael cheerfully got up from the chair and threw on his jacket. “I’m out of here. See you guys on Saturday and happy drinking to you!” Michael walked out the front door and slammed it behind him.

“Where does he get that from?” said Jason bitterly.

Rebecca turned lifting her bob haircut into a ponytail “And you see why I’m not going to his stupid birthday party. He’s going to get himself in trouble, that one!”

Jason sighed, the truth is that he’d talk about anything else, like Michael’s party, or anything that Joseph and Rebecca had going on with them. Anything to escape the tedious and

awkwardness that brewed in the room, he felt the coffee would help cut down the anxiety, but he knew better, it was only worse. Jason leaned back against the couch. “Alex hates me!”

“So, what if he does!” Joseph protested.

“That doesn’t matter now! What matters now is that you’re okay!” Rebecca assured him. “You can stay at my place tonight if you feel up to it. I know your dad won’t be around as much.”

“I don’t have any or do drugs, Rebecca!” said Jason half annoyed.

Rebecca sighed in disappointment. “I know but you could use the company!” She looked over at Joseph who looked miserable at the thought is narrow nose faced down, he stroked his neatly trimmed facial hair.

“On second thought!” Rebecca placed the coffee cup on the coffee table in front of her. and crossed her arms leaning against the sofa. She stared at Joseph who looked back at her as if anticipating her answer. “What are you doing tonight, Joseph?”

Joseph shook his head, reading Rebecca’s posture. “You don’t think I’m going to fall for that, do you?”

Jason looked about at Rebecca and Joseph confused.

“Oh, come on! It would be fun? Besides your house is bigger than mine. And your parents aren’t home so what’s the big deal! We’ll have an anti – Michael party!”

“That’s messed up!” Joseph took his coffee from the table, taking a sip.

“I’ll bring the goodies.” She paused and looked over at Jason before she could say another word further. “The food, I mean!” She perched her lips at him.

Jason nodded. Not sure what he was about to agree to.

Kirk rose up the stone steps leading to the church. He opened the doors to the cathedral but inside he looked around and saw nobody. He closed the door behind him and started walking down the huge aisle between the two large rows of chairs. The cathedral was big and darkened. The ceiling was high with ancient architecture. Everywhere he turned he realized it was candles lighting up the big sanctuary. He reached the alter hoping to see if someone would finally come his way.

“You’re late.” A voice from behind Kirk spoke. The woman was walking up towards him.

“I didn’t think it mattered, since you called me at such a random time as always. Have you no consideration, Stephanie?”

Stephanie lifted off her hood. “Do you know why I summoned you here tonight?”

“Yes, I do! You know the last time we spoke, you nearly got me into trouble!” Kirk started forward. “What do you want from me after twenty years?”

Stephanie ignored him. “Your son has been attacked. And the enemy has learned he was in the West Village.”

Kirk was silent but sat on the stone steps looking outraged. “How is that?”

“That is a matter you should take into your hands and discover for yourself. Given the fact that the boy is your son, you should have a decency to keep a close eye.”

“You don’t think I know that? Who is this you speak of? Who had the nerve to attack my kid?”

“Well if I did know who it was, I wouldn’t be asking you to come out here, now would I? It’s horrid to think you could live a normal life for Jason. But all you’re doing is living a lie and not letting Jason be who he truly is. If he should ever discover who he truly is and where he came from, the fault will be yours for not telling him. He probably won’t forgive you... ever!”

“How else was I supposed to protect him?” said Kirk in an outrage. “He’s nineteen now.”

“That’s the age he’ll grow mature like his father before him. And then like his father and the many spellcasters, his aging will slow. It’s the trait of a spellcaster and surely you must know!”

“I do.”

“Well for Jason’s safety, Zarius sent a spellcaster to defend Jason from the witch that was following him.”

“Which spellcaster is this?” Kirk asked. “Who attacked my son?”

“I don’t know the name of the spellcaster sent to help Jason. But as for the spellcaster that attacked him!” Stephanie paused, she took a photo from out her cloak and handed it to Kirk.

Kirk sighed, his heart fell, and he shook in anger as if a sour item touched the tip of his tongue “Glenico? He’s the one who attacked Jason?”

“So, you know him?”

Kirk’s mind wandered, it was no surprise that he would ever see the face of an evil man. “You could say that, He’s a witch!” Kirk settled on the church bench beside him.

“I gathered that much!” Stephanie took a step closer, glaring at the photo over Kirk’s shoulder. “Who is he to you!”

“It’s a long story!”

“I have loads of time!” Stephanie crossed her arms.

“Well of course you do, you’re one of them!” Kirk shot angrily. “Immortal and all!”

“You’re distaste for spellcasters is really quite amusing. Speaking of which. Was there any word on Victor’s whereabouts?”

Kirk glared at the photo, hardened in the face. Her words struck him, she always knew what to say to get him angry or soften. Any emotion she’d struck to get him talking. She was a like a mother with no ill will, always looking out for one’s best interest, whether it was someone who was an ally or once before.

“I must be honest, it’s been nearly twenty years. I don’t know if I could encourage you to keep hope!”

He looked away. “I have to... And I will.”

Drawing on his sketchpad, Jason planted himself on the couch, the hissing of the coffee pot on the stove let out the familiar aroma, ever since he arrived in Joseph’s apartment. Reluctant to prevent sleep, it was the only a contributing factor to walk about. Michael’s birthday party was days away and it wasn’t the only factor Jason had in mind.

Joseph walked into the living room with two mugs in hand. He sat in the armchair on the right of Jason. He placed the two mugs of coffee on the table.

“What are you drawing?”

“It was a snake.” Jason replied. “I couldn’t get the image out of my head, so I just started scribbling - -.” Jason paused as the sound of his phone vibrating., quickly he took the phone. He took it from out his jean pocket. “It’s Kirk!”

As soon as Jason picked up the phone, a light uproar approached. “JASON!”

“Yeah, dad. What’s going on?”

“Where are you?”

“I’m...fine!” Jason hesitated, hearing the urgency in his father’s voice. “Dad! Is something wrong?”

“...No! But I want to see you! I want to see that you are safe!”

“I’m fine!”

“Jason, Please! Come home!” Kirk choked as he attempted to speak further. “I really need for you to be right now!”

“What for, Dad? You’re not making sense! What’s wrong?”

Kirk sighed. “I...nothing is wrong!”

“Look, dad! I’m going to stay at Joseph’s for a while! We’re preparing for Michael’s birthday. If I stay home alone, I’m just going to lose my mind!”

“Son, I - -.”

“Please, dad! I just want some space out of the house! And time to think!”

“Is Joseph with you?”

“Yes! And Rebecca should be here any moment!”

“Prove it!”

Jason lifted himself off the couch. “Dad, what are you talking about?”

“Prove it!” He demanded. “Put him on the phone!”

Jason handed the phone to Joseph who looked stricken and nervous. “What’s going on --?” he whispered. He held the phone to his ear expecting a distraught attitude. “Hello! Mr. Malero!”

Kirk sighed aloud, over the phone as if a wave of relief overcame him.

“Mr. Malero! Are you there?”

“Yes. I’m here! Take care of my son would you! Make sure he doesn’t get into trouble. And that he comes home when the party is over!”

“You have my word, sir!”

“Thanks!” The phone hung up.

Joseph glared at it in confusion, raising up to stare at Jason. “What was that all about?”

“I don’t know!”

“Why didn’t you tell him about what happened last night?”

Jason took the mug of coffee from off the table, leaning back against the couch. “Because I was hoping I wouldn’t have to. As if nothing could happen like that again...Ever!”

The dreadful Saturday were upon them. Dressed for Michael's Birthday, Jason and Joseph, were reluctant to not let any worries overcome them. Trudging toward the end of the sidewalk before Seventh Avenue, Jason unbuttoned his jean jacket, feeling the sweat form around his torso, as he attempted quickly to make it toward the bar. He pushed back his short hair, checking for any sights of duress from the walk there, no sweat. He shook his leg, allowing the air to enter his jeans, diminishing the need to continue fidgeting and getting the day over with.

With past experiences, Jason and Joseph expected an outcome from many of their get togethers prior with Michael, the trip to the Halloween Parade of 2013. Expecting to see the sights of those dressed as characters of a pop culture, renders of inspiring actors, visionaries that march and wave at the crowds accompanying them. The smiles and clever contraptions and dressing of children and their parents glaring about the sights around them.

But it was not to be, Jason thought. For all Michael had planned for them were to dress, to drink on the local streets of Greenwich to Waverly Place, while taking countless hours to trudge through the crowds of century bob training bags of people, only to meet up with strangers with which Jason nor Joseph had never met aside from Michael.

Despite the sudden need to recount their established word of promise, Joseph could feel the tension grow, permitting himself to turn away.

"Don't even think about!" Jason bit his lip. "You're not leaving me to go in there by myself."

“I’d give anything to be in Rebecca’s position right now!” Joseph shook at the sudden chill behind him, he turned to find a couple walk passed him. “At least she’s home watching Netflix and drinking.”

“We promised, Michael. He’ll never forgive us, if we end up not making it to the bar.”

“We could say one of us got sick on the way here!”

“He’s not going to buy that.”

“It’s not my type of crowd.” Joseph gritted his teeth, the light wind of frustration tickling his neck.

“Oh, and it’s mine - -?” Jason rose his head, almost expecting to take back the words. “I don’t want to be here! I’d rather be home, or with Rebecca. But it’s his birthday, we have to at least show some support!” At the switch of the walk sign, Jason started forward.

Joseph sighed heavily, hesitant at first to move a limb, but followed his friend in surrender. “Fine, but if Michael so much as strips to underwear and starts dancing on the bar top, without getting paid mind you, I’m leaving!”

“I doubt they’ll let him do that.” Jason nodded. “But yes, anything that compares to that mere lunacy, I will oblige to leave the premises.” He said with a mocking smile.

Crossing Seventh Avenue, they started quickly toward the bar. “Boots & Saddles” Jason looked about the crowd outside, the smell of burning nicotine and recycled kegs of alcohol in the distance grew as he made his way closer to the crowd of walking perfume bottles, chatting of escapades of stresses like most humans ought to do.

Odors of the large black trash bags which were piled on top of each other across the street from the bar, lingered toward their direction. Jason were amazed that the men, both the young and the more matured ones, with the streaks of silver hair, and facial occurrences of experience, would stomach the aroma, that nearly made any outsider or anti native want to hurl. "This is New York, after all." He thought.

Stopping before the heavy man that stood before the low steps, before Jason and Joseph could dig in their pockets for Identification.

"No need, you guys are good," the man stated in a husky voice. "Michael sent me your pictures, he's waiting inside.!"

"Of course, he did!" said Joseph sighed in disappointment "And here I was prepared to give a fake I.D, so I wouldn't go inside - -." Jason nudged Joseph on the shoulder.

"Thank you!" Jason started for the door and Joseph, while fidgeting, followed him.

Gently pushing himself through the crowd, the stench of whiskey filled the bar entrance, the speakers of the blasting music closest to the entrance made it impossible for him to speak over anything with a voice. Joseph nearly crashed into Jason as he stopped in time to let the people walk pass him out the crowded path.

Michael sat at the far end of the bar, Jason quickly spotted him conversing with two gentlemen, neither of who, Jason could recognize. "There he is."

"Over here!" Michael waved, the two men before him glared toward Jason's direction, surprised at their stature.

"They look little older, don't they?"

“Look around you. Half of them look their age!” said Joseph, glaring about his surroundings cautiously. “It’s crowded in here! I don’t think I’m going to make it out of here quietly tonight - -.” He paused as he and Jason stopped before Michael and the two gentlemen.

“Ah you made it!” said Michael cheerfully. “Hey guys. I’d like you to meet my friends, Joseph and Jason!”

“What’s up?” they replied hesitantly, Joseph bit his lip, quickly regretting that he’d say hello with a nod.

“This is Felipe and Erik!” Michael rose from the bar and made his way beside Joseph and Jason pulling them both by the shoulders. “They’re not from France. Visiting for the sights of Greenwich, so I thought I’d show them a good time... Joseph?”

Joseph let out a smirk. “Yeah?”

“Tell them about the music you make! They’re in college as well, a major in music composition and work in theater.”

“Dude, I record music in the studio - -.”

“You also compose music.” Michael said coldly. “Tell them about yourself!”

Joseph let out a smirk, he looked over at Jason who could only shrug but was just as inquisitive as to what Michael were trying to get Joseph to do. “Do you record music?” he glared toward Felipe.

“Yes, I play the wind instrument!” he said, his accent thick with the French dialect. “What do you play?”

Almost impossible to make out what Felipe had uttered, Joseph felt less than burdened to reply. “That’s good! I play that too!”

Awkward at the sudden need to speak afterward, Jason let out a smirk. “How about I get us some drinks!” He glared at Joseph with an embarrassed twitch.

Joseph glared at him, Jason could almost tell that Joseph were nearly pleading for him to leave him where he was. “Why don’t I come with you!”

“No need, Jason got this!” Michel said afterward. “Jason, tell the bartender to put it on my tab. Oh, and get us a shot of the house tequila. All five of us!”

“Yes, boss!”

Joseph pulled Jason by the arm. “Jason, no! No tequila, you know how I get. For all I know I’ll end up in France with them! God dammit no!”

“okay, fine! Just hold tight, I’ll be right back!”

“You guys go ahead; I’m going to get a drink.” Jason stated.

Jason made his way toward the other end of the bar, where in which the bartender stood, beside the bar back, friends and associates. He stood before one of the stools and kneeled over to get the bartender’s attention. “May I have a Blue Hawaiian?” he asked the bartender. “And five shots of Don Julio. My friend Michael over there has a tab open!”

“Ah, you got it!” The bartender walked over the shelf display and mixed several of the liquids within one another. Jason watched him for a moment and then he turned around, looking out towards the crowd.

A long night it may have seemed, putting aside all that had transpired a week ago, he finally worked up the strength to put his mind at ease at the thought of what he may or may not have encountered. Could it really have been real? Was there really a wizard whom attacked that shapeshifting snake to human? Was it really a dream? And if it wasn't? What would happen next?"

The bartender handed him the drink and Jason laid twelve dollars on the counter.

Shaking off the thought, Jason glared toward Michael and Joseph, with the other two men in the crowd. He wondered about the times when the three of them first met and how life began to loop up ever since. It wasn't that they would talk about the past. At least not with Michael. Jason always shared a common character with both Michael and Joseph. Especially in a time like this where they'd fight for human rights and marriage equality. But none of that really became the center of attention or at least in their minds yet.

Jason had much of other worries, helplessly worrying about death in a bar filled with drinks, laughter and dancing. "Would it ever be possible to stop thinking about a world out there besides the one he knew?" he thought to himself. "Will I go on living a life before almost getting killed by a gigantic serpent?"

He sat with the drink in his hand. Closed his eyes and listened to the music, clearing his head of all the distractions. This is what he enjoyed, being around people, letting the music succumb to his mindset and ridding all his fears and illusions.

"You look deep in thought." said a voice.

Slowly opening his eyes, Jason glared to his right, of where the boyish voice had spoken. He looked no older than twenty-one. Tall, slim and masculine, his curly hair reflecting off the dim

yellow lights, making his hair look a light brown instead of black. For this Jason knew, his hair was the same color, but too short to be mistaken it for any other shade. “I was just enjoying the music!”

The tall gentlemen sat on the seat beside Jason, he too, felt compelled to shift over, worried that the tall figure would make conversation without asking if he had time to converse at all. “What are you doing sitting at a bar by yourself?”

“Oh, I’m not by myself.” Jason said quickly. “I’m with my two friends. They’re in the crowd dancing and talking with --.” He paused for a second, trying to remember the guy’s names. “They’re dancing with some guys.”

The young man nodded and stared at Jason with silent eyes. Although to Jason it seemed rather questioning as if this tall seductive looking gentleman, had seen Jason before. His stature as well as his manner seemed complex and mature, Jason thought it paired very well with the neatly pressed navy button down, the long sleeve shirt which were untucked, covering the top part of his slacks, made him feel as if he had just left work, or that may have the render of his style altogether. But as for what kind of man he’d portray himself to be, Jason couldn’t bring himself to read him at all as tried. “I didn’t get your name?”

“Jeremy.”

“Are you here by yourself?”

“You could say that. I was taking a stroll through the city and, I ended up here.”

“Here... To a bar in the West Village?”

“Well yeah. What’s wrong with that?” Jeremy smirked.

“No nothing. I just, figured that if I wanted to wander someplace close to midnight, I probably wouldn’t want to stop at a bar by myself.”

“Maybe you don’t know the city, let alone the inhabitants that well.”

“Maybe, and you do?” Jason took a sip of the drink again.

Jeremy smiled “Well one could inquire that this is the city that never sleeps.”

Jason chuckled, annoyed at Jeremy’s sarcasm. “Yeah, right.”

The music in the bar began to simmer. A slow sax of dance, as if expecting anyone to dance in a sort of trance between parties of two. An aphrodisiac of love thrusting its emotion upon the crowd. That’s unusual for a bar of this magnitude, Jason thought. Knowing from experience that on a Saturday, the bar itself, were intense with dance music sustaining the integrity of today’s Pop Culture. But never a remnant of a nineties’ high school dance, as its music attempted to spark chemistry between two people.

To Jason’s surprise, the crowd were motioning to the captivating rhythm, staring at the crowd confused, the shifting of the music, almost like a spell were cast to motion themselves like zombies, unaware of the emotion or ecstasy they felt not more than a moment ago. No one were dancing then but conversing with close friends and others near the bar. The sudden sight of seeing those dancing, those of the young and those of the older mature men, danced the night into a bliss. Jason stared about amazed.

“Would you like to dance?” Jeremy asked suddenly.

Jason shook out of thought, although Jeremy did not appear to notice, and if he did, he did well to hide it. “We just met,” he said suddenly, quickly regretting it. “And I hardly know you.”

“That’s why I want to dance,” Jeremy rose his hand, his attitude determined, as if he expected Jason to agree and not refuse. “So, you can get to know me.”

Jason rose his glass from the counter to take another sip, to his surprise he saw the five shots of tequila before them. When did he place those there? He thought. He was about to distance himself away from Jeremy’s hand, until he turned from the bar to Jeremy, whose hand were still raised, his brown eyes fixed on him patiently, he rose an eyebrow, expecting Jason to say something else in refusal.

“Okay,” Jason said finally. He took a gulp of the drink in which he placed back on the counter, the burn in his throat, merely shattered his sense of awareness around him. Still he kept his composure, ready to abandon the five shot glasses. “Let’s do this.”

He reached for Jeremy’s hand, and Jeremy, interlocked his. Together they walked into the crowd. The sudden sharpness of his sight was weakening, naked in spirit, fearing the eyes around him would glare at his company or himself in disgust. Reflecting on that mindset, Jason shook it off, caring not what others thought. Then again, were that him speaking? Or the alcohol? he asked himself. It didn’t matter now, nor will it ever.

Jeremy paused in the middle of the dance floor, Jeremy’s hands slid down to Jason’s sides. Jason shivered for only a quick second having felt uncomfortable of never being handled. With his hand on Jeremy’s shoulder and the other hand with his, he cautiously gave in.

Jeremy smiled. “I take it you’re sort of new to the bar!”

Jason looked up at Jeremy’s eyes but at first was hesitant. “Yeah, you could say that, what gave me away?”

“Well first off, you don’t look twenty-one. Aren’t you the least bit uncomfortable with this sort of crowd?”

“No, not really. It’s kind of cool. Should I be worried?”

Jeremy smiled. “Of this bar, No. You shouldn’t. But in the outside world, I’d say there are much greater things than meets the eye.”

“Do you mean you?” he chuckled nervously.

“Me, maybe, but I also meant you.”

Jason was confused. “Me? What about me?”

Jeremy was about to speak but then held his head high and then looked down. “I just meant that at this age, nineteen, you think you know something, but you probably really don’t.”

“That sounds an awful lot like what you hear when you’re seventeen - -. Hang on, how did you even know how old I was?” he asked surprised.

“It was a guess. An intuition.”

“I think that’s a little too good for an intuition,” Jason could hear the tension in his voice. Although not sure of its trigger, his need for security were raising higher than he anticipated. Are you a psyche major or something?”

Jeremy laughed. “Nah, I don’t go to college.”

“So, what do you do?”

Jeremy perched his lip and hesitated “That would be one of my many secrets.”

“So, I take it you have a lot?”

“Just the ones I’m forced to keep.”

“Forced? Why would you be forced to keep your own secrets?”

“That’s because some secrets are not mine to tell.”

“I thought us getting to know each other, was the reason we were dancing? And you’re already telling me you have a secret.”

“That’s true.” said Jeremy. “But like you said. We just met.”

Annoyed at Jeremy’s possible means to mimic, Jason slowed himself, his hands still in Jeremy’s “I don’t expect you to trust me but telling someone you have things kept while getting to know someone, it sparks suspicion. And so, I’m suspicious as to why you would bring it up in the first place. Especially if you won’t tell me anything.”

“Maybe, but in case you’re a total psycho, I wouldn’t want to tell my secrets to you.”

“You’re the one telling me you have many secrets, and you think I’m a psycho?”

“I didn’t say you were, I just don’t know you well enough to share them. If you were in my position, I’d like to think you’d be cautious as to who you’d tell your business too, wouldn’t you think so?”

“I know what to be cautious of,” Jason shot. “I just don’t know you. And why I should be subject to be a psycho.”

“You tend to take things seriously, don’t you?” Jeremy’s voice was calm, as if not fearing the outcome of anything, his determination, started to annoy Jason more.

“I don’t understand why it’s so difficult to answer a simple question.”

Jeremy laughed. “Which question is that?”

“What’s your secret?” Jason asked.

“Oh, that one.” said Jeremy. “Boy, you ask a lot of questions. No wonder I couldn’t remember that one.”

“You know I’m beginning to think you’re mocking me.”

“Yeah, I get that a lot.” Jeremy laughed.

Jason nodded and smiled abruptly. “Forget it.”

“Please...Don’t leave.” Jeremy begged.

They both continued to dance. Jason looked around to see where Michael and Joseph were. “I wasn’t planning on it. Besides if I did, my two friends would sense the tension and think something went wrong. It’s my friend’s birthday, he should be the center of attention, and I really don’t need either of my friends on my tail. Expecting something to go wrong, when there isn’t.”

“So, you will remain dancing with me, for the sake of not being asked if something is wrong?”

“Correct.” Jason nodded looking from behind Jeremy. “Yes, because my friends are watching us.”

Jeremy turned to follow Jason's gaze, to see two men about Jason's age, smiling. They looked away long enough to realize Jeremy's eyes were fixed on them. "They seem charming."

Jeremy shook suddenly, pulling his hands away from Jason's side, he reached in the pocket of his slacks. His smile vanished, glaring at his phone. He bit his lip, nearly nodding in anger, Jason recognized his facial expression rather abruptly. "Is something wrong?" Jason asked.

"I have to go!" Jeremy let go of Jason and he sped through the crowd without saying another look back. Dumbfounded was confused, Jason felt, his chest weakened somehow, as if his organs parted, leaving a hollow hole where his chest cavity out to be.

Joseph and Michael made their way toward him, reluctant and concerned their expressions were. Jason sighed, ready for an explanation. "Here we go."

"Who was that?" Michael asked.

"Jeremy. He had to leave suddenly."

"Damn it! What did you do to scare him away?"

"I didn't... I mean... Well I don't know... He said he had to go. It must have been important."

Joseph nodded.

"I need some air." Jason turned, walking through the crowd, the path in which Jeremy disappeared. He could have sworn that he heard Joseph telling Michael to let Jason be as he parted away from them. Suddenly the hunger to feel the autumn air and escape the heat that surrounded the small space of the bar were relenting.

Pushing his way through the crowd, he could feel the blistering wind from a distance, reaching the front doorway, an exhilarating relief took hold, the air striking through coat, he sighed suddenly, feeling the need to shut his eyes, as well as the outside world for as long as he could manage.

Suspicious as to why Jeremy would wander off, the abrupt departure angered him, like a push to the chest from a total stranger, with no reason or explanation at all.

As he leaned against the scaffolding of the building beside the bar, Jason were caught off guard by the render of a man several feet from him, walking underneath the scaffold. His stare was fixed solely in Jason's direction, his long braids cowering upon his forest green trench coat down to his thighs. Amazed by the length of this man's hair, Jason considered his unusual attire, like an ensemble fitted for the earlier century, or from another country all together. Although from where Jason stood, he could have sworn it were a leather black trench coat, but if it weren't for the florescent lights above him, blooming upon the wires under the wooden boards of the scaffold. "Can I help you?" asked Jason, annoyed and not really looking to converse with another stranger.

"You must be Jason!"

"Yes." Jason flinched, quickly regretting having said anything at all. The long-haired man did not at all appear familiar to Jason to assume he seen him before "Who are you?"

The man looked at him with a smirk. "Forgive me, Jason. Let me introduce myself. My name is Amadeus. I am a sorcerer from the Realm of Nocturna and as I understand it, you are the son of Victor and Kirk, are you not?"

Jason gave Amadeus a look of disbelief, taking a minute to absorb and accept what he had just heard. He thought the man before him was insane “I’m sorry, but I don’t quite follow you.” Jason tried not to show reluctant mimicry. Did he say sorcerer? He thought.

“Yes, you do. You’re a sorcerer, surely you can sense I am too.”

“No sir, I’m not.” He said still surprised by what he just heard. “I think I should go now.”

“You’re lying.” The blunt statement in Amadeus’s voice made Jason pause.

“Excuse me,” Jason glared at Amadeus with a distraught glare.

“I excused as much. I don’t like being lied too. Perhaps we may talk in private?”

“No,” Joseph interrupted, appearing from behind Jason, causing him to flinch and look back in a partial relief. Both Joseph and Michael stood there beside Jason in security.

“Whatever you can say to Jason, you can say to us.” said Michael bluntly. Jason would have thought they were being rude but considering the stunt they witnessed Jeremy did not more than ten minutes ago, it’s understandable that they would be concerned.

Amadeus smiled. “I think it’s best to let Jason speak for himself...” He took a step forward, fearlessly as looking for a fight. “Now, now. Gentlemen surely you know I mean no harm.”

“Jason,” started Joseph, trying to get Jason’s attention.

At a loss for words, Jason wasn’t the type to be in the middle of an argument or let alone wait for his response, cowardice and tediously numb the ordeal portrayed itself, he stormed away. Joseph and Michael quickly followed him.

“Well, it was an honor to meet you Jason,” Amadeus said aloud. “...We will meet again.”

Making it toward the end of the sidewalk, Jason paused before the red light. Joseph and Michael had no difficulty trying to catch up with him, they were already at his pace.

“Jason, who was that guy? Why was he messing with you?”

“I don’t know. But he said he knew me.”

“And you’re sure you haven’t seen him before?”

“Positive.” Jason sighed.

Michael rolled his eyes “Okay, this is getting out of whack...Lets just flush it out with a few shots.”

“You guys go ahead.” said Jason suddenly. “I want to see if Kirk is home.”

“We can’t just leave you here.” said Joseph.

“Yes, you could.” barked Michael “Let’s go, the boys are probably looking for us.”

“No, no way!” Joseph protested. “I’m not doing it!”

Jason laughed. “No, seriously, you guys go ahead. I’ll be fine, Joseph. Don’t worry about me. Considering the state of things, I’ll only slow you guys down. Just let me be!”

“Will do, but you better call me on my cell, when you get home.” Michael demanded. “Or send a text if you could, because I won’t hear you through the crowd. Promise us buddy!”

“Will do.” Jason turned around, at the switch of the light Jason made his way, crossing from the direction in which he first came, the relief of being alone, were quickly turned to despair

as he recounted back onto the ideal that had transpired, he felt it best to stay alone for the evening and make it up to Michael when he had the chance.

A Sunday brunch, a trip around Central Park, a simple visit to Michael's house the following morning. Considering all that Michael were about to endure in the night ahead, he'd probably be to hungover to leave the house. It probably best to prepare a remedy of sorts to clear Michael out of the hangover. That were something Jason could make up for in the morning and surely Michael would approve.

Joseph had taken a big risk into staying the night with Michael, he'd already sacrificed so much, and Jason distraught having left him with Michael's insanity. But the feeling of having to stay at the bar would surely complicate things for Joseph and Michael, putting a damper on their mood as they attempted to have fun and make the most of it when they could.

He wished he could stay, he wished he could flush out the anger, the fear of rejection and relieve himself of the sudden danger that he felt lurked even as he made his way home. But it was like shaking off a toothache with the snap of his fingers. Impossible to steer away from the mindset. He wished he had that strength. But every fiber, every muscle, every limb pulled him away from the ordeal and begged him to return home, to his comfort zone where he could think, draw, make a coffee and cry.

Kirk arrived at the apartment. He placed his keys on the side table and headed straight for the bedroom. He closed the bedroom door behind him, walked over and sat on the bedside.

Stephanie informed him that she was to return home and may not speak to him for quite some time. To Kirk it was a relief, but it was a daunting feeling knowing that the familiar face was not to present herself in times of need rather than despair. Despite her flaws, Kirk believed that Stephanie's actions were always for the greater good. He knew he'd probably wouldn't hear from her for another six or seven months. After all, that's how it always was with the woman.

Kirk slid off the ring that made him look years older, the ring not only made him feel weak, but Kirk could feel a tolerable difference, when he wears the ring and when he takes it off.

He looked at the portrait of his son. He saw a resemblance to him though how alike they both seemed, Jason and Victor.

"Let's play a game shall we,"

Kirk froze at the sudden southern accent, he grew familiar with. "Glenico." he said without looking behind him.

"You tell me why you been hiding from me for so long," Glenico presented himself through the shadows of Kirk's open walk in closet. "And all is forgiven." A woman appeared behind Glenico, her tom boyish outfit, loose jeans, and a waist coat covering her top half, as well as her hair slit back in a mohawk sort of stance, had a blade in hand. A stature all too familiar to Kirk. "Always a nuisance to see you, Ingrid."

Kirk stood up from the bed and slowly he turned around and considered the Glenico's brown hazel eyes. Glenico wore a brown wrinkled short trench coat on top of a silky brown vest. His clothes looked burnt and damp.

"What are you doing here?" Kirk asked angrily.

“I saw you’re kid yesterday.” Glenico went on, ignoring Kirk. “He looks just like Victor, although he does have your eyes.”

“Why did you try to kill my son?” Kirk asked angrily.

“I was only trying to scare him.” Glenico teased. “I wanted to see if he carried the same bravery gene as you.”

Kirk grew angry but did not want to lose his cool. “Yet you’re still up to your old tricks again.”

“Nah my respect and love for you hasn’t changed.” said Glenico perching his lips and smiled. “Just like I know you’re love for me hasn’t changed.”

“Ah so, still having trouble accepting that I hate you.”

“I’ve been on an emotional rollercoaster without you for twenty years,” said Glenico twirling himself around. “It’s about time you accept defeat and take ride on it with me.”

Kirk gave a look of disgust “Go to hell!”

“For god’s sake, Glenico, let’s kill him.” Ingrid wobbled her shoulders, her blade in hand she stepped closer before Glenico. “You been after the same punk for a while now. You can catch better fish than this ass hole!”

“But look at him, he’s too good to be true!”

Ingrid rolled her eyes.

“And to hell I’ll go. Oh, I will, but if you don’t give me what I want, sugarplum. I’ll take your beloved Jason with me.”

Outraged, Kirk lunged for Glenico in a haste.

Glenico stepped aside and Kirk missed. “Ingrid, I got this!” said Glenico excitedly. “Look for the blade.”

Ingrid did as commanded and darted out of the bedroom.

His pride and anger were his ally now, Kirk quickly got up to his feet and threw a punch towards Glenico face but Glenico blocked. Kirk attempted to throw another punch, but this time didn’t hit Glenico but the air. Then Glenico tried to throw a punch at Kirk but blocked and gave Kirk the opportunity to punch Glenico in the left jaw and didn’t miss this time. Glenico almost fell back but didn’t. Kirk tried to throw another punch but Glenico grabbed the oncoming fist, then threw his right leg to Kirk’s chin and Kirk flew up to the air over the bed and landed on his feet facing Glenico’s direction. Kirk smeared blood away from his mouth, he was bleeding.

Glenico laughed. “Now, Now, is that any way to treat your lover?” Glenico jumped and tried to lunge a kick towards Kirk.

Kirk pushed Glenico’s leg away then his other leg when he failed the first. While Glenico landed on the ground, Kirk threw a punch towards Glenico’s face but Glenico blocked. Then Glenico threw another punch towards Kirk’s chest and Kirk flew through the open door to the wall of the hallway. Standing against the wall, Kirk watched for Glenico as he then sped across towards Kirk to throw a punch to his head. Kirk moved his head to the side and Glenico then slammed his fist into the wall where his head once was.

Glenico's fist was stuck in the wall, which then gave Kirk the chance to throw a punch to Glenico's face. Glenico flew to the wall opposite, still standing. Kirk threw another punch towards Glenico but Glenico blocked and threw one more punch to Kirk and stepped back. When Glenico threw another punch and then Kirk blocked Glenico then kicked Kirk with his right leg to Kirk's chest.

Kirk flew a few feet away still standing and Glenico lunged toward him throwing another kick towards Kirk's rib, causing him to stand against the wall opposite. As Glenico attempted to throw one more punch, Kirk was getting ready to block when Glenico took a fist back and used the other fist to strike at Kirk's face. Kirk fell on the floor. Kirk was about to get up but then Glenico slammed his foot to Kirk's neck.

Glenico stood staring down to Kirk's eyes. Kirk stared at him while trying to catch his breath. Glenico sneered.

"How does it feel?" he whispered. "How does it feel to try and catch the oxygen for your dear life as it slowly slips away, trying to latch on to a seed that doesn't want life in the first place?"

"Perhaps it just takes getting used to." Kirk struggled.

"You could've come with me. But no, you're just too stubborn."

"The world doesn't evolve around you, Glenico. You never wanted to love me; you just wanted to possess me. Look at you. You're a narcissistic maniac who can't accept that I've moved on. We're no longer allies, when are you going to get that through your head? When are you going to...?"

Glenico put his foot to the neck of Kirk a little tighter.

“You shouldn’t say things you don’t mean.” smirked Glenico. “You’ll see, once I slash that little pretty boys face, only then you’ll come to your senses.”

“If you lay even a...” Kirk paused at the sudden tightness of Glenico’s foot on his neck

“I wouldn’t bet on it, sweet face!”

“I can’t find it!” Ingrid yelled from the closed rooms beyond.

“Of course not!” Glenico sighed. “You wouldn’t happen to have the blade in which belonged to Victor Song, would you?”

Trying to catch his breath through the tightened airways of his throat. Surely Kirk knew that Glenico knew the answer to his question, even if Kirk didn’t say so.

“I figured as much!”

The weakened stairway creaked at every footstep Jason took, ascending the wooden narrow path leading to the apartment, were impossible to allow hordes of people to approach up or down.

He paused before the apartment door, the whispers of grunting, someone in pain, came from the other side. “Oh no!”

Quickly unlocking the door, he pushed the door open. He darted inside looking about anxiously for Kirk. He peeked inside the living room. No one there. Although the couch was flipped, cabinets to the large shelves were disarranged and tossed to the floor as if someone had ransacked them a moment ago.

The cries came again, this time from the end of the hallway toward Kirk's bedroom. Following the noise, he paused. The sight of the hazel eyes with, his raven attire dark and sinister from when he last saw him by Washington Square Park. The stranger kneeling below Glenico, with the dagger to his neck, did not at all seem known to Jason, although his familiar features, his fixed expression upon him, were too captivating not to glare away.

"Jason, leave here now!" Kirk begged.

Jason flinched at the dominant voice, coming from the young handsome man. "Dad?"

Glenico smiled. "Did I mention, Kirk? That he has your eyes?"

"What the hell do you want?" Jason asked, annoyed to hear Glenico's southern accent, teasing and sinister.

"Oh please, little boy! There's nothing you can give me. But your sweet little daddy here, can! Ingrid a little help here!"

Silence.

"Damn it, Ingrid! Where the hell are you?" Glenico yelled confused. Jason caught his glares, who seemed almost accusatory and confused. "What the hell did you do?"

Jason shrugged in a panic.

"Don't listen to him." Kirk groaned. Jason glared at the mysterious young man, whose resemblance and voice were that of Kirk's, watching as he slipped into his pocket.

"We still deny our love, Kirk?" Glenico went on. "You know full well your emotions are toward mine and mine alone."

“You’re sick!” With Kirk’s hand delved into his pocket, Kirk bit his lip as he attempted for a button on the cellular phone, at a state of triumph, he pressed a button and an alarm sounded off in the bedroom behind him.

Jason recognized it all too well. That really is Kirk, he thought.

Startled, Glenico quickly glared behind him. Given the chance, Kirk elbowed him in the groin, his dagger fell to the floor, and Kirk punched the witch upwards. Causing him to step back, lose his balance and lean against the wall beside him. “You fool!”

“Jason get out here now!” Kirk yelled.

“I’m not leaving you here with him!” Jason started forward.

“No! Go!”

Within the palm of Glenico’s hand, metallic like tentacles sprung out of his flesh and sprinted, faster than the blink of an eye, coiling around Jason’s leg.

“Dad!” Jason shook in horror at the sudden impact, the tentacles tightened around his leg, and shrunk forward, into Glenico’s palm.

“Glenico, stop!” Kirk yelled angrily.

The tentacles tightened, and Jason slipped. Sucking him closer like that of a measuring tape, in a swift speed.

Kirk grabbed the dagger Glenico dropped and threw it towards the tentacles slicing them apart, the dagger struck the wooden floorboards. Jason ripped away the spikey metal tentacles and quickly he crawled away.

As Kirk lunged toward Glenico, the witch took his right leg to Kirk's chest, grabbing his arms, he flipped Kirk over himself, letting him crash onto the wooden floorboard, head first behind him.

Kirk shook it off, rose up and punched Glenico where he stood.

"Hold on, dad! You got this!" Jason got up, darting for the living room where the house phone had been. Immediately captivated by all his options, he took his cell phone from his pocket instead, still clearing himself from harm's way, now that his father, mysteriously younger and more aggressive than ever, were winning the fight.

Stepping into the living room, Jason placed the phone by his ear, fidgeting nervously in hopes that Kirk could put out a little longer. As he made it to the living room window looking out, tempted to yell out the window for help, his hands shook, at the sudden adrenaline and rage that filled his mindset, it was close to impossible to rationalize how to approach or even consider the witch from a distance. He was too powerful to aggressive and fast for Jason to even render him an opponent.

A sudden gust of force passed through his fingers, distancing Jason from his phone. Caught off guard, the phone slipped out of his hands and tore through the air behind him. He turned in time to see that the long-haired figure appears before the opening of the living room.

"Amadeus!" Jason watched the long- haired figure cautiously, his forest green trench coat, were like silk, shiny in the florescent light of the living room. Amadeus raised his arm and a green bolt of energy, cackling like electricity into his grasp, forming into the shape of a dagger... A sword. The blade whose length were several feet taller than its wielder.

“What the hell!” Jason stepped back.

“I told you we would see each other again.” Amadeus took his sword and raised it towards Jason’s neck. Jason took a step back looking at the long sword cautiously as it led him into his living room. “Make one more noise and you’ll end up like the bitch witch above us!” He snapped his fingers, and within a second, the ceiling let out a crash, a body emerged from out the shadows, crashed onto the wooden floor before him.

Jason stepped away. “Oh my - -. Oh no!” He could still hear Glenico and Kirk fighting in the back of the apartment, but his attention was fixed solely on the sorcerer Amadeus. “What the hell do you people want?” Jason asked.

“That’s a tedious question. Surely, your father told you this day would come!” Amadeus lowered his blade, strutting closer to Jason, cornering him where he stood. “I want just you... My Aquarian Sorcerer!” Grabbing Jason’s neck, he choked him, raising him off the ground.

Gasping for air, Jason attempted to push Amadeus’s arm away, trying to loosen his grasp but his attempt was like a light tap against the sorcerer’s strong and still arms. Solid as a pole, whose mechanical claw attempted to sever his vocal chords

As a shadow appeared by the entrance to the living room, Jason caught the sight of a familiar face, his blue ignited blade rose high, he swung it towards Amadeus like a baseball bat, and at its apex a shard of energy burst through midair. Amadeus let go of Jason, letting him collapse onto the ground and raise his green ignited blade in defense against the projectile that formed from the blue opposing blade. “You fool!”

“Get away from him!” Jeremy yelled, he stood tall, taller than Amadeus.

Trying to catch his breath, Jason glared at the curly haired figure, his attire the same as when he last saw him at the Boots& Saddles bar. His stature was not as sure or intimidating as his opponents. Still... He held his own and started toward Amadeus. "Leave now, Sorcerer!"

"You won't kill me. You must be another one of Zarius's puppies. You wouldn't kill me in his name! He won't allow it!" said Amadeus amused.

"Care to try me?"

"You modern teenagers these days," He turned to glare at Jason with a sinister smirk. "You think you have nothing to lose but I assure you! We all do! Whether it will be a loved one or... a simple limb!"

Jason could still hear Kirk and Glenico at the far side of the apartment. He wanted so badly to get up and help Kirk. But the man before him had become more fearsome than Jason could imagine.

"And Jason," said Amadeus turning to face him. "We'll meet once more. You'll give me what's required, or you'll end up like poor Ingrid there!"

Jason looked at Amadeus in disgust and fear, and down finally at the poor motionless woman on the ground. He concluded that Amadeus were in fact here with Glenico, but as to why he murdered the woman, who was also an ally of Glenico from what Jason had gathered already, was beyond what Jason could comprehend.

Amadeus took a step toward Jeremy and suddenly electricity consumed his body and he disappeared within a portal like vortex. Jason watched in horror, he couldn't believe his eyes, for they witnessed more abnormalities than what were displayed in a horror movie.

“Are you alright?” Jeremy sighed, allowing his shoulders to sink in anger.

Jason did not answer, he rose up from the floor, skipping over Ingrid’s corpse, pushing passed Jeremy and started toward the hallway in which where he left Kirk. Nervously he hoped that Glenico was at his end, and that he would leave his father alone.

Jason ran to the

Jeremy quickly followed.

Stopping in the middle of the hallway, Jason watched as Kirk had Glenico on head lock, somehow making into the middle room. Trying to shake him and stop him off, Glenico pushed himself backward, trudging and struggling towards the window behind him. Glenico laughed as Kirk struggled to keep the chokehold on him. As Kirk strengthened his legs, keeping away from the window, Glenico rose his leg against the wall, and kicked himself backward, crashing through the window, they dove out in an instant.

“NOOO!!!!” Jason ran for the back room. “Oh my god! No! No! NO!” To the window, he glared out through the broken glass and onto the ground, the glass still crashing against the pavement below. But there was no sign of Kirk or the Witch.

Nothing out of ordinary as if nothing happened in the first place. The pedestrians still walked among the sidewalks and the cars still drove along their way, did they not see the broken glass falling like rain against the pavement. Did they not care? Jason thought. “Where is he? Where could he have gone.”

Light headed and weak, he pulled himself away from the window, and glared back into the apartment which were accompanied by silence, and Jeremy who stood in the doorway of the room in which they were in. His legs almost ready to collapse, Jason slowly fell onto the floor. Losing consciousness, he saw Jeremy approach him, attempting to catch him before he hit the ground. But it was too late, his mind drifted out of consciousness, overwhelmed with the fear of loss.

Chapter 4

Slowly Jason opened his eyes, staring about weakly at the bleached white ceiling of the large room, whose patterns were box shaped, like tiles on the floor. An armoire passed the foot of the bed were beside the door in which Jason questioned were someone or something waiting behind it.

The bed to his left were identical to the bed in which he lay. Uncertain of how long he was out, it was impossible to determine the time of the day while there were no windows among the four walls, and no one in the room but him to say so. “How did I get here?” he said to himself. Recollecting on all that had transpired, his mind raced.

“Kirk!” As Jason rose, an open envelope on the nightstand between two beds caught his attention. Carelessly he snatched it from the stand, sliding out a piece of parchment with a written text.

Portal Present!
439 Broadway New York, NY.
The Moonlight Cathedral

Jason shook as he heard the door open, dropping the envelope onto the top of the nightstand.

“About time you wake up!” said Jeremy stepping inside. “I thought you were going to be out longer.” Surprised to see a different side of the tall figure, Jason concluded that the change of Jeremy’s attire looked a little more dominant. His dark navy jean jacket down to the calves was sleeveless, revealing a black short sleeve under, and fingerless gloves in which he had placed his hands in his pockets.

Jason rendered him in a fit of with rage. “Where am I?”

“We’re in a hotel. I couldn’t leave you in your apartment. There are spellcasters coming after you and I think it’s best that we stay low key!”

“Spellcasters? What are you talking about? Why are these spellcasters after me? What do they want?”

Jeremy laughed. “I see you were put in solo for a while, huh?”

“I don’t see this being a laughing matter.”

“Look, I don’t know what they want or why there after you. But if you come with me someplace, I’m sure we’ll find out”

“I take it someplace is the address written on that letter?” Jason snapped. “Why should I go with you anyway? I have to go to the police and tell them my father is missing!”

“Wow! You’re both nosy and clueless.”

“I have to find my old man!” Jason paused, sensing it were an understatement. Considering the way his father looked when he saw him at the apartment, young, aggressive and vibrant than that of a thirty-year-old. he started for the door. “I have to go!”

Jeremy grabbed Jason by the arm. “Wait!”

“I can’t! Glenico could kill him!”

“He won’t!” Jeremy said with confidence. “Glenico has been on to Kirk for quite some time. He knows where Kirk lives and where he’s been. If Glenico wanted Kirk dead, He would’ve killed him by now. So, in this case, he’s not our problem.”

“Well of course he’s our problem. He has Kirk!”

“I know! This makes him safe for now.”

“How the hell does it make him safe? You saw what that mad man was capable of! If he doesn’t want Kirk dead, then why would he take him? Why would my father go through so much trouble to stay away from him?” Jason asked.

“Didn’t you see the desperation in Glenico’s eyes? In his actions? He wants Kirk in a way that couldn’t possibly be vengeful!”

“Forgive me, but I haven’t necessarily had a conversation with Glenico,” said Jason sarcastically. “So, I can’t really pin his character except that he was a great big snake when I last encountered him.”

“He’s obsessed with your father.” Jeremy said bluntly ignoring Jason’s sarcasm. “Glenico is desperate. He’s been after Kirk for quite some time.”

Jason crossed his arms “How do you know all this?”

“Like I said, if you come with me, it will become clear!”

“What about the other one?”

“Amadeus, you mean?” Jeremy nodded. “He’s a different matter! One I’d have to take up with my superiors and associates. He’s the one we should be concerned about right now. Giving everything that’s going on, we must be careful, he is a very dangerous man. He makes Glenico look like a tick.” Jeremy walked to the nightstand, grabbed the envelope and the letter placing it in his pocket. “Come! Let’s head to the cathedral!”

“I’m not sure I want to go with you. I hardly even know you.”

“To be frank, you really don’t have a choice in the matter.” Jeremy said bluntly. “If you want answers, if you want to find Kirk, then you’re going to have to bear with me. It’s not safe for you at your apartment or by yourself even.”

Jason thought hard for a moment. He knew Jeremy was right, despite the majority of what he witnessed as well as what Jeremy stated, it still didn’t make sense. But there were no other options. “If I go with you, do I have your word that you will help me find Kirk?”

“Of Course!”

“Fine!” He said finally.

Jeremy walked over to the bed opposite, he pushed the bed aside and picked up what looked to be a sword.

Realizing that it was the same blade he used to drive Amadeus away, he grew suspicious as to why he'd hide it in a confined corner. "You aren't really going to walk around with that thing, are you?" Jason asked. "I mean people may think you're crazy."

"What? My soldora?" Jeremy said puzzled. "If I am to walk around in defense, yes I do!"

"What the hell is a soldora?"

Jeremy smirked irritably but was acutely amused. "It's a spellcasters weapon that ignites within a spellcasters aura."

Jason sighed, shutting his eyes in annoyance. "That's the third time I heard that word...Or fourth... What the hell is a spellcaster?"

"Damn, did Kirk not tell you anything?" Jeremy opened the door to the room and started out. "I'll tell you on the way!"

Why would he? Jason thought. What did he have to hide? He followed him, strutting through the yellow illuminated corridor whose light were a shade darker than the room he was in. The ceiling lamps flickered, letting out a buzz in rhythms through the awkward corridor. "So why are we going to this cathedral?" asked Jason.

"To take a portal to meet some comrades. I would teleport, but I don't want to risk having you faint again!"

"Teleport! You could teleport?"

Jeremy did not reply. He paused before the elevator doors, pressing the call button, the quickly slid opened. They stepped inside, and the doors slid closed behind them. “A spellcaster is exactly what it suggests. We are a magical breed, we’ve been around for centuries.”

“We?”

“You’re just like us! You are of spellcaster ancestry! Although I don’t know what kind of spellcaster you are.”

“This can’t be - -. I mean - -. Kirk never - -.” He paused suddenly the faint words of certainty filled his mind with what he had thought not too long ago. “Amadeus was saying that I was some sort of sorcerer. But sorcerers don’t exist. Do they? I mean he said that I have two fathers. One is Kirk obviously, and the other was a sorcerer named Victor... Victor Song. But that’s not true, I only have Kirk!”

Jeremy nodded as if he understood. “To answer your question, yes. Sorcerers do exist. And you should know that if one of your fathers is of a mutant or magical being, then that would make you in that line of breed as well!”

“So, wait! That would make me one of them? That would make me a sorcerer? But Kirk isn’t a sorcerer.”

“I was referring to Victor Song!”

“I told you, Victor isn’t - -.”

“Are you sure about that? Exactly what did your dear “old” daddy Kirk tell you? For goodness sake, did you ever wonder or at least suspect?”

“No - -.”

“Anything at all to suggest otherwise? Suggest that the world around you, aren’t the only one present? Did you ever question your father Kirk’s motives? The reasons why he is, the way he is?”

Jason stood silent. He recalled plenty of times as to why Kirk had wanted Jason to be home schooled and not be taught in public schools. It wasn’t until he reached High School that he was finally allowed to go about meeting friends and others in a stable environment. Still, he had no reason to question as to why Kirk were so secretive. It was the norm to his understanding. It was always Jason and Kirk. It was never Jason, Kirk and Victor Song... Who was Victor Song?

He recalled to when he last seen Kirk, young, vibrant and different. He wasn’t the same man he knew throughout his life, at least not in a lifetime that he was made aware of. It was different. How could one person keep a lie like that for so long. He wanted to believe it was Glenico’s doing. It was Glenico that made Kirk look like that, but to what end? Besides the fact that he was obsessed with him. “Why would Kirk lie about that? Why never mention...This sorcerer, Victor Song?”

“I wish I could answer that for you!”

“So... are you a sorcerer?”

“No, I’m a wizard!”

“What’s the difference?”

“Speck Cells.” said Jeremy bluntly. “Specks are mutant cells within magical beings that flow within our body. It creates an aura. No human can detect them. But other magical beings can

sense them when they're near, in other words, another spellcaster. There are six different types of spellcasters. And spellcasters of their own line can sense another one's aura. For example, I'm a wizard. And if another wizard is near me, I can detect and sense them. We know there near when our cells start to react in a vibrant function and ignite our aura. It's sort of like a sixth sense."

"That's probably how Amadeus knew where I was."

"Perhaps." said Jeremy. "Amadeus is a sorcerer, but I can't confirm that would make you one too."

"He did somehow assume that I was. He said I was an Aquarian sorcerer. Whatever that means... This is bull - -."

The elevator stopped, and the doors opened revealing dull massive hall of the hotel, like that of the corridor a few floors above. Dim but brighter as the windows revealed the blue tinted sky. The dawn approaching upon the busy Manhattan streets in the distance.

Dark and damp, the windows were wide open revealing the sun bursting through the clouds and the pouring rain falling from the skies above.

Kirk woke, lifting his head, he looked around plainly. Attempting to move his limbs, he shook, realizing his hands were tied with tightened ropes, blistering him the more he moved behind him upon the metal chair. Although no furniture was around, he was facing two large glass doors that looked to be an entrance to the balcony. Kirk couldn't tell for sure. The door covered in sandpaper, blocked the view only leaving lines of light in the edges of the doorframe. Behind him

were countertops, dusted as if it were not used for some time. He sighed in relief to see a shadow appear underneath the other side of the door that could be only a bedroom or better yet, the exit.

The door opened, revealing a figure he knew all too well.

“Where’s my son?” Kirk yelled.

“With the Cobra Entity, I presume!” said Amadeus. “In a place you would know all too well! Amadeus raised a dagger out of his pocket side and shot it towards kirks leg.

“AGGGHH!!” Kirk screamed.

“I find it remarkable how you choose to stay under the radar for twenty years! Living in secret with your son. Right under our noses!”

“Us?” Kirk groaned. “Working with Glenico, are you?”

Amadeus ignored him. “And in your neighborhood, the one in which you grew up, under the guise of an older gentlemen. With the use of the ring that was on your finger. Had to be the magic, the clever contraption of Victor Song! Speaking of which - -.” Amadeus turned the blade clockwise, impaled into Kirk’s leg.

He screamed in agony. “Stop!! What the hell do you Want?”

“Come on! Surely you know where we could find Victor Song!”

“I don’t know where he is,” Kirk groaned. “But so, help me, if you touch him, I’ll break you in two!”

“So harsh, you’ve become. Clearly you don’t fear death, but you often welcome it!”

“Whatever Glenico has promised you, he won’t give it!”

“Fool! What makes you think I work with Glenico? Especially since I wiped out his little subordinate. Ingrid was it?”

Kirk bit his lip eager to get the blade from out his thigh, left abandoned as Amadeus spoke, somehow the sorcerer’s words made the blade more irritating for Kirk to put up with. “Why do you want Victor so bad?”

“It is not I, who wants Victor. But a certain someone does. Someone you would know all too well!”

Kirk sighed, anger filled his mind as well as the pain that sparked at every move he made upon the metal chair. “How is the Starlighter doing these days?” Kirk struggled to keep his composure, keeping his mind set to steer away from the pain in his thigh. “Enjoying his time as a servant to the gods?”

Amadeus gave a slight smirk. “Wow! You really have been secluding yourself, haven’t you? We’ve a lot to catch up on.”

“What are you talking about?”

“Oh, it will make sense later. You see, there are many forms of immortality. No doubt about it in the Spellcaster history. You however, were very fortunate, but not fortunate for long.”

“So, what, are you going to kill me? Go ahead! You’ll never find Victor if you do!”

“Don’t be a fool,” said Amadeus. “You know you value your life as much as you value Jason’s.”

“Maybe I do. So why don’t you quit being a coward and prove me wrong?”

Amadeus smiled. “Be patient, your time will come!” He pulled the dagger from out of Kirk’s thigh in a haste. Kirk yelled in agony, his screams echoed through the hollow halls, Kirk himself thought he were going deaf, when his ears gave out within that moment.

Chapter 5

The rain was a downpour, although Jeremy did not at all let it worry him, allowing it to soak him as he trudged quickly toward the cathedral. Jason followed him in hopes that he was there already. They made it to Broadway not more than five minutes ago, but the relief of having to walk less were far from Jason’s reach.

“At the middle of the avenue is our destination!” said Jeremy. “Just bear with me a little longer.”

“It’s not the rain that gets me! It’s a piece of cake. But the damn walking...”

“Not in this Realm!” Jeremy called, he stared behind him at Jason, but did not stop.

Not this realm? Jason thought.

As Jeremy were about to ascend the steps of the large stair to the cathedral. Jason paused before taking another step.

Jeremy stared at him. “We’re here! Giving up already?”

Jason sighed in anger. Taking a breath, he started forward, walking up the steps reaching Jeremy as he walked on.

Jeremy walked to Jason's side as they started up the steps of the cathedral. Jeremy opened the front door, gesturing for Jason to walk in. The door closed behind them, shutting out the falling rain and cars blaring the horns from afar. "About time."

Looked around the tall arches that led to the mantle up ahead, the room filled his nostrils with incense, the soothing calm took over. Silent as the large open space were, lacking any other human aside from Jeremy and himself, Jason could hear nothing but his breathing. His wet sneakers let out squeaks at every one of his footsteps as he leaned against the bench, panting for breath.

"Follow me," Jeremy demanded suddenly, he started down the aisle between the two rows of benches, leading to the candles that paved a way toward the arch corridor by the mantle.

Jason followed, he thought about what it would be like to get married here. In the large space surrounded by countless, cousins, sisters, brothers, parents and friends as well as their friends. It would have been a dream come true to any bride and groom. A feat in which Jason wondered would ever come across his means to want to marry.

To create a family bigger than the duo he was accustomed to all these years, accustomed to Kirk and his son, Jason. That's what it seemed like much of his life. Tedious as the thought was, he wanted a chance to have a family, and the church, with its tall arches, painted ceilings, and glass paintings of the Virgin Mary, as well as Jesus Christ, reminded Jason of that dream in an instant. Would that hope be shattered in the eyes of Higher Power, especially when learning he was a spellcaster? Was it a form of good? Or a remnant of sin?

Making it toward the archway corridor beside the alter, Jason followed Jeremy, stepping inside in time to see a large study room, but no larger than that of his living room of his apartment. He saw there was an empty archway, dusted were engravings that Jason thought perhaps were of Latin context. It was round, standing in the middle of the room. As Jason stepped inside the room, Jeremy closed the door behind him.

“You ready?” Jeremy asked.

“For what?”

Jeremy let out a smirk. “To take a portal?”

Jason grew nervous. “Uh yeah sure... This place we’re going to, is it far?”

Jeremy looked at him in puzzlement. Well it isn’t in New York City. Or on Earth for that matter, at least not this one. Depending on how you look at it! It’s in the Realm of Santuario.”

“Realm of Santuario.”

“You’ll see when we get there. Come on. Don’t be paranoid.”

“I’m not being paranoid!” Jason shot.

Jeremy smiled and reached out for Jason’s hand.

Breathing shakily, Jason grabbed Jeremy’s hand and they walked closer to the archway. Jeremy waved his left hand in front of the Archway and a circle of black clouds began to form before them, covering the edges of the archway a mist of the black clouds now forged the empty façade, what now became a passage way.

“Good lord!” Jason caught himself stepping back, Jeremy’s hold on him, preventing him from moving another muscle.

“You’re in the house of the lord!” Jeremy began. “I’d refrain from using any further remarks that provoke his name!”

Jason rolled his eyes. Jeremy’s hands were locked with Jason’s as they now entered the portal. Jason took a deep breath, shutting his eyes, at the same capacity as if he were getting a flu shot from the doctor’s appointment. He entered the black cloud and felt a vibrant sensation captivate his body, he shook as it swallowed him whole. Within seconds, a warm breeze, like the temperature of the summer beach, overpowered his senses, and he felt the light heat as the sun beamed across his eyelids.

Opening his eyes, the clouds were drifting away from his retina, in time to reveal the tall reflective steels, countless tall rectangular arc patterns scraping the clouds of the blue tinted summer sky. A city of New York fast forward toward years of infinite, from what Jason imagined.

Jeremy let go of Jason’s hand. “Welcome to the Realm of Santuario! The city that lacks the definition of sleep!”

“Wow!” Stepping out of the arch, which were like a mirror image of the one he stepped in back at the cathedral, his gaze at the reflective windows above him and afar, were remarkably structured in ways that would take years to complete. New York were nothing like it. No signs of oceans for another several miles but he could see the grasslands in the distance, trees tall and vivid with its natural color against the sun’s light. The horizon in the distance showed countless buildings in various length, some of which exceed and hung tall through the forests in the far ends of the city.

Soaring vehicles of sorts were driving in midair between the skyscrapers, its contraptions looked careless and with no means of control to prevent a crash, but Jason saw the lights attached to buildings to which he concluded were the traffic lights that kept them busy. “What are those flying things?”

“They’re Jetcars!”

“We’re on top of the Avaya building. It’s a banking building for those who seek trade and money, in case you were going to ask me what that is!”

Making himself closer toward the edge of the railing, he paused as he glared down remarkably at the countless stories below him, wondering perhaps that the building itself were taller than the tallest skyscrapers in New York, and perhaps the same length if not taller than the mountains of Mount Everest.

And to his surprise, at the far bottom of the buildings foundation, cars drove at the same pace of the Jetcars from what Jason had gathered, were cars driving along the road. Jason held his head, shutting his eyes and steering away from the edge as vertigo consumed his mindset. Not at all looking to faint again like he done at the apartment, he turned away. “I never knew such a place existed.”

Jeremy stood several feet away from the balcony with arms crossed. “The Realm of Santuario is one of many realms. Besides Earth, there are places that spellcasters like us get to live in harmony. The Santuarians are equivalent of humans and spellcasters from Earth. But not all realms are safe. Some are cursed, others lie in chaos or some are controlled as an evil empire. But here is peace. This is a Realm that is governed by a democracy as well as monarchy.”

“Monarchy? You mean this realm is controlled by a King?”

“Yes,” Jeremy replied. “King Marcus. He’s a wizard, like myself with an ancestry that exceeds as far as perhaps centuries known to man.”

“So, you’ve met this King?”

“Only once,” said Jeremy. “During my ascension to becoming a wizard several years ago.”

Jason nodded.

“Come! We should get going!”

Jason followed Jeremy and walked towards the elevator back from where they came. As they walked towards the double doors, they began to slide open. Jason and Jeremy stepped inside, and the doors closed. Jeremy pressed the M button. Jason thought perhaps the letter M was the initial for the Main Floor. The elevator vibrated and began to descend.

As the elevator finally stopped, the doors opened. Amazed, Jason gasped at the sight of countless people within the large lobby, whose walls were of high steel holding up the triangular glass patterned across the ceiling, revealing the tall buildings outside.

Jeremy started forward, and Jason followed, with relentless curiosity, he couldn’t help but look up at the tall arches and the countless buildings that appeared tall behind the glass walls.

Jason nearly tripped bumping into the man before him. He shook off his curiosity, trying to keep his focus on the main ground. Glaring about confused, the residents or the inhabitants from what he could gather, were dressed in different attire than that he’d know back in New York. Some in which were dressed like monks from the Asian and European cultures, others, amazons from

somewhere that he may not recognize. But could compare they were a render from the middle ages of Asian culture. “Exactly how old are these people?” he thought.

Clothing that looked to be of some sort of Amazon vintage gear, as well as military attire were in different shades, present within the hall. Different cultural based entities and upbringings that seemed to farfetched for an event of sorts. An event he thought would occur only on Halloween.

Even business suits strutted across the lobby, that looked like they migrated from the City Hall of New York to the large lobby of the Avaya Building. “I wonder if Kirk knew about this place.”

“He must have! Especially if he knew what intervals were on his shoulders!”

Making their way toward the façade of the lobby, they descended the large steps. Jeremy rushed a little forward as Jason followed.

Jeremy raised his arm upward. Jason thought he was trying to hail for a taxi but thought perhaps that they didn’t have that sort of thing in the Realm of Santuario.

To Jason’s surprise, Jeremy unsheathed a blade from his back brace, the soldora in which Jeremy told Jason were a spellcaster’s weapon. “Who are you trying to kill?” Jason asked worriedly.

Within seconds, blue sparks of energy were cackling out of Jeremy’s blade, it ignited letting out the blue illuminated color like it had done back at Jason’s apartment.

As Jeremy swung the blade letting it warp and cackle, its energy shot toward the road, its energy formed tackling the street and generating what looked to be the render of an automobile.

Shocked, Jason glared remarkably at the generating car, forming as its navy-blue tint took shape, its tires searing across the pavement, the convertible let out a shine, as if untouched. A fine finish ready for its first drive since leaving car dealership.

Jason nodded. "Not sure if I could take much more of this."

"I would have summoned a jetcar I had parked in Headquarters, but I don't want to risk you vomiting in that vehicle, it's a closed space and neither of us would be comfortable if it came to that." Jeremy sheathed his blade back in his back brace. "Get in!"

Jason entered the passenger side of the car with Jeremy in the driver seat and they sped off. Disappointed that Jeremy did not have a jetcar instead, he considered what Jeremy had said about his getting motion sickness. His mind had raced quicker than a speeding train and having a weak brain as well as a need to hurl on the way to their destination were not a worry necessary considering the state of things.

Jeremy dug into the glove compartment. "Here is your phone," Jeremy handed him the device. "You're going to need it to make a phone call around here. These only works in selected realms excluding Earth."

"And don't try calling Kirk! We can't risk having the spellcasters Amadeus, or even Glenico tracking us. We have to be cautious!"

"I understand." Jason's heart fell, he remembered that Michael and Joseph insisted that he call as soon as he got home from the Boots& Saddles Bar, which he neglected to do firsthand. His cell phone was left at the apartment, and his phone must be blown up by now as to whether Michael, Joseph and even Rebecca were worried sick of his whereabouts, calling him

compulsively without any clue as to what we're going on. He wanted to call them at least. To put their mind at ease before they bring the attention of others into the picture and create a bigger scene with people he wouldn't deem fit to control the situation.

These were spellcasters, Jason thought. The police were no match for them, and probably, or most likely wouldn't know how to handle a situation of this magnitude. He had to be smart and somehow convince Jeremy to put his friends at ease. But he already had enough on his plate, and Jason were not in full compliance to trust the wizard first hand.

"I understand you're a wizard, but you sound an awful lot like a C.I.A agent."

"An agent doesn't deal with supernatural near-death experiences every day." said Jeremy.

"I haven't seen you any dangerous encounters on the way here."

Jeremy shrugged his shoulders "That's because I'm on protective duty. I'm not exactly on the hunt for any evil spellcasters, now am I? I'm working as a shield rather than a sword."

"You sound like you don't want that." said Jason.

"Let's just say it's a vacation, one that I rarely get these days."

"How did you come about being part of this...Cobra Entity?" Jason asked. "Are you originally from this realm?"

"No, not really!" Jeremy replied. "I'm from Earth."

"So how did you come across here?"

"It's a long story."

Jason shrugged. “Well if you haven’t noticed, I suppose we have nothing but time.”

Jeremy nodded. “When I was fifteen I told my mom a truth she didn’t want to hear. She didn’t accept me. So, I ran away from home.”

“Accept you? What do you mean?”

“What do you think?” Jeremy let out a sly smirk.

What a stupid question, Jason thought. Wondering perhaps if Jeremy were thinking the same thing.

“My home was there in New Jersey. I ran away to New York looking for a place to stay or live for that matter. I remember wandering through the alleyways of the West Village. I was alone that night and scared to turn anywhere that would attract the wrong attention. Mind you, I had no idea that spellcasters or supernatural entities existed at that time, until I encountered one.”

“Who?” Jason asked.

“Zarius... He confronted me stating that he witnessed everything that had happened. And that this occasion occurs for a reason. At first I looked at him like he was crazy but then he did something wondrous.” Jeremy sighed lightly “He clapped his hands together, as he slowly moved them apart in a parallel expression. An orb appeared between them. And in the bubble, held a memory. I saw my mother yelling at me after I had told her about myself. She was outraged, and I was crying...I was only sixteen.”

“Then he clapped his hands again and the bubble dissolved. I collapsed on the floor and broke down. I was amazed and depressed about what I was seeing. But then Zarius had knelt in

front of me and he cupped my chin. ‘*Come along with me.*’ He said to me. He said there was nothing for me here and that I should come with him immediately.

“You can imagine I was little hesitant. Talking to a stranger with whom I had never met. But something in me sensed a light of hope. The things he was saying scared me for sure but in that moment, that moment of vulnerability, I was dumbfounded, and I wouldn’t have made a right decision either way, perhaps. So, I followed him.

“We walked to a portal, and on the way, he explained to me that he sensed a great deal of cells within me that could render I was a spellcaster. A human born wizard, who was descended from one who had shunned his powers many years ago. And if I decided to join that life, I would have to have my powers awakened, to let the cells flow freely as I should. He did caution me, however, that if I were to go forth with this, that there would be no turning back. I would stay a wizard forever. And that I must never share this knowledge.”

“But for all we know, your entire family could be wizards too.” Jason interpreted.

“That’s what I thought, But Zarius assured me that it is only I, that had he Speck cell count! And that I could bind with nature because of it. My mother never told me about wizardry, I said to him. And we concluded that perhaps not even she knows.”

“So, wait! Zarius sensed you because you are both wizards. Zarius is a wizard too, right?”

“If he was a wizard, yes.” Jeremy replied. “He would have sensed me but he’s not a spellcaster. He’s an Overseer, a Demi God, to be precise. Zarius could read any spellcaster that comes his way. He is the leader of the Santuarian Cobra Entity. He’s the one I answer too and

work for. If it wasn't for him, I'd have nothing. Even if this life isn't all it's cracked up to be, I am grateful."

Jason stood looking at Jeremy "I understand."

"I don't think you do, Jason," Jeremy said bluntly. "Living in a time of eternal war, you lose your loved ones, you get betrayed, you face near death situations that scare you until you man up and suffer the same encounter the next day. Sometimes you must wonder, is it worth it."

Nodding at the sudden change of Jeremy's attitude, Jason felt the tension rise, like a heatwave striking the car on a hot summer day in the middle of traffic. Irritating and relentlessly awkward, he looked away toward the window beside him, looking about the countless facades of the tall steel buildings.

"We're here!" Jeremy slowed the car. "This is Cobra Entity Headquarters.\!"

Fascinated, Jason saw the building as a monument rather than an office building in the guise of the buildings around him. The exterior of the large complex was like that of a mansion. Although it was not a tall building like those of the steel complexes around him. It showed promise that if it hadn't been in use, it was a trademark to the Santuarian kingdom. With its tall towers, and its unique setting of the cemented cylinder arches that rose high, it was like walking into the White House. Despite its gray fixtures, it looked completely tint from where Jason sat.

Stopping in front of the building, Jeremy shut off the engine and stepped out of the car.

With eyes still fixed on the large obsidian colored building. Jason glared about the building anxiously, it had to be about seven stories high, he thought. His hands reached the handle to open

the passenger door, his mind absent from what he was about to touch, he couldn't keep his eyes off the steep steps leading up the entrance.

Jeremy opened the door, causing Jason to shake away from his trance and step out of the car immediately.

Together they walked up the stone steps. The glass doors slid open, almost as if it they were anticipating their arrival, Jason thought. But no, it couldn't have been magic, could it?

The lobby were of large marble arches, in a cylinder form, like a Victorian Era London Structures of its time, Jason thought. The large space was of an amber shade, reflecting throughout the walls, the ceiling itself were bleached white. High and squarely crafted.

Through the hall ahead, were six elevators, three on either side. Jeremy led Jason through the way until they reached one to their left. The metal doors open, and they stepped inside. "Is there nobody here?" Jason asked. "It's quiet!"

"There is a little get together in the ballroom, supposedly a party of some sort."

"A party for whom?" It dawned on Jason that Michael would still be asleep after a night of drinking in the bar with Joseph at Boots & Saddles, he wondered perhaps if he were ever going to wake up passed the afternoon, but given Michael's commitment to have fun, he'd miss the morning for certain. He hated not seeing Michael, or Rebecca, or Joseph for that matter.

"I'm not sure to be honest." Jeremy replied. "It was Ivy's idea, I think."

The elevator doors opened, to reveal a man and woman standing before the glass doors. The man's eyes lit up. "About time!" he yelled out to Jeremy. His braids were shoulder length under his baseball cap that were fitted backwards. His attire consisting of a candy red trench coat,

and button all the way down to his knees. The woman beside him were dressed in amazon gear. A tightened vest shirt and skinny black leather pants dug inside her high heels. “Where the hell have you been?”

“Ivy!” Jeremy called surprised. “I thought you weren’t coming today.”

“Yes, well the night is quickly approaching, and I couldn’t pass up the free booze!!” Ivy and the girl beside him made their way towards Jeremy and Jason. “Zarius alerted me. So, is this the guy?” He glared at Jason.

Despite the dislike of the man attitude, Jason could help but shake a familiarity about the guy, he rendered someone familiar. As if he’d seen him before or he were just a man that resembled someone he knew.

“Ivy don’t be rude!” Said the woman, she glared at Jason with a smile. “You must be Jason Song! I’m so excited to meet you!”

Jason nodded. Jason Song? As in Victor Song? He glared at the woman confused. “Nice to meet you! You are - -.”

“Magdalene! I’m a Sorceress of Santuario. I’m from the outskirts of the Village Alley! I must say you look so much like Victor Song! The facial expressions, the head shape, the way you stand. My word, if I didn’t know you. I would have taken you for myself - -.”

“Okay woman, we get it!” Ivy barked.

Jeremy laid a hand onto Jason’s shoulder, sensing the awkwardness that Jason had felt. “Jason, this is Ivy! Ivy’s a warlock from the Realm of Nocturna.”

“What kind of spellcaster are you?” asked Ivy bluntly in an impatient tone.

“A Sorcerer, I think.” The started toward the doors leading to the ballroom passed the elevators.

“Oh, how lovely,” said Magdalene, she twirled her shoulder length hair, raising her legs to tip toe.

“You think? You mean you don’t know?” Ivy asked irritably.

“Your brother tried to abduct Jason.” Jeremy cut in. “When I found Jason at his apartment. He was there.”

“Yes, Jeremy, I know! Zarius told me everything!”

“Wait a second,” Jason started. “Amadeus is your brother?” Picking up the similarities, he concluded the familiar aspects that Ivy gave off. They were the same characteristics of Amadeus. But this man was ill mannered Jason thought. Unlike Amadeus, who were a complete psycho but at least an intelligent one.

“Yes!” said Jeremy suddenly. “Amadeus and Ivy are brothers.”

Reaching the end of the hallway, Jeremy opened the wooden doors, quickly the sound of music captivated the hearing of those before the doorway, loud but intense. Jason looked about curiously, the cultures and the attires of the men and women around them resembled that of the people who were outside.

People gathered around in the large ballroom, conversing with one another while drinking what looked to be champagne or wine. Some of them wore the Amazon couture that Jason saw

outside, in a place where the ballroom décor was like the scenery of the Victorian Era. “Are all these people spellcasters?”

“You have a lot to learn rookie.” said Ivy suddenly behind Jason and Jeremy.

Jason grew annoyed and Ivy snorted at Jason’s reaction. “If you’ll excuse me gentlemen, I have my own matters to attend to. Magdalene if you will!” Ivy disappeared through the crowd, grabbing the sorceress by the hand.

“Bye Jason!” she smirked.

Jason nodded, giving a nervous chuckle.

“Let’s go this way!” Jeremy led Jason through a narrow hallway behind the stairwell. They walked past the stairwell until they reached the two double wooden doors.

When they reached the double doors, Jeremy opened one of them gesturing for Jason to step inside. The large room were a circular architecture, shelves for walls throughout, and a desk in the middle at the far end, with a door beside the shelf to Jason’s right.

“Whose there?” a voice called out. A figure had emerged from the door beside the right shelf, glaring at Jeremy with a smile. “Ah, at last you’ve arrived! I was beginning to worry!”

“No, I’m fine! Barely a scratch, Lord Zarius!” Jeremy peered over at Jason who stood with his arms crossed, as if he felt a sudden chill. “Jason, this is Lord Zarius, director of the Cobra Entity!”

“My word! It’s a pleasure to meet you at last,” Zarius’s eyes fixed on Jason with keen interest. “My - -. You look so much like the sorcerer, Victor Song! It’s uncanny!”

“You knew Victor.” Said Jason, partially surprised.

“Yes! I did in fact! And Kirk Malero!”

“You knew my dad?”

“Yes! I knew both your fathers! It’s remarkable how I’m just finding out or let alone see you for the very first time!” Zarius stepped forward away from the desk. “It’s amazing how you have Kirk’s eyes. As to everything else, the stature, the head, the skin of Victor Song. I swear it’s like I’m visioning him now.”

Jason nodded. “I never met Victor Song. So, I wouldn’t know.” Trying to keep his composure, he couldn’t bring himself to praise the sorcerer Victor Song. He was a being he had just come to learn not more than a day ago. It was relentlessly irksome, and Jason were surprised to find that he could keep himself aware.

“I see!” said Zarius. He glared from Jason to Jeremy. “Jeremy, I wonder if I may have a word alone with Jason. We have stuff we need to discuss.”

“Sure!” said Jeremy.

Jason nodded and grew a little nervous to be standing next to what others have called a god. A Demigod to what Jeremy had stated. “*Am I supposed to confess for sins I may have committed?*” Jason thought stupidly. “*I haven’t been to church; I don’t even recall being baptized. Damn you, Kirk.*”

“I’ll just be in the grand hall,” Jeremy let out a smile before walking out the room. He started before the doors and closed them behind him.

“Please have a seat.” said Zarius. He walked over behind the desk and sat on the chair. Jason started for the seat opposite, dreading to be in a closed space, suddenly he felt the need to yell daddy in a crowded room full of strangers.

Chapter 6

“I heard about your father Kirk.” Zarius began, he planted himself in the tall chair. “I’m very sorry to hear of his disappearance.”

Jason nodded. “Jeremy said that you could help me find him.”

“Of course, we can! But we also must consider your own safety. Among other things.”

“Other things, sir?”

“You never knew Victor Song.”

“No, I haven’t!”

“Ah then, yes, my memory does serve me correctly. I should start by saying Victor Song was one of the bravest Sorcerers the realms have ever known. He helped bring order and justice. He was an excellent man. But from what I understand, for your safety, Kirk had to keep you ignorant from this world. He couldn’t talk about Victor in your presence for it would attract the wrong attention. If it came to that, you and Kirk’s safety would be breached.”

Attempting to keep his composure and learn more about what he was up against, Jason felt it prudent to cope with all he can about why Amadeus had questioned Jason back at his apartment. Why did the sorcerer assume Jason had knowledge for which he hadn't? "What happened to Victor Song?"

"No one knows," Zarius began. "Except that he disappeared about twenty years ago. The year you were born, I'm afraid!"

"Do you know what happened?"

"I'll tell you what I know. It's knowledge to the public in the Realm of Santuario. Your father was attempting to stop a very dangerous man! A man with whom he quarreled with relatively often. This man was his doppelganger, Vincent Song." Zarius shifted, nodding and glaring at Jason's arm. "May I have your arm?"

Surprised at the odd request, Jason laid his arm out on the desk. "Doppelganger? Isn't that like - -."

"A genetic copy or twin." Locking Jason's arm with his hands, Zarius shut his eyes, taking a deep breath. "Victor Song is one of three doppelgangers. There are Vincent, Vladimir and your father." After several long seconds, Zarius let go of Jason's arm, opening his eyes. "And like them, you're a sorcerer indeed. The speck cells that runs through your veins shows your mark."

"My mark? Are you psychic?"

Zarius laughed. "Why no, I'm not. It's just one of my special gifts, reading the biological coding of spellcasters."

“So, my dad is one of three doppelgangers. I don’t understand, why would Victor have a quarrel with his own brother?”

“Ah, but they are not brothers,” Zarius said quickly. “How they were brought up, they were forced to be treated as brothers but that is not their origin. It is unclear as to how they came about! But interestingly, for a century, it’s been stressed enough, that they aren’t brothers.”

Jason wanted to ask what the upbringing entailed, but the idea daunted on him, that he probably didn’t want to know. “A century ago? How old are these guys? Surely they can’t still be alive.”

“Spellcasters live a relatively long life, which would make us almost immortal, having the ability to slowly age when we turn twenty. In that case, Victor and the two doppelgangers would almost be a hundred and something, if I’m correct.”

“So, are they still around?”

“No one has heard from them for quite some time. But they have been very good at hiding, especially from enemies that seek their power and use it for a greater evil. Their powers came from a pure source, as sorcerers, their divine beliefs and upbringing is what made them so unique. They possess a power that not many other spellcasters have.”

Jason nodded “Zarius, what brought about the spellcasters?”

“Well, Jason. Do you believe in gods?”

“Yeah, I suppose I do.” He lied. Kirk were an atheist, and somehow projected that entitled belief onto him. But Jason wanted to believe whatever he thought possible, seeing was believing

indeed, but there were certain things in this world that needed questioning. For that Jason was always certain.

“The Elder Deities, in other words, gods or lords, created the Cobra Entity. Not like the Cobra Entity in which I govern with the spellcasters here, but I mean the system of the same name. It is a system of six spellcasters that were formed centuries ago. The six types of spellcasters are Wizard, Warlock, Witch, Shaman, Sorcerer and Starlighter.

“And yes, all these spellcasters are the same when it comes to casting spells. But knowing which spellcaster came from the line of spellcastry and origin is what makes them different. Each type is unique, harboring the abilities to do things that the other type of spellcaster cannot.”

“What about my father Kirk? How did he come across all this? I’d like to know how I have a second father instead of a mother. It doesn’t make sense.”

“I don’t know exactly how Kirk came to meeting Victor Song. Neither how you look like both. Giving the obvious state of things.” Zarius nodded. “If its magic that has anything to do with it, I shan’t guess. But I imagine that Victor Song shared certain properties of magic with Kirk. Despite Kirk being human after all.”

“When I saw my dad the last time, he looked years younger. It was weird. I was beginning to think that my dad was a spellcaster too, after all this.”

“Did you ever see your father in possession of a rare looking pendant, a ring or bracelet of any sort?”

“A ring, yeah!” Jason recollected. “He never took it off!”

“Until that dreadful hour, I suppose. Your father had a bewitched ring to make him look different and perhaps older from what I can gather. A very clever contraption, I might add. The lengths a person must go through to not be detected or hurt. I do remember there being a saying that a doppelgangers magic, Kirk was granted to age at the same pace of a natural spellcaster. Which is why he looks years younger. This was no doubt the work of Victor Song. This caught the attention of certain individuals. Either that or Kirk was still attempting to find Victor after all these years, which I’m sure he has no doubt.”

“He never...said anything.” Jason remembered what Jeremy had said to him back at the hotel. Glenico’s obsession with Kirk and wanting him for other reasons rather than death. “I will be honest. My trust in Kirk has been shaken. But he looked out for me all these years. He’s my father. I must stand by him. But I just got to know. Who was he trying to protect me from all this time? Was it just Amadeus all these years? Or Glenico even?”

Zarius grew hesitant. Jason caught on to Zarius’s actions. “No, it wasn’t Amadeus all these years. But it surprises me that either of them would capture the interest of you two.” Zarius leaned forward, glaring at Jason with cautious eyes. “Jason, you remember me telling you that there are six types of spellcasters?”

“Yes, you said there were the warlock, the witch, the wizard, the shaman, and the sorcerer... Oh and - -.”

“The Starlighter!” Zarius finished.

“*Starlighter*” Jason thought. “What’s a Starlighter? I’ve never heard of such a thing.”

Zarius was silent for a second. He rose up from the seat and walked over to the bookshelf next to the desk. “A Starlighter is a rare spellcaster. They are created by the gods themselves. They are cursed, bound to the servitude of the deities. No one is born a Starlighter. They would have to be created by the gods or a Starlighter themselves, perhaps.”

Zarius took a book out from the shelf, flipping through the pages, and stopped. He placed the open book on top of the desk for Jason to see.

Glaring at the page with keen interest, the ancient illustration was of a bare-chested man standing in front of a gigantic star rune, clouded in smoke. “I don’t understand, he looks like a -.”

“A ghost?” said Zarius. “Starlighters are deceased spellcasters that were punished by the elder deities for doing a vicious crime. Most of the crimes are unknown but one of them is a spellcaster exceeding with so much power and using it for evil deeds. However, in some stories the Starlighter is what we call a genie or jinn. A spellcaster would have to die before being subject as a starlighter, a spirit who becomes bound to servitude for eternity. They are in other words, the true immortals! And because of this, many spellcasters have attempted to claim this status and would therefore attempt to harness without being bound to the natures of servitude. Many failed and simply died.”

Shocked at that thought, Jason were nearly too disturbed to ask. “Are there any who succeeded? Are there any Starlighters here today in this present time?”

“I’d like to think they aren’t. But there was one, the same one that attacked both your fathers twenty years ago.”

“Vincent Song.” Jason sighed.

“You’re catching on quick!” Zarius perched his lips in surprise. “The Starlighter Vincent Song was the main reason Kirk had to bring you into hiding from the spellcaster world. Kirk and Victor feared for your life if this Starlighter ever found out of your existence.”

“But why?”

“They were enemies! You could have been collateral damage or simply a means to be used against Victor or Kirk. Neither were willing to risk it. Vincent Song is evil. He seeks power for his own personal gain, more power than he already possessed, and he put a shame in all that he and his two doppelgangers were to represent.” Zarius shook almost as if trying to forget what he was attempting to explain.

Jason sunk into the chair, his stomach growled, and his mind were light with exhaustion. This is all too much to take in, he thought. The thought of Kirk lying to him all this time were shifting his need to find him. But still, Kirk was his only family, only he could tell Jason the truth and was upset to hear it from a total stranger, however honest and sensible. It hurt to not hear from the one man he grew to know all his life.

“Vincent Song hasn’t been seen in almost twenty years. And I doubt that we’ll ever see him now. So, you mustn’t worry on that front.”

Jason sighed, nodding in agreement.

“You must be guarded however,” Zarius went on. “So, I have appointed Jeremy to keep you company and under protection detail while some of my best men continue their search for Kirk and Glenico. As well as Amadeus. Trust me Jason, I am most sympathetic to your plight.

That's why I will do all that I can to help and protect you, even if you chose not to stay and join the Cobra Entity."

"Thank you." Jason shuddered at the sudden thought. "Hold on, you want me to join the Cobra Entity?"

"It's who you are, Jason! I don't expect you to come to terms with that anytime soon. But it is imperative that you acknowledge its history and know that because your name has been brought up in the spellcaster world, especially now after twenty years, you're going to need to protect yourself.

"Which is why I summoned you here this evening. I wanted to get to know the son of Victor Song and encourage you to join the Cobra Entity! We at the Cobra Entity, enforce order and justice. Much like what Victor Song was fighting for all his life. There is no doubt that he would have wanted you to do the same."

"But Kirk wouldn't." Jason began. "If he wanted to keep this a secret to prevent those harming him and me. I have to go by that word."

"I understand. There is no pressure. But I must implore you to think about it. At some point, you must be awakened. Once you turn twenty, you will in fact start to inherit the traits of a spellcaster, whether your powers are awakened or not. And slowly start to age, the magic inside you will take on a life of its own. And will become dangerous."

"Did Kirk know this?" The shock in Jason's voice nearly startled himself, he tried to remain calm as if there were greater burden than he anticipated for rendering himself weak towards the demigod. "What would he have said if the time came?"

“I can’t be sure. It would of course require huge lie on his part. But I mustn’t speak for him. I only wish to convey my sympathies and ask that you stay under Jeremy’s protection. He will keep you under protective detail until such a time that we find Glenico and bring Kirk to safety.”

“I don’t really have choice, do I?”

“I’m afraid not, sorcerer.” Zarius chuckled. “Your safety is important to us. But you do have a choice on whether you choose to ally with us and train as a spellcaster of the Cobra Entity.” Zarius closed the book in which he took out that rendered the scripts and definitions of the infamous starlighter, he made his way beside Jason, glaring at him with a smirk. “It was good meeting you, Jason. But I must retire to some other matters. I hope to see you again on positive circumstances.”

As Zarius rose his arm, Jason took his hand to shake. “Thanks for the reassurance. I would be happy if this had all blown over as soon as possible.”

“I agree. But until then we must remain vigilant and keep a clear mind. You will meet Jeremy outside and he will attend to your every need. Bear with him, for his judgement is solely to keep you out of harm’s way.”

“I’ll try!” Jason sighed.

“Good! Farwell sorcerer, and think about what I said about joining the Cobra Entity.” Zarius started forward behind his desk, he sat pulling up papers in which were already before him

Jason nodded and started toward the exit of the office. Sorcerer, Jason thought. It nearly sounded to plain to be true, too much of a myth to believe. But it was a fact. He was a sorcerer

descended from a sorcerer before him, Victor Song. A doppelganger of Vincent and Vladimir Song, all of which were around a hundred and something years old, that's if they were still alive. Why would Kirk go through all that trouble to keep it a secret, especially when the Starlighter Vincent Song hasn't been seen in almost twenty years?

As his stomach started to growl, he felt his head light with dizziness, yet it was so heavy to keep himself face up. The tedious need to keep level were overwhelming, he'd give anything to seek Kirk and demand answers for what he's done.

The silent winds let out its echoes, and though the metal chair in which Kirk sat were tediously numbing his rear thighs, it was nowhere compared to the pain of his bruised wrists, which were embraced tightly by the blistering ropes.

He paused suddenly at the sound of voices in the distance. To the door ahead of him in which Kirk questioned was the exit to where Amadeus had emerged not more than an hour ago, he could make out shadows under the door. The voices were faint, but he listened closely as it grew. He attempted to pull himself, as well as the chair forward, listening in for anything audibly familiar.

"So, I take it, you know who has come back at last." said the voice, a voice Kirk couldn't recognize.

"Yes, he has." Kirk concluded immediately that it was Amadeus.

"And he is still not satisfied with his hunger for vengeance." Amadeus went on. "He's become desperate now, so desperate that he's turned to me for aid!"

“Oh Really?” The third voice spoke, the southern North American accent that Kirk knew all too well, had to be Glenico. “And did he give you strict orders to murder my henchwoman. She was innocent, a long-time ally, I should rip your intestines and feed them to the dogs, your worthless old prune.”

“I thought we were to keep this strictly between us three. No use bringing that dreadful Ingrid into the picture.”

Glenico snorted. “You really think you can trust that coward, the man who has no emotions, no reason to negotiate with. You are a fool to trust that foolish sorcerer, all because his.”

“You refuse to join the sorcerer’s cause?” replied the third voice, his voice deep and husky. “If I were you, Glenico, I would watch what you say about Vincent. He doesn’t forgive easily.”

Oh no! Kirk sighed, his heart fell in A fit of anger and worry, fearing for his son, I hoped that Jason were in fact under the custody of the Cobra Entity and that Amadeus were not just stating that to a means to find him.

“I agree with you, Kevin.” said Amadeus. “After all, Glenico, you should also be careful what you say period.”

Glenico hissed. “You are both Imbeciles, you think you can keep Kirk here and get a rise out of him, so he can tell you where Victor is? This may be even more stupid than one can imagine.”

“It appears that Kirk doesn’t know where Victor is.” said Kevin. “We could just be wasting our time.”

Amadeus sighed. “But nevertheless, I think we should take more time with him. I’m thinking we should at least have Kirk as bait. What about his son Jason?”

“You son of a bitch!” Kirk had a jolt of anger boiling inside him at the sound of Amadeus saying Jason’s name. His selfish purposes, however unknown were a danger.

“Are you sure that’s wise?” asked Kevin. “A whole house of spellcasters against the three of us, may get ugly unless we bomb their base. Or at least bluff about it to make things easier.”

“You mean the two of you,” corrected Glenico. “I have my own matters for Kirk, what you’re talking about is most idiotic at best.”

Amadeus ignored him. “I don’t think Vincent has knowledge of the boy however, if he did he would have mentioned him by now.”

“Forget the boy,” said Kevin. “It’s Victor that Vincent wants. If Vincent is convinced that Victor is alive then he must be. We’ll use whatever measures necessary to get to him.”

“Enough of this,” Glenico yelled impatiently. “I will find the boy and I will kill him. When I come back, I’m taking Kirk into my custody. And then you can find another lead worth fighting for. Give the idiot Vincent Song, my hatred and condolences, for having to exist in the first place.”

Kirk heard a loud metal door scratch upon the floor in the distance, slamming shut. The sound of two set of footsteps departed in the opposite direction, growing faint, allowing the silent echoes again.

Kirk’s stomach turned. Staring up at the ceiling of the open window above, he prayed silently ever forgetting his misdeeds, asking for a fortunate solution to bring his son to safety.

Exiting the long hallway, and into the ballroom, the crowd grew from when Jason last seen it. The night had fully approached. The violins, and piano playing in the large cylinder hall, played to the vocals of chatter that struck about around him.

Not wanting to walk through the crowd who were all but confided within the cylinder hall, conversing and associating with other spellcasters alike, Jason stood at the outer rim, where he could hopefully see Jeremy from a distance. Walking along the side of the wall to see if he could peak him from afar.

At last, Jason had spotted Jeremy towards the exit of the ballroom, talking to Ivy and another gentleman with a wool coat, the torso striped with a long black sleeve on his left arm, and sleeveless on his right. Whose braided hair were just like Ivy and Amadeus. “*Another brother?*” Jason thought.

Jason hurried passed toward them, Jeremy saw him coming and immediately he tapped the gentlemen beside him, getting his attention, and immediately he stared at Jason as he came.

Jeremy Patted Jason on the shoulder. “Well I hope Zarius wasn’t too hard on you. Or scare you in a way.”

Jason smirked. “No not at all! Why would he!”

“Are you hungry? Me and the boys were about to get something to eat out in Jersey City. There’s this diner by my house!”

“Are we going back to Earth,” said Jason relieved. “Well, yeah, I’m a bit starved.”

“We can see that,” said Ivy coldly. “Do you not lift weights at all? You’re all skin and bones.”

Jason shot Ivy a look. Jeremy didn’t seem to notice.

“Jason, I’d like you to meet Ivy’s other brother, Clash.” said Jason.

Clash raised his hand to grab hold of Jason’s. The two shook hands. A better greeting Clash gave to Jason rather than Ivy. “I heard about what our older brother had done.” Clash started. “We’re keeping tabs on where to find you. You mustn’t worry. We won’t let him get to you.”

I knew it. Jason thought satisfied with the guess that Clash and Ivy were also brothers aside from Amadeus. “I appreciate that, thanks.”

“Don’t mind Ivy. He’s obnoxious but he’ll get used to you.”

“Speak for yourself, little bro,” Ivy spat. “He’s the descendant of a sorcerer. A rather dangerous one at that.”

“He’s Victor’s son! Not Vincent’s!”

“Yeah, no kidding. They were all dangerous if I recall.”

Ivy just shook his head. “Shall we?” he said pointing towards the exit.

They all walked towards the long hallway and through the laneway of the exit. The same way Jason and Jeremy walked through earlier on their way in.

“I’m really sorry to hear about your father.” said Clash breaking the moment’s silence.

“I’m sure Zarius will have some of his best men on the case to discover his whereabouts.”

Jason felt reassured. That this man before him was nothing like his brothers even if he knew him for a clash for a second. He just hoped he was wrong “Thanks that means a lot. I don’t think I would have had any doubt that he would be willing to help.”

“You shouldn’t,” said Jeremy. “He’s well equipped and hands on in this field of work. This is how we do things as Spellcasters of the Cobra Entity.”

Clash smirked. “Jason, you should consider Zarius’s offer and join us. He senses a lot of potential for a guy like you.”

Jason was caught off guard. “How did you know about? That Zarius wanted me to join him?”

Jeremy laughed. “You think a guy like you, who have been shunned from this world his whole life will be left living as a human forever? Zarius despises that feat. He wants those of spellcaster ancestry to become aware of who they are. He doesn’t like anyone to be left stranded against their will, whether they know it or not.”

“Besides,” Clash began “We need more fighters.”

“We also need food.” Ivy stormed through the double doors, into the long hallway where the four gentlemen waited for the elevator.

Chapter 7

Although continuously dozing off, Kirk quickly shook awake to his aching arms, keeping him from sleep and sanity.

Saddened at the memory of fear that streaked across his son's face haunted him, all that he could remember from that time of the attack, all that he could think to himself were, I'm not going to lose my son today. Not today. Fearing for Jason's life, at the beginning of the twenty-year span, grew unpredictable, from Kirk could remember. But as time went on, it got easier. Letting his son live a life in the normal world, without fear of him being detected by those who seek revenge on Kirk's life as well as Victor's.

While sirens quieted down throughout the years, simmering questions of Victor's whereabouts dissipating in the days passed, Kirk's mind did not. Without the guidance and knowledge of Victor Song, Kirk accomplished much of Jason's living. Giving their only child all that he could muster, the riches, the resources that the Sorcerer left behind, was his only way to live in peace.

But then there were the dangers of Jason's confined magic, begging to break free as he got older. Kirk knew the dangers as told by Victor Song as well as the experiences with other spellcasters he came across during his youth. It was something he hadn't taken lightly. He dreaded in the telling, the revealing of Jason's true nature and how it shouldn't be used as a commodity, or selfish purposes, or a means to protect those around him. A spellcaster are usually piling with enemies. And the thought of Jason having so much as one, were daunting enough as it is.

How would he explain to his son who he truly is? How would he take it? Who would Kirk turn to and help him elaborate the foundations and teachings of a spellcaster, aside from the Cobra Entity in the Realm of Santuario? There was no one. For he felt the Cobra Entity were but only a

police force that looks for enemies and continue to endanger their lives stopping the spellcasters throughout the realms. He did not want that for his only son.

His son was an artist, he knew that when peeking through his bedroom, examining the sketchpads he left behind, ever since he attended Elementary School. What if he could balance and control his magic? And be an artist at the same time? That was the life Jason ought to live, as Kirk had prayed to see fit for so many years, without being detected by the Cobra Entity...and Glenico.

Glenico was the enemy. He was the one that wanted Jason dead, not Amadeus. Disappointed that the Witch, were no longer within these halls of the large building, Kirk had to improvise and consider his surroundings. To find Glenico before he would ever find Jason. He was the target, and if only Glenico were still here, alone, without Kevin and Amadeus, would he finally end the witch.

A flicker of light motioned across the dusty floorboards. Kirk's eyes flew open, fixed at the small round light, the size of a basketball dancing towards him. It strutted closer, making its way up his leg. Upon his chest... and paused.

Looking up at the ceiling, the light shone from the windows above him, finally shining upon his face.

The light pulled away, and within moments a screeching noise coming from above. Kirk could've sworn he felt the outside air for the first time in hours. The window slid open and the wind grew stronger.

"Hold tight, I'm coming to get you." said the voice.

“Javier?”.

A rope fell to the floor from above, coiled no more than two feet away from Kirk. Javier descended the rope, quicker than he anticipated with his flashlight shining through his buckle of his loose black khakis. The man came down fast. At last he landed, almost losing his balance at the sudden impact.

“How the hell did you find me?” Kirk asked surprised.

“Your phone. I tracked it here. Did you forget you left a GPS tracker directory on my phone when you thought you lost yours?” He unhooked the flashlight from his buckle and rose it to reveal his heavy black sweater as well as his round face, huge eyes and short hair resembling that of a military commander.

“That’s because one of the spellcasters took it from me.” Said Kirk. “It must have been Glenico most likely.”

“Yeah, he picked up! As soon as I heard his voice, I hung up and I knew you were in trouble.” Taking a knife out from ankle brace, Javier kneeled before Kirk and wrestled with the tight rope around Kirks legs. “Should we get it back?”

“No! They’ll probably use it to track us once they found out I’ve escaped. We should move quickly.”

“They?”

“Amadeus is here as well.”

“Oh, is he now! Well that’s just great! Well the good news is I brought your car.”

“That is good news.” Kirk sighed.

“A spellcaster from the Cobra Entity informed me that Zarius sent a squad to search for you throughout the realms. But what they didn’t know, is that you never left the Realm of Earth.”

“The Cobra Entity knows? So, they really do have my son. Jason told them.”

“Yes, which means he is safe for now.” Javier went on. “And they’re looking for Glenico. We need to get him. Where in the building do you think he is?”

“Unfortunately, he’s not!”

“What do you mean? Is he not the one who kidnapped you?”

“Yes, but he left. He left me here with Amadeus. I can’t find and capture Glenico with Amadeus on our tail. Amadeus is a lot stronger and older. And waiting here for Glenico to show up would be a suicide mission. We need to steer clear away from the sorcerer. And only then, can we work a way toward Glenico.”

“Then Glenico must still be in the city. Especially If he knows that he can’t use any portals or teleportation spells to leave the Earth. They’ll be tracked by the Cobra Entity and Zarius himself.” Javier finally ripped off the ropes from Kirk’s legs and started to rip the ropes off kirks wrists. “What does Amadeus want with you?”

“He wants to torture me to find Victor.” said Kirk. “Amadeus is working with Vincent Song. Vincent is the one searching for Victor and Amadeus is just helping him.” Kirk sighed in relief at the loosening grip of the tight ropes. He ripped them apart, massaging his bruised wrists.

“Wait! Vincent is still alive? The Starlighter? But how - -.” Javier paused, the sound of slamming doors in the distance grew audible, he and Kirk looked at each other in a panic.

“I’ll tell you all that I know on the way.” Said Kirk, he started toward the rope in which Javier descended. “Let’s go!”

Javier took a ring out from his pocket and tossed it to Kirk. “I thought you might need this!”

“A spellcasters jetring. How did you get it?” Kirk asked.

“Long story,” Javier said quickly. “Let’s go!” The rope in which appeared when Javier descended had disappeared, and at that moment the ring on Javier’s finger, in which were identical to Kirk’s, let out an illuminated energy.

Kirk slid the ring on his finger. Rejuvenated, Kirk and Javier raised their rings up to the window above. A burst of electricity shot out in the form of a rope and attached itself to the window pane. The sparkle simmered and shrunk, raising both Kirk and Javier off the ground and out into air above.

Below, the doors of the hollow room burst open. Men emerged and stared up in time to see Kirk and Javier climbed up the window edge. The men scrambled and headed out the room.

“Your car is in the alleyway!” said Javier, who darted toward the next roof of the large warehouse. The sky bright and bleak, revealing the daunting dusk colored sky.

Looking about anxiously, he caught sight of the Manhattan Bridge, stretching high above him. The blistering autumn winds let out the smell of the river not far from where he stood of the

large boarded warehouse. “Now this is going to be an easy night.” Kirk followed Javier and skipping over the dry tar of the gray façade.

Javier stopped at the edge of the roof. “There it is.”

The long black car, with its bulbs did not resemble that of a car from the 90’s, for its model were a replica in the Realm of Santuarian’s dealership. Its length like a 70’s Cadillac, its height like that of a racecar, and it its fine finish like that of a tank. Sat in the alleyway, blending with the shadows round it. “This was Victor’s car!” Kirk said to himself.

Javier shook his ring, letting the energy tackle the metal bars of the roof. Kirk did the same and together they jumped.

Landing on the ground, Kirk nearly lost his balance, but caught the garbage tin beside the shutters, attempting stand still without hitting the concrete. “We’ll need to go to your place!” he said struggling to stand.

“What’s up? What’s wrong with you?”

“I’m fine, just light headed!” Kirk opened the driver door getting inside the driver’s seat of the car, while Javier sat in the passenger seat next to him. Closing the doors, Kirk started the engine and without hesitation, sped off.

The thrill of the engine roaring to life, speeding into the night, feeling the familiar vibrant atmosphere in a closed space, made Kirk sigh in relief. But quickly vanished at the thought of the Witch he’d known to despise for as long as he could remember. “We need to find Glenico. Something tells me that whoever I spoke to, whoever I knew whilst my time at home had definitely sold me out to him.”

“We need to come up with a plan then. Glenico can’t be far behind. I refuse to have us just stay put and do nothing.”

“I agree. And the Cobra Entity is in the picture, so all Glenico is going to do, is hide. That’s why we should find Glenico first. With his guard down, it gives us the advantage to find him, without being detected. If we don’t, he’ll end up killing my son.

“I put my son in danger. Stephanie was right, I shouldn’t have had Jason in the dark of all this spellcaster crap. What else could I have done?”

“That doesn’t matter. We’re on our own. We can find the witch ourselves. He’s safe now. You could have had Zarius offer your assistance. He could have had Jason trained under his tutelage. I’m sure no one would have harmed Jason for what he would become.”

“You don’t get it.” Kirk shot.

“Get what?”

“Years ago, Vincent had become a Starlighter for a crime he wasn’t sure he committed. He wasn’t looking to be a starlighter, just study them, but he became one by sudden cause. At first, he thought it were something that he may have done wrong to possess the features but, he considered Victor for what he had attempted to do then.”

“Which was give life? To Jason?”

“You make it sound like it’s a curse?” Kirk looked at Javier with bleak disgust. “But yes, Vincent blamed it on Victor thinking that he framed him. That’s what their beef was all about twenty years ago. Victor and I didn’t want Vincent finding out about Jason in case he tried to use him as leverage against us.”

“Why would Vincent’s name be brought up again after all this time? What’s Amadeus’s end game?”

“I don’t know. But Lord forbid, that if he ever uses my kid. So, help me - -.” Kirk recalled the piercing words of the sorcerer, attempting to ask Glenico and Kevin if it were a broadened idea to take Jason from the Cobra Entity and use him as bait.

“It’s been twenty years,” Javier went on “Unbelievable.”

Kirk made it up the ramp that led to the highway above, quickest to lead him to Javier’s home. Adjusting the rearview mirror, the pattern of several cars sped quick behind him “You know what else is unbelievable? The fact that we have company!”

Javier jumped out of his seat, glaring at the back window of the car. He counted at least six of them, motioning passed the other cars along the highway. “What makes you think there following us?”

“I didn’t say they were following us. I said we have company. They’re ready to attack us!”

“Damn it!”

Pressing the pedal, he sped, driving carelessly pass the caravans and cars that drove in minimal intervals. through a long underpass which Kirk knew from memory of taking the route prior, had no exit within miles. The lights on the upper streets above had shown vividly but the underpass was dark and almost impossible to see pedestrians passing.

Javier held on to the bar above the window next to him as Kirk sped.

“What the hell?” Kirk were tempted to stop at the sight of a cloaked figure up ahead. Outlining itself in the street lamps that shown several feet away from the underpass, the dark trenches of the cloak lay on the illuminated concrete, facing Kirk and Javier as they sped towards its direction.

“Don’t stop! It could be a trap!” Javier demanded.

Raised its arms, its bare hands reached for the hood of its cloak, tearing it away and staring intently at Kirk.

Tempted to hit the break, his eyes were struck in surprise.

Javier lifted himself from the seat in shock. “Victor!”

Kirk’s remorse turned quickly to anger. “No, it’s not!”

Tearing away the cloak entirely, the figure lifted a long cylinder device, aiming it towards the fast-approaching car.

“Oh crap, he’s got a launcher!” Javier held tightly to the bar beside him, leaning back against the seat. “Kirk, move away!”

Kirk turned the steering wheel, making all four wheels of the car turn counter clockwise. A feature of Victor’s own making whilst he owned the car. Kirk recalled it once, remembering its duty at the instant, in case he wanted to make a getaway to a detour Victor had passed while driving.

As the figure raised the rocket launcher upward, the rocket sprung to life, letting out a cackle as it soared fast toward the car.

As Kirk motioned the car, it immediately sprung to the left, dodging the speeding rocket, which hit the car behind them.

The car exploded, illuminating the dark overpass, the smell of gasoline and burnt tar filled the air. Kirk glared at the rearview mirror, watching as the car that followed him were engulfed in the flames. Several more cars appeared down the ramp of the highway from where Kirk had come.

“Damn it, Kirk! Go!”

Kirk pulled the driving lever, speeding off through the road of the underpass. The figure stood, the face of a familiar comrade, but the hatred of a stranger, Kirk thought. Refusing to look any further, he kept the car driving at a quicker pace.

“Who the hell is that? Javier panicked. “He looked just like Victor!”

Glaring through the rearview mirror, Kirk counted about eight cars on his tail, the one closest had a Gatling gun on the hood of the car. The firearm roared, letting out the angry shards and firing the back of Kirk’s car.

“Well at least the car is bulletproof!” Kirk yelled. “They’re wasting their time!”

“But can we lose them?”

Kirk made a sharp right, hoping he’d lose some of the ones up front. The car behind him, attempted to do the same as it turned and lost control, the car shifted sideways and crashed into the side of the road block.

“Amadeus can’t be far behind! I know he’s enjoying himself!” Kirk drove fast enough to stay at least ten to twelve feet away from the blazing guns of the cars behind him, attempting to

penetrate the interior. The aroma of the burning gun powder filled the air, coming from Javier's open window. Kirk were tempted to get him to close it, but the adrenaline as well as the sweat of nervous determination consumed him as he leveled the steering wheel. Rendering him hot and light headed.

He made another turn from out of the underpass and through an alleyway. Up ahead were the back of the tall brick apartment complex. "Dead end! We'll have to teleport out of here."

"And here I thought you weren't going to have any sense to say that." Javier took a peak at the back window, his right arm still hanging intently on the bar above the window.

"Well then buckle in. We must get closer to the end of the alley. When I say so, press the button under the glove compartment. The cars behind us won't know what's up ahead!"

"Got it!" said Javier determined.

Kirk was trembling with both hands on the steering wheel. Knowing his hands were what would determine the place of his destination, he feared that his mind was not capable for Victor's next clever contraption of the car, letting the rubber steer, read the destination imagined in mind. Kirk thought hard, trying to picture a spot close to Javier's home where the cars behind them could not follow.

Javier had his hands near the button of the glove compartment.

"Do it now!"

Javier pressed the button. The car lit up, it's engine roared, and the head lights flickered, until at last burst into a beaming white light in the direction in front of them, nearly blinding Kirk and Javier. Javier shielded his eyes with his left arm. Kirk nearly attempted to do the same on first

instinct but couldn't help but feel the need to hold the steering wheel still. The car captivated itself in the blinding light and disappeared before the nearest courtyard lamp.

Appearing out of the darkness of the back alley, Kirk picked up his location immediately, relieved that the car worked its magic. Where the car had appeared in the community garden, not far from Javier's house, he thought thankfully. No doubt would the planters question the smell of gun powder and burnt fuel in the air of the garden. And bark at the disgrace of their magnolias roses, and orchids of sorts flattened upon the soil in which they emerged. It could be worse, Kirk imagined.

He sighed in a bitter relief, his head gave up on him, and nearly felt the need to faint. His head collapsed onto the steering wheel, while his heart raced at the car's concluding impact.

Javier leaned against the seat, chuckling in relief. He slapped Kirk on the back. "Well that was fun, wasn't it?"

Kirk felt an acute awareness return to him at the touch, as he lifted his head off the steer. "A Thrill!" He said rolling his eyes. He drove the car toward the garage of which he first placed the car. He knew Javier would keep an eye on it for emergencies considering what occurred, but the planters would commission a rather hostile dispute.

Kirk pressed the clicker attached to the key of the car, and at the command, the shutters of the garage rose shakily, scratching against the rusty metal gears. He drove inside as they raised high.

"That guy -" Javier began, puzzled. "Was that Vincent back there? Are you even certain that it's not Victor?"

“It’s neither, it was just Amadeus’s old tricks, like I said, he like to manipulate me.” Kirk sighed, he shut the engine off, pulled away the keys and stepped out of the car.

Kirk shut the door behind him. “Amadeus is not our concern. We have Glenico to worry about. He was after me and, in the process, tried to kill Jason. Glenico must pay. We have to find him before he finds Jason and tries to use him to get to me.”

“No, we don’t.” said Javier appearing out of the car. “You said it yourself, that he’s in safe hands with those spellcasters.”

“Yeah, well their hands aren’t always as safe as it seems. How many times have they failed?”

“How many times have they not?”.

“I don’t trust them with Jason. One of them could be working with Glenico and giving him Intel. There is many of them out there. You can’t always rely on the supernatural for protection and support.”

“I agree. And I’m not,” Javier began. “But consider your son, maybe we should go see him, let him know you’re good and out of harm’s way.”

“We have to find whoever told Glenico where Jason and I were.” Kirk went on, not minding Javier’s words but his own. “It had to be someone I spoke to, someone who I encountered whilst I could.”

“Maybe the mole may have been already living in your neighborhood. If we are to find this certain someone.”

Kirk tried to think back at the times when he spoken to someone, but immediately dismissed several possibilities when he knew that he always had the ring on to make him look years older. He couldn't come up with explanation as to how anyone would realize it was Kirk from so many years ago. "It's hard to say." Kirk started "I've had the ring on for so long I don't understand how anyone could have found me or Jason."

"What about Jason? You think was there something about him which gave the identity away instantly?"

Kirk thought hard for a moment, he couldn't find a suitable explanation to be brought to light as to where the mole had come in the first place or if anything in Jason's behavior may have attracted the wrong attention in all his nineteen years. Kirk had watched Jason closely, knowing that Jason didn't do anything that resembled the life of a spellcaster, anything that would make anyone who knew of the spellcasters existence a concern. Kirk tried for years and succeeded in protecting Jason from that life in which he thought his son couldn't handle.

But time was running out, he was found and so was Jason. He knew he couldn't undo the past or undo all the hurt that he put Jason through. Kirk wondered what Jason had thought of him now that he was quickly without a doubt discovering who he is, and where he'd come from. Thanks to Zarius and the rest of the Cobra Entity, they will unveil a shadow in which Kirk felt was the only protection for Jason alone.

Chapter 8

The purple sky was tinted with patches of silver clouds, the lighted windows of the residential buildings as well as the street lamps made it impossible to see the stars anywhere among the Jersey City Scape. No different than New York of course. Jason thought. But compared to the night sky of the Realm of Santuario, the night wasn't a fantasia, the studded diamonds embedded in the large sky like Santuario when he left, it was a disappointment having to leave so soon.

Jason adjusted himself in the car in which Jeremy drove, he still felt a little bit of a jetlag having taken the portal back to the city. The walk to the parking garage across from the cathedral, were unbearable as the night breeze nearly swept him off his feet, literally almost about to collapse upon the pavement of the busy Manhattan street.

Luckily the car was there for Jeremy to drive, as Jason were already assured on the destination of Jersey City. But now of all times Jason would give anything to go home. His real home. Under the covers, of his nice warm bed, and lit aroma candles of cherry and licorice filling the air as he drank a chamomile tea and binge-watching Netflix. That was what he wanted on this Sunday evening.

"Oh crap! School is tomorrow!" Jason thought. His mind drifted out of his subconscious and settled back into the passenger seat of the red car. Jeremy driving and the two warlock brothers, Ivy and Clash in the backseat.

"You're awfully quiet." said Jeremy not taking his eyes off the wheel.

"Just enjoying the scenery, I guess. Where are we going exactly?"

"There's a diner up the road, we go there all the time."

"But why Jersey City, of all places?"

“It’s where you’ll be staying. I took the liberty of having some of your clothes packed up and brought to my apartment. Oh, and you’re school stuff.”

“Your apartment? When did you do that?”

“When you were unconscious! I was going to tell you when I got back to the hotel! But you were bit distraught, having read the letter on the nightstand!” he looked over at him with a smirk.

Jason bit his lip, a flicker of anger consumed him, having to get no say on where he would be staying was enough to storm out of the car at the next red light. But given that these were spellcasters, three of which he had no knowledge of until today, would be a huge mistake.

“Awe are you worried he dug into your personal belongings and might have found your edibles?” Ivy chuckled. “What did you find in the top drawer, Jeremy? Do tell us!”

“Stop it, Ivy!” Clash demanded. “The dude is tired and hungry. And he just lost his dad, ease up!”

“I’m just messing with the kid. Gosh, fellas. Lighten up!”

Jeremy made no remark, keeping his eyes on the road.

Jason on the other hand, stared out the window, humiliated and distraught. His elbow against the inner passenger door, he sunk his head in his hand, praying for an alternate reality to take shape. A rewind to the days prior when he first woke up that morning in his friend Joseph’s apartment, preparing for Michael’s Birthday. Anything but the awkward tension that rose up his spine, heating up to a temptation of kicking the passenger door open. He breathed heavily, the tears threatening to spill from his eyes.

“Don’t listen to him, Jason. He has the emotional range of ten-year-old bully! No class whatsoever.”

“It’s called lighting the mood!” Ivy shot, laughing at his brother’s remark. “Say Jeremy, tell me! Did you ever find anything in particular?”

Jeremy sighed. “Ivy, I’m not like you! I don’t go looking for treasures to calm my sexual frustration, as I’m sure you can imagine.”

Clash burst out laughing.

“Oh! Burn!” Ivy chuckled. “You’re not far from that department. Now, are you kid?”

“You’re right, I’m not. But it’s by choice. I’m content being with what I got in life now.”

“What? Two hands and a soldora?”

Jeremy shook his head. He glared over at Jason who were but only silent. His head in his hand, eyes shut as if in a sleep that rendered him entirely still and alone.

“We’re here,” Jeremy drove through the parking lot, going for the space closest towards the entrance of the diner.

Jason carelessly rose his head. His nerves were severed in exhaustion, his stomach ceased to growl, and his mind focused only on the sudden need of sleep.

Clash’s cellular phone went off, a constant beep. Immediately grabbing it from the pocket of his long-sleeved trench coat, he silenced it, glaring at the text on the screen. He looked to Ivy. “We’ve got a situation. It’s urgent.”

Ivy grew annoyed. “What’s going on?”

All four of them stepped out of the car. Jason felt the sudden night breeze envelope him, he felt the sudden chill and need to run inside the diner.

Clash handed Ivy the phone with the text visible for him to see. “Zarius needs us at Journal Square. There’s a lead he wants us to check out.”

“Damn!” Ivy shot through gritted teeth. “I want cake!”

“Take the car.” said Jeremy “Jason and I will walk to the house.”

Jason glared at him in disbelief. Hoping that the house was close, the walk alone would be enough to have him catch an ammonia in the blistering cold. He wasn’t a trained spellcaster to endure the sort of weather, if that along were a contributing factor to how Jeremy, Clash and Ivy held the stance, Jason wouldn’t know.

Jeremy tossed Clash the keys. “It was cool to meet you, Jason! I’m sure you’ll see us soon!”

Jason nodded.

“Speak for yourself.” Ivy muttered to his brother, he made his way for the passenger door, while Clash sat in the driver’s seat. The car came back to life and they immediately drove off.

Jeremy started for the ramp behind him, leading to the entrance. “Come on!”

Silently, with his hands in his pockets, Jason followed.

Entering through the glass doors, the smell of entrees from all three courses of the day, breakfast, lunch and dinner, filled the air like an air freshener to fill the appetites of the hungry. Overwhelming and full.

Jason looked about the wooding furnishings in wonder, antiques and collectibles placed neatly on the shelf behind the bar area, which were in front of the entrance as they walked in. On either side of the large counter, were the dining rooms, fancier and perhaps older than an average diner. And the bar stools which were of polished wood stood tall, not suitable for a child who were just learning algebra.

“Table for two please!” Jeremy said suddenly.

Jason turned, taking his eyes off the large dining room to see a woman, dressed in black slacks and a loosened white button down, with a thin lilac colored scarf, approach them. “You may follow me this way!” She stabbed a pen into her hair bun and lifted two menus from the counter.

“Thanks!” Jeremy started after her, and Jason as well.

Realizing there were hardly any people in the diner, he had to suspect perhaps because it was a Sunday, or because the food here weren’t at all satisfying. But this was Jersey City, it wasn’t at all like New York where there were people, quick and relentless to get to their destination, as well as some traveling in packs like wolves. Like how he saw in the lobby of the Avaya Building in the Realm of Santuario. All sorts of people from different Realms, from Jeremy had explained, eager to get home or to get to work in the late hour.

There was peace here, despite what he heard, about its secluded and therefore more prone to be mugged in the trenches of the neighborhoods. It didn’t seem at all hostile, where he was

concerned. Whatever the case, it wasn't even midnight and night seemed longer than he anticipated. Given that it was night in Santuario from when he left, and it was night when he arrived in New York, Jason hadn't realized the time went so fast, looking at the clock hung above the far window of the diner, it was only nine o'clock.

The host laid out two menus out on the table of the booth, closest to the window. "All right you guys, the server will be with you in a moment!"

"Thanks!" said Jeremy as he sat on the cushion of the booth. Jason made his way on the seated cushion opposite.

The host walked away.

"Have you thought about what Zarius had asked of you?"

"Which was?" Jason asked, although he knew the answer.

"Joining the Cobra Entity."

"No, I haven't. I was too busy thinking about my friends, of course of which I were supposed to call when I'd come home last night. Since, you know everything happened."

"It would be a huge risk, having to contact - -."

"Yes, I know!" Jason interrupted. "I was told that thousand times over. But what I wasn't told or even asked, if I could agree to this so-called custody, and ransack my things, only to be brought to your house. I have nothing to hide of course, but I would appreciate it if you let me in on that note."

“For obvious reasons, we couldn’t wait for your permission. We didn’t want to attract the wrong attention by letting you stay at your apartment, so Zarius and I decided that you should stay at my place.” Jeremy shrugged his shoulders. “It was his idea, actually.”

Jason shook his head. “Zarius didn’t bring any of this up when I was in his office.”

“He didn’t tell you that I am to protect you and keep you in my custody?”

“Yes, he did.” said Jason, feeling defeated. “But just not the part where you go through my things.”

“I’m feeling kind of neglected and disrespected with lack of proper knowledge. Kirk neglected to tell me anything and I’m beginning to feel like it’s because of something I done. Maybe when I was younger, he saw something that would risk his safety. Maybe it’s just not about me, he could be hiding something that involved his past and someone who was part of it besides me.”

“You’re thinking way too much into this.” said Jeremy bluntly. “You should eat something. Aren’t you hungry?”

“I am hungry. But I can’t help it, my mind is racing in all directions.”

“Maybe you should let your mind rest by looking at the menu and finding what you want to stuff your face with.”

Jason sighed, glaring at the contents on the pages with irritable anger.

“Look, If I was in your position, I’d be pissed off too, believe me. But there are people out there that want your dad dead and perhaps you. We’re trying to protect you.”

Jason shot him a look. “That’s very reassuring.”

“Really? Because it sounded like you are having doubts about me.”

Jason shrugged his shoulders nervously. He didn’t want to start anything hostel.

“Look I understand if you don’t trust me completely, but you could at least believe me when I say I’m a man of my word. I know what I’m doing, and I wouldn’t let anything happen to you.”

Frustrated with the whole outcome, Jason knew there weren’t any other alternatives. He was stuck with Jeremy for now. There was no point in running, there was nowhere to run to and in all things, nothing to run from. Stepping away from any hostel activity, he glared at the menu, keeping in mind on the positive. “So, what are you ordering? I may just settle for the burger and fries. I haven’t eaten all day. And the vanilla milk shake looks promising.”

“The milkshake! It’s actually pretty good.” said Jeremy.

Just in time, the waiter came by. “My name is Billy and I’ll be your waiter tonight. Can I start you off with some drinks?”

Jeremy started off with his order, without another thought, settling for the breakfast menu. “The usual!” he told the waiter. Jason ordered afterward, a simple bacon cheese burger with fries, and extra pickles on the side, just the way he’d always order when he went to places with his best friends Michael, Joseph and Rebecca.

“You got it!” The waiter walked off towards the kitchen.

“Can I ask you a question?” Jeremy started

“You just did!”

“You don’t have a boyfriend?” Jeremy went on, not minding the joke.

“No, I don’t.”

“That’s good I guess,” said Jeremy. “At least you don’t have to worry about someone waiting for you at home.”

“Yeah, I suppose... Why the sudden interest in my love life? Is it the basics of starting an interrogation in the Cobra Entity?”

“No, it’s just my way of starting a conversation. If I offended you, forgive me, that wasn’t my intention...But then again you do seem to get offended easily.”

“I’m not offended.” said Jason irritably. “I just don’t see what made you ask that, if that of all things were to start a conversation.”

“Okay, let’s talk about something else then.”

“Like what?” Jason crossed his arms.

“What do you do for a living?”

“I’m an artist.”

“What kind of artist?”

“I’m a drawing artist. I dabble in sketches of landscapes and stuff like that.”

“I see. You know, you wouldn’t strike me as the artistic type though.”

“Yeah I get that a lot. People look at me and they say I’m average and when I tell people my hobby or profession of choice they doubt me and think I couldn’t possibly ever succeed with what I do now.”

“Whose they?”

“Just people in general, people I knew from the past. Some friends I know now.”

“That sounds kind of harsh.”

“So, does Kirk know about you?” Jeremy asked. Jason caught on that he was referring to his preference in companionship.

“Yeah, he knows.”

“What about the rest of your family, do they know?”

“There is no one else.” said Jason. “It’s just me and Kirk. At least that is how it’s always been, but my dad hadn’t told me about Victor and his doppelgangers. So, I’d like to think it’s just been me and Kirk. I don’t know anybody else. Kind of harsh, huh?”

“In a way, yeah.”

Billy the waiter came back to the table, placing both drinks that both Jeremy and Jason ordered. “Alright guys here you are!”

“Thanks” said Jeremy.

Jason reached for the milkshake that he ordered. Exhilarated to finally taste anything in under countless hours. He slurped the drink, not minding his surroundings, his head raced at the same pace as the drink, making its way into Jason's throat.

Chapter 9

Emerging out of the diner, well fed and full, Jason felt more tired than when he was in the car on the way to Jersey City. He couldn't wait to cuddle under the covers of a nice warm bed, or the couch even, considering he were to sleep in Jeremy's apartment and not his own home.

"Later Billy!" yelled Jeremy.

"Have a good evening gentleman." he yelled back.

The boys walked on down the ramp leading to the sidewalk. "Man, I needed that." said Jeremy.

"I can tell, I can't wait to knock out. So, where is your place?"

"Oh, just about several blocks up. Are you alright to walk or should we take the bus?"

"We could walk," Jason sighed. Surprised that he even agreed, or even had strength to walk in the blistering weather, winds blowing at every turn.

Jeremy had paid for the food at the diner, and although Jason had expressed his gratitude, with no hesitant remarks from Jeremy, he felt it prudent to not deny any action in which Jeremy asked. Hoping it would alleviate the need to express anything in return for Jeremy's sake. It wasn't

enough Jason thought. But he had hoped it would lift the guilt and therefore the weight off his shoulders for not being forthcoming in the first place.

Strutting up the road of Kennedy boulevard, the winds were calming and suddenly Jason didn't feel the need to shake at every turn. Jeremy and Jason talked, killing the time and speaking of their childhood, of their friends and associates for which they come to know.

Expressing and hoping to excuse Ivy's behavior while in the car, Jeremy assured Jason that his actions only seem hostile when first meeting someone, and it would take a while for Ivy to even consider someone's emotions. But to express and reiterate what Clash had said about his brother Ivy, he had an emotional range of a ten-year-old boy.

"They're warlocks!" Jeremy had stated. He walked fast, Jason had no problem walking at his pace, he was more than reluctant to remain indoors. "Clash and Ivy. They grew up in a hostile environment you could say, They're sons of the late Emperor Cornelius. So, you could say they aren't really the type to express emotion."

"I see. But Clash didn't really seem like his brother. If anything, I kind of picked up that Ivy and Amadeus are more alike."

Jeremy chuckled. "Well, I didn't know about that. But yeah, Clash is real cool guy, probably the best spellcaster I've come across. He's considerate, brave, heads on, and he can have an attitude sometimes, but it only shows when he's in battle."

"Tell me something, how is that Amadeus is a sorcerer, but Ivy and Clash are warlocks? Their brothers, but I thought you were born a specific type of spellcaster?"

“You are a born one. But you see, their father, the late emperor, was a warlock, which means Ivy and Clash picked up after him. But Amadeus picked up after their mother. She was a sorceress, a much older one at that. Clash told me about her. That she was beautiful, and she had traits not native to that of Nocturnans.”

“Nocturnans? Is that a word for natives of Nocturna?”

“Yes, it is! You’re catching on quick.”

“Only picked it up because you said Santuarians are natives of Santuario. Inhabitants in fact.”

“Yeah, there are many realms out there. Some of which can be stricter than Santuario and some that lie in chaos. I’ve visited some, but if I had to choose between either of them, to live I mean, it will always be here. On Earth.”

Jason nodded, interested to learn more about the existing realms, and the spellcasters in which Jeremy had come to encounter ever since he became a spellcaster. “Were it the missions you took, that got you to travel across realms?”

“And training. Book studies on spells, History of spellcastry classes, Swordplay with the soldora, and the works.”

“Where is your soldora? I noticed you hadn’t had it since you left the Realm of Santuario.”

“In the car, for now.”

“Won’t you need it?”

“To go home, no.” Jeremy chuckled.

“I thought you said spellcasters were to keep their soldoras with them at all times? That its mixture between a wand and a sword. That spellcasters will be vulnerable without it.”

“I did say that. But you do remember me telling you that it enriches a spellcaster’s aura, no?”

“Yes!”

“Well, so that means my aura could summon it. I cast a spell, and it shall appear within my grasp.”

“How?”

Jeremy took several steps back, away from Jason, Jeremy gestured for him to stay put. Raising his arm, he whispered an incantation. Within seconds a blue spark of energy formed within his grasp, forming into a sword like weapon, the edge almost toward Jason’s legs.

Jason was startled. “What the - -.”

“All spellcasters can call forth their blades when in a threatening situation. Clash and Ivy wouldn’t have noticed my blade were missing while their driving to Journal Square because I had it in the trunk.” Jeremy started forward.

Jason followed him. “So why bother carrying it around? Like you did when we were on our way to the cathedral in Manhattan?”

“Sometimes I like to save up my strength to cast more magic, especially in battle. It’s a trait Ivy and Clash taught me all too well. They say that you may want to save up as much magic as you possibly can, and therefore your strength because it’s like ammunition. With lack of magic

comes lack of brain power, and you can't think of new tricks to accomplish while dueling or fighting off other spellcasters in battle. It will tire your mind, and therefore your body. It can take a toll for any of us."

Glaring about the dark shadows in every turn, he caught a glimpse of the red brick buildings across from where he was, all of which were consisted together. A campus? He thought. He looked at the awning of the bus stop, whose fluorescent lights dimmed on the advertisement display, which read, Saint Francis University.

"We're here." Jeremy said suddenly.

Jason took a brief look at the house to his left, in which Jeremy gestured towards. The white building, with pattered tiles, were of a wooden structured building. Some of which not found in Manhattan or let alone where Jason had lived. They strutted up the stairs, Jeremy unlocked the door and gestured for Jason to follow.

As Jeremy started up the dark stairs, the lights illuminated at his quick approach, revealing several wooden doors on the first floor. Jason followed him, questioning as to whether the yellow lights which reflected off the crescent colored walls, and creaking hardwood floors, were a form of magic. Or just a simple contraption made by humans, to sense when someone comes inside in the dark.

Jeremy stopped before the door closest to the head of the stairs, unlocking he stepped inside. Jason hurried up the stairs, his stomach, yet full and impatient, held him down to move at a glacial pace.

He reached the top of the stairs and stepped inside through the narrow walkway, the air of the apartment was warm, but cozy. He almost felt he could faint at the door.

“It’s not much, but it’s my home. A place I can relax and reflect.”

Jason glared about wondrously at the naked white walls, an open door revealing the bathroom closest to the entrance of where he stood. A large space where he thought perhaps were the living room from where he stood. A door at the end of the hallway to his right, who Jason could only guess were the bedroom. And opening that revealed a kitchen to his left.

Jason started forward, and Jeremy were behind him, closing and locking the door. “I left your things in the Living Room. I take it you’d probably want to freshen up since you have the same clothes on from the bar last night. You can feel free to use the bathroom and anything that you like to be comfortable.”

Jason sighed, thinking about the sudden turmoil. “That would be much appreciated, thanks.” Strutting over to the left side of the long couch, he reached for that blue familiar bag in which he carried when he’d sleep over Joseph’s house. Relieved to see some familiarity of his sanity, before ever hearing the word spellcaster, or realms, or Soldoras even. It was a calming reassurance that his life did exist before when he woke up today at the hotel. “You know I still feel little uneasy about you going through my stuff.”

“On about that still, are you?” Jeremy leaned against the wall with his arms crossed.

“I don’t know you that well. So of course, I’m going to be a little protective about my belongings.”

“I have to confess, I did inquire about something.”

Jason rose his eyebrows, nervously at the sudden suggestion. “Such as?”

“You’re entire wardrobe...Its blue.”

“Yeah, it’s my favorite color.”

“You know I’m beginning to think that if your powers were awakened, that that may be the color of your aura.”

“What’s an aura?”

“The aura is what you’re speck cells respond to, it grants your soldora the color of its blade. Like for example, you saw that my soldora ignited a blue color, a blur aura. The aura grants the power of telekinesis and other attributes for a spellcaster.”

“I see. So, telekinesis, is that another form of spellcastry?”

Jeremy looked around the room. He then glared at the glass of marbles that sat on top of the dining table. “All spellcasters have the power of telekinesis, regardless of what type of spellcaster you are.”

Jason looked at Jeremy suspiciously as he sat next to Jason raising his hand towards the dining table. With his left arm raised and his hand gesturing as if he had something at his palm and aimed straight for the glass of marbles. As Jeremy raised his arm a little further up, the glass of marbles raised at the same pace as his arm. “See!”

Jason nodded, partially surprised but mostly terrified. “Wow!”

Closing his fingers into a fist, Jeremy gestured for the glass to hover towards his direction. Slowly the glass came to where he was stood beside the wall, and Jason looked at the glass cautiously, somehow expecting it to fall and shatter across the rug of the living room.

“This type of training in telekinesis takes time, maybe even months. Depending on how quickly you absorb it. You just have to possess the will.” Suddenly blue sparks brighten Jeremy’s hand where the glass was held.

Jason was astonished. “So, blue is your elemental color too?”

“Yes.” replied Jeremy. “It’s the color that represents my aura. But mind you, there are other spellcasters who can harness the gravity. And their powers can represent any color chosen for that spellcaster. You can possess this power too. It’s hardly ever simple at first but after a while, you’ll learn to let go of the doubt. Carry your will and be eager to harness more. This power is inside of you already, it’s just up to you to awaken it.”

Jason suddenly felt dizzy at the thought of persuading himself to any sort of magic making. “I should jump in the shower,” Jason grabbed his P. J’s, his deodorant, toothbrush, and got up from the couch. “Won’t be long!”

Jeremy let out a smirk, as Jason strutted passed him, hurrying to jump in the shower, like a child impatient to see a movie in the large cineplex. He could imagine the hot blissful shower raining down on him, washing away all the worries, the need to resort to insecurity and remain pure like he had just awakened from a dream, a nightmare begging to conclude. Suddenly he stopped, glaring back at Jeremy.

Jeremy heard the pause of his footsteps. He locked eyes with him. “Is something wrong?”

“It was you, wasn’t it? You were the one who blew Glenico off and preventing him from killing me. Last week, when I was on my way home.”

Jeremy nodded. He started for the kitchen without another word.

Surprised at the inquisition, Jason recalled the aura, the way the blade had moved against Glenico. It was the same shade, same energy that cackled from out of Jeremy’s blade. In which he showed on the way home. As well as back at the apartment when he attempted to fight off the Sorcerer, Amadeus.

He sighed and started for the bathroom.

Chapter 10

The shower ran with blistering water, the heat that filled the bathtub made Jason’s body rejuvenating and refreshed. Closing his eyes as the last bits soapy water dripped down his face, allowing the aroma to captivate him entirely. He opened his eyes in relief and shut off the hot water and pulled the shower curtain aside to step out and reach for the towel that was placed on top of the shelf.

Drying himself to best of his ability, he got dressed, put on his P. J’s and grabbed his belongings. Starting for the door, he opened it as a whirlwind of cool air crashed against him, relieving him of the heat that ensued in the bathroom.

He caught himself shaking suddenly, but only for a moment, he made his way for the living room, in time to see a bed pulled out from the cushions of the large couch, pillows were stocked

against them as well as quilt neatly folded beside it. Jason were tempted to jump on it, but instead decided to put away his belongings.

Making for the side of the couch, he placed his clothes in which he wore in a separate back, as well as his toothpaste and brush in the inner pockets of the traveling set.

On top of the table, he sawt that the bowl of marbles was placed back to where they were, when Jeremy held them with his telekinesis. Two mugs and a plate fig bars were placed on the tray.

“How was your shower?” Jeremy asked, as he emerged from the kitchen.

“It was great. I feel better.”

“Just got the tea prepared, I thought we have some before bed.”

“Thanks.”

Starting toward the dining table, Jeremy poured hot water into two of the black mugs that sat on the dining table with spoons beside each of them. The scent of chamomile filled the air.

Jason sat on the chair and grabbed a mug. “This smell delicious.”

“It helps me relax my mind, when I find myself thinking too much, I’ll sleep better too.”

“Is there something that keeps you thinking in particular? That prevents sleep?”

“There are a few.” Jeremy sat on the chair and grabbed his mug of tea. “But surprisingly none that would keep me up in the middle of the night. But still, I’d like the tea. It’s delicious.”

Jason tore his lips away from the mug. “That it is. But if you don’t mind me asking. What situation troubled you as much?”

“Yesterday when I met you at the bar.”

“What do you mean?”

“When I was at there, I was supposed to track down Glenico. Ever since he attacked you on MacDougal Street. I had to make sure I wasn’t noticed or seen in case the Witch would catch my attention.

“Did you bring me home that night?”

“Yes, I brought you to your apartment. I didn’t know where you lived obviously, but thankfully you had your wallet in your pocket with Identification. Your dad was in the house too, but he was locked in the room, so I don’t think he heard me coming.”

“Yeah, he does that.” Jason nodded, his thoughts drifting to Kirk in a fit of rage to hear Glenico’s name or let alone hear his voice in mind, when it came. “So, Glenico is a witch. Not a wizard or sorcerer even. How did you know I was at the bar?”

“I didn’t! I was alerted of a possible hotspot where I can find a spellcaster, hopefully Glenico. But it turns out it was just you, sitting by the bar, while your friends were conversing with other fellows that were there.”

“And I’m left to wonder what that would mean for Kirk. I mean do you think they’ll catch Glenico?”

“We will.” said Jeremy bluntly. “It’s only a matter of time.”

There was an awkward silence between the two. Jason wondered if it were a good time to tell Jeremy that he had class in the afternoon, and that he'd wish to go to take his mind off things, but the last thing Jason wanted to hear was a protest of sorts, saying that he shouldn't be out in the public, especially in a place where he was bound to be noticed.

Perhaps I could contact Rebecca, Michael or Joseph even. He thought. Anything to drown out the silence. But he remained silent and sat patiently, sipping his tea.

"I think you're a cool dancer by the way." said Jeremy.

Jason felt awkward to the random statement. "Okay."

"I know it's random, it's just that I kind of caught myself thinking about the time we first met."

"It was only yesterday." said Jason stupidly, quickly regretting the statement.

"I think that night would have gone a lot better, if it hadn't ended the way it did. Don't you think?"

"Yeah, definitely." Jason recollected on what they spoke about during their encounter. "Were you serious when you said, you had a diverse set of secrets?"

Jeremy laughed. "Yes, of course."

"You're going to have to tell me someday. And not leave a guy hanging."

"Well I think I've told you a few. About my disowning and how I came across being with the Cobra Entity."

“But that’s public knowledge, isn’t it?”

“But you didn’t.” Jeremy let out a smirk. “Why don’t I show you another one?”

Jason was partially excited. “Okay, what is it?”

Jeremy rose up from the seat and looked at Jason with a smile he had one arm behind his back and another he held out to Jason. “Shall we?”

Jason looked at him in confusion. “Wait, what?”

“Don’t you want to see my skills?”

“Ha! Cocky much? Are you trying to dance with me?”

“Not really, I just thought you’d like to see what I’m made of on the ballroom floor.” Jeremy stood up and walked over to the stereo. He took his iPod and plugged it into the radio outlet. The song played, a smooth wave of a woman’s voice, definitive and slow.

Strutting over toward Jason, Jeremy rose his hand again. “May I have this dance?”

Awkwardly and quietly, Jason stood up, they walked to the middle of the living room, stopped and held each other by arm’s length. The music was still and as they danced slowly, they both had their head down watching their feet.

“Follow my lead.” said Jeremy. “When my feet step in, you step out, and so on.”

“I can’t believe you’re making me do this.”

“Yes, indeed.” Jeremy teased. “What’s one song going to do to you?”

“Nothing, I suppose.” Jason followed Jeremy’s way as they held each other and moved left to right, motioning to the rhythm of the music.

Jeremy locked his hands with Jason’s as he rocked left and right to the song. Jason was slowly but surely trying to keep up. Difficult at the thought of Jeremy’s gaze, heady and heavy. His head low, watching his bare feet sway against the carpet, opposite of Jeremy construction boots.

With ascending courage, Jason slowly raised his head to gaze upward look his foot to Jeremy’s face, cautiously attempting to lock eye contact. His eyes wandered around looking to obtain a purpose or perhaps make conversation.

“See, you’re doing fine. You haven’t stepped on me yet, or I you.” said Jeremy.

“I’m just going with my gut here. I don’t particularly get to dance with other guys often. When I do, it’s mostly with my friends, Rebecca and Michael.”

“You really miss your friends, don’t you?”

“Yes, I do. They’re probably worried sick about me. I was supposed to call them when I got home that evening, but I didn’t. They’re probably mad at me.”

Jeremy nodded in agreement. “Tell you what, tomorrow morning, you can use my phone and you can call them. Therefore, it won’t be tracked.”

“Really? I mean you’re sure?”

“Yes, but I highly recommend you don’t tell them what happened. Or where you are in fact. We don’t want to risk them getting into trouble. Or you even. Remember we’re trying to stay under the radar.”

“Yeah...” Jason were almost hesitant, to bring up this next request. “There’s another thing?”

Jeremy rose upward, gesturing that he was listening.

“I have class tomorrow afternoon. Would it be too much trouble if I went?”

Jeremy did not answer, his eyes wandered toward the stereo, and back at Jason.

“If it’s too much trouble, I’ll understand. But I just want to go. It’s an art class, and until my father is safely back home, I would appreciate if I occupied my time with something that takes my mind off things.”

“Doe this not take your mind off things?” Jeremy let out a chuckle, tightening Jason’s hand, as they danced.

“It does, certainly. But I got to have some familiarity in there somewhere. Proof that my life isn’t falling apart... I’m thinking about my dad constantly, and I don’t know what that... Witch... Glenico... has in store for Kirk. And I don’t want to waste time thinking about it. I’d like to believe that my father is alive and well adjusted.”

Jeremy leaned his head and bit his lips. “As you wish, Sorcerer, Jason Malero. Up and coming artist of the century, since Picasso. I shall drive you to school myself.”

Silence fell once more, and Jason couldn't think of anything to say. His mind was no longer racing but all he wanted to do now was be alone, He felt weak and tired from mixed emotions. Jason didn't know what to think about this moment or what he was supposed to think.

"I should probably hit the sack. My eyes are getting heavy." Jason said confused and felt a little guilt to ending the dance.

"No problem." Jeremy smiled and let Jason go and walked over to the radio to turn the system off. The music stopped, and Jason felt a relief that the living room was then quiet.

"The bed is prepared for you and I hope you have everything you need."

"I do." said Jason "Thanks again."

"Alright, well you sleep. I'm going to jump in the shower." Jeremy walked off to the bedroom without saying another word. He closed the door behind him.

"*What just happened?*" Jason thought. He didn't want to think much of the current ordeal. But he couldn't help it, he was overwhelmed. He unfolded quilt, He lay down and tucked himself in.

Anxious to start his day anew tomorrow, Jason couldn't help feeling weird about Jeremy. How could a guy he met at a club, end up being a wizard from an underground or yet secret society that defends a world outside the one he is in. Things were happening a little too quickly.

Jason was used to Kirk's absence but when it came to Jeremy and looking for a second opinion, Kirk would be the one to look for when he needed questioning as to who to trust. But with Kirk anyway, that matter had been shaken. Jason could think, Kirk believed that men like Jeremy aren't cool people to be around. Kirk was judgmental.

Is Jeremy even the guy Jason believes him to be or is Jeremy just beautiful outside but not as keen to be on the inside? Everything Jeremy did for him was perhaps a little too nice to assume the role of protection detail for Jason. This was more like the role of someone close to you. Someone who knows you? Someone who knows what you want in life without asking? But is Jason wrong to think this way? Or is he supposed to focus on being ignorant and therefore the victim? Because if he gave in anymore time in to this line of thinking Jason may be blind from the truth, the reality that enlightens right before his very eyes. But no Jason knew this couldn't be worth stressing about. Not just yet. Jason lay on the bed with the quilt tucked around him. No noise but silence.

Jason dreamt that night. A crystal tower surrounded by the clouds that hung in the lilac sky. The fog swam around its reflective surfaces, leaving no traces of its foundation, or a clue as to how high the tower stood.

One thing was certain, and it was that Jason never laid eyes on an image like this before. Haven't been to such a mystical place or a plane that could reveal the lowest cloud, captivating the tower. It was like a dream, but a mind whose special effects allowed you to feel the moisture of the clouds, the chilly winds crashing against your bare face, as you try to lock eyes with the visuals around you.

Appearing out of the shadows, a figure emerged, standing before the edge of the crystal brick balcony, whose reflective surfaces were like that of a giant diamond.

"Stay brave, young sorcerer!" said the figure.

Raising both his hands, a cackle of energy sparked in his grasp. Forming into a round shape of an orb, its magic reflecting that of stars, which burst out of its center, and sprung passed the wielder where he stood.

The magic cast became a whirlwind of violet stars, whose extended power were like that of confetti, coiled around the spellcaster that rendered still. Its starshaped energy cackled to life, taking on a will of its own, a will identical to the spellcaster, but whose power can exceed farther then where the figure stood.

“A will greater than our own, has birthed a new human.” He said. “Rendered entirely by the will of the elder deities. A body made with the support of two humans, but the spirit of what the lord had in store. You are no sin. You are no abomination. You were birthed by the lord’s will, and not my own.”

With the orb in his grasp, He used his other arm and summoned a violet shadow, which took form into the shape of a long blade. “Be who you are!”

A Soldora.

The sharp blade illuminated into a spark of violet, and the spellcaster turned it thrice. Whispering an incantation, the orb levitated out of his hand. Soaring away from the tower, it sprung and crashed into the clouds above. Thunder cackled among the clouds, concluding the orbs departure, and its message of hope that lies within.

“*Was this dream real?*” Jason thought, slowly awaking to find the night broad in the window.

Although his head is still imbedded in the pillow of the sofa, His thoughts coming together, recollecting on the spellcaster that stood atop the tower.

An armored suited spellcaster, with curly jet-black hair up to his ears, a light brown skin complexion, similar if not the same as Jason's, made him believe that perhaps he knows this man before.

But surely, he could remember seeing a man with shoulder padded armor on his left arm, purple and black leg braces. And though the man looked young, Jason thought the man could be of Kirk's age, his real age without the time ring.

Concluding that he indeed never seen the amazon warrior before, the images started fading. Thoughts on the man dressed as an Amazon warrior began to disappear into the shadows that were closing in with him, everything faded to black, and he fell deeper into unconsciousness. Sleep consumed at last.

The high sky line of an unknown city illuminated by the foundation of the many buildings in the lower structures. Both abandoned and dark, embedded in the mountainous concretes of the centuries old skyscrapers. The Realm of Nocturna. Its daylight resembled that of the Earth's twilight dusk and dawn.

Far off away from the city, were the Saturn Mountains, ancient grounds that left behind remnants and trifles of the old world. Long before the Realm were named Nocturna. Today of course, many Nocturnans share the histories of the early times of gods and sanctuaries created by

them. Others dismiss them as baseless myths that leave behind no proof or reasons to extend the stories further among the offspring. Some don't realize that the proof could stand not more than an inch from them.

The Sorcerer Amadeus hurried up the mountains. "I feel gracious to slip through the eyes of the demi god Lord Zarius whilst I teleported on the grounds, not using magic, for it would be easy for Zarius to find us, Vincent!"

"These are holy grounds," said Vincent Song, his English accent hoarse and weak, he stood before the vine covered cauldron which were welted to the rust, and mildew covered rock beneath it. "These grounds repel the use of magic. Ever since I could remember, I could not as so much cast a whistle."

"When shall we return to the city?"

"When all that has transpired is settled down. I sense an imminent danger, however. The lords above have remained ignorant for quite some time... We need to find my doppelganger soon. The more time we waste, the older we become, and our goals will no longer reach fruition."

"You're stronger than most. Why can't you hurry out of the shadows, and provoke Victor to come out of hiding?"

"It would deem unnecessary. At first, I thought Victor were waiting for the right time to initiate an attack against my power. But for him to hide this long, is completely out of character. Something has happened to him. Something far worse than death."

"And still you think that Victor is not dead?"

“Somehow, no! I would’ve felt it. The emptiness, the light fade from the bowels of the realms my doppelganger has ever touched.”

“I still require his son, Jason.” Amadeus crossed his arms. “He will be of much use to me. Surprisingly I feel, that he does not share the same necessity for you.”

“I rather see him dead.” Vincent shot angrily. “All that Victor has left behind. His son, his partner, his allies, are all a complete disgrace to my name. Victor’s persona shall die, and his cursed family with him.

“Now, Amadeus. I brace my hands away from the boy for your request. But if he so much as becomes a nuisance to my endeavors, my reasons to live a life without my doppelgangers, then I shall strike him where he stands.”

Amadeus nodded. “This, I appreciate. He is my goal, Vincent. I will make him join my cause. Even if I must force him into thy will.” Amadeus started down the mountains, tearing away from where Vincent stood.

Vincent turned, watching the sorcerer cautiously. “Amadeus!”

The sorcerer stopped.

“If it’s true what you say, and the boy has the aura in which you seen years before. He may be more powerful than you know. More powerful than you! See to it, that he’s not a threat.”

Chapter 11

Morning came at last, the cell phone rang loudly in the bedroom. Jeremy hurried to go grab it. He picked up the cell phone up from the side of the bed and touched the screen to pick it up without realizing who was calling. “Hello!”

“Did you sleep with him?” said Ivy, chuckling.

“Seriously.”

“Well I want to know. How did it go?”

“We didn’t do anything.” Jeremy took a glimpse into the living room to see that Jason was still sound asleep and started toward the kitchen.

“Well what are you waiting for? You know you want to - -. Otherwise you wouldn’t invite him to your house.”

“Ivy you really don’t know me at all. It’s nothing like that. Zarius insisted that he’d stay away from the East Village. We don’t know what could be waiting for him out there.”

“An Ex-boyfriend maybe.” snorted Ivy. *“Where is he now?”*

“He’s still asleep in the living room. I’m just about getting breakfast started.”

“Zarius has intel of an unidentified portal that opened on the Chelsea region. And he thinks something might go down around the surrounding area.”

“Sounds like you need to be cautious.”

“Zarius suggested I bring other spellcasters as well. But who knows maybe it would be unnecessary.”

“You think the portal may have something to do with Glenico or your brother Amadeus even?” asked Jeremy.

“Beats me! But one thing we do know is that the portal may have been opened from outside Manhattan, outside Earth. Somebody came from a realm opposite.”

“Well hopefully we’ll get to the bottom of this because opening new portals in the city without permit is forbidden by the elder deities.”

“I know. Which makes it easier for us. Whoever opened the portal knows that the deities will soon be on their tail.”

“Obviously.” said Jeremy. “Look, I’ve got to finish up with breakfast. I’ll text you when I’m done.”

“Alright, But I called to let you know that Clash will be returning with the car. He got your message and he’s on his way, but you got to drop him off back to meet me in Chelsea.”

“Understood. I’ll talk to you later.” Jeremy placed the phone down and took a peak in the living room.

No movement upon the couch, he sighed in relief.

Sitting on the couch in the living room, Kirk’s mind wandered, thinking about the past and how unfortunate to know that Jason was no longer with him, however fortunate to be still alive from yesterday’s predicament. Kirk couldn’t bring himself to shake the absence of the only son

he's ever had. The only gift Kirk and Victor shared. And being without Victor seemed like a lost cause. But without Jason, felt worse, like a puncture to the heart, and no reason to even live.

With the sun begging to still rise to its highest peak, Javier's living room in which Kirk sat was mellow and a bit cold. It was empty with just a couch and a flat screen T.V on the far side of the wall opposite. But that wasn't the cause of the silence, Kirk thought. Kirk didn't feel any fear to go back home and pick up some stuff. Upset, distraught and fed up with hiding, he wanted to put everything he fought against to an end. It wouldn't be easy but at some point, this had to be done.

Kirk heard the keys jangling against the front door. As if someone were trying to open it. He quickly looked away from the window to the front door to see who it was.

The front door opened. "Good news!" said Javier. "I got some Intel that a good friend of Glenico's or at least an asset, lives off one sixty first and Amsterdam."

"That's in Washington Heights." said Kirk plainly. "Who was this Intel?"

"A woman named Katrina from Seventh Street; she's supposedly friends with the guy who she saw hangs out with Glenico. Maybe he was a closet case going on a secret rendezvous with Glenico but had to go somewhere he wouldn't notice. My guess is Washington Heights."

"You think this guy may be the one we go to, to find Glenico?" asked Kirk. "What's the guy's name?"

"Francisco Soto."

Kirk nodded. "Francisco...I've never heard of him."

“Me neither. Glenico’s sloppy at covering his tracks. And this guy who works with him could be the one that told Glenico where you and Jason were.”

“Maybe. But I’ve never associated with a Francisco Soto, so I wouldn’t know.”

“Maybe he has another alias.” Javier placed the black bag on top of the couch and unzipped his coat to take it off. “Think about it, Glenico could have given this guy a picture of you and asked him to keep a lookout to find you in case you turned up to be in the East Village.”

Kirk nodded “You’re probably right. And with this guy being friends with a Katrina, who lives a few blocks from my house by the way, isn’t a coincidence.”

Javier took off his jacket and placed it on top of the couch and sat down. “Do you really think Glenico is still in the city?” asked Javier.

“He has to be. He wouldn’t leave without setting up a goal abroad. Glenico is planning something, I feel it in my bones.”

“All the more reason we should attack first.”

“We should be careful though, he could have allied himself with a whole new crowd.”

“As in friends?” asked Javier sarcastically. “Glenico has no friends; he doesn’t give a damn about anybody but himself. Well, except you.”

“That’s not funny.”

“I’m serious, obviously Glenico couldn’t bring himself to kill you but slap you around a bit to prove he’s the best.”

Kirk wasn't amused. "Glenico could never take a hint. I know that for sure. He's been on to me for years now. It's upsetting. Look could we just not talk about that - -." Kirk paused at the sudden knock at the door, he jumped from the couch. "Who the hell is that?"

"Umm yeah about that." said Javier. He sounded hesitant. "I asked somebody to come by. I need him to deliver the message."

"What kind of message?" Kirk asked concerned.

The door was clacking again. Javier started toward the door. "Who is it?"

"Trevor!"

Opening the door, Javier nodded toward the tall gentlemen. His long sleeveless trench coat revealed his dark brown muscle arms, heavy than that of a UFC Champion. Trevor nodded in return and strutted inside toward the living room. He gave a quick glance at Kirk who did not look at all pleased.

"What's going on?" Trevor asked, turning around to face Javier, who entered the living room after him. "So, what's the plan? Why did you ask me here?"

"I just need a message delivered to Zarius." said Javier suddenly. "Zarius - -."

"Zarius?" said Kirk. "What message are you talking about, Javier?"

Trevor looked at Kirk oddly. "So, you're Kirk I take it. Javier told me a lot about you."

"Well I know nothing of you." said Kirk bluntly. "So, mind your own business!"

Trevor gave a slight smirk to Javier. "Your friends got a death wish, huh?"

“Say what!” Kirk rose up from the couch.

Trevor took his attention off Kirk. He glared at the bucket by the window, tools of sorts remained abandoned. Raising his arm up, Trevor fixed his gaze onto the hammer, obeying his will and levitated toward his grasp. “Death is easy, Kirk! You sure you want to try me!”

Kirk chuckled in anger. “Great! A spellcaster.”

Trevor ignored him and turned to look at Javier who sat on the couch munching on his sandwich. “So, you want to tell me what I’m doing here? Zarius has me on duty tonight and I should be at home sleeping until that happens.”

“And the dude works for the Cobra Entity. Awesome!”

“You got a lot of mouth there, buddy! You got something you want to get off your chest?”

“Why sure!”

“Gentlemen!!” Javier started. “Let’s discuss business and leave the fights for later... Trevor, I asked you here, so you could tell Zarius of Kirk’s safety. Hopefully in return he could relay the message to his son, Jason. You’re the only spellcaster that we know who can talk to them directly and we can’t risk it given the fact that Glenico may be on our tail. We’re trying to stay one step ahead of him.

“Javier, I told you!” Kirk shot. “I will speak with Jason, I don’t want to interfere with any more spellcasters. Apart from Glenico.”

“Glenico?” Trevor perched his lips. “You guys are trying to find Glenico. It’s too dangerous for you humans.”

“Well thanks for the concern.”

“Just how were you going to contact your son?” Javier crossed his arms. “By a call? And risk having Amadeus and Glenico find you in the aftermath! Track you down and torture you before you can say your son’s name? No way! We need a second ear. And Trevor here, a Wizard of the Cobra Entity, will do just that.”

Kirk knew Javier was right. There could have been more enemies on their tail and still patrolling the nearby areas of where Kirk lived.

Javier told Trevor the plan that was going to go down today. Javier also stated that it would be best to tell Zarius that Kirk is alive, and the message should be brought to Kirks son Jason.

“This is a case Zarius should be aware of.” said Trevor.

“I know I think it’s safe to assume that Zarius had Jason put on protective detail by another spellcaster.” said Javier.

“So why are you telling me this?” asked Trevor.

“You’re one of the few spellcasters I trust. There could be other spellcasters in Zarius’s enforcement that could be covering for Glenico. I can’t risk telling anybody else about Kirk staying with me, and besides Kirk needs to know if Jason is all right.”

“The boy should be fine.” said Trevor. “I know he’s with one of the spellcasters, but I don’t know who.”

“Thanks,” Javier gave a rapid glare at Kirk, who were staring into space and not to mind the conversation. “Kirk gives his thanks too.”

“I’ll relay this information to Zarius when I can.”

Jason awoke that morning to find that the breakfast was set up. Jeremy displayed the cups and plates, where they would sit at the table. Conversing of varied sorts. Jason however, couldn’t help but give a few glares at the bowl of marbles, that levitated last night at the force of Jeremy’s will. Remarkable that he, Jason Malero, would inherit these same qualities as an awakened spellcaster.

It was terrifying, but it also seemed imperative. In the words of what Jason like to believe were Victor Song, coming to him a dream. “Be who you are.” The last four words spoken by the render of the amazon warrior. The sorcerer whose magic seemed entirely enclosed atop the tower. Jason recalled it many times over, like a movie quote, to vital to pass up, and risk forgetting for a day’s motivation.

“Clash is coming back with the car.” Said Jeremy suddenly. “I told his when to stop by, so you won’t be late for your class. But I must drop him off on the way, so he’ll ride with us.”

“Okay, no worries. The class doesn’t start till 1pm.”

“You sure? I don’t want you thinking he’s like Ivy.”

Jason chuckled. “Its fine! I’m not worried.” Of course, he was worried, just not about Ivy or Clash. There were plenty of worries, here he was going to school, and yet still there wasn’t any word as to whether his father Kirk had been found. His mind racing nearly diminished his appetite, forcing the muscles within his stomach to tighten as he sat there.

But given that Jeremy woke up early just to get breakfast started, he forced himself miserably to eat it. He expressed his gratitude a thousand times over, and even offered to do the dishes while Jeremy had made the preparations for them to depart from the house when Clash would arrive. But Jeremy, being Jeremy, declined.

A weight was lifted off Jason's shoulders, when Jeremy gave him his phone for him to call Rebecca, Michael and Joseph. and let him know where he was. With a rehearsed story that said. "I'm fine, guys! Kirk had a rough time at work and thought it would do us justice to travel to Puerto Rico before the conclusion of November. We're going to be around for a while, so best not to wait up. We will return soon...Very soon." He finished.

The homesick feeling of hearing their voice on three ways, Michael on one end, and Rebecca and Joseph on the other. With Jason assuring them that he was alright. Anything to not raise panic. He asked them about the Sunday aftermath, after the party. Recalling that Rebecca did not go, but she did meet up with Michael at his apartment.

"He was a hot mess," Rebecca started. "I brought the cannabis to stop his moaning, and I could have sworn when I came in the room, he was - -."

"I was not, I told you!" Michael barked.

Joseph and Rebecca couldn't help but laugh. "He wasn't exactly in a sick state." She went on. "Drunk, sure. But you know the cure for that on some men."

Jason laughed, sighing in relief. The familiar voices, as well as the need of their company were relentlessly home sickening. He'd give anything to have a coffee or a time to socialize and reflect all that had transpired on Michael's Birthday and the following.

But his safety was on the line, and so were things so hellbent on consuming Jason's subconscious. The dream he had of Victor Song, the anxious need to go to class and tear away from all that he'd come to know of Kirk's disappearance. If it were to be, he'd rather stay put and indoors. But it would only create more problems than it should.

The sun was about to rise to its highest, and Jeremy and Jason walked out the front door of the house. The cold crisp breeze had blown past the building's exterior. Jason nearly lost his balance as he descended the narrow steps. Thankfully, Jeremy did not appear to notice.

The candy red car in which Jeremy drove last night from Manhattan to Jersey City, were parked in front of the house. And a familiar man, with his hair braided and let black trench coat, sleeveless, and armor attached to the long sleeve opposite, stood with his arms crossed against the car.

"Good to see you two up and about." said Clash.

Jeremy opened the back-passenger door, leading Jeremy to sit inside. Jeremy started for the driver's seat and Clash sat in the front beside him. Jeremy started the engine and drove off.

"What happened at journal square?"

"I don't know if Ivy told you, but it was just some possible theft between the spellcasters. There's was blood on the escalators leading to the Path Train Station. We were led to believe it may have been just a possible brawl."

"Were they from New York?"

"One of them were. As for the other one, she wasn't very cooperative."

“How so?”

“Well they were both shamans! It would appear they were from the ancients’ bloodline. One was of the ice shamans; the other was fire. The Fire Shaman is supposedly from here, from Earth. But I don’t recall any Fire shamans in reservation along the New York City Region. So, it could be possible that she was from somewhere along the U.S or any other part of the world.”

“But not a realm opposite.”

“Apparently not!”

Although he sat in the backseat, Jason couldn’t help but question just how many spellcaster lived across New York. Strutting through the busy crowds of Times Square, would he recognize, if he had the ability to sense a spellcaster within several feet from him. Could he/ or she have sensed Jason if he such much as spoke, or even touched. Would any of them had known that Jason was a spellcaster, just by looking at him, even if his aura were not awakened. Would he sense them, if he tried? “

“Ivy took over for me when I left last night,” Clash went on “Thankfully I was able to get some sleep and eat. So now I’m returning the favor, by letting him sleep like a log.”

“I thought he was still on duty? He said that he wanted me to drop you off to him while I’m on my way to Chelsea.”

“That’s what he thinks, but as soon as I get there, he’s out. I can’t deal with a hungry warlock, who hasn’t slept in hours.”

Jeremy chuckled and looked over to Jason in the rearview mirror. “What time do you get out again?”

“Four, I think.” said Jason. “If we don’t get a break between the hours.”

“Sounds fair.”

Jason thought for a moment about what Zarius said to him yesterday. About being a spellcaster, being taught the arts and how to fight in the martial arts study. Could that be what the man in the dream meant when he said *be who you are*? Possibly, so what else could he become anyway? “What was it like training as a spellcaster?” Jason asked openly.

Jason caught Jeremy looking over at Clash hoping he’d answer first.

“I was trained for as long as I can remember. My brothers and I were taught by ancient scholars of Nocturna. A realm purely dominated by his reign, and we were taught under his tutelage and his rule. He was strict, selfish, and completely power hungry. Everything he wanted, he got. But it wasn’t enough... As his sons, we were to be enforcers of his will. And his will, destroyed us.”

“How so?”

“Ivy and I weren’t taught to love, or to show compassion among others. As we got older and when my father fell from his rule, we were able to live our own lives, and started to migrate to the Realm of Santuario.”

“What about Amadeus?”

“Amadeus ran away from the empire at a very young age. Right after our mother died, in fact. We lost so much after her death, her light, are only hoping to love, everything. It was a time during the Nocturnan Civil War. Rebels against my father’s rule. It was a daunting time, quickly

consumed by famine and disease, all my father's doing to eradicate those who were against his rule. Amadeus escaped all of that.

"I wouldn't say Amadeus had it easy, given that he escaped the empire, but he did of course, find his way, find a purpose outside our father's madness. He trained with fellow sorcerers. Mind you, for years, Ivy and I were trapped in the Emperor's clutches. Even if we managed to escape, we were looked at as the threat. Everyone across the realms knew that I, Ivy and Amadeus were sons of greed, power, and eternal torment. Amadeus found solace in training with sorcerers, some of which included Vincent and Victor Song. And of course, sorcerers from our mother's side."

"So, you knew Victor Song?"

"Oh yes, a lot of people have. I've meet him many years ago."

"Many years ago?" asked Jason confused, recalled Victor's age and how old he would have been if he were indeed still alive. Giving the fact, he was passed the century mark, as told by Lord Zarius. "But wait, how old are you? I thought you were like twenty-two or something."

"In the human eye, I am." Clash went on. "But considering I am a spellcaster, I age pretty slowly. I'm Eighty!"

"I see." said Jason surprised.

"All spellcasters tend to age rather slow. Mostly occurs when you reach nineteen or twenty."

"But wait a minute, I'm nineteen. So, since I haven't had my powers awakened or not even a trained spellcaster. Could that mean that I can still age like an earthly human?"

“Apparently not. Considering you have blood of a spellcaster, you will in fact age at the same pace as any of us, regardless whether your powers were awakened or not.”

Jason realized that his father Kirk had to be aware of this. He wondered how Kirk was going to explain to Jason the lack of aging when it came his time at nineteen or twenty.

“You would be so lucky.” said Jeremy suddenly. “Most people would give anything to age as slowly as us.”

“Even you? How old are you?”

“How old do you think I am?”

Jason shrugged his shoulders. “I give up. For all I know you could be thirty, even though you look twenty.”

“I’m twenty-one.” said Jeremy.

Jason sighed in disappointment realizing he was way off on the assumption of Jeremy’s age. “Like I said, I wouldn’t know.” He shifted and glared out the window. “What about Ivy?”

“Ivy’s biological age is Eighty-.” Clash paused for a moment as if he hesitated to what he was going to say next. “My brothers and I are two years apart.”

Jason stared and realized why clash was hesitant. “So, Amadeus is like Eighty-two?”

“Ivy is Eighty-Two. Amadeus is Eighty-four or five! I can’t recall honestly. I’m the youngest.”

“So, again, about Amadeus. What could Amadeus want with me? He practically tried to kill me back at the apartment.” He wanted to ask all these questions when they first entered Jersey City last night. But he stood quiet at the sudden idea that Ivy would say or do something that Jason wouldn’t like. It was irritating to think Ivy would spurt out words of insults if Jason so much as asked a stupid question, all which Ivy would render as useless and bashful. Of course, he would understand that Ivy would defend Amadeus, especially if it’s his brother.

Clash took a deep sigh. “I don’t want to defend my brother. But if there is one thing I know about him, is that he has a purpose.”

“How so?” Jason asked.

“Amadeus inherited the traits of our mother, Amara, a Nocturnan sorceress who studied ancient alchemy. She possessed qualities that neither I nor Ivy can control because we had the blood of our father, the magical speck cells of a warlock. But Amadeus inherited cells close to our mother, a sorceress. Theoretically we suspected it was because he was the first born, so Amadeus was closer to our mother than we were.

“He made it his obsession to discover the secrets that our mother had kept. Her heritage, her origin, everything she was before she was forcefully married to our father, The Emperor Cornelius. Of course, Amadeus found much about Amara, and discovered her family in the far reaches of the Nocturnan Realm. We’ve never heard of them, our brothers and I, because they were banished by the Emperor many years ago. However, we soon discovered why.

“When Amadeus told us what he learned, we were in shock, Ivy and I, because what Amadeus had discovered was dark magic. Our mother wasn’t a moral person. She had plans to worship a nature that would destroy humanity.”

“What do you mean? What did your mother do that was so bad?”

“She colonized innocent life as her own.” said Clash. “You see, sorcerers are basically researchers that deal with the equivalent of what scientists do with biology, astronomy, anything that you can think of to satisfy their curiosity, that exceeds far beyond the human eye.

“Our mother’s family dealt with astrological benefactors upon our world. Rumor has it, she murdered and sacrificed children for her own selfish beliefs into becoming a supreme being or beings. Gathering apprentices who share the same astrological factors as her own. She was a psychopath. She actually believed in things that were not recorded in history, she was making things up, saying that the spirits had guided her to a road of divine belief and power.”

“How did you come across this? How did you discover these secrets?”

“I didn’t. It was Amadeus who became sympathetic to our mother’s research. He found these secrets in journals that my mother had kept in her monastery. Where she researched and continued writing what she had seen on her journeys. Amadeus read them and was seduced by what she had written. His belief in things had become more like a stranger than the brother I grew up with. Things had started to change ever since, and we never gotten around to making it right...Amadeus had killed so many innocent people, so many humans and spellcasters alike. It felt impossible to bring our older brother back.”

“Do you still think you can? Do you have hope for your brother?”

“After Sixty or so years? No! I don’t think there’s a chance.”

“And Ivy?”

“Ivy knew it before I did. He’s over our brother, said and done. And I have to agree.” Clash sighed. “But one thing is certain. Is that Ivy and I, we’re at peace without him. He’s just a reflective surface of all that has transpired around us. We shared our grievances and long after he’d shed his about us. It took us a while, but we came around.”

Although Jason hadn’t grown up with siblings, it was a little more daunting to understand the chemistry between the three brothers. Amadeus were not at all what Clash first portrayed him to be. Jason were certain that the sorcerer was trying to kill him. But he briefly reinstated Clash’s statement. “You said, your mother was dealing with astrological Benefactors. To gather apprentices, or allies to cause to be supreme beings, right?”

“Yes!”

“Would Amadeus be doing the same thing?”

Clash looked over at Jeremy, who were just as silent and stunned to think that what was discussed, weren’t registered.

“Forgive me, I heard everything you said,” Jason said quickly. “And of course, Amadeus would be doing the same thing. It’s just well, When I think astrology, I think horoscopes. Some humans, as in Earthy humans, believe that our signs play an integral part in divine and religious beliefs. If not scientific. I didn’t really believe it but considering the state of things, I’m not sure I know what to believe.”

Jeremy chuckled. “Do you have a question there somewhere?”

“What’s Amadeus’s sign?” Jason asked bluntly.

“It’s... Aquarius, isn’t it?” Jeremy hesitated, looking over at Clash, who nodded in agreement. “Why do you ask?”

“Because I am too.”

Clash paused. He sat silent, not ever bothering to respond to what Jason had attempted to say.

Jeremy studied his comrade’s actions and tried to break the silence. He chuckled nervously. “I am too.”

Minutes had passed but to Jeremy’s surprise it was nowhere near the first hour of the afternoon, while reaching Jersey City to New York. The streets of the highway leading to Long Island City, were not at all as traffic induced as anyone would have guessed. Jeremy drove quickly to make it in time before the rush hour was on the brink of its prelude. And usually only happened between times.

Jeremy pulled up in front of the college campus. Students walking in opposite directions, attempting to enter and leave the premises. Jason even saw some of them he may have recognized.

“Remember,” said Jeremy suddenly. “Meet me at this exact spot when you come out of class.”

“Sure dad!” said Jason sarcastically.

“I just want to make sure you’re okay when you’re in the building. I don’t want anything to happen to you.”

“Nothing will! What spellcaster would start any trouble in public?”

“You’d be surprised.” Clash nodded.

“Yeah but still, it kills me when you’re not around me.” Jeremy paused, suddenly transfixed by his words.

Clash chuckled, sensing the awkwardness.

Surprise were smeared across Jason’s face.

“To protect you I mean.” Jeremy added.

“Okay I got it. I’ll meet you at this exact spot.”

“I’ll be back here by three – thirty-five. Twenty-five minutes before your class ends.”

“Okay, no problem.” Jason opened the passenger door, stepping outside, grabbing his backpack from the car floor.

“I’ll see you later, Clash.” said Jason.

“Later, buddy! Be careful!”

Chapter 12

Kirk pulled up front of an old red bricked parked apartment building, some of which reflected its predecessors of Washington Heights. It wasn’t until Kirk got out of the car that he realized the building had its own parking lot for its tenants. There was an awning on the right side of the building that read, “Parking lot this way!”

Javier stepped out of the car, following Kirk as he made his way toward the lobby of the building. “Good thing you decided to take my car.” Javier started. “Taking Victor’s would draw up some muggers in the neighborhood. Not that Victor’s car wouldn’t stand a chance.”

“To be honest, you’re Dodge Charger wouldn’t really stand a chance against them either.” Kirk shot.

“Hey, don’t hate the car. I’m just saying, you’re partner, Victor Song knew many people. Who’s to say that they won’t recognize his car.”

Recollecting on all the people who would even mention the name Victor Song, he agreed that Javier’s point was merit. “What floor does Francisco lived on?” Kirk asked.

“The eighth floor I think... Hold on.” Javier dug out a piece of paper out from his jacket pocket. “8J! The eighth floor, I take it.”

Kirk hurried into the lobby, with Javier behind him, they started for the elevator. Both Kirk and Javier stepped in and Javier pressed the button in the panel of the elevator. The doors then closed and moved up.

“What are we going to use against him to start talking? We don’t even know if this guy is going to talk.”

“We’ll do what is necessary.” said Kirk calmly.

“You’re kidding. Are we really going to make a scene in front of this dude?”

Kirk said nothing he just looked at Javier with a blank face.

Ok fine.” said Javier. “Then let’s just set him straight without raising the roof off the house.”

The elevator doors opened. Kirk and Javier stepped out. “Let’s go this way.” said Kirk. “His apartment is probably down here.”

Kirk walked on, and Javier followed. They looked from door to door to see if they recognize the letters “8J” on any of the doors... But none was of yet.

“It’s got to be this way.” said Javier.” The letters are moving -.”

“Right here!”

Javier paused, turning to where Kirk stood. “Ready - -.”

Kirk knocked on the door incessantly, letting the roaring echoes fill the hallow halls.

“Okay never mind!”

After ten seconds or so, there was still no answer at the door. Kirk knocked again. Louder. Still no answer or sound of movement behind the door.

Kirk knocked again consistently without stopping.

Javier got annoyed. “Alright that’s enough. Obviously, no one is home.”

Kirk turned the knob and the door opened.

“Okay! Why didn’t you do that first?”

“That would be breaking and entering, smartass!” Kirk replied angrily.

“No shit!”

Pushing the door open, Javier walked passed Kirk and started inside the apartment, quiet and still the setting seemed. The lights to the large living room were on, the curtains to the two windows behind the couch, were tied with the rubber bands. The stench of cigarettes filled the living room, recent and fresh.

Kirk closed the front door behind him, turned in time to see Javier disappear into the corridor on his right, passed the small kitchen. “I’ll check the bedroom!” he yelled.

A low wooden shelf, the height of kitchen counter top, had an ashtray, which let out an aroma of a recently lit cigarette. The smoke let out whiffs of dust like that of incents. Burning out on its own.

Dusty Portraits of old and recent stood tall beside each other. Hand me down frames, Kirk thought. Some of which from his experience, were not made in the present times. Judging by the stains and ornaments, rendered them decades old.

Pictures of three young kids, a woman and man. Some, of the same small boy with the same woman in other portraits. And another of a man and woman, judging by the clothes, focus, and stance of the two, it was taken recently. The man with a thick beard and large eyes for a small head, embracing the short haired woman, who were no doubt his lover.

Startled by the sounds of sirens at the window, Kirk made his way behind the couch he moved the tied curtains aside, glaring at the frightening street levels below. People walking in opposite directions, none of which were aware or even cared that they were watched. Minding their own as they attempted to go home, to work, or places designate before the hour was up.

“Holy shit!” screamed Javier.

“What is it?” Without hesitation, Kirk darted toward the hallway, his leg banged against the coffee table. “Shit!” Nearly losing his balance, the adrenaline sheltered the pain as he hopped forward toward the hallway in which Javier disappeared too.

Kirk paused, in time to see Javier kneeled before the door. A puddle of bile stretching across the tile floor in front of him, contents in which Kirk could only assume were all that they had ate that morning. “What happened?”

Javier gestured to look up at Kirk and pointed at the door in front of him.

Painfully, Kirk skipped over the vomit, his left leg still pulsing from the table’s impact. He pushed the bathroom door open and stepped inside. “Oh crap.”

Hung from the ceiling by one of his legs, were the bearded man Kirk saw in the portrait, the metallic wires coiling around his calves, protruded through his rectum. The ligature marks were visible through his bare chest, the metallic shape like that of an immovable serpent, sprung from out his neck, and scarred out the flesh from within. “Well at least we found Francisco.”

“That is... I thought it was a freaking mannequin!”

Victimized by the familiar metallic tentacles, Kirk had seen before, the coiled spike end wires, held the naked body up by a thread. Struck deep from the wall above it came out, from Kirk had gathered. And entered the apartment from the toilet bowl, preventing having been detected by its prey.

“He did it!”

“Why would Glenico do this?” Javier asked, knowing full well that was who Kirk were referring too.

“The guy got cut and gutted out alive while in the shower. Tying up a loose end. The perfect metaphor for the siding with the wrong witch.”

Javier was silent, looking away from the corpse.

“Look at the wires. It came from Glenico’s dark magic. The same wires that tried to shed Jason back at the apartment. I’m telling you, Javier! Glenico did this. He must know we’re looking for him.”

“Now what do we do?” said Javier weakly. “How the hell are we going to get answers now? That damn corpse isn’t going to tell us anything.”

Kirk was too frustrated to answer. He left the bathroom and walked over door to the bedroom opposite the bathroom. Searching hopelessly for answers in which he thought the dead man would leave behind. The stench of cigarettes grew stronger, as well as hints of cheap cologne.

Digger into the drawer of the night stand, he slapped papers and envelopes about, junk all of which were nothing to go but proof that the dean man was stocked on bills and warrants. Impatient and anxious he kicked the night draw shut, and the sound jangling crashing onto the floor. He turned around to see the dresser beside him. “Car keys!” He grabbed them and started out the bedroom.

“What are you doing?” Javier groaned rising from the floor.

“Our friend in the bathroom had a car. I’m going down to the indoor parking lot to see if I can find it. You stay here and look around to see if you can find anything that will put us in the right direction.”

“Are you seriously going to leave me here with a dead body hanging in the bathroom? Why don’t I go to the parking lot?”

“Because you’re soft.” shot Kirk. “You act like the corpse is going to come alive and bite your ass. I’ll be right back.”

Opened the front door of the apartment, he stormed out, exiting the door behind him.

The aroma of pastels, moist cardboard, like that of a kindergarten classroom were always nostalgic to those who drew in the open space. The dim walls weren’t illuminated by any sunlight. The rectangular room had no windows, and therefore showed no signs of what the sky line were.

It did no matter on Jason’s part as to whether it was day or night. His mind focused, as a power source of the pencil he stroked across the white plain paper on the drawing board. The lines shifting into all directions, creating all that his naked eye can see.

The silence was broad around him and the other students, making it easier to focus on the lines of the graphing paper, letting the pencil between his finger sway and dance. Duplicating the photograph of the large contemporary living room. Only the clacking heels of the professor examining each picture that stood tall before each of the students, who formed in a circle.

Whilst looking from the photograph, to the graphed paper in which commissioned, Jason constantly drew along the lines of the paper, each line, shape and stroke of the pencil making an identical visual of the photograph before him. With focus, he wholeheartedly relied on the trust of his hands, as well as his cautious eye, to make the picture an exact duplicate, an exact photo enlarged rather than copied or drawn.

The professor approached Jason from behind him. “What’s this?”

Startled, his eyes broke from the trance, and glared at the tall woman behind him. “I choose a picture of a living room from the Astoria lofts. I thought it be a perfect fit for the graphing. The furniture was all squared in the open space.”

“Oh, that’s very lovely. And so is this drawing you have, but it’s not really our assignment!”

“But I thought...” Jason paused, glaring back at the image, which were entirely a different focus, a different outline than what his eyes were begging him to visualize. The pencil in which he used did not compose a room or that of the furniture within it, like he said.

Disturbed, his eyes were fixed across the markings and shapes of a large façade, square shaped and tall. All around it, shades of gray in which were only used by the pastels, to change the tint of the drawers liking. The gray markings were expressions of clouds above the tall square shape, a tower. Drawn to be seen standing at the very foundation expressed in a darker shade. The same stance, and same way he saw looking up at the tower. A tall stick figure standing at the edge. “Victor.” Jason thought.

“Like I said, it’s very good.” The professor went on. “But might I suggest you get started on the graphing.”

“I’m sorry. I didn’t realize...” Jason paused, calmly shifting his tone. “I’ll get started right away. I lost track of time, thinking I’d finish a project.”

“Excellent! Don’t feel discouraged. You have great potential in the expression of your drawings. Keep up the good work!” The professor strutted away, attending to the next student.

Jason took another look at the drawing in front of him; he couldn’t recall having to draw this picture. He lifted the current sketch, looking about anxiously, for the picture in which he thought he drew. Nothing.

Rubbing his eyes in frustration, attempting to bring his consciousness to reality. Jason rose up from the stool, leaving his bag abandoned before the drawing board. And walked out of the art studio.

Debating as to whether he should call Jeremy, he didn’t want to initiate a panic, to something he felt were so foolish. It wasn’t as if he were being attacked, or threatened, unless of course he’s being possessed by his father, Victor Song. Taking control of his hands and drawing images of what Jason dreamt last night. But to what end.

He strutted up the narrow hallway, slapping the door open to the men’s bathroom.

Empty, no sound, but an echo to the door closing behind him. He crashed himself against the sink closest to him. Turning the knob, letting the freezing water roar out of the faucet, he splashed the water across his face, hoping some sense of awareness would return to him, as if it weren’t present already.

His eyes shut, thoughts stringing across his head. “Damn it, Kirk! Where are you when I need you!”

In a fit rage, his tears threatening to bulge from his eyes. His emotions overwhelming, captivating him in fear. He felt them spill upon his hands and sniffled. “Damn it.”

He shut his eyes, as a tear struck his hand once more, only to realize he didn’t feel it escape his eyelids. The air in the bathroom grew cold and moist. The tears slapped against the tile floor once more, but it did not fall from his eyes. “What the - -.” The scent of a rain forest took over his nostrils.

Opening his eyes, he shook in horror. The air burst into a gust of wind, the green trees captivated him in a circle, tearing away all signs of the bathroom tiles, and mirror before the sink. The rain fell upon him, accompanied by the cackling clouds of the twilight sky above him. Stepping back at the sudden sight, he nearly tripped as his sneakers were adjusted to the cold wet soil, sinking into the muddy ground.

“What the hell!” He glared about hopelessly at the rain forest closing around him. His heart skipped a beat for only a moment. His consciousness forcing him to adjust to the smell of nature and the forest rain taking shape. Soothing he thought.

Confused and amazed at the sudden emotion that it did not render a threat, it was a stranger nonetheless, leaving him to question his surroundings. Was this his doing? Was he losing his mind and forced to repel against today’s society and revisit the foundation of the world it once was. Was it magic?

He smirked, feeling the cool crisp air, and the smell of rain take hold of him. Like a cleanse in the earth's spiritual healing. Revisiting what life once was, or simply taken to a place where life remains, he felt a captivating welcome to his heart, the fear in his psyche dissipated, abandoning him where he stood, in the surrounded aroma of the trees and bushes of the wild forest.

At the sudden bang of the door opening, he shifted, only to feel his eyes open to reveal the mirror before him. The scent of fragrant soap, soiled toilets and excrement spilling in the distance. Dizzy at the sudden shift, he watched as two men appeared out of the bathroom entrance making their way towards the cubicles.

His clothes dry, Jason patted against his jean jacket, no signs of moisture or change in temperature were visible. He sighed, his heart racing, he started out the bathroom, leaving all that he felt his mind escaped to into the world behind him, if it were still visible.

Strutting quickly out of the entrance of the apartment building, Kirk made his way toward the car, not minding the possibility of the cars passing in either direction. He went for the passenger door opposite the driver seat and dug into the glove compartment. Planting himself onto the seat, he grabbed the nine-millimeter gun, stuffing it into his trousers and topping the shirt on top of it. With the jacket assuring the façade.

Quickly he darted out of the car and started toward the parking lot.

He strutted across the street and sped toward the entrance closest of the two. Careful to grab his pants and not show any obvious signs of a firearm present to the public eye.

The large low ceiling space had cars in rows, he counted were at least rows of four, no one were visible, no sound but the echo of Kirk's footsteps upon the concrete.

Taking out the car keys, he rose it up pressed the alarm button for the car.

In the distance, the chirp echoed through the large space, he glared about anxiously, for any signs of movement, or blink of the lights.

The hazard lights lit up to his left, closest to the opposite entrance. "Got it!"

He skipped through the cars next to him, realizing the pain on his leg dissipated from the tables impact at the apartment, he sighed in relief, and started onward. He pressed the button again, the chirping Toyota Camry, shut off. Kirk went ahead to open the driver door. He sat inside and closed the door behind him.

He sighed and looked at the seats behind him. No papers, no signs of disturbance or struggle from the owner Francisco, whilst he was still alive. Considering the neatness and the aroma of cigarettes upstairs, he expected the same attribute in the car as well. But as far as he can tell, the car were a dead man pride and joy. "It's a shame to leave a nice car like this behind." Kirk thought.

He started for the glove compartment, looking for anything of interest, anything that may link Glenico's asset to any other individual. But there was nothing in there but a driver's registration and a couple of manuals. Nothing of use.

Pressing himself against the seat, his head throbbed, he rubbed his face in frustration.

Muffled movement were faint in the distance, Kirk turned to face the seats behind him. He felt a sudden kicking, coming from the back of the car.

Kirk cautiously rose out of the vehicle, pulled out the gun from his jeans, aiming it toward the trunk. Careless as to whether he was being watched, his mind raced, sweat dripping from his forehead as he walked cautiously to the trunk.

Touching the handle with a firm grip he lifted the door upward, letting it stay up and he took a step back with both hands on the handle of the gun.

The thin man, young, no older than Jason, muffled at the sight of Kirk, eyes wide open, with red and confused expressions as he glared at Kirk with ferocious anger.

Kirk lowered his gun, placing it back in his jeans. He ripped the tape off the boy's mouth.

The boy groaned and sighed in relief. "Thanks!"

"Who are you?"

"Adrian!"

"What the hell were you doing inside the trunk?"

"Well it's not like I was here on purpose! Some guy knocked me over the head and locked me in here! Can you untie me please?"

"Why?"

"Because it hurts!"

"No, I mean why were you locked in here?"

"I don't know, man! I don't what the problem is! Can you get me out of here?"

"How do I know you're not messing with me?"

“How can I?” Adrian shot angrily. “I’ve been locked in a trunk for god knows how long. Give me a reason why I should trust you, in fact?”

“Nah it’s cool. You don’t have too!” Kirk grasped the trunk and lowered it.

“Okay, Okay, Okay! Look I’ll do whatever you ask, if you could just rip the tape off my limbs and get me out of here.”

“Excellent. But questions come first. Now tell me how you got in here in the first place.”

“I was on my way to a club in Chelsea. I was asking around for a certain individual.”

“Who?”

“Does it matter? He’s dead.” Adrian started getting teary eyed. “All I know was that I was supposed to meet up with someone at the club that supposed to help me find my father’s killer.”

“I’m listening! Keep going! What was the guy’s name?”

“I think his name was... was...Glenico.”

“So, what happened?”

“I was supposed to meet up with Glenico at the club. I didn’t see him there yet. So, I called Glenico to ask where he was. He said he was outside and that he’ll be there soon, and in the meantime just wait for him across the street of the club. So, I did. I crossed the street, to stay across where he said to meet him. Then suddenly I blacked out and ended up in here.”

Kirk gave Adrian a look that seemed doubtful at its best. But Adrian’s did sound legit. “Do you have the phone number that Glenico called you from? Or yet your phone in your pocket?”

“No, I don’t I think so. I think my captor took it. My wallet and my keys from my pocket before they locked me in here. Now can you please untie me? My body aches, I haven’t been able to move all that much.”

Kirk took out his pocket knife from his leg brace and started to rip off the tape from Adrian’s legs. “What do you know about Glenico?”

“You won’t believe me if I told you?”

“Try me!”

Adrian said nothing.

“Well this Glenico, you’ve been associating with, is a hell spawn witch, whose powers originate from a realm outside the one we’re in.” Kirk ripped the tape off Adrian’s jeans.

“So, you know Glenico?”

“Yes.” Kirk wrestled the tape on Adrian’s wrists.

‘Do you think he’s the one who locked me in here?’

“No, I don’t. In fact, it was the guy whose corpse I found hanging in his own bathroom. Done by the works of Glenico!”

“Good, god! Where the hell are we?”

“We are in the parking lot of your captor’s apartment building.”

The tape surrendered, and Adrian tore it gently from his hands, messaging his aching wrists.

Kirk rose his arm, gesturing for Adrian to grab hold. “Come on! We have to leave?”

Gently pulling Adrian’s arm, he stood up, his skin appeared lighter, as he stepped away from the trunks shadow, and into the lighter shade of the parking lot. Almost the same as Kirk’s as he stood. Kirk watched him cautiously, as he nearly collapsed from his aching legs, Adrian stretched, adjusting his black and red sweat shirt, and patting his black jeans, Kirk suspected he were expecting to find something in the pockets.

The relief of feeling the air brush through his short curly hair. “Why do you call Glenico a witch?” Adrian asked.

“He’s a spellcaster and not a moral one at that.”

“So, wait! you mean he’s an actual witch? I thought you were kidding!”

Kirk started walking towards the exit of the parking lot with Adrian quickly following him. “Nope everything I said is absolutely true. I don’t kid about anything at this point.” Kirk took out his cell phone to call Javier, hoping he had gotten over the stench and sight of the corpse in the bathroom.

The phone was ringing and immediately Javier picked up. “What’s up? Find anything?”

“Yes, I have. Meet me downstairs in front of the car.” said Kirk. “You won’t believe the extent of Glenico’s madness.”

Chapter 13

The class concluded, and the students spilled out of the art studio, Jason distanced away from the others, fearing the ordeal that had occurred in the bathroom could perhaps happen once more. To be on the safe side, Jason descended the stairs instead of the elevator, strutting out of the stairway exit.

Making it into the lobby, and through the glasses door, that revealed the approaching twilight sky, he pushed himself through to find the familiar red car parked out front, with the body in familiar clothes, familiar face and short curly hair leaning against it. “Guess what!” Jeremy called happily, as he saw Jason approaching, he lifted himself off the car. “Zarius had called earlier, saying that spellcaster had got in contact with Kirk.”

“Really? Where is he?”

“He’s laying low with a friend of his. Does the name Javier mean anything to you?”

“Yes. He’s a close colleague of Kirk’s. Is he hurt? Did Glenico injure him?”

“He’s Fine!”

“How do you know that?”

“Zarius said that Kirk was held captive by Amadeus, but Kirk escaped with the aid Javier. They never left New York it looks like.”

“When can I see him?”

“When this all blows over. Kirk and Javier didn’t give us any more details as to where they are. One of our spellcasters Trevor, had said that they confronted them at Javier’s apartment. And when he returned he wasn’t there. But that was hours ago.”

“Well he could be there now, let’s go!”

“Zarius insists that we should keep you safe. And to make sure we let you know that Kirk will see you soon.”

Jason bit his lip, in a fit of rage. “Jeremy are you telling me I can’t see my father?”

“You must keep your distance away from Kirk because if you don’t, Amadeus or Glenico will have a greater chance of getting to you. If you give away your position, you’ll put Kirk and yourself in danger.”

“You got to be kidding me. My old man wants to see me. He has too!” Jason paused, suddenly remembering that Kirk hasn’t an old man, hasn’t been for nearly twenty years as far as he was concerned.

“It was to Kirk’s agreement, that we’d keep you with us!

“I don’t believe that!”

“I’m really sorry. I wish there was something more that I could do.”

Jason turned away, his head swaying in a fit of anger, tempted to slam his book bag to the ground. “What do we do now?”

“Well the last thing I want to do is head back to Jersey City so early and stay indoors. The night isn’t at all chilly, so I thought we’d go out. Why don’t we take a drive, you don’t mind, do you?”

“Sure, whatever.” Jason strutted past Jeremy, opening the passenger door and sat inside with his bag on his lap. He sighed frustratingly. Emotions started to burst like a water damn past the flood gates.

Jeremy opened the driver door gently, stepping to sit inside. He started the engine in a hurry, almost as if he were eager to get to a destination.

“So where are we going?” Jason asked.

“It’s a surprise. I promise, it will brighten the mood.”

Jason nodded, facing the window as the engine started and they sped off.

It did not matter, whether he was in a good mood or not. Somehow Jason wondered that if he felt asleep right there and now, would he wake up to find himself in his bedroom. With Kirk in the kitchen trudging through the dishes obnoxiously in the morning. Would everything go back the way it was. No spellcasters. No Cobra Entity, no visual mystifications occurring in bathrooms and no large snakes in the dark nights of Washington Square Park. Would it all end once he opened his eyes again?

Part of him so badly wanted to tell Jeremy what went on in the classroom today, the possible idea that his subconscious took over, embracing his hands and stroking it across paper to reiterate the visuals of what he saw in the dream. Could it possibly have been his subconscious or could it have been his father, Victor Song? Possessing him and getting to realize a potential or warning that he couldn’t have foreseen.

Even so, it didn’t explain why it happened then, in a time of all times when he was encountered by threats, or when he was surrounded by other spellcasters in the Realm of Santuario.

Still, from what he could remember, the drawing gave off a sad display. It was as if the man in the picture had been alone, for years maybe. Could Victor really be atop that tower? He thought. Does the tower really exist? But where was it, in the realm of Santuario, in New York or anywhere on Earth? Even if it wasn't derived from Jason's consciousness, the picture was abroad for a reason. It did not alter facts that Jason had drawn it. It wasn't a daydream given a mind of its own, it was something, an entity.

Moments later, the car reared upon an industrial block that Jason did not at all recognize, but he suspected that he was still in the Queens, New York region. Astoria neighborhood as some would call it. The car slowed to an exterior that had a ramp leading up to the large reflective façade as to what Jason could only guess were some type of bar. "What is this place?"

"Studio Square." Jeremy replied. "It's a beer garden."

"A Beer Garden! Jeremy, I'm nineteen, are they even going to let me in there?"

"It doesn't matter." Jeremy got out the car and closed the door behind him. Jason did the same, glaring at the exterior of the beer garden, which its render was mostly of glass windows, surrounded by concrete walls. Glaring within the windows to the left, as he stepped out of the car, closing it behind him, his eyes were fixed on the side windows of the entrance. Rows of wooden benches along the inside were visible, patterned neatly like a school cafeteria, for adults. "You know, I've heard of this place, but I've never really been here."

“Well now you will.” Jeremy started toward the ramp, Jason beside him as they walked up through the entrance of the glass doors. “I come here occasionally with Clash and Ivy to have a couple of drinks and burgers.”

“I see.”

They started inside passed the doors, a woman stood behind the bar, her blond hair in a long ponytail, covering behind her black tank top, its length to her black skinny jeans. “Hey Jeremy!”

“Hey Alexis, how are you?”

“I’m good, sweetie! Where is that gorgeous red trench coat fella you bring in here all the time? You know the one with the braids? And what about the other one?”

“Oh, Ivy and Clash? Their busy now! They’re in Chelsea. Taking care of some - - stuff.”

Jason glared at the woman wondrously, friendly, and yet older around mid-twenties, Jason thought, judging by the creases in her chin, as well as the matured stature in which she carried. Judging by Jeremy actions, Jason had to assume to assume that the woman was human, and therefore had no knowledge of spellcasters in that fact.

“But Ivy sends his regards! He says he’ll see you the next time he’s in Queens.”

“Mm I hope so! I gave him six beers on us! For throwing out those drunks who came by last month. You remember that?”

“Yes, I do!”

“Tell Ivy to come through! Shoot me a call, and don’t leave a girl hanging. He’s not on your team, is he?”

Jeremy chuckled. “No, not at all!”

“Well then! I gave him my number, tell him to call.”

“I will, Alexis! I promise you!”

“Whose you’re friend?” She leaned against the bar top, glaring at Jason with keen interest.

Jason’s beady eyes retorted at the sight. Expecting her to flirt with him in some way.

“This is Jason, he’s a friend of mine! He just came out of class and we decided to have a little get together.”

Alexis’s eyes flew wide open. “About time you bring a friend in here - -.”

“Oh no! It’s not like that!” Jeremy said quickly, giving a nervous chuckle. One in which Jason couldn’t help but smile towards, his actions suddenly seemed invigorating and inspiring. “He’s just a friend accompanying me for the evening.”

“Okay!” Alexis perched her lips leaning off the bar top. “Well, I imagined you were bringing someone else.” She looked at Jason up and down. “But damn, you sure know how to pick them. Everything is ready for you outside.”

“Outside?” Jason thought.

“Thanks, Alexis! I appreciate it!”

“No worries, love! Have fun!” She blew kiss toward Jeremy and winked at Jason with a smile. Jason nodded in return.

Jeremy started forward passed the bar and a large opening in which Jason could only guess would lead outside. “I should mention that this is mostly for people who are into sports and half naked girls. Not a lot here for dancing. just music, sports, girls and socializing.”

“Sounds just about right.” Jason agreed. “Where is everybody? The bartenders and all, isn’t anyone going to wait on us?”

“Nope not exactly, I bought the place out.”

“You did what?”

“I mean I didn’t buy the place.” said Jeremy quickly. “I just rented it for a few hours. Thanks to a good friend of mine who works here.”

“Why would you –?” Jason paused. Up ahead were a huge flat screen television or a row of big screens to make it look like it in its image. Impressed, Jason saw that below the television were huge benches lined up in rows. A bench in the middle of the garden had a blanket on top of it. “Wow!”

“I thought you’d like it.”

“But why did you have to go through all this trouble? We could’ve just gone to your place and ordered takeout.”

“I thought we would just enjoy the great outdoors and watch the big screen. After a while, staying inside could’ve been boring. And it’s nice out here. Why waste it by staying home.”

“I guess.”

“Now, do you want to see something cool?”

“It’s not illegal, is it?”

“Illegal? You can’t be serious.” Jeremy took off his jacket while Jason stared at him closely. “After all that you witness do you think the ordinary law applies to us?”

Jason said nothing.

“Look at the sky.” said Jeremy pointing up “Notice that it’s still twilight.”

Jason looked up and noticed that it was about to hit night any time soon. “I’m looking.”

“Now close your eyes.”

Jason did what he was told, and Jeremy had done the same, raising his arms parallel to Jason’s sides.

Jason kept his eyes closed, nervous at the same time at the thought of not knowing what Jeremy was doing. Little did Jason know, what Jeremy was capable of or what he was about to do. But something about Jeremy made Jason trust him even more. But why, he asked himself. He tried to relax his mind.

“Don’t open your eyes just yet.” Jeremy whispered. “Keep them closed.”

Jeremy locked his hands with Jason’s and still they’ve kept their eyes shut. A swift wave of a warm sense of security, mentally assured, Jason was now careless. Slowly, Jeremy pulled him

closer. He could feel his face close to a warm surface. Foolishly, he thought it were Jeremy pressing closer to him.

“Open your eyes.”

Opening his eyes, Jason was stunned to see floating ignition in the form of sticks floating around him. As his eyesight adjusted to the dim and yet blinding light, he glared at the candles, each of them lit, vividly upon the benches around them.

They let out a scented aroma that took over the garden. Jason looked up and saw that it was night. And he looked over at the bench behind him and saw that a setting for two had appeared out of nowhere and a banquet of food had appeared as well.

“How... How did you do that?” asked Jason shocked.

“Just a trick I know. A spell really.”

“But it was twilight when I closed my eyes and now it’s... night... How the... How did you do that?”

Jeremy let Jason’s hand go and took out his cell phone from his pocket to look at the time. “Well we’ve been meditating for nearly thirty minutes.”

“It felt like a few seconds!”

Jeremy laughed “No! I did a spell that made the meditation cloak. I could teach you sometime, If you’re up to it.”

“Well, maybe!”

“Have a seat. Make yourself comfortable.”

Jason agreed, he nodded and sat at the bench, his mind wandered looking about curiously in amazement. For a second, he couldn't remember anything that transpired no more than an hour ago. Just what exactly was he feeling, he thought. Despite the butterflies that formed in his intestines which kicked about excitedly causing him to smile. Like a tickle to the stomach, something he hadn't felt in a while, something he felt to guilty to feel. But he needed it somehow, he needed to feel the sense of security, the sense of hope. The sense of escape.

Chapter 14

The sun was gone. The diner's window had tinted edges and from inside the people could see how dark the sky descended. Kirk and Javier sat at the table with Adrian sitting opposite them. Kirk and Javier sipped on their coffee while Adrian was devouring his dinner platter, eating uncontrollably.

Javier watched him in disgust. He felt like he was going to puke again just thinking about what he saw in the bathroom of Francisco's apartment and the sight of Adrian, pigging out at the food in front of him. “Remind me why he's with us again?” Javier asked.

Kirk was staring into space not paying attention to what Javier was saying.

“Kirk!”

Kirk shook his head and looked at Javier. “What?”

“What's wrong with you?”

“Nothing... I was just thinking.”

Kirk turned to look at Adrian who was stuffing a sandwich inside his mouth. “Adrian said that he was looking for a man and that Glenico agreed to meet with him at this club in Chelsea. But Adrian was attacked by Francisco. No doubt under the orders of Glenico! Tying up loose ends!”

“Not to mention he threw me in the trunk.” Adrian spat, trying to keep the food in his mouth.

“I think we should check the club out.” Kirk continued “They’re could be a lead there that could lead us to Glenico.”

“Might as well.” said Javier. “I literally can’t think of anything else.”

“I say we go tonight. We head back to your place put on some different clothes that should be of a proper attire.”

“What club is this?”

“Splash!” said Adrian suddenly, swallowing the last bit. “I don’t remember the exact streets though.”

“I’ll Google it on my phone.” Kirk took out his device and typed in the name of the club that is listed in New York City. “It’s in Chelsea.”

“I remember now!” Adrian began. “It was Saturday! But they found out I was a nineteen and then they kicked me out. They barely gave me a chance to look around!”

We’ll sneak you in!”

“I’m not really convinced by that!”

“Does it matter?” Javier shot angrily. “You’re going to come with us either way. You’re going to show us where you were attacked, where you were supposed to meet Glenico? And do try to keep in mind that we aren’t asking? I don’t care if we have to do it by force.”

Adrian gave Javier a look of anger and felt threatened.

Kirk shot Javier a look of disgust “Do you have to be hard on the kid?”

“This KID doesn’t seem to get it! We’re not going to back out on the plan, we have a job to do, a witch to catch! And your son to save! I would think you’d be more forthcoming about this!”

“I am content, Javier! And I don’t need you telling me how I’m supposed to feel where my son is concerned! Don’t act like a hard ass with the kid! It’s not like he knew this was going to happen to him! Being thrown in the trunk and left there to die!”

“I only care about catching Glenico! You know what, never mind! I’m going out for a smoke!” Javier got up, strutting passed the people who entered the diner, he pushed the front door and darted out.

Adrian was at a loss for words. Kirk was aggravated. “Don’t listen to Javier. I don’t know what’s gotten into him, but he really doesn’t act like this. It’s not in his character.”

“I was beginning to think it was.” said Adrian bluntly. “But if you say so.”

Kirk nodded “You should finish up; we have to head back to Javier’s apartment to change.”

Adrian agreed. “So... you have a son?”

“Yes.”

“How old is he?”

“I’m guessing he’s your age. Nineteen, are you?”

Adrian leaned against the cushion in surprise, a smile smeared across his face. “Wow! You’re good!”

“I’m old! I could tell age like the back of my hand!”

“But how could you have a son at that age of nineteen? You look like you’re in your twenties. It’s kind of hard to believe, actually.”

“It’s a long story. I really shouldn’t discuss it.”

Adrian looked at Kirk with a frowned face while Kirk rubbed his own face with both hands. “How come?”

“It will just make me angrier.”

“It’s funny, I remember my pops use to say something like that. Always the protector, always hostile whenever I was out of his sight. When I was boy, he would just go nuts! Or, so he would tell me. I love my old man. I always hoped he’d understand that.”

“I’m sure he does. Where’s your dad now?”

“I have two. One I never met, the other, whom I stayed with all my life.”

“Not all your life.” Kirk said quickly. “You’re still living.”

“Right,” said Adrian. “As for my other dad, I never knew him. Hopefully one day I get to meet him. Despite all he’s been to me but a mystery. We think he’ll come back. And honestly, I hope he’s right... Your son must be very lucky to have you.”

“If I don’t get to Jason soon, he probably won’t be so lucky.”

“So, Jason is his name.”

“Yes, it is.”

“Interesting.” Adrian picked up his soda. “Who gave him that name you or his mother?”

Kirk smiled “Well as it turns out, Jason has two fathers too. There’s me and Victor. And I asked to give him that name.”

“So, where’s Victor now?”

“I don’t know.” Kirk replied. “He’s been missing for quite some time...Let’s just leave it there, I’d rather not talk about him.” Kirk lifted the coffee to his shaken lips.

“I’m sorry, I didn’t mean to stick my nose in your business. It’s just you remind me of my dad... Always the protector.”

Kirk surrendered a smile. “It’s all good. It’s been a difficult time lately. Being strong aren’t what it’s all cracked up to be. But I’d rather remain vigilant rather than being a coward.”

“You’re right.” Adrian agreed. “I don’t want to just sit here and play the victim. I’ll do what my old man wanted me to do. Be strong. Live life to the fullest, and don’t take shit from no one.”

Kirk smirked. “That’s the spirit, buddy!” He eyes were fixed out the window and saw Javier walking inside the diner and making his way over to the table. “We should go!”

As they conversed, the night sky above the Beer Garden grew darker as it approached the concluding afternoon hours. Consumed by the autumn winds of the November and leaving behind the nostalgic integrity to all those who cherished the outside.

Jason wished that an older presence from when he was very young was somewhere to tell him the wisest words, words that only a father can concoct out of his own past experiences. Jason knew that Kirk had answers. He deserved to know why Kirk was so hell-bent on keeping secrets from him in the first place. But none of that mattered to Jason now. Yesterday felt like the longest day for Jason. From going home to find the witch Glenico attacking Kirk, to encountering the sorcerer Amadeus.

Amadeus. The Aquarian Sorcerer with who Jason could only guess what want to use himself for his own endeavors. The sudden realization as well as the established character of Amadeus as explained by his youngest brother Clash. Had stated that Amadeus had wished to follow in his mother’s shoes, to sustain what she once believed in while she was alive, to gather followers, or apprentices who were the same astrological sign as her.

Jason questioned this many time. Jason is an Aquarius, just like Amadeus. But the only reason Jason would dismiss this was the sole reason that Jason weren’t awakened sorcerer. So how

could Amadeus want to deal with him in the first place? Jason thought. Why bother with someone who hadn't know about sorcery or therefore their heritage for nearly two decades?

Jason couldn't help but wonder what life would be like if he indeed did decide to be a sorcerer. Would Jason be anything like his father. Victor Song. or perhaps like his father's two doppelgangers, Vincent and Vladimir Song.

Funny. Jason wondered. How he had no knowledge about the three until yesterday at the Realm of Santuario. But still, would Jason end up a sorcerer with immeasurable power than that of Victor?

"You're doing it again." Jeremy sat on the bench, still sipping his drink.

"Doing what?"

Jeremy laughed. "Oh, come on, you know, you're thinking too much."

Jason rolled his eyes. "Yes, I know, but could you blame me? It's just you mentioned how you came across a couple of sorcerers who were in fact part of a cult. Looking to experiment on humans while they were still alive. I ended up thinking about...Victor Song. My dad, I guess!

"It's draining, you know! Absorbing all that!"

"You know you're beginning to sound like a vampire."

"Wait a minute... What do you mean by that?"

"Just what I said. What did you think I meant?"

"Are you telling me there are vampires? They actually exist?"

Jeremy burst out laughing. “You know, I forget you really don’t know anything.”

“Bullshit, they’re can’t really be some in the city, can they?” Jason said almost hyperventilating but excited. He couldn’t tell anymore.

“There are a select few of the clans that reside here, yes!”

“Then why haven’t I encountered any all my life, I mean, surely I would have noticed them wouldn’t I?”

“Well I don’t know. They are rather fast, at least in the human eye. Think about it, you didn’t notice spellcasters existed until yesterday.”

Jason’s head began to spin, perhaps like that of a vampire, he thought. Like the world was upon his shoulders and he already knew why. “I should probably tell you something.”

“Sure. What’s up?” Jeremy sat up straight to face Jason.

Jason did the same to face Jeremy. He had both hands on his own lap. “When I was in class today, something really weird happened.”

“Define weird?” said Jeremy curiously.

“Well I was graphing my drawing, a still photo of a living room. At least I thought I was. The next thing I know, a completely drawing is sitting in front of me. But I don’t remember drawing it.”

“Weird indeed!” said Jeremy suspiciously.

“The picture was of a man on top of a castle tower or a balcony if I should say, a pigment of a dream I had prior. The guy looked like he was an Amazon, like those people I saw yesterday in the Realm of Santuario. It was - -.”

“Santuarians.” Jeremy added.

“Right. And that’s not the end of it. I left the classroom to go use the bathroom; I rinse my face to wake up because I literally thought I was going crazy or probably had asleep. Then suddenly, it starts raining inside the bathroom.

“Interesting.”

“I told you! It’s completely weird. But it felt as if I was outside in a rain forest or something. The bathroom was misty, the rain was light but breezy and cold.”

“I’m shocked that you wait until now to tell me this.”

“I was scared to, I thought you weren’t going to believe me.”

“Seriously? I answer all your questions about spellcasters, and you think I’ll find it hard to believe that it rains inside the school bathroom?”

Jason said nothing.

“Look, don’t worry about the rain. What happened in the bathroom was a rapture of your powers.”

“A rapture of my powers.” said Jason confused. “What do you mean by that?”

“Yeah, you’ve been exposed to the world your cells in your body are familiar with. In other words, you’ve been exposed to or in contact with other spellcasters that trigger your speck cells inside your body. Spellcasters like me and the ones in the Realm of Santuario. That’s why you saw what you saw and felt what you saw in the bathroom. But that only happens when you’re near spellcasters who use magic in a daily basis. So, in other words the spellcasters who don’t use magic around as much, are less likely to trigger such a rapture.”

“Well that explains a lot.”

“I would hope so. But for the drawing however, that has nothing to do with the spellcaster rapture.”

“Then what is it?”

“To be honest, I really don’t have a clue. I haven’t heard of anything like that.”

“Well at least you don’t think I’m crazy.” Jason grabbing the soda from the table.

“Jason, I could never think you’re crazy.”

Jason was speechless but wanted to find a way to break the silence. Jason put his soda down after two gulps and faced away from Jeremy. “So, what do we do now?” he said.

“Well I take it you’re not hungry.”

“No! not really.”

“Well in that case before we head back to Jersey City, I thought we go somewhere to take our mind off things.”

“You’re kidding”

“Nope not at all.”

“I don’t know, I thought staying here at the Beer Garden was enough for the day. Aren’t you tired of taking me places?”

“Not really.” Jeremy jumped off the bench and raised a hand to grab Jason’s.

Jason grabbed Jeremy’s hand to get off the bench and then let go afterward. “This is too much.”

“Come on. I think you will really enjoy it.”

Jason was hesitant at first. “Where are we going?”

Jeremy threw his jacket back on. “I really don’t know yet but let’s just drive around the city and find a place. Its night. I don’t think the traffic is going to be at all bad.”

“You really just don’t want to go home, do you?”

“I don’t know. You tell me.”

Jason was feeling a little tedious and somehow exhausted after mentally thinking about it. “I really don’t know if I want to go.” But Jason knew there was no way getting out of this one and even he did, there was no way of getting away from Jeremy. Jeremy was going to be by his side always whether he liked it or not.

Chapter 15

It was nine o' clock in the evening. Kirk, Javier and Adrian were all dressed and ready, but Kirk stood in the bedroom looking for weapons that may be useful in the search for Glenico. Kirk opened the bottom drawer of Javier's dresser and found bullets that were compatible to his 9mm handgun and caught sight of other bullets to several other weapons he knew were too big to carry.

Javier walked into the bedroom and closed the bedroom door behind him. "I don't trust that kid!"

Kirk grew annoyed. "I think you confirmed that when we were at the diner."

"Well now that you are aware. You should also consider that he could be toying with us."

"Do you have any proof of these accusations you're making on Adrian? Because I think you sound kind of ridiculous."

"I just know that we can't trust him." said Javier sitting on the side off the bed.

"You say we shouldn't trust him. Yet you say nothing to support your claim and make me believe you."

"Fine, you're right! I don't have any proof!" whispered Javier angrily. "But you can't deny that there is something off about that kid."

"I don't know what you're talking about. But I do know you're being hard on him. And I hope that when he comes with us to this so called 'Splash' club, you will do your best to stop messing with Adrian."

"I won't guarantee that. But do what you want with the boy. I won't have any part in it, but I will continue to investigate on my part."

“Have it your way then!”

The bedroom door opened to reveal Adrian. “The club is set to be packed around midnight. We should probably be there before hand.”

“Don’t worry we will.” said Kirk. “In the meantime, just hold tight. Or get yourself a drink. We’re almost done.”

“Okay.” said Adrian. He was just about to walk out the bedroom, when he spotted the row of guns on top of the dresser and the box of bullets on the open drawer.

“Anything else.” asked Javier impatiently.

Adrian was caught off guard. “Is this really necessary? The guns and the blades, I mean this is a gay club. I’ll doubt it will be anything of danger to us.”

“Perhaps you should leave the tactics and decisions to us. Considering that we’re older and have more experience with this type of situation.” said Javier.

“I was just suggesting - -.”

“Your suggestions aren’t needed.” Javier interrupted angrily.

Kirk grew annoyed with Javier’s behavior, but he didn’t want to do anything to upset himself.

There was a knock at the front door of the apartment. “I got it.” said Javier angrily, he pushed past Adrian and walking out of the bedroom.

“His attitude won’t get him far.”

“Yeah, probably not.” Kirk agreed.

“Why is he like that anyway?” Adrian strutted over to the bedside.

“He is just a hard on type of guy. If he’s got a mission, he’s going to see it through without relying on anyone he hardly knows.”

“I was beginning to think it was more than that. Probably something fatal that happened to him as a kid.”

Kirk laughed. “Nah, it’s nothing like that.”

Adrian smirked “Oh well. He could’ve fooled me.”

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Kirk nodded, sighing in agreement. Suspecting Javier’s rebellious behavior towards the boy, Kirk couldn’t bring himself to guess the foundation of Javier’s troubles. Javier risked a lot to bring Kirk into safety. Desperate to show gratitude and to express that Javier’s doing were not in vain. He attempted to understand what it was that made Adrian the tension, the punching bag that an angry human can’t seem to leave alone.

Appearing out of the doorway, Javier emerged, followed by an olive-skinned male, whose muscle arms revealed itself under the sleeveless jean coat. One in which Kirk felt his stomach tighten and palms form aggressively. “Trevor!”

Kirk lifted himself from the bedside. “What’s going on? What’s he doing here?”

“He’s with us in case we need some assistance from a spellcaster.” Said Javier plainly, crossing his arms.

“How do you fail to mention any of these things? Are you trying to get back at me or something?”

“Because I know you would disagree. You always disagree with what I have planned!”

“Don’t bicker or even do that thing that couples do!” Trevor barked, looking from Kirk to Javier impatiently. “I’m right here and that means you shouldn’t talk about me as if I’m not.”

“Why don’t we all just calm down.” said Adrian suddenly.

Javier shot him a look which nearly startled him, he looked away not before realizing that Trevor gave a quick glare to him, that nearly seemed just as unsettling as Javier’s.

“I only came here because you obviously need my help.” Trevor went on. “Considering that you’ve asked me to deliver the reassurances of your safety, Kirk. And would therefore inform your son that you have been in good hands. I think I deserve a little bit more respect. You should be lucky to have a spellcaster on your side. And have a couple of conditions the lot of you should consider.” Trevor gave a quick glare to Adrian.

Watching Trevor’s actions, Kirk caught his fixed expressions toward Adrian as if almost as if he had something out of place. Despite Adrian’s obvious silence, he assumed it were because no one introduced the two of them. “So, what do you suggest?” asked Kirk.

“Zarius.”

“What about him?”

“Zarius is going to want in on this. This is the lead closest we’ve had on nailing Glenico in days!”

“Maybe the Cobra Entity isn’t doing their job right. If silly human folks like me and Javier, were able to pinpoint Glenico, then you must be pointless at what you do. Talk about high and mighty Protecting humans and the tedious dialogue.”

“This argument is getting us nowhere. And I must agree with Kirk. I don’t want any other spellcasters apart of this. It should just be us three.” said Javier, leaving out Adrian who was clearly annoyed by Javier’s ignorance.

Trevor turned away perching his lips, facing the doorway as if attempting to flee.

Kirk watched Trevor suspiciously. “You already told Zarius, didn’t you?”

Trevor turned to look at Kirk. “Glenico is a dangerous witch. He won’t be taken down easily.”

“So, what you didn’t think we couldn’t have handled Glenico ourselves?” asked Javier angrily.

“Obviously not, if he went and snitched to his master.” said Kirk sarcastically.

“You can be upset with me all you want. The fact of the matter is, is that we have bigger problems arising. If you were so willing to call yourselves heroes, you probably wouldn’t call me in the first place. Heroes don’t call for backup.” Trevor laughed.

“You’re an idiot.” said Javier.

“I suggest you get with it guys. We need to leave now. The club will be jam-packed and there will be other spellcasters sent by Zarius to arrive soon. As for the E.T.A on their arrival, I cannot say. Still waiting on a reply.” He patted his coat, gesturing for the phone in his pocket.

“Oh, I’m ready.” said Kirk grabbing his coat from the bedroom door. “You ready, Adrian?”

Adrian got up off the bed and followed Kirk out of the bedroom. Javier grabbed a loaded handgun from on top of the dresser and placed it inside the back of his jeans.

Trevor watched in annoyance. “You humans I forget how fragile you can be.”

Javier shot him a look. “Was that supposed to piss me off?”

“No, I was just simply stating my forgetfulness.”

The rush hour dissipated, the traffic was minimal enough for Jeremy to drive back to Manhattan in haste. The view from the Queensborough Bridge while heading into the heart of the concrete jungle, was a beautiful sight Jason always thought, to be up high above the water, and watch it look still as the cars sped across the bridge. At one point he considered drawing a still portrait of the city by standing atop the pedestrian side of the bridge and scribble away as the lights of the buildings started to appear just before night. The thrill was an unrelenting adrenaline, vibrant and rich in his veins, when seeing a city strong and diverse that it could ever be. As if seeing it for the first time ever.

Moments passed as Jeremy drove the local streets of the city. From the low condominiums of Gramercy, to Midtown West, to Hell’s Kitchen and then Chelsea. The November nights were

cool on a Monday but also welcoming to tourists as well as those who enjoyed the city night life.

“I bet you have a lot of friends here.” Said Jeremy. “You go out often, don’t you?”

Jason shifted himself from the passenger seat, his legs numb from sitting for a longer time than he expected. “Not as much. As I got older, it was then that I started to appreciate the city.”

“What do you mean?”

“Well I haven’t really gone out as a kid. Except with my dad, and with a few friends of his. Some of which were friends he met at work. At least he would say.”

“Yeah, right.”

It was a render that Jason couldn’t really bring himself to enjoy. Not by purpose but by lack of opportunity. “Kirk had me home schooled. until I started High School. It was then that I met the only friends I have. Rebecca, Joseph, and Michael. That only friends I’ve ever had.”

“I see.”

As Jeremy pulled up in front of a crowded club, Jason anticipated the relief to be able to move after all that he ate. Everywhere Jason would look were patches of people along the sidewalk. Jeremy shut the engine. As Jason was about to step out of the car, Jeremy quickly grabbed him by the arm. “Wait!”

Jason shook, off guard. “What happened?”

Jeremy said nothing he shut his eyes, whispering an incantation as if he was praying.

“Jeremy! What are you doing?”

Jeremy opened his eyes and smiled before he let Jason go and stepped out of the car. Confused by Jason's actions, stepped out as well, expecting to feel any hint of difference, like a spell cast upon him.

"This place is pretty packed."

"Well then, what are we doing here? Do you just want to go home?" Jason realized that home may have meant Jeremy's place in Jersey City. But Jason didn't want to dwell on it.

"What would we do that for? We just got here."

Jason glared at the crowd of men, all of which were about his age if not older. "What is that place?"

"It's a dance club."

Jason shook his head in disbelief. "Why on earth are we going to club at a dangerous time like this? Especially when we got enemies out there?"

"I'm trying to light the mood. Would you rather stay in the bowels of my apartment and sulk? Besides what spellcasters would want to start trouble here? Or even come here for that matter."

"I don't know, look at you. You're here. And you're a spellcaster."

"So are you." Jeremy shot back happily. "Well...Sort of."

They strutted quickly toward the crowd.

Cautious to see the bodyguard standing by the entrance of the club. Jason expected the tall built brute to ask for I.D. Before he knew it, Jeremy grabbed Jason by the arm and he hurried past the security guard, who showed no concern or bothered to look their way. “What the - -.”

Jason slowed his pace, appreciating the view as the music grew. They past the glass doors where they would find a square shaped bar, two men in tank tops spilling drinks into the shakers and mixing them for the men and women who stood before the bar opposite.

“It’s usually crowded like this, you know.”

Jason was just barely trying to hear what Jeremy had said. “No, I don’t know. I’ve never been here, remember? And how is it that the security guy didn’t ask us for I.D?”

“That’s because he didn’t see us.”

“What are you talking about? We passed right by him. How could he not see us?”

“I cast an invisibility spell while we were in the car. No one can see us.”

“What the hell! How did you do that?” Jason asked stupidly realizing that Jeremy would be capable of such a surprise.

“Come over this way.” Jeremy pulled Jason by the hand. Jason was forced to follow Jeremy through the stairwell that led downstairs. It was the entrance way that led to the downstairs bathrooms. They walked inside and leveled their way to go to the cubicle without being noticed. They walked inside a cubicle furthest away from the group of people who stood outside the entryway.

“What are we doing in here?”

“We can’t let anyone see us appear out of nowhere.” Jeremy raised his hand to Jason’s forehead and closed his own eyes.

“Now before you ask, I’m undoing the spell. I would keep us like this if you want, but people in the crowd would keep stepping on us on the dance floor and that will be very frustrating. But it’s up to you.”

“No, go right ahead. Is this what you were chanting about in the car?”

“Yes, that’s why I held your arm and...I’m done.” Jeremy opened the cubicle door and stepped out. Jason did the same.

Jeremy gently grabbed Jason by the hand again. And they walked up the steps leading to the dance floor.

“You didn’t do that while we were in the car.”

“Do what?”

“You know. Touch my head like you’re performing exorcism.”

“I didn’t have to at first because I was holding your arm. When I touch you, you bear the invisibility spell as well. No one could have seen you.”

“But that doesn’t explain - -.”

“Can we just go to the dance floor?” Jeremy ran up the stairwell. He grabbed Jason by the hand again, leading him to the top of the stairs where the bar remained. As well as the music that overflowed the psyche of anyone to reluctant to listen and migrate across the floor.

As they made it beside the counter, Jeremy rose up to flag the bartender. “Do you want a drink?”

“Sure, I’ll take a vodka cranberry!”

Jeremy told the bartender what they both wanted. Within in a minute the bartender came back with their drinks and Jeremy left a twenty-dollar bill on the table. Jeremy gave Jason his drink and Jeremy took his.

“Thanks.” Jason attempted to take a sip, but his mouth watered, and quickly turned into a gulp, triggered by the intensity around him.

“When I undid the spell, I had to remove what was left of the invisibility charm on you. That’s why I held you like you were getting baptized.”

Jason gave Jeremy an annoyed look. “Perhaps next time you should warn me when you do something like that again. I thought you were playing a hoax or something.”

“You really think I’d do that?”

“No, it’s just that, I don’t know I’m still getting used to the whole magic thing. I don’t know when you’ll use magic, whether I’ll notice or not. But for my own curiosity just let me know next time.”

Jeremy put his drink down on the countertop. “Alright, as you wish.”

Jason glared over to the large square room, full of men and women of many diversities, dancing together in a careless fashion. The music itself were vibrant, energetic, and with intense light that made everyone motion in waves in the blinking dark. Strangers beside them captivated

by the same enchanting music, forgetting their differences and worries left at the outside world. The music was indeed a spell, a trance casted upon all those who'd listen, a drug with unrelenting pleasure that consumes the psyche in intervals within the hour.

Expressing love and admiration toward everyone around them, companions, friends or not. All were proceeded to feel the unity and the need to express themselves in a chaotic sense.

Jason could only guess that this was the human world. The human world Kirk tried so hard to shield him from, for the sake of being spotted by dangers that were bigger than he and his father. The spellcaster world was huge. A pleasure to be hold, but so was this, Jason thought. This large space full of people escaping reality for the night, this was a world anyone could ask for.

“So, it’s not me?” asked Jeremy.

Jason turned to look at him “What?”

“You don’t think I’m being too weird? Or that it’s me you don’t want to be near?”

“No, of course not.” said Jason quickly. “I mean of course I think this is all weird, because I’m obviously not used to the whole magic, like I said before. I like hanging around you. It’s just that...I don’t know. I’m very protective of myself.”

“Well of course, you should be.”

“What do you mean by that?”

“I just mean that that’s how humans are, you put yourself first mentally and study the other person’s actions when it involves you.”

“I’m trying to be cautious of not saying the word magic in public, and still not sound like I know nothing at all, which of course, I don’t seem to know nothing at all.”

“You know you shouldn’t really worry about. So, what if somebody hears you say something out of ordinary. I mean look around, look at our surroundings, you really think someone is going to ask around for a stray jacket, rather than a guy’s phone number?”

“Look, I get it. I worry too much. But I can’t help myself, I’m a nervous wreck.” He took another sip of the drink.

Jeremy smiled looking away and facing the crowd. “I’ve noticed.”

Jason could have sworn that was another insult, amateur at best, he thought, but didn’t acknowledge Jeremy’s sense of humor.

“Do you want to go dance?” Jeremy asked suddenly.

“I haven’t even finished my drink.”

Jeremy took the drink from Jason’s hand and placed it on the bar top. “It will be here when we come back.” He took Jason by the hand and they walked toward the crowd, the music rose louder as they reached the center of the floor.

Jason chuckled at the mere sight of Jeremy attempting to sway in action.

“What’s your problem? You haven’t seen a hot guy dance before?”

“No, not at all.” His eyes were fixed on Jeremy with cautious eyes, confused as if it were glares that rendered him folly... or admirable.

“I was supposedly human too once! I live across the river, remember? Why don’t you join me? I can dance like any other urban legend.” Jeremy pulled Jason closer.

Caught by surprise, Jason nearly lost his balance. “Alright, okay, I got it.”

They danced, and as Jason tried to level his mind with the rhythm, therefore allowing his body to make sense of the music, he felt rather nervous at the silent judging eyes that would glance his way. He brushed his short hair back, attempting to not show any signs of caring. But he couldn’t help it, the weight of the stares was heavy. Although he wasn’t sure there were stares at all.

“You’re tense and uptight. Let loose!” Jeremy started. “No one cares here! Except me of course. I care. Let loose, be yourself, sorcerer!”

“Be who you are!” Jason caught himself mimicking the words of the supposed Victor Song, the dream he tried desperately not to think about. He shrugged it off and allowed the music to take over. A weird feeling came over Jason in perhaps the slightest sense that may change the mood. Everything was in slow motion, Jason closed his eyes and images started flashing before them, he dares not say them out loud for they were more promiscuous than he cared to ensue.

All in the moment, he felt his jeans get tighter. He opened his eyes and tuned around to face away from Jeremy, who rocked him in his embrace. Both his hands wrapped around Jason’s ribs. Nervous, a heat heady and sublime, made him feel more comfortable against Jeremy’s body temperature. The light gusts of his warm breath made Jason shudder, although barely noticeable within the blinking lights of the dark space, for Jeremy to see. Tighter and at a rush for lust, he shut his eyes, Jason’s adrenaline was pumping in his veins, losing control at the taking of his companion’s touch. Must be the drink, he thought.

Jason nervously raised his right arm around Jeremy's neck. Clutching each other tightly, Jason opened his eyes and turned around, letting go of Jeremy's neck only to have both his arms around his neck again.

Determined, he didn't know how else to feel at this moment. Jeremy considered Jason's eyes and Jason did the same. A sense of calm befalls upon them, Jeremy perked down closer to and kissed him before Jason could make another move. Their eyes closed, and their lips in a light clash.

Jason paused. Shaking in a sigh of relief, he briefly attempted to collect the last bit of air aside from Jeremy's breathing, tastes of mint and nature but failed. Captivated, he kissed Jeremy once more, allowing the wizard to lock him in his embrace, escaping their surroundings and letting their thoughts to settle.

At the sudden nudge from a jointed couple; two grown men not minding their surroundings, Jason awoke from the trance, departing his Jeremy's lips. "No!" He let go of Jeremy, pulling his arms away and pushed past him without looking back.

Disappearing through the crowd, Jason could've sworn he heard Jeremy call his name. But in fear, he fought the temptation to return, his mentality guilt stricken at the look on Kirk's judgmental face as if he were present. His adrenaline led him, through the intense dark, wet eyes glistening, controlled Jason telling him where to go in a place in which he's never been before.

Chapter 16

“That’s it!” Adrian pointing across the street, next to Kirk while Javier and Trevor were strutted in front of them.

“No shit.” shot Javier. “I think we can tell that by the awning on the entrance.”

Kirk saw that the club was jammed packed with guys all around them. “Good thing we parked Javier dodge charger not too far from the place.” He said, glaring at the crowd. “Good god look at them. It’s as if they were waiting on line for free food or something.”

Javier saw the security guy in front of the door of the club. He went ahead to approach him. “Hey you!!” he yelled. He whipped out his I.D to show it off the guard.

“Do you know a guy named Glenico?” asked Kirk. “We think he hangs out around here.”

The guard was confused. “Who?”

“Don’t play stupid! Glenico! He’s got an eye patch on the right side of his eye with brown straight hair down to his ear. He dresses kind of classy but trashy.”

“I don’t know who you’re talking about. I suggest you guys leave if your just here looking to ask some lame ass quest - -.” The guard paused, his eyes froze looking elsewhere.

Kirk turned to find Trevor raising his hand, casting a spell blindly toward the guard. “I think its best we go in now!” said Trevor.

Kirk and Javier looked about toward the crowd behind him, surprised that did not seem to notice Trevor’s actions. “But how - -?” Javier questioned.

Stunned, the guard nodded toward gestures of Trevor’s hand. “Yes, it is best to go in now.”

“Step aside!” Trevor told the guard.

Awkwardly, the guard moved, making way for all four of them to get in.

Trevor walked in through the entrance first, followed by Kirk, Javier and then Adrian who were silent and did not at all seem alarmed by what Trevor had just done.

“I believe the phrase is - -, That’s how you do it, bitch!” said Trevor proudly looking from Kirk to Javier. Trevor opened the door, shaking his head in shame. “You’re welcome.”

While running up the stairs, the cold winds blew downward, nearly knocking Jason off his feet as he made it to the open rooftop patio, where he imagined he would find men and women caught in the essence of nicotine as they conversed beside the rails of the balcony, glaring at the skyline. He walked over to the edge of the balcony overlooking the street below, revealing the entrance to the club.

“Jason!” Jeremy called out. Jason turned around to see Jeremy approaching him.

“I can’t do this. I just can’t. It’s not right.”

“Jason, I know how you feel.”

“No, you don’t. You don’t know at all how I feel. I’m practically going through an identity crisis and all you’re doing is being a little too nice to me, taking me into your home taking me to places like this.”

Jeremy was stunned. “I did all that because I care about you. I was trying to distract you from everything that makes you upset. I not only want to protect you physically but mentally. I don’t want you to be depressed and lose yourself all because you almost lost Kirk and because you found out you’re a spellcaster. Don’t you see? I’m just trying to help!”

“Jeremy, we were getting intimate down there. How do I know you’re not just taking advantage of me?”

Jeremy rolled his eyes. “Do you really think that low of me? After everything I had done to make you comfortable around me. You would seriously think I would take advantage of you?”

“Well I don’t know. Would you?” Jason’s nerves were tightening, Jason pushed himself off the railing, he sat at the bench beside the roof top entrance bench, with his head in his hands.

Kirk strutted through the dance floor, crowded and almost impossible to quicken the pace unless they shoved passed the dancers around them. The music that entrapped any means of conversation, played intensely.

Kirk reflected briefly on his youth in which he found this type crowd stimulating. He sighed in frustration to realize that this was now all a contribution to a dreadful headache. His adrenaline did not pair well with crowd and the intense heat and sweat that surrounded him, not like that of a rebellious teenager, shouting with relentless energy for no reason at all. He wondered if Jason possessed this sort of energy or even knew of a place like this.

Javier, Trevor and Adrian were glaring towards the bar. Kirk paused. “Where do you suppose the owner of this place is?” he yelled through the music. “Or management for that matter.”

“Downstairs, maybe! I saw a stairwell not far from where we just were.” Adrian gestured toward the way they came.

“Well what are we waiting for? Let’s go!” Kirk strutted out of the dance floor, making his way beside the bar. Trevor, Javier and Adrian had quickly followed him.

As Adrian bumped into Trevor, Trevor shook, glaring at the young man with ferocious curiosity.

“Sorry.” Adrian walked away, quickly catching up to Kirk who then disappeared through the crowd beside him.

Stunned, Trevor’s eyes were fixed upon the crowd, he felt his heart race, his adrenaline kickstart to abnormal levels. He shook attempting to control his emotions.

Disturbed by the way Trevor froze, Javier made his way toward him. “Hey man, what’s going on?”

“That kid. He bumped into me.” said Trevor loudly over the music.

“You mean Adrian? He’s a klutz. Big deal, he’s not much different than any of these other yahoos in here!”

“I’m not talking about these kids, I’m talking about Adrian! I felt a tremor when he bumped into me!”

“Hey what’s going on?” Kirk strutted over impatiently. “We need to get this over with and find the owner!”

Trevor looked over to where Kirk was and realized that Adrian wasn't with him. "Adrian... He's gone."

"He was here a second ago."

"We have to find him."

"What the hell for? We could search the place without him."

"No, we can't." said Javier. "He has to show us where he encountered Francisco and where he was supposed to meet Glenico."

"But it's not just that." Trevor added. "I told you, Javier! Adrian bumped into me and when he did, I felt a tremor from his body as well as mine."

"I'm confused, what are you guys talking about?" said Kirk "You know this is no time to want to get kinky with a teenager!"

"Kirk, he's saying Adrian is a Spell - -." Javier paused,

Although his facial features were barely seen in the dark mist of blinking lights, Kirk glared at his comrade in a panic, a blade protruded through his shoulder, and Kirk were fueled with surprise that quickly thwarted to anger. Javier groaned in pain and collapsed onto the floor.

Adrian stood behind Javier with a blade in hand, Kirk could have sworn that it let out hints of a scarlet red, reflecting the color of the liquid that dripped to the edge of the hilt. "A soldora!"

"You fool!" Trevor yelled.

Adrian disappeared through the crowd.

Javier's cry was barely audible through the loud music, as he tried desperately to stand still. His legs gave up at every attempt.

"No! NO! NO!" Kirk ran to where Adrian had disappeared, but Trevor turned and grabbed him by the arm. "What the hell!"

"Stop! Adrian wants us to follow him." Trevor shifted and darted toward Javier. "Help me with him!"

Kirk nodded, sighing in anger at the sight of his comrade, he darted over, grabbing his arm. Javier yelled at the sudden force and Kirk immediately let go. "Somebody gets us a towel!" He lifted Javier up from his back placing him against his legs. "I got you, buddy!"

"I can still fight!" groaned Javier. "Trevor can get me something to numb the pain."

"Yes, I can perform a spell!" Trevor looked about his surroundings as the people gathered around them. Some gesturing and yelling for others to call the ambulance. "You think this would get the owner of the club's attention. If we can even get to him."

"I wish I could understand all of this, but I can't." Jason rose his head from his hands, staring at the railing of the balcony.

Jeremy gently sat next to him "I didn't expect you to."

"I mean what are you getting out of this? Me being here with you? Why did you choose to protect me?"

“I told you! Zarius appointed me to look after you. And I agreed!”

“And?”

“And what?” Jeremy shrugged. “I wanted to do this. If I didn’t, I would have backed out! Are you that ashamed of me?”

“No.”

“Then what is it, Jason? You’re not making sense.”

Jason sighed, glaring deeply into Jeremy concerned eyes. “I’m scared.”

“Of what?”

“Of what will happen when this is all over. Will I be safe again? Will Amadeus or Glenico leave us be? Will Kirk be around more and will you - -.” Jason paused, biting his lip, careful to not regret his words. “Jeremy I’m sorry. I know I’m being a pain in the - -”

“Finish your sentence.” Jeremy demanded softly. “Don’t be afraid. Say what you were going to say.”

Jason shook his head, his heart beat faster as his mind raced. “Will you still be here? And will you cease to look at me like a fragile nobody.”

“I never looked at you that way.”

“You treat me like a victim. Like a man who has no responsibilities on the outside. I’m not fragile. I’m not inadequate. I’m human. And I refuse to give in to you, if you continue to look at me that way - -” Jeremy laid a finger on Jason’s lips.

“I have never looked at you that way. I see you as a human being. If anything, I see you as a spellcaster. One who is stronger and capable of so much more.” Jeremy stroked Jason’s cheeks, glaring at Jason’s eyes, the sorrow quickly appearing before him.

Time stood still once more, Jason gestured forward towards Jeremy’s face and their lips locked, the familiar scent of soap engulfed Jason’s nostrils as Jeremy placed both his hands upon Jason’s cheeks. Calm and somewhat relieved at the stress disintegrating upon him, Jason kissed Jeremy again. His legs weak, trying to catch his breath.

“I hope I’m not intruding!” said a voice.

Caught by surprise, Jeremy tore away from Jason’s lips and rose from the bench.

Jason done the same quickly coming to the realization of the southern voice that struck his heart, the familiar voice coming from the other side of the roof. “Glenico!”

The brown suited witch, whose eye path covered his left eye glared at the two of them like a predator ready to strike when given the chance. His wrinkled brown button down, brown slacks flailing in the wind, and his body unaffected by the cold that swayed where he stood. “Then again, I’m known for being narcissistic!”

Jeremy gestured and pushed Jason to stay behind him. “What do you want?”

Jason knew well not to make a rebellious move by any means to provoke Glenico or give him the chance to fight Jeremy and leave himself defenseless.

Glenico crossed his arms. “You know my young wizard, you’re beginning to annoy me. You’re in my domain. You here, are a crappy coincidence. Having the Cobra Entity know my

hideout!” he gave a quick glare at Jason, who stood behind Jeremy. “But then an opportunity always presents itself.” He took a step forward glaring at Jason with reluctant eyes.

Jeremy took a step forward. “Keep your distance, witch!”

“Oh no, wizard! You were able to guard yourself from my magic back at the Greenwich Village. But I assure you, you won’t be so lucky. I’ve got a chunk of years on you, boy! You can’t defeat me!”

“What do you want with Jason?”

“Jason!” Glenico chuckled. “I don’t want Jason! I want his daddy! The little punk you’re defending is Amadeus’s endeavor. But since you two showed up here unannounced, I’m willing to sever that endeavor and use you two, to my liking.”

“You’re making a big mistake. Give it up, Glenico! You’re never going to find Kirk!”

“Oh, I don’t need too.” said Glenico. “In fact, all is according to plan. He’s here!”

“What?” Jason’s heart skipped a beat, he felt the weight of the world lift off his shoulders, only to feel numb at the sight of the witch. “What the hell do you want with my father?” Jason demanded.

“Isn’t it a coincidence indeed. I’m able to slash two birds with one stone!” Glenico took a step forward.

Jeremy shifted. Whispering an incantation, he rose his arm. A cackle of energy formed in his grasp and ignited into the shape of a blade.

“The soldora!” Jason thought.

Glenico laughed. “Your father is mine! He always was! Always will be!”

“Maybe it’s time you took a hint.” Jeremy rose his blade, ready to attack. “The guy is over you!”

“I beg to differ!” Glenico snapped his fingers, a light tremble took hold beneath Jeremy and Jason’s feet. The lights of the patio went out, leaving only darkness between the three of them. “Enjoy the party. It’s a dozy!”

Chapter 17

The lights dissipated in a ferocious manner, leaving everyone stand in a panic. Shadows in every corner without any signs of light. However, within seconds, squares of illuminated screens appeared before the faces that stood on the dance floor. Their phones lit the way, accompanied by outcries of joy, laughter, and confusion as their mist of ecstasy were still intact.

“Turn on the music, Turn on the lights.” People were yelling out. The faint sounds of whispers were suddenly heard all around them.

“What the hell is going on?” asked Kirk. “Trevor, Javier, you guys there? What the hell happened?”

“Beats me.” said Javier who was behind Kirk unexpectedly and caught him off guard.

Using his magic, Trevor placed his hand upon Javier’s shoulder, numbing the cut that protruded from his back to his front torso.

“Ah! Easy!” groaned Javier. “I need to still be able to walk! You’ll rupture my spine!”

“I know what I’m doing!” Trevor moved his hand away, and a lit spark were summoned among his grasp, a flash of energy revealed a blade. His soldora, in the shape of a long silver vertical stick, letting out an illuminating white energy. He rose it up towards where Javier and Kirk stood, who shielded their eyes at the piercing light.

“Hey, W

hats that in your hand? Wasn’t he injured?” said a woman, glaring at Javier in wonder, her face illuminated by the ignited pixels on her phone. The others who projected their face had done the same, pointing their mobile flashlights towards Javier’s direction.

Javier tried desperately to adjust his eyes to the captivating dark, as the light obnoxiously shining on him nearly blinded his vision.

The security guards came through the dancehall with flashlights lit at the countless people who stood in the crowd. Walking around telling everyone to stay calm and remain silent while the manager was checking the breakers.

The startling wind of doors slammed in the distance, as if the building was closing itself in. A heat wave consumed the air, its aroma of ash and burned rubber. For a second, Kirk thought it may have been a fire lit somewhere in the building and could have cause panic. But then another thought struck him. “He’s here! Glenico is somewhere in the building!”

Trevor and Javier agreed.

At the sound of a scream arising, Trevor pointed the soldora towards where the scream was broad. Quickly, Kirk and Trevor darted toward where the scream were, Javier followed, adjusting

himself to the pain that quickly dissipated, as well as the open wound sealing itself due to Trevor's magic.

"Over here!" Trevor pointed his flashlight towards a man screaming and groaning in pain on the floor before him.

"What is it? What's going on?" Javier made his way toward Trevor whose soldora flashed before a man crumpled upon the floor, he looked back at Javier in scarce horror.

Pleading, the trembling man, glared about Trevor and Javier, seeking help for the pain inflicted upon him, as told by his teary eyes. "Help me! I can't - -." His mouth, almost like they forcefully pried open, his eyes had rolled behind his head, and blood sprung from its sockets.

"Shit! Javier, back away!" Kirk demanded, he pulled Javier out of the way, leaving Trevor to fend before the dying man.

"Somebody please calls an ambulance." someone said in the crowd. "Quick!" said another.

As the destructive man trembled uncontrollably, someone suggested that the man had a seizure. Kirk picked up on the stench of the ash growing stronger, hints of its contents appeared from out the man's neck, captivating his body as he moved.

Slowly raising his arm, as if struggling to grab hold of an inanimate object for stability, his skull split open. Snapped apart with bloodshot flesh protruding from its cranium.

Kirk cringed at the sudden sight. "Damn!"

"Run!" yelled Trevor. "Everyone gets back now!"

Screams filled the dark space; the lights of the mobile phones shook in scrambles as they made their way for the exit of the club. Kirk, Trevor and Javier stood in horror. Gags of disgust were audible, bodies collapsing as they couldn't attempt to run while their stomach churned unaccountably.

“Why is Glenico doing this?” Javier asked.

Kirk nodded. “Maybe its Adrian!”

As some managed to run away from the mutant, others watched in horror as the man rose up off the floor without so much as bending his legs or arms to rise off the floor, like a puppet without strings. As his open flesh wound sunk downwards, metal barb wired tentacles dripping with red blackish blood slithered from out his skull.

“Get back!” Kirk demanded. He grabbed Javier by the arm, they glared over at the bystanders who shook in horror at the mere sight. “Get away! All of you!”

The tentacles wobbled and sprung towards the one closest coiling the man's legs, tightly pulling him off his feet. Its spiky edges cutting at the man's calves as he screamed. The tentacle sucked itself into the mutant's cranium and rose the man in midair.

“Déjà vu, anyone!” Kirk took his gun from his side pocket and rose it toward the tentacles.

“Ugh! Not funny!” Javier took the gun from his side pocket, aiming at the roaring mutant.

“Put him down!”

Trevor rose his soldora, ready to swing at the first tentacle that came toward the three of them.

A spring of dripping tentacles shot out at multiples, striking at the woman behind the man hanging upside down.

“Fire!” Kirk yelled.

The blazing shards of Kirk’s and Javier’s firearms let out the roaring echoes, that shot violently at the countless tentacles. As they sprung from the mutant relentlessly, one by one, the barb wired tentacles made their way toward the departing crowd that pushed and shoved toward the exit. Taking the one closest, one after the other.

The two security guards stood defenseless. With no means of firearms but the blinding flashlights, they hurried behind the bar, taking the liquor bottles and tossing them toward the mutant. Its contents splattered across the blood dripping flesh. Joined by the piercing bullet, the mutant was engulfed in flames, making its way wherever the liquid dripped.

“Hold your fire!” Trevor demanded to Javier and Kirk.

The blaze consumed the coiling tentacles making it toward its victims who were entrapped in its grasp. The bodies lifted in midair by the force of coiling magic that snared about, shaking them uncontrollably, as the barbwires pierced within their flesh.

As the two screamed in pain and unrelenting fear, more tentacles came out the mutant’s skull and slithered towards the others in the crowd.

“Oh god no!” Javier stepped back in horror.

Kirk did the same. “The fire is feeding it power! We can’t help them! Damn it! There has to be something that we can do!”

More screams were audible around the dark room, tackled by the necks of the slithering tentacles. As those who were ensnared by the coiling mutant tried to escape, the blacken dripping contents touched their skin, stiffening and paralyzing their limbs. A remnant of shadows like that of the bloodshot mutant.

As a tentacle made its way toward him, Trevor jumped aside, and swung his then silver soldora, slicing the tentacle in two. The mutant roared.

“I think you pissed it off!” Kirk rose his gun and fired at the creature. Javier, who adjusted his shoulder and tried to remain ignorant to the stench of burnt flesh, rose his gun, careful to not strike or cause a strain to his injury as it slowly dissipated. Considering the sight of things, it was the least of his worries.

“What have you done?” Jeremy asked angrily, Jason felt his hand reach for his, tightly clutching his hands as if scared for his life. Jason were tempted to step back for he feared Jeremy would only move closer to attack if he thought it possible.

“Recruiting a couple of folks!” Glenico crossed his arms. “You don’t expect me to run a party all by myself now, do you?”

Jeremy rose his blade upwards.

“Now wizard, be smart. You’re surrounded, believe it or not. You’re not going to win like you did the last time by Washington Square Park. I let you win, you see.”

“What are you talking about?”

“I needed you to tell me where Jason was. Because If I would find Jason, I would find Kirk!”

“I told you nothing!”

“Technically, no! You haven’t,” Stepping closer toward the exit of the rooftop, therefore blocking the only way of Jeremy and Jason from getting out. “But you brought Jason to his household. Where no doubt, Kirk would have been.”

Jason jumped at the sound of sudden piercing screams in the distance. “What the - -.”

“Careless, are you, young wizard? You didn’t even bother to think that the use of you were so easy. That you would defeat me, a witch whose got decades of years on you. You are fool to think so.”

“That’s not true!” Jeremy stated cautiously. “You had people looking for Jason and kirk for a while!”

“That’s true, yes! I had a certain someone from Washington Heights tell me that Kirk had been spotted with a young individual. The boy you see beside you!”

Jason flinched.

“But I had no idea where they lived. And as Francisco told me. The guy I mean, who say he spotted Kirk. Had spotted a boy who looked remarkably like Victor Song. I knew I had to follow him. It’s no coincidence that I should try the East Village. The birth place of Kirk Malero!

“And as I scavenge the avenues for someone who even resembles that of Victor Song, I found you!” Within a second, Glenico rose his arm, the flesh of his wrists discombobulated, until metallic tentacle protruded out of his hand and coiled around Jason’s leg.

“No, stop!!” Jason attempted to shake it off and step away at first glance, but he was pulled off his feet and dragged across the pavement.

“Stop!” Jeremy swung his soldora before himself and raised it towards Glenico. “Let him go!”

Glenico grabbed Jason up off the floor, bracing him around the neck.

“Let go of me!” Jason attempted to struggle his way out of Glenico’s grasp, but his grip on him were stronger than he anticipated.

Jeremy stepped forward. “Surrender, Glenico! You’ve lost there is no one to help you now!”

Glenico laughed “I told you, there isn’t any point in running, this was the plan all along. With Kirk here, I have everything I need according to the deed.”

Kirk is here. Jason recalled with a sigh. Despite his possible death caused of any further movement, he had to get Kirk’s attention, if he hadn’t already.

“Why don’t you just go after Kirk yourself?” Jeremy shot.

“That’s an excellent idea! Except he’s in a crowd with a hundred or so people. So, I thought the distraction would also be a force of persuasion. Whether the crowds like it or not, of course!” The screams arose again, this time in scrambles.

Jason jumped at the startling cries in the distance behind him, the stairway, he thought. Leading to formidable horrors, of the countless people he seen earlier facing a terror he couldn't imagine possible.

"Not to mention my son is with him." Glenico finished.

"Your son?" asked Jeremy confused.

"And the annoying thing is," Glenico continued "Is that Kirk has a spellcaster on his side. So of course, I have to be careful that he didn't call anymore of them to join our little party."

Jeremy smirked. "Something tells me, someone did!"

At the sound of a shard screeching across the air, Glenico groaned, forcefully letting go of Jason. "You fool!" he turned facing the stairway to see a figure in a scarlet trench coat speed his way toward him.

Jason rose from the floor, Jeremy reached for him, pulling away and stepping aside from the impact.

"The witching hour is over, coward!" With two revolvers in hand, Ivy rose a kick towards Glenico's chin, causing the witch to hurdle back and crash against the railing of the balcony behind him. "Make one wrong move and the next bullet will hit between your eyes!"

Jeremy cupped Jason by the shoulders. "You are alright?"

"Yeah, I'm good!"

"Jeremy, you have to head inside, they need your help down there!" Ivy demanded.

“Copy that!” Jeremy grabbed Jason with one hand, the soldora in his other. They ran for the stairwell leading downstairs.

Ivy still pointed his gun towards Glenico. “I’m taking you to the realm of Santuario. Zarius is going to want in on your imprisonment.”

Glenico laughed. “Like hell, you will! And I mean literally... like hell. You honestly think I didn’t have a plan?”

“It doesn’t matter! This madness ends now!”

Glenico moved aside and quickly Ivy shot at toward Glenico but he missed him. Glenico stood up straight raising both arms. The floor began to blacken right underneath where he stood. Ivy ran towards Glenico but before he knew it, Glenico sacked in the black shadow below him.

Ivy stopped dead in his tracks. “Shit!”

Ivy pulled out his phone, readying the dial as it rung. “Clash it’s me, I need you here now!”

The dark hallway made it difficult for both Jason and Jeremy to see ahead of them, Jeremy’s soldora ignited, paving a blue spark of light ahead of them.

“This isn’t how I thought I’d spend my Monday!” He glared at Jeremy’s weapon amazed. He recalled Jeremy telling him on the way out of the hotel yesterday that it was a spellcaster’s weapon, used in terms of defense and aggression. “Where are we going to go?” Jason asked. “My father is here. We should go find him.”

Jeremy turned around. “Wait a second, do you hear that?”

“What, the gunshots?”

“No, there’s something else!” Turning towards the dark walkway in the opposite direction from where they came, Jeremy looked ahead cautiously, as he heard groans, followed suddenly by scratching metal, clanking pipes in the distance.

Hearing the same mystery that caught Jeremy’s alert, Jason looked about nervously, following Jeremy’s ignited blade where its blue energy upon the narrow stairway.

“Jason, stay behind me!” Jeremy readied his soldora.

Jason took a step back beside the wizard and paused. The stench of burnt rubber filled the air accompanied by ash and fire, captivating their nostrils like a slap against the face.

Glaring at the shadows ahead of him, Jason paused as a movement reflected against the outlines of the dark hall.

A bare foot slapping against the floor, and its leg making its way toward them. The leg opposite, hanging off the abdomen like if it was some sort of mannequin. Its clothes blacken and burnt to a crisp, lifted off the ground while the arms had swayed across the floor and closer to Jeremy.

Jason watched in horror. “Jeremy!”

As Jeremy stepped away, more shadows appeared behind the beast, burned blackened flesh wailing like dancers making their way toward them. Examining their ripped clothes and faces resembling that of a human, Jason concluded they were those that stood on the dance floor downstairs. “What happened to them?”

“Glenico, of course!”

The creatures groaned, dragging their inanimate limbs by the force of their one leg, their one arm, like that of a puppet.

As Jeremy were ready to step forward, Jason felt his grip realizing he were attempting to make way away from the approaching mutants, the creature lunged for the wizard. Jeremy pushed Jason against the wall and Jeremy crashed against the wall opposite. The mutant crashed against the floor, fueled with rage, the creature turned to face Jeremy with ferocious eyes.

Glaring at the creature, watching its arm rise, Jason caught sight of a sharp claw protruding from its forearm. Tempted to kick the creature, anything to get its attention away from Jeremy. “Jeremy, watch out!”

As the claw rose up it made its way toward the wall above Jeremy. Jeremy rose h soldora and swung the mutants arm off.

The mutant let out an aggravating shriek. Jeremy stepped forward and kicked the creature back, pushing it against the several creatures behind it. All of which roared in anger.

At the startling sound of the running footsteps behind him, coming from the stairway that led to the roof. Jason turned to find Ivy with a blade in hand, its energy cackled and ignited, letting its ray of scarlet reflect against the dark walls.

“We have to go!” Jeremy turned to face Jason and grabbed him by the arm. “Come!”

“Wait!” said Ivy “Take this!” He took a dagger out from his side and gave it to Jason.

Jeremy glared at him in disbelief. “He doesn’t know how to use a dagger!”

“Would you rather I gave him a gun?” Ivy glared at the creatures ahead of them, he rose his red soldora upward. “Glenico is gone! But he left his rejects behind! We must finish them off, before they attract the wrong attention. They’re not human anymore and never will be!”

“But they were human!” Jason started. “There has to be - -.”

“There isn’t!” Ivy darted toward the creatures and swung his scarlet ignited soldora against them, as they attempted to claw their way upon the warlock, injuring and destroying him when they could.”

Jason watched him in horror, and turned to the blade, glaring at it suspiciously.

“When you see the creatures come at you, do not hesitate!” Jeremy started. “You should attack them with all you might and mind your surroundings. They can overwhelm you in a heartbeat. Understood?”

“Yes!” Jason agreed.

“Alright, let’s go!” Jeremy let go of Jason’s hand and started forward. Jason followed him, playing with the weight of the dagger, whose hilt were heavy and thick.

“Oh, and by the way,” Ivy yelled. “Do bring my dagger back in one piece.”

Shadows cast outside every corner, Kirk could at least make out that every dancer, bartender and employees of the club were consumed at last by Glenico’s magic, outside from he, Javier and Trevor.

Kirk watched as Trevor rose his soldora and swung it upwards, a shard of white light hit the ceiling, its energy surfacing and consuming the light bulbs closest, igniting the large dance hall. Puddles of blood, discombobulated bones and ripped flesh smeared across the glass floors like clothes tossed carelessly upon the floor. The stench grew, making Kirk nearly hurl at the sight.

The mutants rose in a frenzy, roaring at the light that were cast above them. Javier and Trevor ducked as two then three creatures attempting to claw at them. “We have to finish them off!” Trevor yelled, raising soldora. “They’re not human anymore!”

Kirk trudged passed the creature closet, as it swung its clawed arm toward his chest. Kirk ducked, rose from the ground and darted toward the stools. Before the creature could make visual contact toward him, he jumped over the counter behind the bar.

Crashing against the bar fridge, a sharp pain struck his elbow. Kirk shook it off, minding nothing but the ability to mobilize himself in defense. Unhinging his gun, he inserted an extra mag. Reloading, and setting the gun to its natural offense state. He rose from the bar in time to see the same creature attempting to claw its way toward him. Raising his firearm, he fired at the creature, aiming for its head. The creature yelled in a rage until finally giving in to the piercing bullet that struck his forehead.

“What the hell do we do now?” Javier yelled, glaring at Trevor beside him, who protruded his blade into the creature before him. “We’re trapped in here with these things.”

Kirk glared all around where the light touched, in shock to see the creatures crawling everywhere they had turned, among the floor, limping across the walls and roof. There were no patches of the dance floor to be seen. “We can’t take them alone!” he said.

A burst of blue and red light cast the door off its hinges, blasting into wooden shards that hit two creatures closest to it, causing them to fall back and roaring anger, ready to attack.

Three men appeared out of the doorway. Looking out towards where Kirk, Javier and Trevor stood.

“Kirk!!” Jason yelled.

“What!! JASON, WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING HERE?!!” he said in a panic. Kirk caught eye contact with his son, his mind and body suddenly softening at the sight of the young familiar face, Kirk jumped over the bar, a creature, whose long-burned arms swung at him, he ducked and kicked the creature upward, kicking him again, watching it as it hit the floor. He darted for his son in a haste.

With their soldoras raised, Ivy and Jeremy caught sight of the creatures roaming across the dance floor, as well as above them crawling like bloated soaked red insects. Making its visual contact and locking on to the two spellcasters, whose illuminated blades, were held high, two creatures above them slammed itself upon the ground and darted toward the two spellcasters.

Trevor swung at the creature closest and Javier fired at any that tried to make its way toward them.

As he saw Kirk attempt to make his way toward him, Jason stepped away from Ivy and Jeremy and darted towards Kirk. With Ivy’s dagger in hand, he kept out of harm’s way as his arms locked on to his father’s shoulders.

Kirk caught hold of him, squeezing and holding on to his son for dear life. “Oh, my boy! MY BOY!” he cried, his voice muffling against Jason’s jean jacket. “I’m so sorry!”

Jason wrapped his arms around him, feeling his father patting him on the back, the same aggressive way that he'd usually had done, like the macho man that he was when he was happy to see him out of harm's way. "I missed you, pops!"

Javier followed them, as well as Trevor whose blade let out bursts of energy, firing at the creatures in every direction. "I hate to break up the reunion! But we're in a life and death situation!" said Trevor.

Although Jason were ready to depart from Kirk's arms, he felt his father tighten his grip upon his back, refusing at first until finally letting go. "Stay beside me!" said Kirk.

Jason agreed, he turned to Jeremy whose focus were entirely on the legion of mutants that gathered around he and Ivy.

As one creature had its tentacles reaching for his legs, Jeremy jumped aside, and onto the mutant causing it to fall. Jeremy impaled the soldora to the creature's chest. It let out a shriek of defeating rage, until it finally gave in and lay motionless.

. Jason didn't know how to use a sword or kill anyone, it wasn't in his character. But glaring about the hall as the three spellcasters, Jeremy, Ivy and the dark jean jacket suited warrior who can only guess was a spellcaster too, judging by his weapon of choice. They fought ferociously against the creatures.

Amazed, Jason couldn't take his eyes off the ferocious ways the three spellcasters fought. Their blades clanking and swinging in fixed directions against their abdominal creatures. Like trained samurai's they fought with intense focus, reading their opponents actions and devouring every space possible around the mutants as they attempted to attack.

Ivy, whose blade swung relentlessly, tossing limb from limb off the creature, much like Trevor with silver lined blade. And Jeremy, the humble wizard whose blade were wide and still. Although it did not illuminate like it had done before, it's might be just as determined as its wielder.

"Kirk, you should take Jason out of here!" Javier started. "This is your chance to try and escape."

Jason turned to him in surprise. "No, we can't!"

Kirk glared over at his son worriedly. "We have to. This place is too dangerous, we must clear out of harm's way! It's me Glenico wants, not you."

"But he needs - -! I mean... They need our help!" Jason froze, trying not to make his concern for Jeremy obvious.

"I will stay and fight with them!" Javier went on. "The numbers on the mutants are decreasing anyway!"

"All the more reason to stay!"

"Jason, we can't! We have to go!" Kirk pulled Jason closer, as if attempting to get him to understand the urgency with his posture, sustaining him to reality of his surroundings.

Caught by surprise by the sudden audible rambling behind him, Kirk turned to find the creature raising its dangling arm and reaching for him where he stood, Kirk pushed Jason away and stepped aside in time to see the creature slam its body against where he and his son first stood.

His mind set in a fit of anger, with dagger in hand, Jason swung it at the creature, it staggered back. As it turned and attempted to attack, he swung again. Jason was relentless and not

to his knowledge, a sudden rush of adrenaline pumped in his arms as he took a few more swings at the creature. But the creature was relentless as well and wouldn't give up its aggression.

Finally, Javier and Kirk shot at the creature careful not to hit Jason in the process. The creature gave up and fell to the ground, motionless.

Blinked into reality, recollecting what he had done, Jason didn't believe the anger and fear that took over him, granting a brief wave of strength in an aggressive need to defense. And perhaps a bit of knowledge he didn't know he had.

All in a moment, Jason turned around to see both Kirk and Javier look at him in amazement and surprise. "Jason are you good?"

"Yes, I'm fine!" he sighed.

Jason looked around for Jeremy who was over at the other side still fighting with the horde that went after Trevor and Ivy. Although wanting to run back to Jeremy into his arms, he did not at all feel confident in leaving the complex without him. He wanted desperately to get Jeremy's attention without getting him to lose against the hordes of creatures that surrounded them.

"Jason please, we have to go!" Kirk begged.

Longing for Jeremy to seek his attention, Jason slowly turned around, ready to leave without so much as an utter to call his name. His heart heavy, disappointed and powerless he started toward the exit of the large hall. The dreading was obvious in his footsteps, scared and fearing Jeremy's absence more than the mutated innocent lurking about the room.

Jason paused. A dizzying wave of emotion swept over the large hall, he turned to Kirk whose confused expression told him that he felt the same way. An audible rumble from above took hold. He glared up at the roof above the bar behind Javier.

“Javier, get away!” Kirk demanded

The roof caved in, its burst pushing Javier up off the floor and knocking him over the barstools opposite.

Kirk glared at his comrade and made his way toward him. Before he could step further, his attention was caught by the outlining of a shadow. A shadow of a man.

The spellcasters in the distance, Trevor, Ivy and Jeremy caught sight of the collapse of the roof. Caught by surprise, Ivy reckoned the mutants whose aggression did not at all seem to be interfered with the rubble at the bar. Trevor shifted his focus back to the mutant behind him whose actions seemed much angrier than the ones he already slayed.

Only Jeremy whose hand in slaying the mutants ceased, and his concern shifted. “Jason!” he yelled.

Jason flinched. Immediately he turned to find Jeremy standing several feet from him, ready to make his escape from the losing mutants, each of them dying by the force of the spellcasters Ivy and Trevor, their blades swinging and illuminating the room with its energy.

“YOU!!!”

Jason heard Kirk say, he turned to find Kirk raising his gun towards the figure. The same man in which Jason had seen before. Watching as he stepped out of the shadows, his familiar long-braided hair vining upon his dark forest colored trench coat, slipped back by a warrior’s head band.

“You son of a - -!” Kirk started, he paused before the sorcerer, whose blade ignited letting out an emerald energy upon its sharp edge.

At the emergence of him stepping out of the shadows, Amadeus rose his hand towards Kirk, a bolt of energy formed within his grasp. Within seconds, it entrenched kirk where he stood, he fell backward, groaning at the powerful impact and collapsed.

“No!!!” Jason yelled, he made his way toward his father.

“Jason, wait!!!” Jeremy urged, he darted toward the lot of them. “Stop!!!”

Trevor and Ivy, whose attention shifted from the mutants to the sorcerer standing before the bar,

“Amadeus!” Ivy yelled to his brother.

Within a second, Amadeus darted forward, grabbed hold of Jason on headlock with one arm. With his other, he rose his emerald colored soldora high, its spark of energy shot high at the ceiling. “Let go of me!” Jason demanded.

“Stop!!!” Jeremy yelled.

“Don’t do this, Amadeus! Come back!” Ivy started forward.

The energy struck in the middle of the roof, its cackling force spread like wildfire upon the roof, bricks and plaster fell in all directions. Trevor whispered an incantation, swinging his soldora upward, he ran toward Javier and Kirk, as the energy within his blade cackled. It sprung to life, he swung his blade down and the energy created a shield around him, as well as Kirk and Javier who were now under the dome like energy, repelling the falling debris.

Car3eless to the raining concrete brittles, Jeremy made a run toward Amadeus, in hopes to retrieve Jason out from the sorcerer's grasp.

"Jeremy, wait!" Ivy warned. "It's too dangerous! Take cover!"

"Jason! JASON!!!" The sound of the debris crumbling behind him merely startled him, he turned about to find Ivy, several feet away from him, cast a shield, tearing away the debris that fell upon him. As well as crushing the mutated beasts that wandered weakly around him as well as around the halls, its limbs tearing away. Crushed in all forms of its pressure and sharp edges.

With remarkable force, Jeremy swung his blade upward, whispering the incantation, the shield came abroad and took shape, the energy captivating his presence into a large oval orb.

The large space was dark once more, the lights that were cast by Trevor's magic dissipated.

As the last remains of the debris quieted, Jeremy rose, the shield dissolved and quickly he started for the bar area, in which Amadeus and Jason stood. "Jason!" he called. "JASON!!!" He looked about in a state of panic. But it was no use. Jason was gone.

Chapter 18

Jeremy looked about worriedly in the large hall. "No way!" he uttered. "NO way! He's still got to be here!"

He turned to see Ivy's shield dissolved and watched as he placed his soldora into his back brace and looking about the large hall worriedly. "Where did he go?"

"He didn't go anywhere! He still has to be here!"

Ivy sighed. He saw Trevor rising out of where the bar counter once was. He pointed his sword upward. Silver sparks rose up out of its tip and ignited the darkness around them. The shadows had disappeared once more. “Javier! Kirk!” Trevor called.

“Amadeus!” Ivy yelled.

Trevor limped over to him. “You think your brother is still here?”

“Beats me! What the hell was my brother doing here?”

Trevor nodded. “Perhaps if Kirk is still here than Glenico has to be as well!” Trevor turned around to see signs of any movement. “Kirk! Javier!” Surprised that the magic had indeed consumed the two humans, Trevor couldn’t understand how they managed to migrate away from where they were.

“Jason is gone! Amadeus had taken him!” said Jeremy in a fit of anger, making his way between the two spellcasters. “We have to get him back!”

Ivy sighed “What the hell did he want with him?”

“I don’t know but we have to find him now.”

“Dude calm down!” said Ivy.

“No, I can’t calm down. Jason is not here, Amadeus has him. I don’t know what your brother’s intentions are, Ivy. But I don’t want to risk another minute waiting to find out!”

“Kirk... Javier!” Trevor called out, stepping away and looking about anxiously.

“I’m leaving!”

“Wait, hold up!” said Ivy urgently. “Jeremy, you aren’t going by yourself. I should come with you.”

“No, I’m going alone.”

“No, you’re not!” said Kirk trudging out of the shadows, with Javier beside him. Trevor turned to them in relief.

Kirk’s voice was sharp. “That’s my son you’re talking about, and I’m not about to let you spellcasters assist him anymore! This will be my business alone now.”

“Your son is a spellcaster,” Ivy started. “That makes it our business whether you like it or not.”

“I wasn’t talking to you,” Kirk shot back. “My son is out there and if you were doing your job right, then maybe we wouldn’t be in this mess! My son would be here!”

Although quiet, Jeremy sighed, feeling a hint of guilt sweep over him, that maybe Kirk was right.

Ivy laughed “Ah, so you should be crowned father of the year, because suddenly you decide to be concerned for your son’s whereabouts and his actions! Not that you were ever concerned from the beginning.”

Kirk grew furious “What do you mean by my son’s actions?”

“You know what I’m talking about. You were there. You and your buddy over there.” said Ivy pointing towards Javier.

“You have seen how Jason fought with that dagger. He almost fought the same way we as spellcasters had fought for years. It’s in his blood and you know it.”

“That’s no concern of yours.” said Kirk angrily.

“Alright guys! let’s just cool It!” Trevor stood between Kirk and Ivy. “You guys forget that the captor is indeed Amadeus, and that Glenico was just another matter or at least it seems that way.”

“So, you think Glenico and Amadeus were working together?” asked Jeremy.

“It looks that way. The question is why?”

“Perhaps it had something to do with Adrian.” said Javier walking up to Kirk.

“Who is that?” asked Ivy.

“Adrian.” said Trevor. “He was a boy that came with us, but it wasn’t before he disappeared that I found out he was a spellcaster and that he was working with Glenico. He pushed passed me and I felt his speck cells vibrate against mine. He must have had a cloaking spell of some sort, so no one would sense he was around or even sense he was a spellcaster.”

Ivy nodded in wonder. “Adrian.”

“Well he’s obviously not here.” said Javier. “Neither is Glenico.”

“What does that have to do with - -?” Jeremy paused suddenly when a thought occurred to him. He remembered Glenico said something that struck him something that didn’t make sense until he heard the name Adrian come from Trevor’s mouth. “When Jason and I were on the roof, Glenico told me that his son was with Kirk.”

“Wait, you saw Glenico here?” Kirk asked. “Why didn’t you go after him?”

“I told Jeremy to sprint with Jason before Glenico would do something stupid.” Ivy cut in.
“But he teleported away before I could frisk that damn witch.”

“But still - -.”

“So, you said something about Glenico having a son?” Ivy interrupted, Before Kirk could say anything else that would tip him off.

“Glenico said that his son was with Kirk.” Jeremy said again.

Javier was confused. “Glenico has a son? That can’t be, we would’ve known.” He glared over at Kirk, who were just as stunned.

“Do you suppose his son is Adrian?” Trevor asked suddenly. “He was the only one that was with us and Kirk. But what would Amadeus want with Jason?”

Kirk grew annoyed “To trade me off! Amadeus was there with Glenico and another spellcaster named Kevin. Amadeus was questioning me to find out where Victor was. And were going to use Jason against me!”

“Victor, as in Jason’s father, Kirk means to say!” said Javier looking at the spellcasters who may not know what Kirk meant. But they knew.

“Amadeus was searching for Victor for days, he claimed,” Kirk went on. “I told him, I didn’t know where Victor was. He thought I was lying and were willing to use Jason against me!”

Trevor nodded in wonder. “So, say Amadeus and Glenico were doing a trade off with Kirk and Jason. Where does Adrian fit into all this?”

“I don’t know! Adrian specifically said that Glenico killed his father or at least he suspected. Why would Adrian lie and say that Glenico is his dad’s killer? Adrian told me he had two fathers. Glenico is one of them. As for the other, he’s dead. Adrian told me that.”

“Or maybe,” Ivy started aloud. “His father isn’t dead.”

Everyone looked at him in wonder.

“Adrian... I thought I knew that name somewhere.”

“How so?” Trevor asked.

“Zarius has a registry of spellcasters that were led astray. Those who wandered among the realms, in secret or were simply disowned... That’s how we were able to find Jeremy... Spellcasters who were or may have been born to parents of human and spellcaster ancestry. Or in other cases, perhaps had been born to spellcasters that performed a Geniture Ritual, or as some would call it, a Sacrifice Ritual.”

“What’s a Sacrifice Ritual?” Javier asked.

“To give birth.” said Trevor bluntly. “It’s a Birthing Ritual. When it came to same sex couples, for both male and female, they would perform a Sacrifice Ritual that allows two of the same sex to intertwine their spellcaster DNA and create a child.”

“No way! Like cloning?”

“Not necessarily. When performing the Geniture Ritual, there is a surrogate involved. It allows the parents to nullify the surrogate’s DNA and cells, so that the speck cells of the spellcaster parents can intertwine and create a child. The surrogate carries the child for nine months.”

“That’s insane!”

“You think so?” asked Ivy irritably. “Because it would appear, your best friend over there did the same thing with Victor, to give birth to his child.” Ivy looked over to Kirk who was suspiciously quiet.

“What the hell! I thought Jason was adopted?” Javier turned in outrage toward Kirk.

“I don’t understand how that’s any business of yours.” Kirk took several steps forward, eyes fixed and fueled with rage toward the scarlet suited warlock. “I don’t understand how you came to that conclusion.”

Ivy gave an irritable smirk. “Oh, it’s not my business, for sure. But I’ve lived a long life to know things that are clearly more than it seems. It’s plain to see how much Jason looks like you. And I’ve seen enough pictures of Victor and the other two doppelgangers to recall that Jason shares a rather freaky resemblance. Enough to know they are relatives.”

Trevor glared at Javier sensing the outrage and betrayal he felt towards Kirk’s secrecy. “Javier, you mind accompanying me to find any survivors, or better yet to see if the culprits are still in the building.”

Javier sighed. “Fine!” he agreed, giving one last glare toward his comrade who crossed his arms in shame, he followed Trevor through the rubble and debris covered walkway leading to the exterior of what was once a dance floor.

“Everyone knew that you were Victor’s partner.” Ivy continued. “So of course, one would know you and Victor are the biological fathers of Jason.”

“How do these Geniture Rituals work?” Jeremy asked, almost uninterested.

Ivy shifted his focus from Kirk to Jeremy, whose expression were complicating and impatient. “These rituals are tricky. They must work between two spellcasters or those of the supernatural, for instance. Kirk isn’t a spellcaster but the fact that he ages slowly like a spellcaster, due to the doppelganger’s magic, no doubt, begged the question as to what you were.”

“What’s your point?” Kirk asked.

“The ritual can’t work between a spellcaster and a human.” Ivy went on. “A human has no speck cells and would therefore be terminated. The speck cells would terminate the human cells and therefore kill the individual.”

“Trevor mentioned a surrogate,” Jeremy stated. “What would the surrogate gain from this? Doesn’t the surrogate have to be a spellcaster as well?”

“Yes. The Ritual will enhance the DNA of the parents in the surrogate. Therefore, nullifying the cells of the surrogate, so that her DNA would not interfere with the creation of the child and leave it to the parents alone.”

“Why would anyone want to do that in the first place?”

“Some people are not able to have a child and would therefore adopt. Others just want to have a baby of their own. However, The Geniture Ritual allows the two parents to mix their DNA into one being and would therefore need a surrogate to carry the child.

“This caught the attention of many same sex spellcasters who wanted a child, dating back to the nineteenth century.”

“What does any of this have to do with Adrian?” asked Kirk. “I think it’s quite plain to see that Jason were created from it. Victor and I agreed to it that much.”

“Well then answer me this, Kirk!” Ivy shot. “Since you’re so smart and stubborn, how is it that you haven’t come to know that you had another child?”

“I didn’t. And I don’t!”

“It appears you have! You see, for the Geniture Ritual to be performed, the two people with who’s DNA is shared will have to have intercourse. As if one of them were going to be pregnant anyway. Even if it is two men. You and Victor succeeded on that front, have you not?”

“Yes!”

“So where does Adrian fit in?” Jeremy asked impatiently.

“Well considering that Glenico is Adrian’s father. Kirk - -.”

“Adrian is not my son!” Kirk yelled, clenching his fists, ready to take part in a fight he knew he only had minimal chance of winning. Against a spellcaster, a warlock who were much older and wiser in combat.

“- - Had sex with Glenico!” Ivy finished.

Kirk stepped forward, standing before the warlock, face to face. “Despite my actions, I would have known if I had another child.”

“And yet you haven’t! As it is so bluntly stated, human!”

“I only have one son! I was there when Victor picked the surrogate. One who sacrificed much, and Victor were not about to let her suffer!”

“Go on, repel the truth, no matter how disgusting it makes you look. Fraternizing with a witch who rather see your supposed only son dead than alive!”

“I was there when the ritual was cast, when the DNA were transferring from him to the baby in the womb. Victor were getting sick while the surrogate wasn’t feeling an inch of pain.”

“And on that front, So Victor is the maternal father! He’s the one who would have to endure the sacrifice of his blood, his strength and risk dying while you fraternize and live the bachelorhood!”

“I was no bachelor! And it was his decision, regardless of my disapproval. Because I’m human, he didn’t want me to be the subject of maternal latching for the baby and risk death. But it nearly destroyed him. I was depressed, I hated seeing Victor that way!” A wave of guilt swept over Kirk, remnants of memories coming together to knock him off his sense of reality. “I want to find my son! Let’s just please, cut this crap and help me find him!”

“Oh, what happened to a spellcasters help being useless and - -.”

“Wait!” Kirk glared about cautiously, realizing he and Ivy were the only ones in the middle of what was once a lighted dance floor of the club. The spellcaster that stood no more than three feet from him were no longer there. “Where is your friend?”

Kirk watched as Ivy shifted, stepping away, looking toward the debris covered entrance, hints of the streetlights were visible through the crumbled bricks and concrete. The alerting screams of sirens, it’s blinking lights emerging into the cracks of the debris. “Damn it, Jeremy!”

Starting quickly toward the opposite sidewalk, Jeremy grabbed hold of his keys. Jangling in his fingers, he turned to find the façade of the Splash Dance Club in ruins, hoping that his comrades along with the two humans accompanied, would not notice his disappearance in time for him to escape.

Flushed with anxiety, he sped up the avenue, his heart raced at the thought of Jason hurt. Manipulated and tormented by the sorcerer Amadeus. He desperately wanted to find him at all costs.

At the corner of the sidewalk was his car. As he stepped beside the driver door, he heard footsteps in the distance.

“Jeremy!” yelled the familiar voice.

Jeremy turned in time to see the dark suited warlock appear out of the shadows beside the sidewalk opposite. “Clash! Amadeus, he has Jason, we have to go to him now!”

“Wait what!” Clash stopped before the troubled wizard, his expression surprised and blunt. “How? What happened? Where’s Ivy?”

“He’s inside with the others! We need to find Amadeus! Listen, remember what you told me about your mother, Amara? About her gathering apprentices who share the same astrological factors as her own?”

“I also said that she was a psychopath and that she actually believed in things that were not recorded in history. She was making things up, Jeremy. I told you this! There are such things as gods, angels, demons and such. But what she was looking for were Astrological intervention cast by divine belief. There was never any record of that!

“But what if there was? What if Amadeus had found it! You said it yourself, Amadeus is a sorcerer, an alchemist. He’s not stupid, he wouldn’t pursue something unless he had basis, a foundation supports his ways of alchemy.”

“That’s true but - -.” Clash paused, glaring about the way in which Jeremy came. The sound of sirens was audible in the distance. “What happened to that building there, is that the club - -.”

“Damn it, Clash! I’m worried about Jason, I feel like Amadeus is going to hurt him! We have to get to them before it’s too late.”

“How are we going to do that?”

“Ivy’s dagger!” Jeremy started. “It’s with Jason. If we can do a tracking spell we could be able to find him and pinpoint their location. Clash, you know the dagger better than anyone! You have to do the spell!”

“Sure, but where are the others - -?”

“Clash, there is no time! Please, let’s get in the car and start the spell! Once we find the location you can send Ivy a text and tell him to meet us there!”

Sensing the urgency, Clash agreed, he sat inside the passenger seat of the car. “You need to tell me what happened?”

Jeremy stepped inside, starting the engine, without so much as a thought to retrace back at the Dance Club, his next objective was certain, as well as prudent. As Clash closed the door afterward, Jeremy pressed the pedal and sped off.

His mind raced even as he heard Clash beside him, whispering the incantation of the tracking spell and visualizing Ivy's dagger. Although Jeremy's eyes set on the road, His consciousness was enraptured by the reveal of the events, leading to Jason's birth. "Beside him for two days." He said aloud. "He was beside me for nearly two days, in hours total. I never imagined that I'd question as to whether Jason, a sorcerer, a spellcaster, were a complete render of a human."

Clash glared at his comrade concerned, not sure as to whether the wizard was speaking aloud or to him directly. Shutting his eyes once more, he continued to state the incantation. Consumed with the dread of thoughts swirling like a funnel cloud with vision in mind, he saw through the hilt of the dagger, its blade revealing paddles of the abandoned canoe boats laid across the wooden floorboards, its color of rust and ash, scattered across the floor. A boathouse. He thought. Shifting his focus to the waters in which revealed a familiar skyline, buildings gathered together on top the river. The shape of condos and skyscrapers were familiar, those of which could be seen across from Manhattan, but inside New York. He looked about the peeling paint off the wooden walls of the Pier. One was etched XLIV. "Forty-Four," he said aloud. "Pier Forty-Four! East River."

Jeremy sighed. "Good! I just - -. Man, how can I be so stupid?" He sped the car quicker toward the eastern streets.

"Jeremy, if what you said is true, then Amadeus wouldn't harm Jason in no way. He needs him desperately, he wouldn't go through all this trouble just to kill him."

"It's not just that!" Jeremy said quickly, he sighed, flushed with anger, his eyes were fixed on the road. "You knew, didn't you?"

"Knew what?"

“Jason shares the same traits as both Kirk Malero and Victor Song. You knew for a fact that a young teenager, who could look like two grown men, would tell you something that seemed out of place. They’re both his father, and surprisingly no mother involved.”

Clash nodded. “If you’re referring to the Geniture Ritual, then yes. I knew. My brothers and I have lived a very long life, Eighty years tops. We see this on several occasions.”

“Why didn’t you tell me then? Why didn’t you tell me that Jason isn’t a human? That he’s just a genetic construct?”

“Jeremy, hold up! Who said that Jason isn’t a human? Who said that he’s a construct? You think he’s a freak of nature?”

“Well no, I don’t - -it’s just that - -.”

“It’s freaky!”

“Yes!”

“Jeremy, let me assure you. Geniture Rituals are just a form of alchemy that allows two parents of the same sex, man or women, to have a child based on their DNA. Therefore, nullifying the surrogate’s cells so that it wouldn’t look like her, instead of the parents. It’s a natural birth with an enhancement! No different from when humans enhance their birth, so they could have twins instead of one child, as told by science.

“The only difference is that it must come with the Elder Deities blessing, and their approval. Without it, comes with dire consequences.”

“What can happen?”

“A lot!” Clash shifted, taking out his cellular phone from his pocket, he texts his brother, eager to get him to meet up with them at their destination. He and Jeremy stared out the window, watching as the rain started to emerge.

Although the relief were minimal, the anxiety took over Jeremy, as well as the means to engage the sorcerer Amadeus. Jason was no threat to anyone, and that the fact it wasn't in his character, fueled Jeremy's reasons to find him.

As the time went on in a hurry to make it toward the East River, Jeremy recollected on all that Ivy had come to interpret within the club, more sociological thoughts on the Geniture Rituals as well as the possible reveal of Jason's possible half-brother, as well as Glenico's son, Adrian.

Told to Clash as specific as he can make it, Jeremy's disbelief on the matter didn't at all seem to contribute that what Ivy may have said is true. Was Jason really born from a Geniture Ritual? Do they even still exist? And why after twenty years, is the name as well as the personification of Adrian now just being learned? At least in Kirk's point of view.

Jeremy knew that Glenico were in his cruelty towards Kirk and Glenico were still close by. The troubling worry was that Glenico did not show up after his mutants met their finish. Jeremy wondered, however, what the witch's next move were taken place.

But his main concern was the sorcerer, hoping he weren't too late to save him from the other.

Jeremy watched as the rain drops started to appear on his windshield, recalling the sudden suspicion, as to why Amadeus wanted Jason in the first place. If it were true, he was running out of time.

Chapter 19

Above on the high ceilings, the lamps beaming were slim inside the geriatric space Jason stood in. Chained up against the wall, his arms ached above him. He studied the sky, outside the sturdy looking windows, some of which were plastered over with black paint, its stench filled the room, making his nostrils itch. It had to be before midnight he thought. Considering the patches of clouds were smoky lavender against the Azul sky.

Shaking in frustration, Jason could've sworn he felt his dagger vibrate somehow, hugged between his jeans and belt. He wondered why Amadeus had not bothered to unhook it from Jason's jeans. Surely, he must have seen it, especially with his shirt partially lifted by his braced arms. Was it that Jason were not rendered a threat and a dagger against Amadeus's seven-foot-long soldora weren't close to a fair fight.

Jason recalled the sorcerer's long blade, its terrifying stance, as held by the wielder. Ignited in emerald green, the way Amadeus held it were like that of an amazon swordsman, a vengeful villain and character from which Jason could not recall.

Jason jumped at the sudden of footsteps in the distance, he froze anticipating the sight of the long hair braided sorcerer.

Emerging from the wooden carved doorway, Amadeus, who were fit and dressed in a forest green trench coat, topped with the square shaped patterned armor on his shoulder pads, and appeared, arms crossed staring expressionless at Jason before him.

Jason caught himself anticipating being alone in the large geriatric space once more, letting his nostrils itch as the smell of seawater came crashing against his four senses. It seemed like heaven compared to the eighty something year old sorcerer, whose intentions looked unclear, but appeared sinister nonetheless. Despite his good looks and sharp cheekbones, it was reassurance to the old tale as told to Jason many times over when he could recall, that the beautiful ones can't always be trusted.

"How are you feeling?" he stated, his tone hoarse and dark, giving away his boyishly good looks to know that his tone of voice made him seem older. "You don't appear very threatened."

But I am threatened. Jason wanted to say, but something told him, begging was not going to solve any difficulties this day. He'd best let the sorcerer reveal his intentions.

"Are you scared?" Amadeus took a step further.

Jason sighing as to relax at the sight of him, came as shaky breaths, although intended, it offered no comfort.

"Don't be. I just want a few words with you is all. You know, Jason, you and I are very much alike. The only difference is, is that you're untrained, unawaken. You're also a bit tied up and I'm not... Pun intended, of course!"

Jason nodded. "Yeah, about that, do you think you could loosen these braces up a bit? My arms are aching."

"Why don't I just take them off." Amadeus waved his hand above Jason's head and the metal braces above Jason's head fell off and hit the floor.

Caught by surprise at Amadeus's will, Jason rubbed his wrists where the manacles were, throbbing, yet relieved to have them off as he massaged them. "What - -."

"And don't bother using my brother's dagger to attack me, you won't last two seconds."

Although tempted to make the effort, Jason agreed. The surprise as to whether Amadeus had known about Ivy's dagger between the side of his belt were minimal. Sweat fell from inside his arms and onto his jean jacket. He was tempted to take it off, but his shaky muscles, and his fear repelled the idea for any quick movement. "What do you want?"

"I remember when I first heard about you," Amadeus went on. "Victor told me some things that seemed most promising. About you, a child with measurable talent, and a power you could come to possess. Given you were born in the second month of the year."

It was no surprise to Jason that Amadeus knew Victor Song, but what worried him was where Amadeus were going with his words, almost as if he and Victor Song were once close. A bond like Kirk and Victor, he started to suspect. "Could this have something to do with - -?"

"Not that way." Amadeus said quickly. "Victor Song and I were great friends. He took me under his wing and showed me things fathomable to the sorcerer's eye. I'd do anything for that man. He was an extraordinary gentleman."

"Your brother, Clash, told me about your pursuit of apprenticeship, or followers to join your cause for power. Like your mother had."

"Yes." Amadeus nodded. "It was true."

"Was? Is it still not the case? Is that not why you were friends with Victor Song?"

“No, it wasn’t. Despite what you might have heard, my mother, Amara, was a reasonable woman. It was because of her that I encountered Victor Song.”

“What are you saying? That my Victor was just as evil as your mother?”

“My mother is not evil. She believed in things, she came from a lost time, and lived into a generation afterward when no one were willing to listen, no one were willing to understand their histories. She was an older woman, she witnessed many things and when she tried to instill the teachings of younger sorcerers, they turned on her. Victor Song and his two doppelgangers were the only ones who believed in her. Because they were from a time in which my mother was.”

“And exactly what is it your mother was trying to teach? Astrological domination?”

Amadeus gave Jason a disgruntled look.

“I was told that you were seeking followers, I’m guessing by those that appear to be the same astrological moon as you.”

“Clash does not know much!” Amadeus said calmly, although the confidence and need to rectify false knowledge were audible in his tone of voice. “Yes, I am an alchemist who specializes in the foundations of Astrology. I followed in my mother’s footsteps, and I too, am seeking an apprentice.

“I thought I could find that with my brother Clash, whose heart were pure like our mother. And yet I still do. He’s not Ivy, he’s not reckless or careless. Clash picks up on what’s right and what’s wrong. Despite us living with a tyrant, a warlock emperor, whose greed nearly put all the realms in peril.

“Clash has the heart of a human. Although he is a warlock and not a son of the second month like I, he does appear to share traits of those from my mother’s side.”

“I’d like to agree with you,” Jason started. “I’ve witnessed Clash as a person. And the arrogance of Ivy. I only known them a short while. But this still doesn’t answer the question as to why I’m here. If you’re trying to seek me as an apprentice, you’re wasting your time. I’m not a trained sorcerer. And my speck cells aren’t even awakened.”

“That’s precisely why I brought you here,” Amadeus walked gracefully before the window, the sky whose clouds let out a quick streak of light. Jason could smell the rain in the distance. “Being with that wizard has no doubt, gotten your cells in a frenzy, have they not?”

“Jeremy.” Jason remembered what had happened earlier in the men’s bathroom of his college campus. All around him was mist and rain that appeared before. And Jeremy had told Jason that it was because his cells were sensing another spellcaster and that spellcaster was Jeremy. “You’re going to awaken my powers, aren’t you?”

Amadeus turned away from the window and faced Jason, who were walking toward him in wonder.

“You can’t! You can’t do that!”

“Look out that window,” Amadeus demanded. “Tell me, what do you see?”

“I see rain. Why does it matter?”

“That is what I want you to harbor at this very moment.”

“You kidnapped me to awaken my speck cells. I told you I don’t want this.”

“This is the will of Victor Song. He wanted you to join me.”

“You’re lying!”

“You don’t know anything about your father, do you? Or his two doppelgangers.”

“Victor was a good man,” Jason said loosely, speaking highly of a man with whom he never met. But could only rely on the word of others who have encountered him and spoke of him highly. “He would never side with someone as evil as you?”

“You think me evil?”

“You’re gathering followers and an apprentice, those who are of the same zodiac moon as you. To take over the world, aren’t you?”

“I’m not destroying or taking over realms. I’m saving it!” Raising his arm upward, towards the high wooden roof boards above, his hand gestured as if he were holding a heart in his hand. Within a second, a cackle of energy formed within his grasp,

Jason shook at the sudden sight, watching as emerald energy struck at the wooden boards and shattered the ceiling glass above. He turned and stepped away, shielding himself, arms covering his head as he knelt. The rain of shattering glass fell upon the floor, its screeching clanked against the wooden floorboards.

“You should also learn to shield yourself from oncoming objects flying at you.” said Amadeus. “It will prove most useful in your battles.”

At the chill of the winds above, and the rain quickly falling onto the floor from the roof, Jason rose his head as the rubble quieted, replaced by the falling rain onto the dusty floorboards.

“I really don’t see the point in all this. They’re must be plenty of Aquarian sorcerers throughout the city. Why decide to pick me?”

“Jason, don’t you get it?”

Jason crossed his arms. “No, actually I don’t.”

“It doesn’t only have something to do with your zodiac, but it also has to do with your blood.”

“What are you talking about?”

“Your father was one of the most powerful sorcerers the world has ever known and so were his doppelgangers. You are the closest thing to any of them that would possess the will of magic the way they have. Believe me, you’re a lot more valuable than just a simple Aquarian.”

“I refuse to take part in this.”

Amadeus’s face was serious. “Well I hate to break it to you, but you really don’t have a choice.” As Amadeus rose his arm, Jason felt a sudden jolt of push within his belt buckle,

Forcefully about to lose his balance, Jason felt the dagger pulled from out, in midair and made it into the sorcerer’s grasp. “Well, I see a sorcerer’s telepathy is good for something.” Jason said nervously, he caught himself stepping back at the posture in which Amadeus stood, the dagger sharp and shiny in his hand.

“You know this dagger,” Amadeus started. “Used to aid my brother in all his battles and it has never failed Ivy, never for even a second. I used to watch him fight and he was always

ruthless...Perhaps it's because of the guidance of this dagger. This dagger may hold a great deal of fury itself."

"Why are you telling me this?"

Amadeus pointed the dagger towards Jason then flipped it with the handle now pointing towards him, raising and leveling it to Jason's chest. "Do you think you can telepathically take this dagger from my hand?"

Silent, Jason glared at the dagger in Amadeus's grasp. Impossible, he thought. He couldn't even clap to turn a light switch off, let alone turn it on. "No."

"This dagger can take a life. But it can also give one as well. Your powers are not awakened. Today, I'd like to change that."

Jason shook his head. "I don't want anything to do with war, or magic. I'm not going to do this."

Amadeus smiled. "I'm afraid that's how it's going to be." Raising his hand toward Jason, he froze at the sudden pull of weight beneath his arms.

"What the - -." Panicked, Jason felt a force beneath his arms raise him upward, his body no longer his own as he floated off the floor, by the telekinetic pull of Amadeus's hand. Jason had floated and moved toward the rain that was falling out of the roof. "What are you doing? STOP!!!!!"

As Jason attempted to move his limbs, getting a grip off the sorcerer's grasp. He felt himself motion toward the pouring rain into the open ceiling. The cold rain drops soaking him swiftly like that of a shower head. "Let go of me!"

“In order for a sorcerer to be awakened, the sorcerer must first consider the face of the element that brought your life,” said Amadeus. “An element that shall empower and weaken any sorcerer, and therefore a spellcaster. You sat in the shadows for way too long. This is not the will of Victor Song. This is the treachery of Kirk Malero, shunning you from the speck cells that will no doubt take over.”

“STOP!” The rain showers soaking Jason’s clothes, were blistering cold. He moved his head trying to steer away from the falling rain upon his face. “Please, STOP!!”

Jason watched as Amadeus shut his eyes, within a moment he whispered an incantation, in a language Jason did not recognize. As the chant got louder, emerald energy within the sorcerer’s grasp formed, cackling with a sight like electricity in his palm, and struck at Jason’s chest.

Yelling in agony, the energy seized and captivated Jason’s body, burning his clothes as well as his flesh. “Stop!!...Please!!!” his voice muffled through the cackling force that struck like lightning. His screams barely audible, as his body were ruptured and engulfed in the burst green flames. The emerald energy creating a swirl of circular shield. “HELP!!!!”

While Amadeus ignored him, the chant in which he expressed, channeled the flames, letting the fire take a life of its own. Its energy illuminating the large dark wooden space, changing from an emerald green, to a sky lit blue. As Amadeus opened his eyes, he watched as the fire burned and ripped off strips of Jason’s clothes. Amadeus lowered his arms, whilst the burning body stood afloat, trapped in the engulfing blue flames above.

Jason’s struggle ceased. His body gave up as the blue fire swirled around him, like that of a funnel cloud. Turning from a twister of flames to a tornado of waves, the energy quieted, calming itself around Jason’s motionless body. The swirling tornado of water wrapped across his body,

healing the burning scars upon his flesh that were visible through his torn clothes. And at last, his body dove and crashed against the floorboards, nearly breaking through the wooden façade.

As Amadeus strutted closer before the drenched sorcerer, who lay motionless against the pouring rain. Amadeus smirked in satisfaction, catching himself praying for the sorcerer's safe years from here on out.

Silence took hold of the large wooden space, only to be interrupted by the screeching tires in the distance.

Chapter 20

Although the cops surrounded the façade of the collapsed building, Kirk watched as Ivy insured his magic and influence, bringing about another story as to how the incident came about. An accident, I'm sure, Kirk thought. Knowing full well that Ivy would disclose anything that wouldn't link him to spellcasters or even Kirk and Javier for that matter.

Sighing in anger, the rain in which fell did not make it any easier but increased the thought of blame and stupidity. The idea of trying to fight harder into getting Jason out of there should have been enforced with greater importance. But a part of him didn't at all want to leave the premises, for the simple fact that Glenico may still be around. If he were to leave with his Jason, Glenico would only come back to attack Kirk and his son Jason.

"My son!" Kirk said aloud, although his intent was to keep to himself, he was most grateful that Trevor and Javier, didn't appear to hear him out loud. They spoke as they did. Javier asking

questions as to how they can insure the cover up of spellcaster interference upon Earth. Or here at the club for that matter.

“My son!” Kirk said quietly. The idea of Adrian, a son of a witch, would make him a witch descendent no doubt, could also be Kirk’s own offspring. As to how Glenico came about performing the Geniture Ritual is something that he could never understand.

“They found Jason!” said Ivy suddenly.

Kirk rose his head to glare at the warlock approaching them. Ivy placing his phone back into his pocket, he turning to Trevor who stood beside Kirk and Javier. “Jeremy and Clash are on their way to the East River Piers.”

“Let’s go then. I’m driving.” said Kirk.

“No, I’ll drive.” Trevor said quickly. “Even if Glenico is still around, I can’t risk you getting into a fight with him.”

“Can you blame me? Glenico kept a secret of having a son with me all these years. My quarrel exceeds even greater if you can understand.”

“Hold up, stop!” Ivy demanded. “We don’t have time for this! I texted Clash back telling him we’re on our way! We need to move and cut talk for someone writes a unique dialogue.”

Trevor let out a light chuckle. “Right.”

“Let’s go!” Ivy started over to the motorcycle that stood beside the sidewalk of the club entrance.

Kirk watched Ivy as he embarked on the bike, its wheels were sleek black, and its outer style were that of a glossy candy red, a shade lighter than Ivy's dusty scarlet trench coat. Amazed by the style of the cycle, its contents were not like anything he'd seen on Earth. But were in other realms, in which Kirk visited. Even during the times when Victor were still by his side.

The engine revved on Ivy's motorcycle, quickly Ivy sped his car onto the road.

Kirk, Trevor and Javier started forward toward the car in which they parked not too far from the club, Trevor quickly went into the driver and started the engine. Kirk sat in the seat opposite him, while Javier sat in the back.

"Isn't Ivy going to wait for us?" Javier asked. "We should have gone together in case something came up!"

"I agree," said Trevor. "But we're driving, surely there shouldn't be any trouble on the way there."

Kirk nodded. "I wouldn't be too sure about that!"

Not minding Kirk, Trevor pulled the lever into gear, driving out of the parking line he sped up the avenue, not minding the red lights, the cars behind him, but empty streets that were begging to be crossed.

Although he knew Clash was used to reckless driving, Jeremy's lack of consideration wasn't the problem. Without thought or concern to the surroundings, he sped the car up the side walk, crashing through the rusted gates and into the parking lot, leading to the large abandoned pier down the wooden boardwalk.

Common sense and reason led Jeremy to see through the rain covered windshield, driving faster towards the pier buildings that were connected along the East River.

“You know I’d like to think that Amadeus knows we’re on to him,” said Clash. “The only question will they be there when we arrive.”

“Please don’t say that. Don’t jinx it. We can’t think it’s possible.”

“Jeremy, my brother is smart. I’m only warning you. We can’t go there with our guard down.”

“Trust me, I won’t!” Jeremy crashed made a sharp turn onto the wooden boardwalk, within several feet he crashed through the shutters of the blue painted pier building, and made a stop, before the double doors.

Realizing he were in a garage, Jeremy shut off the engine. “This is it! Let’s go!”

“Remember what I said,” Clash stepped out of the car after him, cautiously looking about his surroundings of the mildew covered garage, its grease contents, and vines spill across the walls of the black covered ceiling. “Keep your guard up!”

As Trevor drove for the East of Fourteenth Street, Kirk glared out the window of Javier’s car, Trevor insisted that they’d keep the windows closed in case they caught the wrong attention. And kirk had no choice but to agree. “Hold on, Jason! I’m coming for you!”

“We’re almost at the FDR Drive!” Trevor stated. “We should be there soon!”

Kirk felt the grip of his handgun poking out of his shoe. With countless encounters and experience into using a gun, as well as expertise in martial arts, he knew full well that a mistake would not ensue. Even if he so much as jumped when hearing a noise, he knew how to approach a threat without incident. His only hope was that Javier would be the same, considering his lack of fighting and more prone use in daggers and firearms.

Javier had indeed learned much of martial arts, but as a human with no magical abilities, no means of spellcaster ancestry in his heritage, left Kirk to wonder as to whether he would ever survive against the sorcerer Amadeus. A sorcerer who had plenty decades on them, and experience that exceeded far greater than any human on earth, especially Javier.

Kirk turned to find Javier massaging his shoulder, the spot where Adrian had impaled a dagger. “What’s up, man?”

Javier shrugged. “Huh -, nothing I’m good!”

“Shit!” Trevor said suddenly, glaring at the rearview mirror. “Guys, I think we have company.”

Quickly Kirk turned facing the window at the back of the vehicle. Javier did the same, adjusting himself to see the back. The rain pouring onto the back window made it difficult for either of them to see. Kirk wondered Trevor had even come to the realization, if Trevor himself couldn’t see beyond the window.

“Trevor, how do you know something is following us?” said Javier. “I can’t see a thing.”

“The tension,” Trevor replied still looking through the rearview mirror. “Keep an eye out, it’s strong. There is a great deal of magic coming this way!”

Kirk had his handgun at his side now. “Well we’re not going to take any chances on that part. Try to drive quicker!”

“Way ahead of you!” Trevor sped the car, passing and steering away from the cars in front of him.

With the handgun in hand, Kirk held tight to the seat to keep his balance, at the aggressive motion of Trevor’s driving. Kirk took a closer look through the window, nothing but shadows and headlights of cars behind the car in which he was in. He paused. “What the - -.”

The shadows appearing from behind the cars behind them made its way quicker toward them, like a cloud of smoke, it dispersed into the appearance of a large rusty truck.

“It’s him!” Kirk watched as the truck sped quicker toward them, its large black frontage, let out a roar, Kirk could’ve have sworn he saw metal like tentacles coiling upon the top of the front windows.

“What the hell is that?” Javier adjusted himself, taking a handgun from his belt buckle. “Trevor, we have to open the windows.”

“Like hell we do, stay put!”

“Trevor, its speeding to us!” Kirk did not bother to turn. The disturbing shadows that surrounded the dark truck, let out a roar. Clanking against the cars ahead of it, causing it to flip over and slam onto the pavement.

“Damn it!” Javier panicked. “Trevor, open the damn window now! We got to do something to drive it away! Slow it down! Shoot the wheels! Anything!”

“That’s not going to stop them!” Trevor stated.

“Adrian.” said Kirk. “That’s him driving the truck.” Making out the outline of the sturdy looking windows of the truck. Kirk rose his gun ready to shoot at the window if he had to.

Clearing the nearest car out of the way, now directly behind Javier’s Dodge Charger, it sped and slammed against the car., causing Kirk to nearly fall off the seat.

At the sudden force of impact, Trevor rose his right hand off the steering wheel, whispering an incantation, he summoned his soldora.

“Funny! I think your son wants to kill you!” Javier shot, his sarcasm sharp at Kirk beside him.

Pushing his way through the double doors, not minding the green mildew of the rain inside. Jeremy looked about the large space, the stench of creek and wet wood filled the air. Clash beside him, he too, were in a fit of security to guard himself from any dangers. He summoned his soldora in his grasp, and kept it steady beside him

“Jason!” Jeremy yelled, several feet from where he entered, he saw the light from the roof opening shine upon a body imbedded in the rubble. He ran to where Jason had laid. Clash followed him, his blade in hand, he was careful as ran upon the wooden floorboards, which were weak and wet from the rain.

Making it before Jason’s motionless body, Jeremy glared in panic at the clothes ripped and burned. He kneeled beside Jason, pressing two fingers to his neck. He sighed in relief. “I got a pulse, he’s alive!”

“Of course, he is!” Clash agreed. “The question is what happened to him.”

“Jason, Jason, come on, wake up!” Jeremy felt Jason’s chest, steady breathing but were unresponsive to Jeremy’s calling.

“Jeremy!” Clash called casually, trying to signal him.

Jeremy turned to face his comrade whose eyes were fixed on the spellcaster several feet from them.

In a fit of anger, Jeremy rose up off the floor, glaring at Amadeus with fixed eyes. “What did you do?”

Amadeus stood motionless, showing no signs of retreat but a smirk.

Jeremy rose his arm, summoning his soldora in his grasp. He darted toward the sorcerer. “You’re dead!”

“Wait, no!” Clash warned. “NO!!!”

Jeremy’s soldora ignited, burning and letting out a blue illuminated energy. As Jeremy rose his soldora ready to strike at the sorcerer. Amadeus swiftly rose his arm, a bolt of emerald energy shot from his fingertips, entrapping Jeremy where he stood. Lifted from off the ground, by the telekinetic grab of Amadeus’s magic, Jeremy were motioned toward where Jason lay and crashed against the floorboards beside him with a tremendous force,

Jeremy groaned, the energy weakened his muscles as he attempted to rise off the floor. He leaned against the wooden, trying to revolt his energy.

“Enough!” Clash yelled.

“I think not, bro!” Amadeus rose his arm, a bolt of emerald energy, struck toward Clash who rose his soldora upward in defense.

“What the hell have you done?” Clash held his soldora high before himself, Amadeus’s energy tackling against his brother’s blade.

The sorcerer Amadeus pulled his arm away, the energy disintegrating into his fingertips. “The real question is, why have you come? Have you finally decided to join my ranks, brother?”

“Still haven’t changed I see.”

“Still following Zarius around like a little puppet, are you?”

“You were once on our side, Amadeus. Before you decided to go solo.”

“Don’t regain me with my obscenities. There are no regrets here.” He shook his arm, as a bolt of energy, emerald and cackled in length. He rose the soldora upward pointing it towards his brother.

“You’re wrong, and they’re lying on the floor!” Clash rose his soldora, ready to attack the sorcerer. “Shall we take this in another realm?”

“Perhaps!” As Amadeus darted toward his brother, Clash rose his blade in defense, Amadeus jumped in midair with his soldora above him. As Amadeus were about to set on the ground, Clash swung his blade upward in defense. Amadeus landed on the ground. Amadeus clanked his blade against Clash as he too, clanked his soldora against his.

Jeremy rose up half way, receiving his energy back, he glared at his comrade as he attempted to injure and disarm the sorcerer. He glared over at Jason beside him, unconscious and still.

“Javier, I hate to do this to your car!” Without hesitation, Kirk shot at the window, its shards falling raining on to the trunk as well as the back seat. Javier jumped at the sharp particles making toward his side.

“What the hell are you doing?” Trevor barked.

Kirk fired, aiming at the wheels of the large truck as it sped, making its way beside the car. Kirk shifted to the passenger side of where Javier kneeled onto the leather seat. He too, glared at the window, firing at the passenger side glass in front of him, its particles shriveling onto the street. “You son of a - -.” Javier held his breath, tempted to glare at Kirk but minimally refused at the possible insult.

“Aim at the wheels!” Kirk demanded.

The truck reared beside the car, letting its dark rusted cargo bed drive parallel to take over is visibility, and smash anything in its way. Like a peel of a sticker, the large metal façade, lifted upwards to reveal, the metal like tentacles. All which coil upon the witch glaring sinisterly at the car.

“PULL OVER!!!” Glenico yelled, he rose his hand and energy cackled in his grip, outlining the shape of a large machete.

With relentless anger, Kirk rose his gun toward the witch. “Shoot him!”

Javier and Kirk fired, their shards of piercing metal, striking at the witch who rose his machete in defense.

With speed and precision Glenico rose it against and wacked the bullets away like a fly to a fly swapper. Within a second his blade ignited, Kirk watched Glenico's stance, recognizing his stature for performing a spell. The bullets in which they used to fire at Glenico, rose and struck the car.

"Shit!!" Kirk shifted beside the passenger door, as the roar of bullets struck the roof of the car.

Although he felt it were no use, Trevor drove faster to dodge the truck. He rose his soldora upward, its energy cackled, and he swung at the roof of the car, causing to peel off like an onion.

Javier and Kirk ducked. What are you doing?" Javier yelled.

The roof peeled like an onion and flew off onto the street behind them. Trevor swung his soldora toward the truck, energy cackled and sprung forth from the blade onto the truck. Like shards of fire, it struck at the façade. Without looking back, Trevor swung the blade to the cargo bed in which Glenico stood. The witch stepped away and rose his machete in defense.

"YOU FOOL!!!" Glenico yelled. Raising his arm towards the car opposite, metallic tentacles burst out of Glenico's raised arm and struck the passenger door of Javier's car, coiling onto the door and pulling it off its hinges.

Kirk fired. Although persistent, the tentacles pulled the car closer to the truck.

Trevor struggled to drive away. “Fire at the tentacles!”

“What happened to putting aside our weaponry? Javier fired at the consistent tentacles all of which coiled to the bottom of the car.

Snapping apart, the tentacles failed, Glenico let go of the car. “You fool!! Surrender now! Stop the damn vehicle!!”

“Go to hell!!” Kirk yelled.

“Been there! Done that! Fall back or I’ll have Amadeus murder your child in cold blood!!”

“He’s lying!! Javier, take the wheel!!” Trevor stepped over to the passenger seat beside Javier, who jumped over in time, keeping his balance against the blowing winds of the fast car to sit where Trevor was. Javier quickly took hold of the steering wheel, careful not to drive the damaged car into the side walk.

Glenico rose his blade, cackling energy formed, and he swung toward the car.

“Get down!!!” Trevor yelled, pushing Kirk behind him, he rose his blade which ignited and disintegrated the shard of energy coming from Glenico’s machete.

“You can’t win, idiot!” Glenico yelled. “Adrian, ram the car!”

The truck shifted and pulled its way closer. Glenico rose his blade, ready to attack Trevor whose distance were less then several feet away.

Trevor rose his blade upward and swung at the witch, who then landed on the trunk of the car. The wind blowing through Glenico’s sweaty brown hair, made it difficult to keep his eyes

open. Relying only on his adrenaline to clear the way and guide him against any other possible attack against Trevor.

As the truck clanked against the car, Javier nearly lost his way, almost driving into the sidewalk. Quickly he drove several feet outward. The cars in front of him sped, clearing away from the horror behind them.

“Kirk move aside!!” Trevor demanded.

“Hell no! I intend to finish Glenico once and for all!”

“Damn it, Kirk! Move!”

Glenico swung at Trevor once more against his soldora, whose energy formed to destroy Glenico’s rusty machete.

“The Cobra Entity has interfered with my business for the last time!” Glenico took the large machete and with an incredible force he raised it and swung downward onto Trevor’s soldora.

“You won’t go anywhere near my son!!” Kirk yelled. Behind Trevor, kneeling onto the side of the seat, Kirk rose upward, pushing past Trevor and side kicked Glenico at the leg. As the witch lost balance of the blade, it slipped from Trevor’s soldora and plunged into the flesh of Kirk’s rising chest.

“No!!” Javier yelled, watching the three from the rearview mirror.

Stunned, Glenico glared at his blade protruding into his Kirk’s chest. “Look what you’ve -
-.”

Trevor punched Glenico in the face, and with intense fury, power kicked Glenico off the car, and sent him flying onto the cargo bed of the truck behind him

“Damn it!” Javier choked, anxious to glare and assist his dying comrade.

Trying to breathe, Kirk felt his chest tighten where the blade struck.

“Hold on!” Trevor demanded. “You’re going to be alright!!” Trevor pulled the blade quickly from out his chest, Kirk’s eyes rose in instant.

“Finish him, damn it!” Kirk groaned.

“Shut up, Kirk! Don’t say anything. I’ll heal you!” Trevor rose his blade to cast a healing spell.

“Give him to me!!!!” Glenico yelled from the truck, tentacles appeared from out his arm, he rose it up and they shot out into the car. As the tentacles were about to reach for Kirk, a projectile of violet energy, let out an electric current and fried the tentacles off the car.

Trevor dodged and shielded his eyes at the sudden impact. “What the hell was that?”

Shocked at the sudden sight, Glenico caught sight of a dark shadow, a black car, coming fast toward the lot of them. Its violent energy cackling upon the exterior of the reflective surfaces of the car.

Kirk caught sight of the energy forming in its wake. “Victor.” he uttered.

Whispering an incantation, A dark aura appeared between Glenico’s hands and it was pointing a beam toward Javier’s car.

“Damn it! He’s going to try and portal us away out of here.” Said Trevor.

“He’s scared of whomever is inside that car!” Javier yelled. “Damn it! Do the healing spell, get Kirk to heal!”

“I can’t!” Trevor glared at Glenico with ferocious anger. “It’s too late!” He lifted his soldora, ready to summon a counter attack against the witch, to silence him once and for all.

Teary eyed and paralyzed, Kirk’s mind drifted as he lay against the seat, sparks of the violet energy rendered him in a trance. Whilst he glared up at the motioning sky, the speeding winds, rushed the tears from out his eyes. An accolade of his stubborn actions reflected, and he couldn’t help allowing his emotions to take hold, as his body trembled in agony.

Speeding fast, the black car did a surface jump, rising between the truck and Javier’s car. Glenico’s eyes opened and the beam shot out aiming at the damaged car but ricocheted against the black car in which soared between them. As Trevor ducked, the dark energy casted from Glenico’s magic swallowed up the truck and silencing everything around them. Leaving Glenico and Adrian to fend off into the shadows leaving nothing in their departure.

Trevor rose his head to find that the truck in which were once there, had left no remnants of its existence. “Javier...Javier, quickly stop the car!” Trevor glared down at Kirk beside him, laid there in agony.

Javier pulled over before sidewalk, the car screeched to a complete stop

In pain, Kirk could not hold out much longer. The only thing keeping Kirk from closing his eyes was the hope of seeing his son once more. And that Victor, his only love would appear from out the black car and heal him in time. The car was gone.

Javier jumped over the seat, ripped a patch of his shirt and held it against kirks chest. “Kirk, just hold tight! You’re going to be fine!”

Kirk attempted to utter a word but failed, his eyes glaring at Javier and back at the sky, choking on his own blood.

Javier pressed the patch of cloth onto Kirk’s chest. “Don’t worry! Trevor can - -. He can - -.” He glared over at Trevor who were expressionless at the sudden sight, he jumped over the car and landed on the street, he sighed in a fit of rage and sympathy. His hands leaning against the passenger door.

“Damn it, Trevor! Help him!”

The sound of rumbling became audible from the area in which they were headed, Ivy’s motorcycle pulled up in front of the damaged car. “What the hell happened?” he said in a panic. “I thought you guys were behind me?” He gestured toward his phone but paused at the sudden sight.

“Ivy come here! Kirk is hurt!” said Javier quickly. “We have to heal him now!”

Trevor glared at Ivy whose expression were unreadable “We’re too late.”

Ivy caught the glance, sighing in a fit of rage.

“Why are you doing this?” Clash asked angrily. “What are you accomplishing with Victor’s son?”

Amadeus chuckled. “You already know what I want, what I crave, that puny little Aquarian sorcerer on the eve of its destiny. And you, you are to join us, brother!”

“Not going to happen,” Clash shot back. “The boy is not your property. He wishes to remain nullified to all things magic, and so he shall.”

“It’s too late for that.”

Clash glared at his brother in disbelief. “You ...didn’t.”

Shocked at Amadeus’s words, Jeremy looked over at Jason who was still unconscious. Saddened by the sight of him, he couldn’t believe his eyes. Jason had been burned alive and healed. His skin tone, his hair, somehow it looked more vibrant and rather still as a golden statue. Amadeus was right, he wasn’t bluffing. Jason is an awakened sorcerer.

“It is not within your power to determine someone else’s will.” Clash yelled. “Who told you of Jason’s persona? The Starlighter, Vincent Song?”

“Starlighter? ... Still believing everything Zarius tells you, I see.”

Anger and impatience, fueled Clash’s need to strike his brother. “What the hell are you talking about?”

“Starlighters, as you know, are created by the Elder Deities. What had Vincent done that were so bad? What mockery has he done toward the gods?”

“Oh, I could think of a few things! Killing innocent lives, siding with our father, the Emperor, just to make his own ends meet!”

“Ah but nothing like creating a son without the will or blessings of the gods.” Amadeus swung his soldora towards Clash’s chest. Quickly, Clash had stepped away from the oncoming blade and swung his own at Amadeus who then stepped aside and swung his blade with tremendous force against Clash’s soldora.

Clash almost lost his balance after the impact.

“There is a starlighter in the midst,” Amadeus continued. “But don’t be so certain its who you always believed it to be!” Realizing the loss of balance, Amadeus kicked Clash off the ground.

Landing on the ground, he had his hand to his chest where Amadeus had kicked him. “You’re lying!” Clash groaned.

“Think about it, the lords have very little patience to those who make a mockery of their abilities. Surely, you know this!” As Amadeus charged toward Clash again, he swung the soldora sideways to take a strike at him toward the rib, which Clash blocked with his own blade. Amadeus kicked Clash again in the chest almost where he had kicked him before. As Clash groaned at the sudden strike, he kneeled onto the floor.

Amadeus rose his leg and kicked Clash upward, chin first and forced him to flip up off the floor and down again. Clash lay weakly upon the ground

Amadeus smiled in satisfaction. “It makes no difference. I need the young sorcerer for my own purposes - -.” He paused.

At the creak of the floor behind him, Amadeus turned to see Jeremy charging toward him in haste. Jeremy raised his soldora and swung at Amadeus much quicker than he had anticipated.

The sudden impact against Amadeus nearly made him flinch in surprise. “Fascinating strength, wizard.” Amadeus had taken a step back, considering that Jeremy’s height was an inch higher than him. “Where could a wizard find this strength?” he said pushing his soldora away from Jeremy causing him to step back. “I wonder.”

“Where is the Starlighter?” Jeremy asked.

“That’s a trick question?”

Jeremy said nothing

“Haven’t you learned your lesson, Jersey Boy?” said Amadeus annoyed. “Jason’s power is of great interest, he has a potential then that of the three doppelgangers. He is an Aquarian sorcerer much like I am, and with Jason’s power, I can finally accomplish what I wanted all those years ago.

“Vincent, however, just wants to find and secure the power that is Victor Song.”

“What the hell are you talking about?”

“For years, Vincent wanted to harbor the powers of a Starlighter without harboring the true effects. But he knew he couldn’t be all powerful, not when Victor may still be alive.

“Vincent knew that a Starlighter is the all-powerful of all spellcasters, the power of a Starlighter would give him the necessity he wants to work a way around in life, for years he tried to become one, one that’s different than what the elder deities had brought about.”

“And what exactly was Vincent’s plan in doing so?” Jeremy asked angrily “To be a Starlighter without harboring the Starlighter curse? It’s impossible; the Starlighter is created only by the Elder Deities, the same gods responsible for our existence.”

“Ah again, with Zarius’s folklore,” Amadeus rolled his eyes. “A Starlighter doesn’t have to be created only by the elder deities. A Starlighter can be created by another Starlighter itself.”

“There is no other Starlighter. Just the creep you work for.”

Amadeus burst out laughing in a sinister tone. “Vincent is not Starlighter.”

“Then who is?” Jeremy asked.

“The man Vincent has been looking for, the one who died and became one twenty years ago.”

“Victor.” Jeremy whispered in disbelief. He considered what Amadeus had told Clash, the punishment of mockery toward the gods, becoming a starlighter were a fate worse than death. At least from what Lord Zarius had always described. A mockery like performing a Geniture Ritual and giving birth to a son. Was that mockery to a god?

But what would Vincent accomplish by wanted to sustain the power of a starlighter and harbor its power? It’s impossible, Jeremy thought. Jeremy paused, he heard footsteps coming from behind Amadeus.

Running towards Amadeus, Clash raised his soldora and jumped off the floor.

As Amadeus turned around, Clash’s blade severed into Amadeus’s shoulder.

Amadeus’s eyes shot with rage at the sudden blow.

Quickly, Clash pulled the blade from out his brother's shoulder. "You're a fool! Vincent will never find his doppelganger. And you will never claim Jason as your apprentice!"

"Well done, brother!" Amadeus uttered. "Well played, therefore I always wanted you as my apprentice. You aren't Ivy. You aren't our father."

"And you, Amadeus, are no longer my brother!" Clash's soldora ignited, letting out a golden spark of energy at the hilt.

"Clash, wait!" Jeremy yelled.

Clash paused as soon as he heard Jeremy yell. And when Clash stopped in his tracks he heard a motorcycle rumble from afar. Outside of the building the rumble of a car and motorcycle began to take over the room. "Ivy!" he thought.

Panicked, Amadeus raised his blade, a green bolt of energy soared toward Jeremy, Jeremy ducked out of the way in time.

Clash raised his blade to disarm Amadeus, their blades clanked against one another.

Despite his injuries, Amadeus held his own like no pain were present, as was any possibility for any spellcaster. "This isn't over, little bro!"

With the strength he had left, Amadeus pushed his blade toward Clash's, the energy let out an emerald spark of light, flashing and blinding Clash where he stood.

"CLASH!!" Jeremy yelled. He covered his eyes, as the emerald energy grew, captivating the large space in which the three spellcasters stood, cautious as to whether the sorcerer would

permit a blind blow and attack him while he shielded his eyes. A gust of wind blew him off the floor, Jeremy yelled at the sudden loud impact.

The energy formed into a funnel cloud, circling a portal beneath Amadeus. The portal had blown out a vicious gust of wind.

Amadeus kicked Clash where he stood, and Clash weakly fell back against the floor.

“When Jason is ready, I will come to thee.” Amadeus uttered. “As will you.” The sorcerer shut his eyes. Within less than a second, he was swallowed within the swirling vortex beneath him. The gusting winds slowed leaving behind the stench of the creak and sea from the distance.

Clash rose up from the ground, startled at the sudden silence around them, the faint aroma of excrement and sea filled the air. He turned to find Jeremy rise from the ground. “Are you alright?” he asked the wizard.

Jeremy nodded, sighing in a brief relief and glared over at the limp body of Jason Malero, silent and undisturbed. Jeremy strutted over and kneeled beside him.

Clash put his blade in his back brace “Come! We should take a portal to the realm of Santuario.”

“It’s too risky,” said Jeremy. “I don’t want Jason getting hurt. His powers may overwhelm him if he is in contact with the portal.”

At the sound of approaching footsteps, both Clash and Jeremy turned to stare at the double doors blazing off the hinges, revealing a scarlet suited warlock, two guns in hand and looking about cautiously. He lowered his firearms whilst staring at his comrades. “What happened?” Ivy demanded.

“He’s gone.” Clash replied. “Amadeus escaped out through a portal. I don’t know where he is! But we have Jason! He’s safe.”

“Damn it! Amadeus is always leaving without me giving him a lecture. Or just when I want to make him feel useless!” Ivy placed his firearms in his inside pockets. “Glenico escaped as well. We need to leave here at once!”

Sighing in anger, Jeremy clutched Jason’s motionless body against his knees, tempted to embrace him in his arms.

“Ivy, what is it?” Clash asked, sensing the troublesome thinking as Ivy stared into space.

“We, failed, bro! We failed, bad!”

Chapter 21

Stepping into the consciousness of somewhere safe, with no beginning as to when Jason first glared at the castellan structures, whose edges revealed he were on top of the tallest building. No other can be seen for miles past, but the puffy gray clouds above, leaving no signs of the stars.

“This isn’t heaven.” Jason thought. The air felt warm and peaceful. Jason didn’t want to leave this place. Not even to move a limb, risking the loss of radiant bliss and hope that surrounded him.

Strutting over to the edge of the railing, Jason anxiously glared beyond the clouds, below anticipating seeing the lowest elevation in which stood. To his disappointment and horror, the building itself protruded through the second sea of clouds. a flow starlight like dust swirling about

the edges of the Castilian structure in every direction. “Like fireflies.” He thought. “I’ve been here before.”

As he attempted to place his hands onto the crystal brick edge, its color and texture like a reflective brick of ice, he glared at his hands in surprise. Covered in Azul warrior wraps, which matched his armed black leather pads, like that of an amazon warrior. His gaze met with his entire ensemble. He was an amazon, dressed in a navy shade. “What the - -.”

Jason shook glaring about the lilac clouds above. “HELLO!!!” he yelled, nearly hyperventilating. At the sound of a distant shard striking the ground, Jason turned, jumped at the sight of an amazon figure before him. His expressions and actions resembled that he too, feared the warrior before him.

Glaring at Jason as he leaned against the crystal façade, careful not to fall over the edge. “Who are you?” Jason demanded. “What are you - -.” He paused. As the actions of the frightened figure before him, displayed the similar actions as Jason himself. He studied his attire, his long curly hair covering the black fabricated mask of his mouth. Were these the traits of Victor Song, he thought. Or were they a reflection of what his eyes forbade him to see, without the use of a mirror?

But the Amazon warrior’s wardrobe was all a shade darker, purple in fact. As well as his eyes, dark and mysterious. But Jason’s eyes had been brown, or were they?

Jason waved his heavy braced arm, watching as the reflection did the same.

“Jason!!”

Jason jumped at the calling. Urgent and careful. He glared about the roof of the tower in which let nothing but his reflection and did not at all even move a muscle around the mouth at the sound of his name.

Everything faded to black.

Slowly opening his eyes, the large square room whose tinted white tiles like that of a cell in a quarantined laboratory, reflected that patches of the departing sun from out the window. Jason's eyes adjusted to the large space, as well as his limbs enveloped in the heavy white knitted sheets.

"Jason!"

His body were a lump of numbness for only a second and dissipated like that of the whiff of smoke before realizing Jeremy's voice. "Where am I?"

Jeremy stood beside him, considering Jason's eyes. "You're in the Hospital Wing of Cobra Entity Headquarters. We brought you to the realm of Santuario to further examine you."

Jason glared at the wizard, who were dressed differently from when he last saw him at the club. Bathed, dressed and refreshed. Jason just how long he had been out. "Examine me for what?"

Jeremy perched his lips and started to walk over to the other side of the bed. "Don't freak out."

"Why would I freak out?" Jason rose upward from the bed, pushing away the sheet that covered him to. "What happened to Amadeus?"

Jeremy picked a mirror up off the night stand. “We’ll talk about that in a minute. But for now - -.” Jeremy handed Jason the mirror.

Jason studied his reflection, shocked perhaps that someone applied rouge to his face. But with further examination to his face. There was nothing false, nothing fathomable to say he weren’t staring at his reflection. “My eyes. They’re... blue.”

Jeremy watched Jason in concern.

“What happened to me?”

“When you were in the pier with Amadeus, he somehow performed a ritual to awaken your spellcaster abilities. Whatever way he did it, he almost killed you, but he didn’t.”

Jason knew why, lacking knowledge as to what had transpired while he was unconscious, or as to how much time had passed, it was a reflex to assume that what occurred wasn’t known to anybody but Jason and the sorcerer Amadeus himself.

Jason adjusted himself, ready to step out of the bed.

“Careful. You should save your energy.” said Jeremy.

“Amadeus did this to me, so he could harness the power that my father Victor had.” Jason ignored him, sitting up with his feet to the ground. “Did you get him?”

“No, he got away. But I don’t think he’s going to be coming after you anymore, at least not for a while.” Jeremy sat beside Jason. “Don’t mind that now, just rest.”

Jason shook his head. “My head hurts.”

“I know, but it will pass.” Jeremy lifted a cup from the stand beside the bed. “Here, drink this. It’s a potion to ease the pain.”

Jason grabbed hold of the cup. “Thanks.” He drank from the cup steadily without taking a minute to think what’s in it. He put the cup back on the stand “Its cherry flavored.”

Jeremy shook his head with a light smile. “Yes, it is.”

Jason studied the wizard, his expression tired, lost and trembling with anger. “Jeremy, what is it?”

Jeremy lifted his head, teary eyed and full of rage. “Jason, I’m sorry.”

“For what?”

“It’s Kirk.”

Considering the name, Jason recalled that Kirk was with him at the club, attempting to leave the premises while they had the chance. “Where is he? Is he, all right? Can I see him?”

Sighing at the collapse of his heart, Jeremy rose from the bed, his hands made his way beneath his arms.

“Jeremy.”

The afternoon arose in the realm of Santuario. All had gathered in Zarius’s office. Trevor, Javier, Ivy and Clash stood before the desk.

Zarius sat with his hands folded, listening to all that had transpired, as told by the four before him. “It’s a shame.” said Zarius. “On what had happened to Kirk, I feel very remorseful towards Jason.”

“Glenico killed Kirk, but he still intended to take him from us!” said Javier leaning against the shelf beside the entrance of the oval room. “While we were in the car, he attempted to portal us out of the streets.” He looked over at Trevor who agreed.

“You must confess that it is indeed a mystery, is it not?” Trevor nodded. “It’s as if Glenico planned to kill him somehow. What about the car that that interfered and caused the portal spell to ricochet to Glenico’s truck.”

“Yeah, about that,” Ivy started. “I really don’t think it was Victor. If it was, it would probably be ironic towards Kirk’s death. Kirk had been looking for Victor for years, or so I hear. Wouldn’t it be ironic to think Victor would show up twenty years later just before Kirk’s death?”

“How did he know where we were in the first place?” Javier asked.

Trevor turned. “Maybe he didn’t, maybe it was Glenico he was after all along, and we just so happened to be there when Victor did in his pursuit.”

Javier nodded. “Does Jason know that Adrian is his brother? That he is also Kirk’s son?”

“No,” said Zarius suddenly. “And to prevent Jason any further pain, it is best that we don’t tell him.”

Ivy and Clash glared at the Demi god in concern. “Wait, why not?” Clash asked.

“We need proof! We can’t but tell Jason what we think we know, when in fact, we don’t know anything at all. Glenico is a treacherous witch. Deceit and selfishness are his enforcers.”

“We can’t keep something like that a secret forever?” said Clash. “He’ll hate us for it if he ever finds out.”

“It will be no secret.” said Zarius urgently. “Jason will learn the truth when he is ready.”

Clash crossed his arms in contempt. “What about the case of our brother, Amadeus? He is still out there. I’m certain he won’t bother Jason for quite some time, but he assured us that Vincent is still out there.”

“Ah yes, Vincent Song.” said Zarius. “I don’t want to believe it, but I think Amadeus is right. About Victor Song being a Starlighter.”

“Zarius, many things were said about Victor Song. About his being a powerful sorcerer. But do you honestly believe that performing the Geniture Ritual is a crime summed up all in one against Vincent’s countless crimes. I refuse to believe Amadeus. I refuse to believe that Jason’s birth was the result of Victor condemned life as a starlighter.”

“We don’t know that for sure!” Ivy cut in. “Amadeus could be lying, you know how he is, he’s a fool!”

“But it makes sense,” Clash added. “Why else weren’t we able to find Victor all this time? He could be trapped in what all Starlighters are condemned to be trapped in, a forbidden object, a place where we may never find him.”

“As I stated, it could be true. But how would we know?” said Zarius. “We must take the proper precaution and assume Victor is still out there. I agree that much. I owe that much to Kirk, at least now it’s easier for me to say so, since Amadeus has revealed this information to you and Jeremy.”

“I want to believe this as much as you guys do.” said Ivy. “But Amadeus is a liar, how can we be certain he’s telling the truth?”

Silence.

Trevor glared away lost in his thoughts.

Kirk’s death had brought such remorse and confusion to Javier’s judgment, where Jason Malero was concerned. “What would become of Jason now?” he asked Zarius.

“I reprise to say that Jason should stay with us. But that’s up to him alone. He’s in no real danger now, I don’t think.”

“I think Kirk would have disagreed to put Jason through such a transition. But considering Jason’s aura had been awakened, I don’t know how to honor Kirk’s will any longer.”

“Nor do I, Javier.” Zarius agreed. “But that’s why I feel we should leave that question to be answered with Jason himself. Only he can choose that path, all we can do is assist him when he asks for it.”

The sun stubbornly refused to set over the realm of Santuario. Reflecting on everything that Jeremy told him, Jason caught himself huddled into Jeremy’s embrace. His eyes fixed with

rage. Unyielding emotions cowering his consciousness into a whirlwind. The aftermath of Kirk's death. The lack of contact with his three best friends. Michael, Rebecca and Joseph.

Wondering that if he fell asleep once more, would he would wake up back in his bedroom? Would kirk still make a ruckus while first coming home so late in the night, that it would cause Jason to jump in a panic? Hurrying to the kitchen to find Kirk sulk and passed out on the couch from a long day at work.

He wanted his old life back. But where would that take him? To a dark place sworn by vengeance, greed and power? Whilst knowing of realms, all of which had no traces or grounds to know that Jason's only companion, his only father, were not waiting up for him on a Saturday night. Would not wake him up as he were getting ready for school as the Monday morning approached. Even if he did return to the East Village, to the apartment which held so many fond memories of the one human who raised him, shielded him from cowering evils, and taught him the necessities, to sustain his manhood and hold his own, things would never be the same.

He pulled his gaze from the window and shut his eyes. His body had already absorbed all the sleep he needed. The broken heart, as well as Jeremy's arms, were the only anchor keeping him tied to the bed. "You must think I'm a freak." Said Jason.

"No, I don't. But I'll admit, I questioned it at first. The Sacrifice Rituals are common among spellcasters... My just learning about it is what caught me off guard."

"I'm a freak!"

"No, you're not! If you're a freak, then so am I. Spellcasters and those born with an enhancement to carry the genes of both fathers aren't that far apart. They aren't evil either."

Jason opened his aching eyes, teary filled and bloodshot with dread. “Why do you stay with me?”

“Because I love you!”

“But you hardly know me!”

“Well that’s why I’m here with you, so you can get to know me?”

Jason recalled those were the similar words in which Jeremy once said when they were at the bar, Boots & Saddles. “That’s why I want to dance with you, so you can get to know me.” It seemed like forever ago that those words struck him, revealing a side of the wizard, in which he seemed only like a human. And not like a nail to the wall. “It doesn’t make sense, Jeremy.”

“I care about you! Despite all that’s happened, I’m willing - -. I want to stay by your side. You dealt with a great deal of loss. You found out a truth that Kirk kept from you for so long... It’s dangerous to be by yourself.”

Jason sighed.

“I’ll leave you alone, if you want me too. But I’d prefer it you let me stay. I don’t want to lose you. I don’t want to lose whatever is happening here.”

“That’s a lot of pressure, Jeremy.”

“It is! Which is why we shouldn’t talk about this right now. What I’m hoping you’ll do, is tell me you love - -.”

At the knock of the door. Jeremy let Jason go, he rose up steadily. Jason sat up and turned toward the opening door.

“Am I intruding?” Zarius asked.

“No, not at all.” Jeremy sighed, turning to Jason with a sorrowful expression, who sat up and wiped the tears from his eyes. “I was just leaving.”

“Where are you going?” Jason asked.

“To get us a drink. I’ll be right back.” Jeremy looked from Zarius to Jason again. “I promise.”

Zarius opened the door further, allowing Jeremy to walk passed him out the room. Gently Zarius closed the door before him, looking toward Jason who sat up expressionless. “How are you feeling?”

“I don’t know.” Jason replied.

Zarius on the bedside opposite of where Jason had sat up. “I’m sorry about Kirk. I can’t imagine what it must be like to lose a father.”

Jason shook his head, glaring toward the window.

“You know.” Zarius continued. “Well, I just want you to know that you will always have a place to stay, at least here in the realm of Santuario. And, I know Jeremy is more than willing to let you stay at his home... But just know you are safe now. No more harm should come to you. So, if you do decide to return to New York City, you shall. But in a way, you will be supervised.”

“Supervised?” said Jason without looking at Zarius.

“Your powers have been awakened, Jason. At this rate your powers may take over you and turn you into something deadly. You could be overwhelmed if we do not keep a close eye on you.”

Glaring out the window in silence, he reflected on his actions, as well as those in which he was forced to surround himself by. Jeremy were the only one in which he felt completely vulnerable but inspired to stay strong. He was tired of playing the victim. In one way or another he wanted to take matters into his own hands.

“I see a great deal of Victor in you.” Zarius sighed. “He was a powerful sorcerer, with a vigilant heart and a reputation of a hero. Many Spellcasters knew him and would agree. Sometimes he could be stubborn but that was one of his strong points. Many would always underestimate him, and he would always catch us by surprise.”

“I will leave you to your thoughts.” Zarius started rising from the bed. “If you need anything or you come to a decision about where to stay, please let me know.”

Zarius gently opened the door to the room.

“Zarius.” Jason called, he sighed rising from the bed, as he turned to find Zarius looking at him as he held the door open.

“I have come to a decision.”

“Alright.”

“I want to join,” said Jason cautiously. “I want to join the Cobra Entity to become the Spellcaster that my father once was. That is, if the offer still stands.”

Zarius looked at Jason in concern. “Jason, you do know that if you become one of us... There is no turning back.”

“But I already am one of you. There is nowhere else for me to turn too... And I won’t stand by and act like I don’t know anything. I won’t wait around for something to happen.”

Zarius said nothing.

“My father Kirk hid me from this world because he thought this would protect me but all it has done was breaking us apart. I am grateful for all Kirk has done for me. And I will continue to love him unconditionally for as long as I live. But I must do what’s best for me. And hiding or walking off towards the sunset isn’t going to be one of them... Not this time.”

Zarius’s face was blank and he looked over at the window walking towards it. He had both his hands crossed behind his back looking out.

“You remind me so much of Victor,” he started. “If he is still out there I hope he gets to see the man that you have become.”

Jason smiled. “Well if I do meet him one day. He does have a lot of explaining to do.”

Zarius smiled. “Oh, I agree.” He patted Jason on the back giving him a slight smile. The tears in Jason’s eyes threatening to spill from his sockets, he knew very well that Zarius had caught sight of the sadness that Jason showed. But he could only hope that Zarius would not believe it were a sign of his weakness or yet a regret toward his decision. It was a long way to go, for that he knew. But it didn’t matter, he could not change his mind. He could not then, he will not now.

Epilogue

The sun surrendered, leaving the blackened sky to fend off with the illuminated cityscape of Santuario. In the bowels of the alley way behind Cobra Entity Headquarters, the stranger carried the black body bag, weakly out onto the docking platform. His right shoulder ached, as the spell to permit his strength and carry the decomposing body started to fade. He could have sworn he picked up a faint aroma of excrement and sulfur, coming from out the rectangular lump of flesh. His imagination, however, always got the best of him.

As he rushed over to the far side of the back-parking lot, he caught up to the long box shaped car. A 1980 Buick, he knew full well were not a model made in the Santuarian kingdom, stood under the scaffolding where the lights of the buildings, would not touch the pavement.

He knocked on the dark car driver door.

The window to the driver door opened and the man looked over to the shadow inside.

“About time.” yelled Glenico, his southern accent like that of a confederate, angry and impatient.

“I don’t think they’ll recognize his body is gone.” Said the man, ready to drop the heavy body where he paused.

“No but soon they will, you imbecile. Put him in the backseat.”

Opening the passenger door to the car, he let the body bag slip off his shoulders and onto the concrete.

Glenico jumped. “Careful, you fool!”

The man attempted to pull the body upward, letting it lay face up and take over the entire leather back seat. As he pushed the body away from the door, the man shut the passenger door behind him. “Where’s my money?”

Glenico took an envelope from the glove compartment and tossed it against the man’s chest, who caught it excitedly. “Now hurry up and get out of here!”

“Lovely doing business with you.” The Santuarian opened the envelope to find a large sum of Santuarian bills. “Glenico I must ask, how do you plan on bringing him back to life. It’s impossible - -.”

“That’s no business of yours.” Glenico shot. “Now get out of here before I have you skewered like a buffalo and hang you from the rafters of the building.”

As the lonely Santuarian started toward the exit of the alleyway, Glenico pulled up the window, started the engine and drove off. Speeding toward the exit of the alleyway while the Santuarian walked on in the same direction, strutting quickly away from the Cobra Entity Building.

Glenico drove as fast as he could, in hopes to perform a teleportation spell before any Santuarians, or spellcasters for that matter, would could come to realize his appearance in Santuario. He was lucky enough he wasn’t spotted while arriving to the realm alone. Considering the defenses that Zarius and those of the Cobra Entity had placed about the city, and perhaps the surrounding realms.

With the dark magic, in which Glenico was taught, the hood of the car burst into flames, the fire enveloping and making its way covering the entire vehicle. Off into the air, the ash fluttered as the car sped down the local street, ashes peeled into in its departure and vanished into smoke.

Within moments, Glenico sighed in relief, as the car in which he drove appeared into the alleyway behind several tenement buildings, much different from that of Santuario. All of which he come to known while living in New York City.

Away from the Santuarrians, away from the Cobra Entity and its halls which were infested with the spellcasters that long wanted him captured. The ascending dusk were a relief, reassuring the witch that he was indeed in the local atmosphere of Earth.

Driving his way inside the warehouse, whose open garage revealed an open space, Glenico paused and stopped the car to a halt, shutting off the engine. He took the scroll from his jacket pocket, unrolled it and glared at it feverishly.

He turned around and zippered down the bag to reveal kirk's lifeless face. "It didn't have to go this way." Glenico started. "If you held on a little bit longer to let me love you, we wouldn't be in this mess of things. We could've lived happily ever after, you and I, in a world outside this hell.

"You have a son who almost died trying to retrieve you back. And you should be happy you have a family willing to support and love you...to death." Almost as if expecting the corpse to reply, he glared at the decomposing body, bloodied and still, eyelids with a darker shadow than that of the black bag in which it lay.

At the sound of a thump in the distance, the glass window on the driver door shattered into particles, raining as the emerging blade made it inside. Glenico turned in time to see the blade struck the flesh of his chest cavity.

The pain shot violently through his body. Attempting to summon his dark magic, the blade protruded into Glenico's bleeding chest, let out a burst of vital energy, vibrant and frying his internal organs. Glenico's eyes flew open in infuriating rage, he attempted to catch the last ounce of breath he could muster.

"You... fool!" Glenico glared up at the spellcaster beside the driver door, the figure's shoulder length curly hair, black as shadows like that of his clothes, covered part of his face. "You were... dead!" Glenico uttered. "The Emperor...should have... killed...you!"

The soldora ignited, letting out a violet energy that illuminated within the small space of the car. Slowly, the spellcaster pulled the soldora from out Glenico's chest. The witch groaned as blood poured from out his mouth, attempting to permit an outcry and defend himself.

Grabbing Glenico by the hair, the spellcaster took his blade. Like a bow to a violin, he stroked Glenico's throat. Stepping back away from the car, the spellcaster watched Glenico quickly cover his temple, coating his throat as the blood poured onto his clothes, and spilling out onto the seat.

Filled with rage and panic, he felt his limbs abandon him against the seat, only his eyes could compel movement to his control.

As the last spark of control vanished, Glenico's head collapsed onto the car horn. Its echoes burst into a hostile song, a continuous note yelling out into the morning sky.

Placing his soldora aside in his brace, the spellcaster pulled the car door open and pulled Glenico out of the driver's seat. The music stopped abruptly, leaving only the lasting sounds of the witch's body thumping against the cold concrete.

He took the unrolled scroll the witch left abandoned against the dashboard, he stuffed it inside his leather coat pocket.

Glaring toward the backseat, he pulled the passenger door open. He zippered up the body bag and pulled him out from the backseat. He carried kirk's body over his shoulder, which were a thick lump of immovable flesh against his thin shoulders. Luckily his spellcaster strength allowed him to muster up all his energy without struggle. "I got you now, Dark Knight!"

He strutted out of the warehouse, making his way toward the black car, whose façade resembled that of a black tank, the height of a Porsche but the façade of a peeling insect.

Opening the passenger car door, he laid kirk's body in the back, closing the door behind him. As he sat in the driver's seat, abruptly the car came to life, sensing the spellcaster's presence as he were ready to take off into the night. "Hello, Sorcerer Vladimir," The car greeted. "Engine on!" The car ignited and sped off, leaving no hint or echo of its presence.