

Echo Nightshade

I walked around the first floor, closing all the curtains and making sure no sunlight was getting in. As I reached the basement door, it opened. Victor was smiling and wrapped me in a hug. It made me feel happy and safe.

"Thank you so much for cleaning that basement, little one! It was so nice to wake up somewhere clean again." He laughed.

"I figured you might be in a better mood if you slept well, Victor." I replied.

"Are you having dinner?" He asked.

"It's just after five. I was starting everything warming up and getting the curtains closed for you. The window guy opened them all. Then I was going to open the door and go start cooking." I explained.

"I'll come with you, then. You can tell me about your day." Victor took my hand and led me into the kitchen.

He was acting weird. It made me wonder how weird he'd be tomorrow night. I needed to stay up and get the rest of the house clean. Luckily, there wasn't anything going into the bathrooms, I could do those tomorrow night.

I worked on cleaning the potato, and rubbing the skin with oil and salt before putting it in the oven. While I worked, I told Victor about all the things I'd seen and done during the day. He was thrilled that tomorrow was the last day he was going to spend in the basement.

Once he was up for the night tomorrow, I'd strip the mattress he was using down there and wash the sheets before putting them on my new bed. He wouldn't need queen size sheets anymore. I'd really get to see what 'high-quality' sheets were like.

We didn't talk about the vampire thing. Or the half-vampire thing. I just wanted time to feel normal. Instead, we talked about what I would need for school next Monday, my nerves about going to school for the first time, and what would happen tomorrow when everything came.

It took me until one in the morning to finish all of the cleaning in preparation for the movers. When I got up, I would strip my bed and prepare for it to be moved out. I didn't mind the mattress, but Victor wanted me to have good quality items. I stopped into his office before I headed to bed.

"Victor?" I said from the door?

He looked up from where he was moving his files into boxes and waved me in. Victor seemed a lot more relaxed than he had last night. There was no shouting this time.

"What do you need, princess?" He asked.

I blushed. Drew called me princess sometimes, I guess Victor liked it. I didn't mind when he did it as much as when Drew did. It was better than 'little one'.

"I'm heading to bed. If you just want to put the files in the closet, I would appreciate it. Make sure your laptop is somewhere safe, okay?" I replied.

"Sleep well, little one. I'll have my office done by morning." Victor said.

"I'm going to have your friend put in the dining room. We don't have people over, so I didn't buy a table for entertaining, just a small one for the kitchen."

"Perfect. See you tonight." He winked.

I headed to my room. Mr. Springer may have been the gentlest of my clients, but Victor was the nicest person I'd ever met.

He cared about me and made sure I had everything I wanted or needed. He was always kind. I was thinking I might like to stay with him. I wanted to be his servant after I was eighteen. I couldn't think of anything else that would suit me as well as that.

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The next morning, I woke at seven, dressed in jeans and a gray t-shirt, and went to have breakfast. People and workers would start arriving at nine. I wanted to have as much time to myself as possible. I knew the house would be full and I wasn't used to that sort of activity.

Once I cleaned my dishes, I looked at the clock on my phone. It was eight-thirty. I checked that the file boxes in Victor's office were put away and was pleased to see he'd finished the work. I opened the doors to the dining room on my way back to the kitchen.

With plenty of time before anyone arrived, I was a little curious. Living with a vampire was so different from acting as a donor. I knew he was just downstairs, virtually dead. Part of me wanted to go look, part of me hated the idea of seeing it. It would be Victor, but not Victor.

A buzzing from the entry pulled me from my thoughts. Saving me from the temptation. I went to answer it and let in the men who were moving the old furniture out. I locked the gate in the open position.

I knew it wasn't entirely safe, but it would mean I didn't have to run back and forth all day. The men started in the rooms upstairs and finished with the living room. I was happy the stuff was going to a good home.

The cashier from the bookstore arrived shortly after with his friend and I had them pull into the garage. There was a door there that was the closest external door to the library. They started loading in boxes of books right as four trucks with the tinting company's logo pulled up.

Their boss started issuing orders. He came and talked to me. I hadn't realized the guy giving the quote yesterday was the owner.

He gave me a time frame now that he knew how many people there were. The men got to work on the upstairs windows. With the white windows, Victor could feel like a human again. He could enjoy natural light without it hurting him.

I grinned and headed inside to sweep where the old furniture had been and get everything ready for the deliveries. All the decorations I'd bought were stored in the garage. I'd put them up once everything was in.

As I was finishing up the living room, a delivery truck pulled up. I went out to meet them. A man approached. While two others were pulling a long crate out of the back.

"Miss Nightshade?" He asked.

It was the first time anyone had called me that. I was a little nervous about answering to it, but I needed to get everything handled. Victor was counting on me.

"Yes. How can I help you?" I smiled.

"We have a delivery of your loved one's remains. Where would you like us to take her?" He replied.

Victor's friend Rosalynn. I needed to act as if I was expecting this. I needed to put myself in the place of someone who had lost a loved one.

"Oh, goodness. Auntie Rosa. Please follow me." I said somberly.

I led the men to the dining room and had them place the crate on the ground. They offered to pry the top off for me and I graciously agreed. Inside was a really nice casket. It was opalescent with gold handles. Very pretty.

"Thank you so much for bringing my aunt back home." I told them as they were leaving.

"No problem, Miss. We're always happy to reunite family. You have a good day. We're very sorry for your loss." He nodded and the men headed back to their truck.

I secured the dining room door and went to check on the men unpacking the books. They were chatting and having a good time. I went to the kitchen and grabbed some cookies I'd baked yesterday, taking them to the guys. They were grateful.

Less than an hour later, several large moving trucks pulled in front of the house. The men doing the tinting had finished the upstairs and were nearly finished with the downstairs. In a couple hours, Victor would wake, I didn't know how long before his friend did.

After directing the appliance men to the laundry room, I took up a position on the upper floor to direct the bedroom sets. Nine queen beds with dressers and nightstands for the other rooms, one king sized bed with dresser and nightstands, a small couch, coffee table, and chairs for Victor's room, a small computer desk and office chair in mine, and some little tables for the hallway were all placed.

I directed the position of everything in Victor's office, the set up for the living room, the layout for the family room, and the placement of the chairs and tables in the library. The dining table and chairs had been set in the perfect place, so I didn't want to move them.

The cashier from the bookstore, Steve, and his friend, Mark, offered to help with making beds and hanging paintings. Several of the movers stayed behind and helped with hanging curtains. I was really getting good at influencing people.