

## Chapter 14 - The Vampire's Servant

Walking around the corner, into the kitchen, I saw Echo curled on a chair eating potato chips and looking at her phone. She was entirely in her own world. I couldn't help the smile that crossed my face. She was so innocent and sweet looking.

There wasn't any fear or worry coming from her. Only the happiness I felt from her whenever she was eating. She loved food and I wanted to let her try every type.

"Echo, we're done." I told her softly.

"Sorry, I snapped. I didn't realize I could get like that. I'm better now that I've eaten." She smiled.

"Good. I didn't even think of how much work you had to have done. You were within your rights to snap a little." I said, sitting at the table with her.

She'd worked hard all day and I hadn't been as grateful as I should have been. Guilt filled my heart. I needed to be a better master to her in the little time I had left with her.

"Bad news, right?" Echo sighed.

"It could be. We don't entirely know yet. Tomorrow, another member of the council will be arriving. He's your sire. Marius Aconitum The vampire your family comes from." I watched her carefully as I told her.

"Is he bad? You said the council was supposed to help humans and vampires. Is he going to let me stay? Why did you talk to him first instead of to me?" She asked.

"We had to. He's one of the most powerful vampires in existence. We had to report it to him immediately or it could have angered him. I will do everything in my power to help you have a happy life, Echo. You deserve it after what your parents put you through." I promised.

"You didn't say if he was a bad vampire, Victor." Her voice quaked.

I didn't like how frightened she was. I truly wished that I could tell her something, anything, to put her at ease. All I could do was tell her the truth.

"I can't answer that for this situation. He's strict, he's deadly, and he never goes easy on anyone. I've never seen him smile, and the only time I heard him laugh was while executing someone. But it was for the good of the community. I have no clue what to tell you, just that, I'll be here and do everything I can to keep you safe." I said softly.

She stared at the plate on the table, then got up and started cleaning the kitchen. I didn't know of anything I could say to make her feel better. I didn't know of anything I could say to make me feel better, so I sat there while she cleaned.

"Do you want to go see your room before I head to bed? I have tests in the morning." Echo smiled.

"I thought you were upset."

"I can't fight the future. I can only try to move it the way I want. Don't worry, Victor. Whatever was meant to be, was meant to be. I don't want you getting hurt. Don't try and stop anything. You're my friend. I'd rather have you alive than know I caused your death." She said softly.

"I would love to see my room, princess. Thank you." I smiled a little.

If she wanted to pretend everything was fine for one more night, I would. It was better than knowing she was crying. I followed her upstairs, after she moved the laundry to the dryer, and she opened the door to the master bedroom.

I walked in. There was a lamp on the nightstand illuminating everything. A little sitting area was set up by the built in bookshelves. The shelves were empty, I had some books in storage I planned to have sent to me that would fit perfectly there. The bed was a heavy, king-size, four poster bed.

She'd made it up with a black duvet and a thick white down comforter. The sheets were high quality black silk. I sighed at the feeling of them. All of the wood in the room was stained dark and the cloth was light. There were no sharp corners, everything was rounded and soft.

Rugs of different sizes were placed strategically on the floor. Paintings of forest scenes hung on the walls, reminding me a little of the forests around my old territory. There was a full-length mirror in the corner of the room, next to the closet. Several vases with silk plants were placed smartly around. Nothing was clumped together, but there was no feeling of emptiness or wasted space.

I returned to where Echo was standing. She was looking at me expectantly. I couldn't help but praise her. She deserved it.

"This is amazing! I love everything about it. I can't wait to go to bed in the morning." I grinned.

"I'm glad you like it." Echo smiled.

"You worked really hard today. Tomorrow night, I'll take you out to dinner." I told her.

Her smile faded. "We'll see. I'm going to take a bath. Once the sheets are done, I can make up my bed and go to sleep. My timer says it's still another forty minutes. I should be done before that."

Before I could say anything, she turned and left the room. I forgot that she might not be able to go to dinner. I would ask Master Marius. It could be one last treat if she had to leave. I really hoped she didn't.

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When I went back to my office, Rosy was working on moving boxes out of the closet. She offered to help me when I told her I had to unpack, earlier. I was glad to have her. If nothing else, she would help me normalize after Echo left.

"My trunk will be delivered tomorrow. After we get these unpacked, help me get the coffin into the basement. If we need to have the Master put somewhere, it will free up that space until he wakes." She said. "How's Echo?"

"Being brave. I couldn't tell her much. I have no idea what he's going to do. I can't lie, either. There was nothing I could do, but tell her what I knew about him." I replied.

"We'll just have to see. Don't worry. Marius may not be all puppy-dogs and rainbows, but he's never cruel without reason. She hasn't done anything wrong. He probably wants to double check our results." Rosy offered with a kind tone.

"I hope so." I sighed and started unpacking the file boxes into the drawers.

There was some peace in getting everything in order. It didn't take long with two vampires moving quickly. When we were done, I let Rosy know about the people I needed to deal with and who I was thinking of asking to be my supports.

I wanted Silence, having the local blood broker would be helpful. There was another vampire called Talon, who ran a boarding house for vampires. He was partners with the owners of a couple local motels who had dedicated rooms for vampire patrons.

By the end of the night, I felt like I'd gotten something done at least. When Echo started cooking her breakfast, I knew it was time to turn in. I showered and slipped in between the cool sheets.

The mattress was heaven. I finally had the daytime resting place I wanted, a territory to care for, and my reputation was beginning to be restored. The trip wasn't an entire loss, at least.

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[Echo]

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I didn't sleep well, again. My nerves were going crazy. I brushed my hair and pulled out a peasant top and some jeans for the day. I would function as if I were staying until I knew otherwise. It was the only thing keeping me together.

Heading to the kitchen, I decided on eggs, fruit, and toast for my breakfast. It was quick and an easy clean up. Before I started cooking, I put away the dishes in the dishwasher.

Drew was bringing his friend at nine to test me for my school stuff and the delivery of the TV and computer would be at one in the afternoon. I had the consoles in the family room already. I hadn't taken them out of the boxes yet. The electronics guys said they'd hook everything up along with setting up the computer for me. It was good, because I didn't have a lot of experience with them.

There was a knock at the door as I was setting my food on the table. It was only seven-thirty, not time for Drew to be here. I went to the door to answer it.

A man stood near the door. It was overcast, so the sun wasn't out, even though it was up. The man had black hair and deep green eyes. He was shorter than Victor, maybe 5'10", and very thickly built. His skin was as pale as mine. He'd had a darker skin tone in life like Victor had. I could sense that he was a vampire, it emanated off of him.

"What is your name?" I asked.

"Marius Aconitum." He answered.

His voice was deep and gravelly. There was a coolness in it, like he had no feeling. He looked down his nose at me. I was used to this look. My mom did it when I disappointed her, I could see the resemblance. I wouldn't disappoint Victor