

Chapter 15 - The Vampire's Servant

“Please come in, Master Marius.” I bowed and opened the door to him.

He entered and looked around. There was an appreciative nod. At least he liked the house. It was something.

“What’s your name?” He asked.

“Echo Nightshade, sir.” I replied.

“You’re my child?”

“That is what my master and Ms. Rosalynn determined.” I told him with a small bow.

“You doubt them?” He pressed.

“I have no reason to. It’s the only answer I could give with confidence. I have no actual idea if it is the truth, so I have to trust they were correct. Can I show you to a room for the day?” I offered.

“Am I boring you, child?” Master Marius asked with a raised eyebrow.

“No, sir. I’m trying to be polite and offer you a place to rest. My master rests until about five in the afternoon. He may wake earlier on overcast days, I don’t know a lot about vampires. I can only assume he will not. I’m expecting people over soon and have to eat my breakfast. My master wants me eating three meals a day.” I explained.

“Go eat. I’ll sit with you.” He smirked.

I took a deep breath and smiled. “Thank you, Master Marius.”

Walking back to the kitchen, I worked to contain my scowl. Something about him irritated me. I didn’t want to let my anger out again. Especially with how dangerous Victor said he was. By the time I sat, I had myself under control again.

He watched me eat like I was an exhibit in the zoo. I focused on my food, which wasn’t terribly warm anymore. Luckily, I was used to eating cold food.

Once I was done, I washed up and turned to find him right behind me. It made me jump. I hated that.

“Sorry, sir. I didn’t see you move.” I murmured. “Is there anything I can get you?”

“What are you doing now?” He asked.

I looked at the clock. It was just after eight. There was an hour before Drew and his friend arrived.

“I was going to make sure my master’s office is ready for the delivery of his computer and do some light cleaning. Ms. Rosalynn’s clothing had bloodstains on them when she arrived yesterday. I’ve had them soaking overnight and was hoping to see if I could get them clean, then run them with my own laundry. Would you like me to show you to a room or the library?” I asked.

“No. I’ll watch you.” He said matter-of-factly.

To my credit, I didn’t groan, sigh, or roll my eyes. My parents’ training was coming in handy. I just smiled and started working as if he wasn’t there.

For a while, I actually did forget he was there. Until I heard Drew come in the house. Then, I nearly ran into him when I turned again.

“Pardon me, sir.” I said.

Master Marius smirked again and waved me past him. I couldn’t figure him out. I knew he was powerful, but he should be sleeping, right?

He’d been running a big risk on the porch, too. If the sun had been out, he could’ve gotten killed.

In the entryway, Drew was looking around with a big grin. His friend was focused on the bag on his shoulder. I greeted them and he was introduced as Paris.

“Who’s that, Echo?” Drew asked.

I didn’t know if I was allowed to introduce him, so I turned to Master Marius and checked for any indication of what I should do. He came up to the men and extended his hand.

“Hey there, I’m Mario. A friend of Rosy and Vic. Nice to meet you.” He smiled politely.

“I’m Drew Golden, this is Paris Sexton. I’m surprised you’re up. Victor is over eight hundred and he has to sleep for most of the day. My mistress sleeps longer than he does.” Drew nodded.

“I’m very old. What are you up to?” Master Marius asked.

He was acting like a normal person. It was creepy and felt fake to me. Drew and Paris seemed to accept it though, maybe it was just me who could see through him.

“We’re testing Echo for school. Tomorrow, we’re getting her enrolled.” Drew explained.

“It sounds interesting. Do you mind if I watch?”

“We’re letting her test alone, so she can focus, but you can hang out with us while she does that and while we’re doing the other work. I was planning on looking through the house. Echo just got everything delivered and set up yesterday. I’ve been itching to see how it all came out.” Drew chuckled.

“Just stay out of my master’s room and the guest room with the number four on it. I don’t want you bothering them while they sleep.” I warned.

“You know they won’t wake up, right? They’re not really sleeping.” Drew said.

“So your mistress would be entirely fine with waking up smelling the fact that you let strangers into her daytime resting place, without her permission or knowledge, while she slept? I didn’t realize Silence was stupid.” I sneered.

“Whoa. That was rude, Echo. Calm down.” Drew put his hands up defensively.

I had no idea where the aggression came from. I was usually fine with Drew saying stupid things. I’d eaten, so it wasn’t like last night.

When I looked over, Master Marius was smirking again. He must, somehow, be the cause. I didn’t like it.

“Sorry, Drew. I didn’t sleep well last night. I’m in a mood. Let’s head to the office and set up.” I offered.

We got the laptop set up at Victor’s desk and I sat to take the tests. It was the best place in the house to take them. The room was quiet and there wasn’t anything to distract me

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It took a couple hours to finish the tests. They hadn’t been too bad. There were things that were difficult, but I felt pretty confident in my scores. When I was done, I went searching for the men.

They were in the library. Drew was chatting with Master Marius while Paris was looking at something on his phone. It was just like watching my family interact. Val was always on his phone, too.

“I’m all done.” I announced.

“Great. I’ll go get the assessment finished and print off your results along with the transcript. Do you speak any other languages?” Paris asked.

“No.”

“I’ll put down that you took a year of Spanish and got a C. Download a language learning app and study. You should know at least one language other than English.” He stated and left the room.

“As a human servant, you should learn as many languages as possible. Take every language course you can. Ask Victor what languages he speaks and have him help you. Your master will always want to see you grow as a person.” Drew said.

“I’ll do that.” I nodded and picked up my phone from a side table by a chair.

I found and downloaded an app for languages and decided I would look at it when I wasn’t busy. I glanced at Master Marius again. He was watching me from the corner of his eye while he was talking to Drew.

When he saw me look, he turned his full attention on Drew and I saw Drew shrink back. He was afraid. I didn’t know why.

Nothing had changed about Master Marius, only his focus. He turned back to me, giving me his full attention. I just felt annoyed.

Had he been trying to make me scared? It didn’t make sense to me. Why would he try and scare someone like me? I’m not big or strong. I’m certainly not deadly or an enemy. I’m just Echo. Basically invisible, easy to ignore, Echo.

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“Got it.” Paris said when he came back. “You are officially transferring from Highlands School for Girls. Everything is entered into our system, so they can even call on it and we’ll answer every question.”

“Thank you, Mr. Sexton.” I replied.

“Just Paris. I prefer it. Come on Drew, you owe me lunch.” He grinned.

“Walk us out, Echo?” Drew asked as more of an order than a question.

“Of course.” I said and went with them.

Once we reached his car outside, he turned to me. He looked a little panicked. I’d never see him look anything but calm and playful.

“That was Master Marius, not Mario whatever he told you. He’s called Death. I met him once, but I wasn’t sure until he turned his hypnosis on me.”

“When did he do that?”

“Just before we left. He’s really good at making people see their death. It might not even actually be theirs. I hope it isn’t. I could feel, hear, smell, and taste everything in the vision he gave me. When he turned to you, I thought I would see you faint or something. What did he show you?” Drew asked.

“I don’t want to talk about it. I’ve imagined my death in violent manners before. He can’t show me anything my brain didn’t already try to push on me long ago.” I lied.

“If he’s here, someone is going to die. He never leaves his home unless it’s for council stuff and when he does, someone bleeds, and someone dies. Has he said why he’s here?”

“Something about making sure Victor can secure the supports he wants as the new master of this region. I’m sure Silence will agree. She and Victor seem to get along. I have no idea who the other support is. If they want to avoid Master Marius, they should all probably be aware that anything less than acceptance is true death....” I warned quietly.

I was certain that Victor would choose Silence. With how much Drew was helping us, she had to be an important contact. If he chose someone else, then I could just say I heard wrong. I didn’t think I was wrong, though. Having Silence would be a benefit to Victor.

“I’ll get the word out to the other servants around town. Thanks, Echo. I don’t think Silence would say no, but I don’t want to have her die if she decided to be difficult.” He said, gratefully.

“Just like you, I would do anything to help my master. He likes Silence, it would be a shame if she died. So I want to make sure she knows in advance.”

“We’ll head out. I’ll let her know when she gets up and start the phone tree so everyone knows to tell their masters.” Drew told me as he got in his car and rolled down the window. “Don’t piss him off. Stay safe.”

“You, too. See you in the morning.” I waved him off and turned back to the house.

That worked out well. I was never above lying if it got me what I wanted. Even if Master Marius made me leave, I’d secured the supports Victor desired. He would be safer now, especially with all of the vampires in the city knowing he was backed by someone called ‘Death’.