

## Chapter 17 - The Vampire's Servant

I was thrilled! He didn't want me and was willing to do what I wanted instead of killing me. Victor wouldn't know what we avoided, but it wasn't as important as the fact that we avoided it.

This meant I would get to have the life I wanted. I would finally be safe and I would get to keep Victor. I was going to be the best human servant ever.

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I looked at my phone. Nearly four-fifteen. I still had time. I went downstairs to start the gaming consoles updating. The gate buzzer went off.

With a sigh I answered it.

“Hello?”

“We have a delivery for Ms. ‘Creepers’.” A male voice said.

I nearly snorted. “I’ll open the gate for you. Thank you.”

Hitting the button, I went to open the front door and wait. A large truck pulled around and three men got out. One approached me with a machine for me to sign. I convinced them to take the large chest upstairs for me. They set it outside Rosalynn’s room and left.

The consoles would have to wait. That took fifteen minutes and I needed to get my laundry folded. Once it was finished, I dropped Rosalynn’s clothes on the chest outside her room and took mine to put away. I straightened my bed and went to Victor’s room.

He would be up in five minutes. I was curious. Earlier, I’d seen what he looked like while sleeping, I wanted to see what he looked like when he was waking up.

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I turned on his lamp, crawled up on the bed, and sat next to him. One minute, he was a blank, empty vessel, then he moved like a person sleeping. It was like he was suddenly filled with himself. He snuggled down in the blankets and smiled.

“I can smell you, Echo. What are you doing?” He chuckled.

“I wanted to see you wake up. Do you like the heated blanket?” I asked.

“It’s heavenly. You have made this the best rest I’ve had in years. Though, there is one thing bothering me.” Victor wrinkled his nose.

“What?”

“Why do I have two conflicting memories in my head? I remember finding out your sire was Master Marius, but I also remember finding out he was Master Marius’ sire.” He said confusedly.

I hadn’t counted on that. Marius said I was the only one to resist his hypnosis. Did drinking my blood make him immune. Did it work on Rosalynn? Oh, no! I didn’t want to die. It should have worked.

“Are you immune to mind control or hypnosis, Victor?” I asked.

He held out a necklace I’d never noticed. “This protects me from losing memories as I sleep. I purchased it when I was hunting Springer. I ran afoul of some fae who erased my memory every time I left their home. I spent three months getting the same information from them. Care to enlighten me?” He quirked his eyebrow.

“Master Marius showed up after you went to bed.” I murmured.

He sat straight up and took my hand. “What did he do? Are you okay?”

“He watched me all day. I learned he was trying to use his hypnotism on me. It didn’t work. That made him a little mad. He wanted to drink my blood and find out who it was that he got pregnant.”

“Did he bite you?”

“No. I cut my finger and bled into a cup for him. He was angry when he figured it out. He’d forgotten, Victor. He said, since he died, he was never with a human woman before or after her. Marius worried about his credibility. I worried he’d decide to kill everyone. I convinced him to change your and Rosalynn’s memories so you would remember it being his sire, not him. Then just not lie about anything else. He didn’t like the idea of lying, but this worked for him. You can’t tell anyone ever, or, I’m pretty sure, he’ll kill us.” I confided.

“Very smart, Echo. I’ll let Rosy take the lead on this then. He’ll know I’m lying if I pretend not to know. What was his decision about your future?”

“He’s letting me do what I want and offering his protection as his sire’s child. Can I stay with you, Victor? Will you keep me?” I asked.

He grinned and hugged me. “Yes. You’re mine, Echo. I’m never letting you go.”

“Good. I like you, Victor. You’re my first friend.” I hugged him back.

We hugged for a while, mostly from relief, then he climbed out of bed and got dressed while I straightened up his bedding. I took him downstairs, showed him the new TV, and got the consoles started updating.

After, I showed him the new computer in his office. He got it all updated and set up with his information. Rosalynn came to the office later and sat.

“Any word on when Master Marius will be here?” She asked.

“He arrived shortly after we went to bed, according to Echo.” Victor answered.

“He’s resting in one of the guest rooms right now. He confirmed what you told him on the call.” I told her.

“Wow. The child of one of the first vampires ever. He was our sire’s sire as well. No wonder your blood is so powerful. It looks like you’re free to stay here then. He’s been dead since before I was turned.” Rosalynn smiled.

“Yes. Marius told me he would protect me and whatever I decided to do with my life. I decided to be Victor’s servant. For now, at least.” I responded.

“You called him ‘Marius’.” Her eyes widened.

“He told me to. He’ll be awake a little after full dark. We should decide where you’re taking me to dinner. I had a long and annoying day. Having a meal I don’t have to cook or clean up after, would be nice.” I chuckled.

“Why don’t you go check on the video game systems, Echo? We can discuss it in a little while. I need to confirm our report and get a little work done for the territory.” Victor suggested.

He was sending me away. I hoped he didn’t mess this up. He was over eight-hundred years old. At some point he had to have learned about keeping secrets. I smiled and headed to the family room.

I still had time before I had to go turn on the blanket for Marius. It was a good time to try and figure out how these consoles worked.

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[Victor]

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To say I was impressed with Echo’s quick thinking, would be a massive understatement. She was right in her assessment. Master Marius would have killed everyone involved to keep his secret.

When she left, I had Rosy pull the report and fixed the part where we said she was Marius' child. Rosy was confused, I told her we were so surprised, that I was certain there would be a mistake. Having found and corrected it was a relief to me.

"I'm usually more careful about these reports." She sighed.

"I understand. It was quite unexpected. Master Marius will give us the last name his sire used so we can change 'Master Marius' sire' to a name others will know. If he doesn't remember, we can contact The Traveler and ask her. No wonder our Echo has such powerful blood. Maybe he can help us figure out how to train her." I said.

"You say 'us' like I'm staying. I have my own territory to care for. You can keep your little frontier backwater." Rosy winked.

"You're just jealous. I'll forgive you this time." I huffed jokingly.

"Sensitive boy." She scoffed.

I worked on updating the vampire census for the area. The boxes from the office of the last master of the territory had been delivered just after I was notified of my ascension to office. They were jumbled and messy. Rosy helped me organize them a little last night, and it looked like all my free time for a while would go into the project.

What was most important now, was getting my supports in place and knowing exactly how many vampires I was leading. There hadn't been a master in this area for over a hundred years. No wonder Springer ran here. It really was a frontier backwater and just as lawless.

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Echo came into my office some time later. She carried a tea service and set it down on my desk. Picking up the teapot, she poured the most beautiful smelling tea I'd ever scented. I wasn't a huge tea fan, so I was intrigued.

"You know we don't drink anything but blood, right, Echo?" Rosy chuckled.

"This is blood tea. I got the recipe from Drew. It's a mixture of blood, water, and tea leaves. It gives the illusion of not being a bloodsucking fiend, while still being a bloodsucking fiend." Echo winked.

I laughed. The look on Rosy's face was priceless. She hadn't believed me about how different Echo could be as she became more comfortable. Knowing she was safe created a big change in her.

"The tea is lovely, Echo. Thank you. Have you thought at all on where you'd like to go to dinner? I just have a couple more things to wrap up before I can start looking." I smiled.

“I have it narrowed to a couple choices... but ordering in might be better. It’s weird to be the only person at a table eating. I’d rather eat at home.” She blushed.

“If we take a little blood to drop into something like soup, we can eat. We’ll just say we’re on a liquid diet.” I offered.

“We? I thought it was just you and me... okay. That should work. I have one idea that has a good soup menu actually. Carroll’s is the name of the place. Val took his girlfriend there... his ex-girlfriend. She dumped him on that date, but the food was good.” She grinned.

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The door opened and I saw Master Marius for the first time in centuries. Rosy and I stood, bowing to him. Echo walked out of the room while we were bowed. I suppose she didn’t feel the need to stand on formality. I’d have to talk to her about that.

“Sit down.” He ordered and took a seat in the chair next to Rosy.

Echo returned with another tea cup and poured him some of the tea.

“Thank you, Echo.” He nodded.

“There’s sugar and cream in the little cups on the tray. I’ll go straighten up your rooms while you meet.” She bowed briefly and left.

Marius sipped the tea and relaxed. I tried it and it was pretty good. Rosy added some sugar to hers before enjoying it.

Even Geoff hadn’t arranged anything like this for me before. I wondered if his recipes were still in my storage. I should get them for Echo.

“So, as you may know, I came to verify the information you gave me over the phone. I have tasted her blood and agree with your conclusion.” Master Marius stated.

“What was the last name your master went by? We need it for our report.” I asked.

“Balouris was the last name he went by.”

“Thank you.” I said, adding it into the official report. “How long are you planning to visit with us, Master Marius?”

“Your servant has roped me into backing you while you get your territory settled. I’ll be popping in every evening to assist in those efforts. I want my room kept so I can sleep here if I decide. I need to have my servant go get some of those warming blankets for my bed back home. I never even thought of it.” Master Marius responded.

“I thought the exact same thing.” Rosy agreed.

I was proud of Echo for thinking of it and of other ways she was improving our lives. More than anything, it cemented my belief that this was a good decision for both of us.

“Did you want to come to dinner with us, Master Marius? I was taking Echo out as a reward for her hard work.” I offered.

“That sounds amusing. I’ll go.” He smirked. It was the closest thing to a smile I’d ever seen on his face.