

FEAR OF THE UNSEEN: SURGE OF SUPERNATURALS

(BOOK 1 OF ANNIE'S NEMESIS)

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To those who have ever felt the weight of the unseen,

To the dreamers who dance in the shadows,

And to the fighters who confront the darkness within.

This book is for you—may you find the courage to face your fears, and the strength to discover the light that guides you home.

CHAPTER ONE

How it all began

I had a tough time in university. I could hardly get enough sleep at night because I was busy researching books and working on projects. However, despite the fatigue, I found comfort in my family's love and support. My mother worked hard at her fruit stand, and my brother Fred, who was the smartest of all, was my rock. We faced challenges together, but our bond remained strong. Everything changed when my father disappeared when I was only six years old, but we persevered and found happiness amid hardship. Little did I know, my life was about to change a lot.

SCHOOL

I exited the school library, glanced to my right, and then adjusted my eyeglasses. After that, I continued walking at a steady pace, holding my book close to my chest. A fellow student greeted me with a "Hey, Annie," and I responded with a happy smile.

Soon after, a female voice called out my name. I stopped and turned around, knowing exactly who it was. Sofia hurried over to me and draped her arm around my neck.

"What are you up to now, Sofia?" I asked, somewhat annoyed.

Sofia is known to have psychopathic tendencies. She also studied history. Despite her delightful appearance – with striking light hair and a face that could turn heads – it was her captivating lips and enchanting gaze that truly stood out, leaving

a trail of admirers in her wake. I sighed and turned my eyes to the side as she softly called my name. Her intense gaze felt like that of an angry lion. She sneered.

"What's going on in that devious mind of yours?" she asked.

"Nothing," I replied firmly.

"Can you come with me to the museum? I need to check out some things there. You know how strict Teacher Tim is about assignments. The deadline is tomorrow," Sofia said urgently. I looked at her blankly.

"Did he give us an assignment?" I asked, looking puzzled.

"Annie, stop joking. I know you could have at least attempted it," Sofia snapped.

"I swear, I haven't even opened the book," I insisted.

"So, that's a yes to my request. You and I are going to the museum. You know that ninety percent of the questions require pictures," she said.

"What time?" I asked as I flagged down a taxi.

"Three o'clock at the usual spot."

"See you," I said and got into the taxi. I sank back into the seat, letting out a tired yawn.

HOME

I rushed into our cabin, everything was just as it should be. Now, I'm back with the one thing I will never compromise on my family. My family is the one thing you should never mess with.

I could hear the sounds of cooking coming from the kitchen as I sneaked in. There she was, my

mom. I kissed her cheek and put my arms around her waist.

"Smells good. You're always the best chef."

"Thanks, dear. How was school today?"

"Frustrating as usual."

"I'll be back," I shouted as I dashed to my room.

I opened the door and took a deep breath. It was exactly the way I left it. I walked past my study table and my mug suddenly fell off the table, startling me.

"Are you okay?" my mother called from the kitchen.

"I'm fine," I replied and bent down to pick up the pieces, muttering, "That's odd."

After undressing, I took a quick shower and emerged with a small towel wrapped around my hair and another around my body.

My phone buzzed on the table. As I walked over to it, I felt

a flutter in my chest at the sight of the name on the screen.

Noah! My secret crush. I hesitated for a moment before answering the call.

"Hello, Noah," I said nervously.

"Annie, you don't sound okay. Is something wrong?" Noah asked.

"I'm fine," I replied.

"Do you have time tonight? I'd like to take you to the karaoke machine. It's been a while since we sang, and I'm bored," Noah suggested, and I was tempted to agree. But what would I tell Sofia? And what about my assignment?

"Are you there?" his voice interrupted from the other end.

"I have somewhere else to go, Noah. Maybe some other time. Bye," I hurriedly ended the call.

"That was close," I muttered, clutching my phone to my chest.

Noah is also a history buff. He didn't always act the same way, so I didn't always have to show that I had a crush on him. Besides, the female employees in the department keep an eye on him. Since I didn't consider myself attractive, why bother? I picked a simple blouse and jeans from my closet. I couldn't wear makeup because it was summer. After all, I'm a simple dresser. I grabbed my bag and hurried out of the room, accidentally bumping into my mother.

"Where are you off to?" she asked, sounding curious.

"I have a project to finish with Sofia. The deadline for submission is tomorrow. Can I go now?" I mumbled, scratching my hair with my fingertip. Before leaving the house, she reminded me, "Make sure you wash your hair tomorrow," and I kissed her cheek.

As I walked down the quiet street, I felt like someone was following me. The fear that had gripped me a few moments ago resurfaced. I felt it wasn't safe anymore, so I started running. Luckily, I was wearing sneakers. The museum was only two streets away from my home.

"I guess fear is a good thing," I said to myself. "Where is she?" I panted heavily as I looked around for her.

I grabbed a milkshake that appeared in front of me and drank all of its icy liquid.

"You're dying, darling. Have you been running?" Sofia teased. I nodded. Sofia put her arm around my neck as she always does and took a few selfies. I grimaced as the flash from the phone hit my face.

"Can we get to work now?" I muttered. She pouted and handed me a ticket, and we headed into the main building.

Inside the historical center, numerous magnificent paintings were displayed on the wall. I saw two pictures of Napoleon Hills. I grinned as I recalled how my dad compared himself with Napoleon Hills. He would read a portion of his books to us many times.

Everything disappeared later, and there was no call to remember all of that because now I see it as past times. I continued my steps.

On a large table, ancient North Korean pots were neatly arranged. I could figure out it was from the Joseon time frame. Bronze and steel blades were put cautiously in a glass box. Nearly everything about this piqued my interest.

“Are you in tears?” Sofia asked with her cheek and brow squeezed.

I laughed and replied, “No,” cleaning my face with the rear of my palm.

“Keep in mind, the best photograph and portrayal generally get the best grade. You can never beat me, you know,” Sofia said proudly.

“How about we do it, baby,”

We began our journey after she chuckled.

The two of us parted ways. I drew out my camera and started to make a few efforts. I snapped pictures of old paintings, mostly of Koreans. I was completely enamored with their attractive faces. Sofia suddenly began to run toward me.

“Come look at this, Annie,” Sofia practically shouted. Her words stifled her.

I followed her with my camera hanging from my neck. I followed her down the hallway.

We got to the furthest limit of the way, and she started to grin thoughtfully. I was confused, and I had to look at her in disdain.

“Might it be said that you are going crazy or what? Nothing exists here.”

“Presumably nothing,” She murmured and opened an entryway

that I didn't see was standing before us.

“Wow!!” I exclaimed. I raised my head, taking not many looks at the entryway. An inscription that was boldly written on the door caught my eye. Sofia groaned as I dragged her by the collar.

“Understand this?” I gave orders.

“Try not to go in. Restricted Space,” She read aloud.

“And what's that all about?” I continued my questioning.

“Hey now, this is true business. Being students, it's always nice to look around. Try not to be the edgy one, we are in the same boat.” With a pat on my shoulder, Sofia said.

I moaned and watched her enter completely. I just feel strange, or am I dreaming?

“Perhaps I'm too uptight,” I murmured and entered.

The spot gave off the impression of being a lobby. Candles provided the other light sources; there were only a few bulbs. Obsession things were out of control. I gritted my teeth as everything played fast in my memory. After taking a deep breath, I avoided touching anything as I made my way to Sofia. The door slammed so suddenly and unexpectedly behind us. Our hearts nearly broke our rib cages.

“Things are getting frightening now,” Sofia said with insecure lips.

“I knew. I warned you,” I replied, trembling.

The bulbs exploded like a time bomb as the candlelight went out. Everywhere became dull. So we drew out our phones from our packs.

“Oh God!” I murmured.

“What’s the matter?” Sofia asked with concern.

“My battery has run out.”

“We can utilize mine, it’s as yet fifteen percent.”

She suggested and flipped the light symbol. I could feel a remarkable quality. I didn’t have the foggiest idea how or who? I was not a strong Christian, so it never happened to me before. Each occasion existing apart from everything else was convoluted. As we made our way slowly to the door, we simultaneously began vigorously banging on it. In any case, perhaps nobody realized we were here. From the center of the room, a hoarse voice said, “You can do better than that.”

“What! Did you hear that?” I asked Sofia.

Sofia responded, “Yes, I did.”

I started to push ahead, to whence the voice came from. Sofia followed me.

“What’s happening with you?” she inquired.

“I don’t know,” I murmured.

The entire area was covered in fog, making it difficult for us to move further. We halted and I held Sofia’s hand.

“It will be fine,” I murmured, squeezing her hand gently.

I felt a warm touch on my shoulder, and Sofia also reported feeling a warm touch on her shoulder. We all the while turned our heads around, and screams erupted from our mouths. It was a man in a beast-like mask. The mist covered us all, and the final thing I heard him say before I blacked out was “At last.”

UNKNOWN PLACE

Gradually, my eyes began to open. Initially, everything was hazy, but soon everything became clear.

"Where are you?" I called out to Sofia as I took several shots of my surroundings. I found myself in an enclosure, with Sofia lying next to me. I rushed to her limp body and gave her a slight push. She moaned, and I murmured, "Where could we be?"

Sitting up, she asked, "Can you see anything?" "Look for yourself," I said, moving away from her and then leaning against the iron bars. Sofia gasped and crawled closer to me, but I hissed as she leaned on me. She made a mess, and I didn't think I could forgive her after getting out of this mess.

"I'm sorry," she whispered in my ear.

Tears streamed down my cheeks. I moved away from her, thinking that having Sofia near me would only cause more trouble. She started to

cry, but none of that could change the current situation.

"You've been my best friend all this time, and I appreciate how you've dealt with my constant problems. But leaving now when we need each other won't help," Sofia mumbled.

"I appreciate all your efforts in putting me through endless difficulties. But now it's time for you to leave, Sofia. You are truly awful," I snapped.

"Always wrong and unsettled. You didn't say that either," I glared at her. She started to chuckle softly. What's wrong with her? The expression on her face betrayed our connection.

"Your looks. You are very much like a beast from a youngster's story. This is one more component of tomfoolery. How about we use our..." "Brains!" I cut into her discourse. As I

stood, my lips curled into a smile. I raised my voice and began to curse. “Hey, scumbags. Is that to perform tasks? Is it safe to say that you are even people?” “Simple bingo, that wasn’t the very thing that I implied,” Sofia said, laughing.

“What did you say?” With a smug grin, I inquired. In the first place, she called me a beast, and presently I’m a canine. How I wish I realized that was my endpoint, what I would turn into.

“I needed to say that we ought to utilize our last minutes to bid farewell. Not this, you’re not making a difference,” She said, and my eyelids fell. For what reason would she say she was not thinking about energy? I pushed the contemplations off my skull, she was generally similar to that.

“Could we at any point share our last insider facts?” Sofia offered. That was all I could think of as a way to lift spirits. So I caved.

“You go first,” She said.

“I have no mysteries to reveal because it's at this point not a mystery that I need to kill you,” I sneered.

“Lies,” She murmured. Might it be said that she was attempting to torture me or something different? What else does she believe I'm concealing?

“Nothing else,” I replied.

“So, you're dating Noah?” She surprised me by asking me.

In any case, how could she know that? No one is familiar with my affection for Noah. I haven't enlightened her on anything concerning him.

“First of all, who informed you of that?” “No one. Recently speculated.”

“Fine. We aren't dating. But I kind of like him,” I continued to explain. I was perplexed when her expression changed. She ought to be content that I, at long last, fell in love with somebody, realizing completely well that I don't fancy folks. “I'm so glad for you,” was all she said once more.

“So, what's your cover story?” I asked, and she laughed.

Just right away, the entryway of the enclosure opened unlatched. Two colossal men came in, one with a little sack pack in his grasp. I began to fight for my freedom as soon as the other one grabbed my hands. The one with the sack pack strolled to Sofia and bowed. My mind went haywire after I double-checked myself. How

could he do that? I had a lot of unanswered questions pounding in my head. I can't wait to do some that were for Sofia.

They began to lead me like a sheep to an amateur as they wore the sack over my head. As we strolled, I heard arbitrary voices and serenades. Despite the sack on my head, the fragrance of incense could enter my nose. Where are they taking me to?

I've seen movies and documentaries where incense was mostly used in shrines and funerals. How is it that I could arrange this spot? My knees went to the ground as the massive men abruptly stopped walking and their hefty hands pressed hard on my shoulders. Hot tears streamed down my eyes as I winced.

"Take it off," I heard a manly voice say. One of them hauled the sack somewhere far away from

me generally, unsettling my hair. The very man that stole us sat on a bronze lofty position, the mythical beast-like cover was still on his head. Also bare was his chest. I saw myself bending over in the middle of a pentagram. Ladies wearing dull shrouds sat on the floor with their legs crossed. I couldn't understand what they started saying. A strong breeze was blowing, and the candle lights began to jive. Then a heel-clicking against the floor got very close to me. My head was bowed to the ground for all of these moments. I had no other choice except to cry. My tears ruined the earth underneath me. The figure remained before me, and gradually I raised my head. It was Sofia, wearing a full illustrious formal attire. The relationship between her and these people was the first thing I asked myself. Was she a cultist as well? I had

lots of inquiries, however, there was nobody to respond to them since I never again stayed with people.

On earth, these were demons. A lady dressed only the same way as Sofia came into the enormous corridor. In her hand, she held a shawl. Also, I knew there was something in it. A red, thick scarf held her hair in place, and as she walked, the gown's remnants gracefully swept the floor. Another man showed up additionally from the wall. Approaching the lady. He carefully gathered the shawl and presented it to the dragon-faced man. The distribution also stopped there.

“May the wolves live forever!” The covered man articulated.

“Wolves we are! Spies in masks!” The others chorused.

“Without a lot of ado, brothers,” the veiled man began, revealing the wrap. A child's voice started to reverberate in the corridor, and the sound was coming from the cloak. How was he going to manage the honest kid? I watched him cautiously, and my pulses appeared to duplicate consistently when I heard the child shout.

“Siblings, the day we anticipated has come. After nonstop disappointments and preliminaries, the genuine article has appeared. The prescience, and the desire for our future.”

“Sofia, what's going on? Converse with me,” I cried, yet it appeared to be that nobody in the room could hear my cry. The masked man opened his palm. A small knife appeared on it, like a fairy. As I awaited his next move, I watched with keen interest. The child wriggled in his arm, crying uproariously, however, he

didn't flinch. He drops the child on a heap of stones which was likely a special raised area. He sinks the blade into the unfortunate youngster's chest, its blood sprinkling on his chest and veil. The child's voice stops, signaling the end of its story. I started imagining how my story would end in the same way. My obliviousness dazed me from knowing my future was more terrible. The covered man depletes the blood of the kid into a cup. Additionally, the sight almost made me vomit. The government must have been aware of this deceit. However, I wasn't sure if they were aware. To my furthest astonishment, he passes the cup to the one who gave him the kid. Furthermore, without an order, he drank from the cup. Without any end in sight, they passed the cup to the last individual.

“You may be pondering, what on earth is going on? What am I doing here? Furthermore, who are these individuals?” Sofia inquired. I frowned. That was not Sofia I was familiar with. “What are you referring to? Why did they treat you this way?”

“How have they treated you?” She impersonated me.

"I need to come clean." Sofia said in a dry voice as she transformed into a terrifying being. "I've been watching you," it said, "Every minute of your life, Annie," as the whole image materialized. I heard that clearly and wished the ground would swallow me. I had no idea that a demon had been constantly watching me, that my best friend was a demon, and that I had been in a relationship with a demon. Wait! Did it also

use Sofia's image to observe me? The betrayal was worse than I could have imagined.

Standing boldly in front of me, it declared, "I am Makesh."

"Annie, let me in!" Makesh bellowed. Was this demonic possession? I've heard that demons exerted control over their victims' bodies. The victims never stood a chance. Was this where my fate was leading me?

"No!" I shouted.

"Relax, Annie," the masked man said, descending the steps.

"It's a simple process and not difficult. All you need to do is submit to his control," the masked man spoke calmly.

"Take a deep breath, Annie," he said. I followed his instructions and felt relaxed.

"Clear your mind, like clearing a computer's cache," he instructed again. My stomach started to feel warm. At first, my throat became dry, and then the sensation flowed down through my body. My spirit felt like it was burning, and I could feel Makesh consuming every part of me. I immediately shut down.

I gasped as I returned to reality. I realized I was in the arms of the man in the mask. I stood up straight, and he laughed. He held my hand, gently squeezing my fingers. We began to walk down the corridor, leaving everyone else astonished. He continued to hold my hand and said, "You have a lot to learn."

"I'm still lost. I need to go back home," I said.

"That will have to wait until tomorrow morning. The police are looking for you. And since that

entity currently resides within you, anything can happen,” he suggested.

“I see. So how long does it need to stay within me?” I asked curiously. After a brief pause, he turned to face me. I could sense that he was looking at me through that mask. I waved my hand across his face and said, “Hmm.”

“Until we find another vessel,” he said firmly.

“So, you transfer the demon to different individuals, right?” I inquired.

“Not entirely. How would you feel about that?”

He redirected the conversation skillfully.

“Somewhat strange. But it’s nothing, I will be fine,” I assured him.

“Do you think so?” he asked again.

“I am fine,” I answered, and he murmured. I gave him a long look. He sounded thoughtful, and I began to appreciate it. But wait!

He kidnapped me, and I'm thinking that I should plan his downfall. My thoughts were racing. He started to leave, and I watched his image slowly vanish. But then, a question slipped from my lips. Assertively, I asked as loudly as possible, “Who are you?!”

CHAPTER TWO

Isolation

I pondered the possible outcome of my irrelevant question as he came to a stop on his path. I could only see one side of the mask when he turned his head. The mask was emitting a red light, which I could see. I felt scared. How does a captive attempt to learn about its captor? As Sofia always does, I was beginning to make a mess. She was with me now. I turned around with a sigh.

He said, “Go to sleep,” and then vanished.

I was led into a room by a woman who approached me. When I entered, the beautiful place was lit with candles, which created an amazing atmosphere. The features were

excellent, and the scent of the perfume was just right for me. I immediately wanted to work with these people because of this. They did a good job styling. I started to understand why Sofia wore that outfit. The woman said, “Goodnight, great one,” bowing her head, and then she left. Surprised, I stood there with my mouth wide open, feeling more and more attracted to the place. This was how power felt to me, and I didn't want to let it go.

As I threw myself onto the king-size bed, I mumbled, “I missed Sofia.” In my head, I heard a voice say, “But I am still here.” I immediately sat up. Was I losing my mind? Wait! I rubbed my eyes with both of my palms.

“Who are you?” I asked, holding a pillow close to me out of nervousness.

Makesh mocked once more, “Still the same weird Annie that I know.”

“Where are you now? Present yourself! I have no fear!” In my rage, I yelled and roared.

“Bitch, in your head,” Makesh finally said, “It's Makesh.”

“This is beyond belief. Can you be heard by anyone else?” I inquired in complete astonishment.

“No, just by the person who carries me. All in all, what should we discuss?”

“This is unsettling. Shut up! You still haven't won my forgiveness,” I said.

He snarled at me, “Neither me.”

He said, “Goodnight,” and I relaxed on the bed.

Makesh is lovable, funny, and kind of sweet. I was beginning to understand that having him live with me was also a way for me to get over

boredom. I was developing a liking for him. He was also submissive. I laughed.

"Stop making your thoughts bother me. Am I attempting to rest here?" he grinned. I chuckled softly, and as the steady process continued, I closed my eyes and slept with a grin on my face.

ANNIE'S BUILDING: NEXT DAY

EMERALD'S PERSPECTIVE (ANNIE'S MOM)

I couldn't sleep as I waited for my daughter to return all night. By 7:00 a.m., there was still no sign of her. I contacted the police, but they couldn't find her either. She wasn't seen on the museum's CCTV footage, and her phone was turned off. This was unusual for her, and I was worried. When I heard a loud noise, I went to the kitchen and saw Annie stumbling into the house. She seemed exhausted and went straight to the

living room. I was surprised by her strange behavior and decided to investigate.

“Good morning, Mother,” she greeted me casually as I stood in front of her, blocking her way to her room. I demanded to know where she had been last night, but she just stared at me and then laughed. I couldn't tell if she was drunk because she didn't smell like alcohol. She pushed me aside and I hurt my elbow as I fell. She closed the door and bolted out while Fred, seeing my state, came to help me.

“What happened?” he asked, concerned.

“I'll tell you later. For now, let's treat my wound,” I replied.

ANNIE'S ROOM: ANNIE'S PERSPECTIVE

As I went to my reading table, I knocked over all the books on it. I felt a surge of anger, but it didn't feel like normal rage. I couldn't figure out

where I was. It was a Saturday, so I didn't have any classes, which was a relief. I felt dizzy and heard many voices. In my distress, I screamed, causing the room to shake. I grabbed a pill from the floor and chewed it without water. Suddenly, everything went black.

After some hours, I opened my eyes. I saw a trail of books scattered around the room and messy hair. What happened? I wondered. I felt better, but I couldn't remember anything that had happened. I nearly screamed when I checked the wall clock and saw that it was already 7:30 p.m. "How many hours of sleep did I get?" I cried out. A strong wind had broken the glass of my window. As I went to check it, I saw a man wearing a mask and a cloak outside. "Does he ever take it off? And why is he here?" I muttered

to myself as I opened the door and left the room, feeling disoriented.

I walked into the living room, but nobody was there. Had they all gone to bed already? I sighed and went to the kitchen. I grabbed a bag of cheese balls and tore it open with my nails. I dug my fingers into it and started eating, also grabbing a bottle of water. I went back to the sofa and sat down. As I ate, I remembered the man in the mask.

I went to the window again, and even without opening the blinds, I felt his red eyes on me. His gaze always triggered something in me, something that made him seem familiar. I ran to Fred's room and knocked several times.

"Fred, are you in there? I need to tell you something."

There was no answer, so I went to my mother's room. I knocked twice, and she opened the door with tired eyes.

"What is it?" she asked.

"Fred isn't in his room."

"He went out to see his friends," she said, yawning loudly, and closed the door in my face. I muttered and turned around. I couldn't run from the situation; I was already involved. I rushed to my room, grabbed a hoodie, and put it on quickly. It was getting dark outside, and I wondered why. I ran into the empty street and found nothing.

"He was here, where did he go?" I asked myself. Perhaps I was just imagining things? I muttered and turned around, accidentally coming across a tall figure. I looked up and caught a glimpse of

his hood. I tried to shout, but he covered my mouth with his hand.

"What's happening to you?" He asked softly.

"You scared me," I yelled.

"I said I intended to teach you. I didn't say when," he said.

"What are you doing here?"

"We have a lot to discuss. Come with me," he said, extending his hand. I placed mine on his gloved palm and let out a nervous laugh. We walked down the path, heading to an empty park. There was a bench in a secluded corner, and we sat there.

"It's hot here. How can you stand wearing that hood?" I asked, taking off my own. He removed his gloves, and I heard him laugh. I saw a distinct tattoo on the back of his hand. It was a

wolf's head with its mouth open, and I felt like I had seen it somewhere before.

"Annie?" He called, and I coughed.

"Are you okay?"

"I'm fine. You said you wanted to talk. I'm all ears," I replied.

"Ever wondered about the origin of our group? And why were we called the wolves? Who do we work for? Have you?"

"I have. And I also wondered why you care about me so much. You should be out there looking for another victim," I scoffed.

"Maybe that's why he chose you," I heard him say.

"What? Who?"

"The master. Could you ever just be quiet and listen?" He sneered.

"Fine," I muttered, folding my arms and scowling.

"Our group was founded a long time ago, around the year 2000. It started as an after-school club, and we were taught some lessons by the one we call the master, or Alpha."

"We adopted the lifestyle of wolves, holding meetings only on the night of the full moon." He paused and turned to me.

To be honest, I couldn't take my eyes off him. I listened intently to everything he said, as he spoke in a low voice before continuing.

"However, everything changed drastically after the master returned from his trip to Chicago. He began talking about power and how it needed to be forcefully pursued. We delved deeper into extraordinary abilities, his words deeply impacting our minds. It spread like a virus in our

thoughts, and we began to crave it. The desire to tap into the same source of power he did. Do you know what usually comes with power?"

"There's always a price to pay for it. That's if you are going to attain the power," I responded, becoming more intrigued by his story.

"That's amazing. Where did you learn that from?" he asked.

"From my father. Could you please continue?" I urged.

"There is always a cost to pay. When the next full moon arrived, we gathered in the forest as expected. There were ten of us: three young ladies and the rest young men. We formed a circle, and he appeared in our midst. We all gasped; his presence ignited our thirst for power. He asked if we were ready, and we all chorused

yes. He inquired if we were willing to do whatever it takes to get what we desired, and we all agreed. Then, he began chanting spells."

He paused briefly, arching his back and leaning on his knees for support.

"What about you? What happened to me?"

"Did an evil spirit possess you?" I asked, looking scared.

"Yes, evil spirits. They emerged from the lake where the master used to drink. The master warned us that the devil would try to exploit our mental strength. However, it was all a lie. It seeks to exploit you and your spirit. I felt its presence more strongly during the next full moon."

"What happened?" I asked anxiously. "I killed someone. My girlfriend. My mother left when I

was six. My father was a cop, always busy. So, I was left all alone." He paused and cried.

"She visited me, and as we were making out. Something came over me. I crushed her head, it was a merciless homicide. I took her to the forest covering her there. It was at absolutely no point ever me in the future, after that. I avoided individuals, acknowledging anybody so near me generally gets injured. I exited school, leaving for Los Angeles. There I went through certain long periods of my life before returning to build my pack. I started recruiting members. And guess what? The more members I had, the stronger I became. I didn't set my eyes on the master again. But I have this feeling that he will be here on the next full moon."

"What!! Why would he come?"

"I have up to ten members now. It's a ritual, and I am expecting him." I heard him chuckle after saying that.

'Psychopath' I mumbled inwardly.

"All this has nothing to do with me. I am only concerned about something," I said with a disapproving frown.

"What?"

"I had this strange dream a few hours ago."

"Not a dream. A sign" he scoffed.

"Since you killed someone on the full moon, does that mean I would do the same"

"Absolutely. And don't think of control yet. You aren't a werewolf."

"Don't you know any solution? I don't want to be a murderer like you" I retorted

"You might be worse. The only way to avoid spilling blood is to stay away from the ones you love. Everyone if possible" he advised.

"This is crazy!" I exclaimed

"That's why you need me," he added.

"It's getting late and you should go to bed. We can discuss more of this later." He advised.

"I will kill you if anything strange happens"

"Expecting you. Your countdown has also started. Forty-eight hours from now, you can decide your plain fate"

"Any tips to avoid that idiot speaking in my head?" I was provoked by the usual intrusion of Makesh in my mind. Honestly, he has been snarling in my head.

"Still simple. Those demons are cunning, always trying to twist their way through you. You just have to be yourself and you are safe. Don't rely

on anything, because things are relying on you now" he advised and I smiled

"What if...

"No more questions. Go home" he roared

"Did you do that to frighten me?" I asked giggling.

"Maybe?" He said putting both hands behind his back.

I said "Goodnight" with a broad smile on my lips. He made me happy this evening. I would walk a little and turn around, only to see him still staring at me. This I did, until I got home

Ugh, I entered my room quietly and bolted the door carefully afterward. Then I rested my back on the door, sliding it down till my butt hit the floor.

"Isolation?" I questioned myself with a frustratingly bizarre look on my face.

CHAPTER THREE

The Full Moon

The time passed quickly, and I was startled when the alarm went off. I left the house in a rush without having breakfast because Sofia wasn't there, so I had to walk to school alone. I walked as fast as I could, feeling my breath quicken. I had the same terrifying dream again last night, and it frightened me.

I sighed bitterly when I realized I had forgotten something: my assignment. "Oh, man," I muttered and turned around. A masked figure stood before me, holding out the book I had forgotten.

"Seems you forgot something," he said.

"Yeah, how did you know that?" I asked, feeling curious and relieved. He tilted his head to the right.

"Thanks, by the way," I said with a smile as I began to walk to school. He started following me.

I stopped, and he stopped too. 'Is he following me?' I asked myself silently. I started walking again, and he did too.

"What do you want?" I asked as he put his hands behind his back, as he always did.

"Nothing. I just want to walk you to school," he said, and I sighed. "Okay," I replied, and we started walking together.

"Don't you have a name?" I asked.

"I have, but no one has ever asked."

"Can you tell me?"

"Elijah."

"That's a cute name. I wonder why you always wear that scary mask?" I pressed further.

"I know where you are heading, but I can't remove this mask," he replied sharply.

"Then you should stop following me. This isn't a Halloween party," I remarked in disgust.

"Fine. I'll leave," he said softly and turned around to go.

'Will he leave?' I screamed in my head, and then I started walking. Suddenly, he called my name. I turned swiftly, our eyes meeting. The morning light highlighted his flawless face, and his lips were as red as fresh tomatoes.

I couldn't help but wonder if such handsomeness truly existed. He threw the mask into a nearby waste bin, and a bright smile appeared on his lips. "I guess it's time I drop that," he said, pointing at the waste bin. I was speechless.

"Annie," I heard him call, and I swallowed.

"Absolutely!" I shouted, and we headed off to school. With every step we took, I couldn't help but steal glances at his beautiful blue eyes. He looked elegant.

"We're here," he said, pulling me by the collar. I almost walked past the school. I just wished we could walk forever.

"Are you... okay?"

"Of course," I replied with a bright smile, and he returned it with a charming smile. A car door slammed loudly, and I turned to see who it was. I gasped and turned to Elijah.

"I have to go now. See ya," I waved.

"Stay safe, sweetheart," he warmly replied, looking at the person who had interrupted us earlier. It was Noah!

I ran into the class with my cheeks burning red. I had been blushing the whole time we walked, and I didn't care if Elijah noticed. He's so adorable. The bell rang, and I hurried to math class.

As the teacher taught, all I could hear were screams and groans of people in pain. I turned around and saw Noah staring at me. He smirked and tapped his pen on his desk.

"Any questions, Mr. Noah?" the teacher asked.

"No sir," Noah replied, and I sat properly.

I stared at my open book, and blood splashes filled it. 'Today is the full moon' boldly inscribed on it. I rubbed my eyes with my palm and it all cleared off. I began to pant heavily. Luckily, the bell jingled and I was the first to run out of the class.

LOCKER ROOM

The locker room was the only place where I could find peace. I opened my locker and rested my head on it. My head was aching badly, and I felt angry for no apparent reason, but the feeling only kept growing.

A soft hand touched my back, and a feminine voice whispered,

"The guy from earlier today, is he your boyfriend?"

I felt my mind relax as I turned to the girl who asked the question. I replied, "No," with a moody expression on my face. The anger had dissipated.

"Let's have lunch together," Noah said as he approached me. I gave him a look to express my refusal, but he insisted on dragging me along.

"You can't say no," Noah whispered as he pulled me along.

"Get your hands off me. I'm not one of those bitches you use" I barked.

"Are we talking about that now?" Noah snarled.

"I should get you to talk about a lot of things. Things like the guy you came with this morning, you coming home late on Saturday, walking like a moron on the road. You aren't alright Annie, and we need to talk"

CAFETERIA

Noah pulls me over to the counter. The female attendant had a smile on her face, which looked silly to me.

"I'll have a cup of latte, please," I said to the attendant.

"Same," Noah said sharply, resting his right elbow on the counter. I glanced at him and winked.

I scoffed. "He's not cute. Not even close to Elijah."

The barista placed two cups of latte on the counter and said, "Enjoy your latte." I picked up my cup and headed to a table. He followed me and sat across from me. As I sipped my drink, I noticed that he was staring at me without touching his latte. I was startled when he said something strange. "What did you say?" I asked, and he repeated it.

"That guy isn't your type. You know that right?" I chuckled as his words flowed shamelessly. "Who do you think is my type, Dad?" I asked him, crossing my hands on the table.

"Um... I don't know; I mean, how can I? I'm not a relationship counselor," Noah said, and I burst into a hot round of laughter. His looks made me laugh.

I used to have strong feelings for him, but things were changing quickly. His smiles and brown eyes no longer affect me. I started to realize that I was becoming distant. "I'm having a party in my condo tonight," he said. "And... why do I need to know?" I replied dryly. "Because I want you to be there," he added. "You should have invited Lydia first," I sneered.

"I wanted to tell you first. Can't you do better?"

"Congratulations. That's progress, telling me before Lydia,"

"Uh-huh."

"Jackpot!" I murmured. The bell rang, and I sighed.

"It's 8:00 pm. See you there," he said, packing his notes swiftly and leaving immediately.

"Biology class," I scoffed after checking my timetable. I grabbed my bag and went to the counter.

"How much?"

"Your boyfriend already paid," the attendant said with a silly smile.

"Oh. People won't stop amazing me," I murmured as I left.

BIOLOGY CLASS

Miss. Martin, a woman in her mid-30s, walked into the classroom gracefully. She was one of the most attractive teachers I've met since high school. Her deep blue eyes were exceptionally charming. She stood behind her desk, her black mini skirt clinging tight to her thighs, her Gucci blouse gripped her upper body firmly, exposing

half of her breast. She drops her textbook on the table. It dropped with a loud noise.

"Today, we will be divided into groups. Annie!"

I jumped when I heard my name called first.

"Join her over there," instructed the teacher, pointing to the front corner of the classroom.

The whole class burst into laughter. I took my book and went to where I was instructed. Her head was on the desk, and her strawberry-colored hair scattered around her shoulder. I could hear her sobs. I drew a chair closer and sat down. I tapped her back twice and asked in a whisper, "What's wrong with you?"

She raised her head slowly and replied, "Nothing. I'm alright."

"Is anything wrong, young lady?" Miss. Martins asked.

"We are good," I answered immediately.

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"Class, today we're discussing the intricate balance of neurotransmitters and hormones in our bodies. You see, serotonin, dopamine, and adrenaline play crucial roles in regulating our mood, behavior, and physical responses," Miss. Martin writes on the blackboard.

"Serotonin, for instance, influences mood, appetite, and sleep. Dopamine regulates pleasure, motivation, and reward. Adrenaline prepares our body for 'fight or flight' responses," she turns to face the class.

"Now, imagine an external influence disrupting this delicate balance. An imbalance can lead to mood swings, impulsive behavior, or even physical changes."

"The hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis, or HPA axis, regulates stress responses. When stressed, our bodies release cortisol and

adrenaline, preparing us for action," she adds and hands out diagrams illustrating the HPA axis.

"Understand, class, that hormonal fluctuations can significantly impact our lives. In some cases, external factors can manipulate our neurotransmitters and hormones, leading to unpredictable consequences."

As she spoke, my heartbeat slowed down as all she said was sticking with me. And I wrote as many things as I could hear her say.

The bell rang, and the entire class hurriedly gathered their belongings and packed their books into their bags.

"Your assignment: Research the effects of neurotransmitter imbalance and hormone regulation. Consider how external influences

might impact our biology." She shouted as we left.

I followed the girl I was paired with. She was walking fast. I increased my pace so I could catch up with her. I grabbed her hand and she stopped, turning around swiftly. She twisted her hand, but my grip was tight enough to restrict her current action. She rolled her eyes and I blinked. "Don't you get along with people?" I asked.

"People who don't notice me, they only act as if they care, and when I lean on them, they move away, leaving me to fall brutally."

"And you think I'm one of them?"

She sighed and looked straight into my eyes.

"Do you trust me?" I asked her.

"Really? We aren't acting in a drama here. You can't come out of nowhere and expect me to trust you," she scoffed.

"Just this once. Will you?"

She looked at my hand, which was still holding hers tightly, and I swallowed. Slowly, I released her, and she rubbed the area softly, with slight groans escaping her lips.

"Are you alright?" I asked softly.

"I'm fine," she replied. I looked at the area I had gripped her. It was so red! Did my hand do that? I think it must be something. Elijah's hint echoed in my mind: "If anything causes your pulse to rise, it takes control."

"Hey, are you there?" She waved her hand in front of my face and I flinched.

"I thought I was the weird one; maybe you are more. My name is Ella."

"I'm Annie," I replied with a graceful smile.

"Are you busy tonight?" I asked.

"No, I'm not. Is there a problem?"

"I wanted to know if you could come to Noah's party with me."

"That's okay. We can get to know each other more," Ella gave in, and we headed out of the school, chatting loudly.

ELIJAH'S MANSION

Elijah's loud voice could be heard in the background, indicating his intense anger. A young woman in her early twenties sat on the couch with her right leg crossed over her left, holding a cup of French champagne. She was dressed in denim jeans and a jacket, her smile indicating her confident nature. "What the hell are you doing here, Braeden?" Elijah asked angrily.

Braeden clicked her tongue. "Mmm..mm. Is that how you welcome your sister?"

Elijah scoffed. "You still haven't answered my question." He picked up a pack of cigarettes, opened it, took one out, lit it, and started smoking.

"I'm here to protect you!" Braeden responded, standing up and walking close to Elijah.

"Protect me! Are you insane?" Elijah retorted.

"Just a little bit. Because coming here was the craziest thing I have done," Braeden fired back.

"Then you leave. I don't see any use in having you here," Elijah commanded.

Braeden took off her jacket, revealing her black singlet. She threw the jacket on the couch and started going up the stairs. Elijah stared with his eyes wide, the cigarette stuck between his lips.

Braeden stopped and turned. "The hunters are in town."

ANNIE'S PERSPECTIVE

I was on the phone having a serious conversation with Ella. We had already exchanged phone numbers, and I couldn't believe how close we were getting.

"What are you going to wear?" I asked her.

"Something sexy."

"Whoa. I guess I've met a new badass."

"Let's make them crazy, baby," she squealed, and I chuckled.

"See ya," I said and hung up. I slammed the phone down, a grin spreading across my face. I tossed the towel aside, letting it land in a heap on the floor. With a spring in my step, I flung open

my wardrobe, revealing a rainbow of outfits begging to be chosen. I picked one of the best I had, standing in front of my mirror.

"Exactly my shape," I whispered. I dressed quickly, checking the time constantly. I was applying makeup when a knock came on the door.

"Who is there?" I asked dropping the makeup kit.

"I'm coming," I said

I rushed to the door, swinging it open. Fred's eyes popped out, his jaw dropped, and pleasure roamed in his eyeballs.

"What's wrong?" I sneered.

"You look awesome!" Fred complimented me, and my cheeks turned red.

"Can I be your date?" He said with his head bowed. I chuckled.

"Stop it, Fred," I said, tapping his head playfully, smiles plastered all over my face.

"Fred, come get the door," my mom called, and he sped off.

I wore my flip-flops following him immediately. My eyes widened, my eyebrows shot up, and my lips parted in stunned silence. My gaze locked onto Elijah's, my face a picture of bewildered shock as if I had seen a ghost.

"Mom! We have a visitor," Fred announced.

"Who?" my mom asked from the kitchen.

Fred looked at me and then at Elijah, and I looked at him. I knew something crazy was going on in his mind. I gave him an "I can explain" gesture, and before I could say a word, he shouted, "Annie's boyfriend."

"Wow!" She squealed and rushed out. She stood transfixed, staring at his flawless face.

" Blessed Mary," she whispered, joking her hands together. Elijah chuckled softly. We were making a scene and it made me feel ashamed.

"Can I get a picture? Please ?" Fred asked Elijah. "Fred?!" I glared at him. Elijah saw what I did and frowned at me.

" Okay." Elijah agreed, and they started taking funny selfies.

"Wow. You look stunning, and the tuxedo is wonderful. Must be thirty thousand bucks" Fred said

" I got it for two hundred thousand bucks," Elijah replied. And we all gasped.

" You are so rich and handsome," My mom exclaimed.

"I'm Emerald and you are?"

"Elijah"

"What a nice name. Will you please have dinner with us?" My mom pleaded.

" Mom. We will be late for the party. We can do that some other time," I pleaded and ran upstairs. I came back shortly.

" Can we go now?" Elijah asked.

I snubbed him and started to leave. I heard Fred whisper to Elijah. "Easy with her. She is a pain in the ass"

I scoffed, fighting the urge to reply. Elijah came out. He opened the door of his car, which I didn't know he had before. I entered quickly and he drove off.

NOAH'S CONDO

The music in the venue was so loud, and different lively groups flooded into the house. Each man came in with a woman, hand in hand. Elijah's car halted in front of the building, and

they got out. They walked into the Condo like others.

As she walked into the room, all eyes were on her. Her fitted, pastel pink graphic tee hugged her curves in all the right places, showcasing her toned physique. The high-waisted, distressed jeans accentuated her long legs and curves, making her look confident and radiant. Her white Converse sneakers added a casual touch, but the delicate silver necklace with a tiny pendant and her minimalist earrings elevated her overall look. Her long, dark hair cascaded down her back, framing her bright smile and sparkling eyes.

As she moved, her flowy cardigan swung open, revealing a hint of her black tank top underneath. Her style was effortless, yet polished. She

exuded a carefree, youthful energy that commanded attention.

With each step, her strappy sandals clicked against the floor, drawing gazes to her perfectly manicured toes. Her fitted, high-waisted skirt flaunted her toned legs, and the bold, red lip color made her stand out in the crowd.

She owned the room, her confidence and charm infectious. Her style was a perfect blend of innocence and sophistication, making her irresistible.

"She looks so hot," other candidates whispered.

"They are cute together," another said.

Ella emerged out of the crowd, running towards Elijah and Annie. "Oh my, you look amazing Annie."

"Thank you," Annie replied.

"Um... I wanna get a drink. Have fun," Elijah said, excusing himself from them.

"You have a polite boyfriend. I wish it were me," Ella pouted. Annie chuckled, giving in to the music.

"You think so?"

"I mean, he is charming, nice, he is a model, babe."

"Let's dance!" Annie shouted, and they continued dancing with excitement. The place was crowded with students, making it difficult for Noah to find what he was looking for. With every step he took, he had to navigate through a sea of dancing students. Feeling almost defeated, he suddenly spotted his friends Annie and Ella in the middle of the crowd. He ran towards them and tapped Annie, who was dancing

energetically. She turned and greeted him along with Ella.

"Hi, are you enjoying the party?" Noah asked.

"Yeah!" they both replied loudly.

"Want a drink?" Noah shouted.

"I'm driving!" Ella said.

"Me too," Annie added.

Noah, disappointed, turned away. Minutes later, a loud groan was heard by Annie, but the music was still playing. It was unbearable for her, so she followed where the echo came from.

"What's wrong?" Ella asked.

"I'll be back," Annie replied and left at that moment. She moved faster as the sound kept getting closer.

She spotted a guy in a suit, sprawled on the floor. As she approached, she was taken aback by his appearance.

"Elijah!" She screamed.

"Tell me what happened!" she begged, tears streaming down her face as she gazed at his battered form. Blood gushed from his mouth, and she strained to hear his faint whisper. Leaning in closer, her ear hovered above his lips, desperate to catch his weakening words.

"He is here" he whispered.

"Who?" she asked, but his eyes were already closed. She looked out of the window, the full moon staring vividly at her. She could hear her heartbeats increasing. The more she stared at him, the angrier she got. She stood up in anger, ready to spring into action. But then a hand grabbed her strongly by the ankle. She looked down. The party was still going on, and nobody noticed the unfolding scene.

"Let go" Annie's voice thundered

"It's what he wants. He wants you to kill someone. But please don't do it. This isn't you" Elijah cried loudly, but the music subdued his voice. She shakes his hand off. And just then, the light went out, and the music stopped. Ella moved in search of Annie, but she was nowhere to be found.

CHAPTER FOUR

Descent into chaos

ANNIE'S PERSPECTIVE

I sprinted down the empty street, gasping for breath as sweat dripped down my forehead and cheeks. My heart pounded against my ribs, and for a moment, I stopped, looking up at the dark sky. The urge to escape—to flee from humanity and its endless troubles—gripped me. I was ready to bolt when a deep, guttural groan echoed from the side of the street.

Cautiously, I abandoned my plan and turned towards the sound, taking slow, measured steps across the street. In the dim moonlight, I stumbled a few times as I approached the source. There it stood—an average-height figure cloaked

in an aura of rejection and sorrow. I edged closer, my pulse quickening. Suddenly, the figure whispered, "Three things cannot be long hidden: the sun, the moon, and the truth." The words sent a chill down my spine. I watched, frozen, as it dragged a claw-like hand along the wall, then abruptly turned toward me. The moonlight caught his face, and I gasped, stumbling back in disbelief.

"Noah!" I shouted.

He turned, his face illuminated by the pale glow of the moon. His eyes—once familiar and warm—now glowed an unnatural, sinister red.

BACK AT NOAH'S CONDO

Elijah lay on the floor, helpless, blood pooling around him. His body throbbed with pain as the chaos erupted around him. Students scrambled in

panic, trampling over him in their desperate attempts to escape. He winced, the agony in his stabbed stomach unbearable.

Through his haze of pain, he saw a familiar figure rushing toward him—Ella. She dropped to her knees beside him, her face etched with shock.

"Elijah! What happened?" she asked, her voice thick with worry.

Elijah winced, struggling to speak. "Have you... have you seen Annie?"

"She's nowhere to be found," Ella replied quickly, glancing around. "But first, we need to get you out of here." She grabbed Elijah's arm, pulling it over her shoulder, straining as she tried to lift him.

"You're not as heavy as I thought," she muttered, staggering under his weight as they

moved toward the exit. But Elijah was slipping in and out of consciousness, barely able to stand. "We need... to find Annie," Elijah whispered weakly, repeating the words like a mantra. As they reached the door, Ella missed a step, and they both collapsed onto the floor. Elijah groaned in pain.

"I take it back—you are heavier than I thought," Ella gasped, panting.

Before they could catch their breath, a loud crash echoed through the room as a vase shattered on the floor. Without warning, bullets ripped through the air, glass shattering all around them. Arrows followed, piercing walls and bodies alike. Screams of terror filled the room as students dropped to the ground, bloodied and groaning.

Ella ducked instinctively, her mind racing. Who would target a group of students like this? What kind of cruelty could fuel such an attack?

She strained her ears and heard voices—muffled at first, then louder, approaching through the chaos. Her heart hammered in her chest as she caught sight of figures moving through the broken windows. Dressed in long black coats, their faces obscured by masks, they moved with lethal precision. Weapons gleamed in their hands, glinting in the moonlight. A thick smoke filled the room, blurring her vision as a grenade clattered to the floor. The hiss of smoke filled the air, and more gunshots followed. Bodies hit the ground with sickening thuds.

Through the smoke, Braeden emerged, her expression grim and determined. She crouched

down beside Elijah, placing her fingers against his neck.

“He’s still breathing,” she called out to Ella, who watched in confusion. Ella glanced between Braeden and Elijah, her eyes narrowing as she noted their resemblance.

“Take him to the black Jeep outside. I’ll cover you,” Braeden ordered, her voice firm as she cocked her gun.

Ella didn’t waste any time. She nodded and, with a surge of adrenaline, pulled Elijah toward the door. The cold night air hit her like a slap to the face as she stepped outside. But where was the Jeep?

“Where the hell is the Jeep?” she called out, panic rising in her throat.

“Your left side—just three steps away!” Braeden’s voice came from behind. Ella turned,

spotting the Jeep parked roughly on the curb. She cursed under her breath, struggling to haul Elijah's body across the pavement. His weight bore down on her like a corpse, and she shuddered at the thought that he might soon be one.

With a final burst of effort, she reached the vehicle, fumbling to open the door. Braeden rushed over, grabbing Elijah's collar and effortlessly hoisting him into the backseat.

“Get in the car,” Braeden shouted, revving the engine.

“Not without Annie!” Ella shouted back, her voice thick with desperation. Braeden’s eyes flashed with frustration. “I’m not your boyfriend, kid. I’m leaving—with or without you.”

Ella clenched her jaw but didn't argue. She scrambled into the front seat, slamming the door as Braeden hit the gas. The Jeep tore down the street, speeding away from the blood-soaked scene like a getaway car after a heist.

As they sped away from Noah's street, the Jeep's tires screeched, throwing Ella against the door. She winced, narrowly avoiding a collision with the jazzboard. The jazz board creaked, protesting the sharp turn. Finally, they hit the main road, the smooth asphalt a welcome respite. Braeden swiveled, her gaze piercing the dim interior. Ella met her eyes, her own narrowing.

"Don't give me that look," Braeden said, her voice low and even. "Can you drive?" Ella's lips curled into a determined smile. "Yes, I can."

"Okay, now take the wheel," Braeden instructed, carefully shifting into the passenger seat as Ella slid into the driver's position. She sank back, releasing a deep sigh of relief.

"Could you press the gas a bit more?" she suggested.

Ella turned to her with a mischievous grin. "You probably shouldn't have said that."

"Wait, wait!" Braeden exclaimed, a hint of panic creeping into her voice, but Ella's foot found the throttle, and the car surged forward, jolting them both.

"Psycho," Braeden scoffed, scooting to the backseat as the world outside blurred past.

In the back, Elijah's eyes widened in shock as he regained enough strength to speak. He slowly propped himself up, wincing at the pain from the

knife still embedded in his side. "What the hell is going on? Who are those people?" he groaned.

"They're the hunters," Braeden replied, grimacing as she pressed a hand against her injury. The tension hung thick in the air, punctuated by the roaring engine and the urgency of their situation.

"Why are they after us?" Elijah asked, wincing from the pain.

Braeden glanced out the window, scanning the horizon. "It's a long story, but trust me, you're better off not knowing all the details right now. Just focus on staying alive."

Ella's grin widened as she sped down the empty road. "This is more like it," she muttered, enjoying the thrill.

"Slow down, Ella! We're not trying to attract more attention!" Braeden snapped, her eyes flicking nervously between the rearview mirror and the road ahead.

"Relax, I've got this under control," she said, barely sparing her a glance.

Elijah's face twisted in pain. "I can't... I can't hold on much longer," he gasped, his voice weak.

Braeden's expression softened as she leaned closer to him. "Just hang in there. We'll get you to safety soon."

Ella's laughter echoed through the car as the engine roared. "If we don't crash first!" she joked, but the tension in the air was thick enough to cut.

Braeden shot her a sharp look. "Ella, enough! We need to get him to a doctor, not the morgue." She finally eased off the gas, though the playful glint in her eyes remained. "Fine, fine. Just trying to lighten the mood."

But the weight of the situation was impossible to ignore.

"I don't need a doctor. Just take me home," Elijah whispered.

" I know, just shut up. You'll heal, but what about me?" Braeden asked, wincing.

*

Noah's heavy breathing echoed through the air, his ragged gasps audible from afar. As he dragged his claw along the wall, sparks flew, sending shivers down Annie's spine. She backed away, but it was too late. Noah lunged, grasping her neck with an iron grip.

"Noah, stop! Please!" Annie begged, tears streaming down her face. But Noah's hearing was lost to his rage. His claw dug deeper into her throat, and Annie gagged, blood gushing from her mouth. In a fleeting moment, Noah's claws slipped, tapping into Annie's memories. Both gasped, Noah's eyes aglow.

Flashes of Emerald, Annie's mother, flooded his mind. Noah's grip released, and he flung Annie to the floor. Transforming back to human, he stood panting. Annie clutched her throat, struggling for breath.

A car's bright headlights sped toward them, striking Noah off the road. He groaned, badly wounded. But there was a werewolf's trick: pain

could make you angry or human. For Noah, pain was his anchor. Anger was his strength. After his family's mansion burned down, he felt he deserved every ounce of agony. It was his punishment.

Noah lay by the roadside, breathing heavily. Ella rushed out of the car and sprinted toward Annie. "Are you alright?" Ella asked. Annie slowly raised her head. "I'm fine. How did you find me?"

"Coincidence," Ella smiled.

Braeden shone a flashlight on Annie's face, and she shielded her eyes. They noticed blood on her collar and neck.

"What happened?" Braeden asked.

"Just a little scratch," Annie replied, standing quickly.

Worry etched her face. "Where's Elijah?"

A loud groan drew their attention to Elijah pounding Noah. Noah's lips burst, his breath fading.

They approached. "What is he?" Annie asked.

"Werewolf," Elijah replied, frowning.

"Stop!" Annie screamed. "Why should I? These creatures are dangerous."

"Aren't you dangerous? You're no different than him," Annie retorted.

"Can someone explain what's going on?" Ella asked, confused.

"I'll explain later. It's supernatural. The full moon, the anger... I'll tell you everything," Annie said. Elijah stopped hitting Noah. "He's innocent. He couldn't control it. He was afraid, alone. I sensed it," Annie explained. Elijah dropped Noah, flinging Annie's hair back. "Look

at this," he said, showing her healed neck. Annie smirked. Elijah chuckled.

"We have a problem," Noah said, standing, his wounds healed.

"The hunters are in town," Noah said.

"Shut up!" Braeden snapped.

"It was a mistake, Braeden," Noah retorted.

Elijah eyed Braeden suspiciously.

"She didn't come only for me?" Elijah asked.

"Yeah, I called her," Noah said.

"Are you guys dating?" Annie asked.

"Nah, we broke up in LA," Braeden replied.

"I guess we have a team," Annie said, smiling.

"Team?" Elijah scoffed. "I work alone."

"Then be prepared to die alone," Braeden added.

"Don't be dumb. We make a good team, He is a werewolf, you and her are both part demons. She is a psychopathic driver" Braeden said, directing

her gaze to Ella. " Don't look at me that way" Ella scoffed.

"Fine," Elijah sneered. "Let's prepare for the worst. The hunters aren't easy."

"We need to know why they want us dead, and also who sent them. We will also need a recruit" Noah added.

"Who do you think will fight a supernatural war with you? "Elijah mocked. Noah glowed his red eyes, and Elijah scoffed.

"I'm an Alpha, I don't fight or hunt without a pack"

They piled into the Jeep, Ella initially claiming the driver's seat.

"No!" Braeden shouted, taking the wheel. Ella pouted, and they all burst into laughter, speeding off. Braeden connects a song to the car speaker. A rap. She began to sing along. "One bad bitch

and she do what I say so. Two big 40s in a big ass Draco.” the speaker was shaking the whole vehicle.

“ Can you please reduce that?” Elijah pleaded, their voices fading in the background, dying along with the sound of their car engine. As they went far, a slimy being emerged from the woods, it stood on the spot they were earlier. Its breath echoing in the dead of night, it stared into the road, and then jumped back into the woods.

TO BE CONTINUED!...

Enjoy this part, that's right cutie, I knew you might have enjoyed it. Please drop a nice review. Book 2 is on the way, and trust me, it's not something you wanna miss. Stay tuned, or follow me here. Or my Twitter account for more updates @DaveLanor. I love you all



COMING SOON!!!

WE FIGHT BACK: WHISPERS IN THE DARK (BOOK 2 OF ANNIE'S NEMESIS)

IN THE WOODS (CALIFORNIA)

The boy's feet pounded against the forest floor, dry leaves crunching underfoot as the moon cast a pale glow over the dark woods. His frantic gaze kept flicking over his shoulder, but before he knew it, he collided with something—something massive. He had slammed into a broad, slimy chest. Towering above him, the creature's body was blackened and rough, its head crowned with small horns surrounded by clusters of spores.

"Think you can escape me?" The creature's deep voice rumbled through the air, shaking the ground beneath them.

With one swift motion, the creature grabbed the boy by the collar and threw him into a

nearby tree. He hit the ground hard, a pained cry escaping his throat as he struggled to get up. “Argh!!” he roared, His body beginning to shift and crack, claws lengthening, fangs growing, and fur bursting from his skin. His spine snapped and reformed, turning him into something stronger. With a roar, he lunged at the beast, his energy renewed. His claws tore through the air, barely missing their target. The creature countered, slamming him down with a crushing blow.

But the boy didn’t give up. He kicked off a tree, flipping through the air and landing back on the creature, roaring as he attacked. This time, though, the beast was prepared. Its claws clamped down on him like iron.

Blood poured from the boy’s mouth, and his swollen eyes blurred with pain.

“Do you know Elijah?” the beast snarled.

The boy, choking and trembling, shook his head. “No, I swear.”

With a look of disgust, the creature sneered, “Useless.” It flung him aside like a rag doll. And then, in the blink of an eye, it was gone.