

## Faced with Silence

The building where Silence ran her business was in an older part of town. There were several row houses that had been turned into businesses. The tree lined road was peaceful at nearly one in the morning. I climbed the stairs to the door and rang the bell.

A tall woman with golden blonde hair and silver eyes answered. She was quite beautiful with an hourglass gure and pale skin that seemed to shimmer in the moonlight. I bowed to her.

"Are you Silence?" I asked.

"Yes, how may I help you?" She replied coolly.

"I have a matter of great importance to speak with you about. Your business, and your life, is in danger. I would like to offer my assistance in helping you keep both." I told her.

"Come in. I don't want to talk about this in front of the whole world." Silence said and led me to her ooe in the back.

I noted that the house was tastefully decorated and well-appointed. This was a vampire who knew how to take care of herself. Glancing to the side as we walked down the hallway, I saw her human servant straightening up.

The place smelled clean. A mix of cleaning chemicals, along with the scent of Silence, permeated the air. This was precisely how a home should smell. I was tempted to ask if I could stay here, but I didn't want to risk my i\*\*\*t childe running again.

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Silence sat behind a large oak desk and indicated the leather wingback chairs on the other side. I sat and waited for her to be ready. The chairs were buttery and comfortable. She pulled out a little voice recorder and turned it on.

"I'll record this meeting. If the council comes to investigate whatever you're speaking of, I want to show that I have done everything in my power. Now, please tell me who you are and what you are about." She nodded.

"My name is Victor Nightshade. I came hunting my childe who stole three million dollars from me fteen years ago. When I found him, he told me he had spent all my money. Much of it had been spent on blood." I stated.

"I'm not responsible for what he did with your money. I hope you aren't trying to take it back. What is your childe's name?" Silence asked.

"Paul Springer." I replied. "I don't want the money and I don't hold you responsible for how he spent it."

She dug through her les and pulled out one with Springer's name on it. After ipping the pages, she looked up and smiled tightly.

"Yes. He was seeing a woman called Verity Gale for the last ten years. He'd had a few others before, but only requested her after his rst feeding with her."

She opened a laptop on the desk and typed a few things in before continuing. "She's fairly popular. Maxed out at four vampires and she has a waiting list. AB negative is rare here, but I don't think my others are as popular. She probably offers other bonuses for additional cash. I don't stop them from doing that, if she wants to sell herself for extra, I'm not one to tell her no."

"She's letting them feed on her minor daughter." I told her.

Silence's mouth dropped open in shock. Rage came over her features and she balled her sts. The elegant woman I'd met a few minutes ago was gone. Silence was seething.

She wasn't mad about them feeding on a child as much as the punishment for going against the brokers' guidelines. I wrote them. Like in my brood, the penalty for merely trading in child's blood is death.

"That b\*\*\*h. I'm removing her from my catalogue. I refuse to be associated with the trade of children. I cannot believe this! The council would have my head. Blood brokers aren't allowed to sell children! How can you help me? I don't want to die for this." She pled.

See, reputationless. She had no idea who I was, or she would have been much more frightened. It didn't matter. Once I resolved this issue, I could get a new place in the council and start rebuilding.

"I need the names of everyone on that list and everyone who has fed from her. The council will look at this as retribution. I will kill them for taking a child. As my own childe was the rst to feed from her, he will also die. I'll need an appointment with the woman so I can make sure this doesn't happen again. Can you make that happen?" I asked.

"Yes. I'm printing out the client and waitlist. If they're on it, they must know." She said disdainfully.

"Those were my thoughts." I nodded.

Silence leaned over and snatched a paper from the printer. She handed it to me, on the bottom, she wrote down an address. I looked over the list. Thirteen vampires would die by my hand, sentenced by me and my wayward childe. Their blood was on his hands.

"I'm texting her that her appointment this week cancelled, but I'm trying to nd someone else from her waitlist. The address I wrote there is hers. She sees clients on Saturday evenings." She stated in a very professional tone.

"I will give you my cellphone number. Text me with the time. I should be able to make quick work of this list. Is there a servant agency here? I need someone to take care of the house my childe bought." I asked.

"Not any more. They started human tracking and got shut down by the feds two years ago. I can try to nd you one from my clients, but donors don't see themselves as servants." Silence said, offering a small smile.

"Could your servant assist me? There is no electricity or running water in the house. Having internet and a few new kitchen appliances would be nice as well. I would be willing to pay." I offered.

Her servant seemed to be an able human. I would only need him for the basics, setting up services, helping me take care of the girl, maybe nding a new servant of my own.

"We'll do this for free. You give me the address and I'll have him set it up. You've helped me far more than you know. I have to run an audit on all of my donors now to make sure there isn't any other funny business going on." She sighed.

I wrote down the information and started hunting. I wanted to be back at the house as soon as possible, just in case I had to x whatever Springer messed up there. I looked at the sheet with the names and addresses for the vampires who'd fed on the girl. Three of them lived in the same house. Lucky me.

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Three hours later, I was pulling up to my new house. I'd stopped at the hotel where I was staying and picked up my bag before I went hunting. It was lucky I did. My clothes were ruined with rips and blood.

I managed to kill ve on the list. The three that lived together, and two others who they'd given me information on before I killed them. Those two had given me more on the others on the list. It would make my hunt tomorrow night just as successful.

I walked into the house and Springer met me at the door.

"Where do you go to clean yourself?" I asked.

"There's a stream that runs through the backyard. I have a bucket by it." He answered, ducking his head.

"I truly despise you." I growled and left the house.

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Once I was clean, I went back in and made my plan for the week. It was Wednesday morning. I wanted to have all the other vampires dead before I went to deal with the mother and the girl.

After putting together the information the dead vampires gave me, I had a list. Tomorrow night, I would try for another ve, but four would be acceptable. Springer would be last. He would have to live the next few days knowing he was responsible for these deaths and that his was coming.

I contacted the council to let them know what was happening, who was involved, and how I was xing the issue. Rosalynn was my advocate. She and I had been friends, and broodmates, for centuries. I was happy for the assignment.

"Do you think you'll have to kill the parents?" She asked.

"I don't really know yet. Silence is the only blood broker in town, but they could sell her on Craigslist or some other online marketplace. It would attract a worse client base. The girl could get hurt further, or someone could decide to take the whole family to drain." I told her.

"Vic, we need more information on the family. Can we keep this under wraps until we know what it looks like? Have Silence schedule you for Saturday and try to get a read on the situation. I have the name of the woman and will do what I can tonight. Giselle is going to work a background check during the day. You know she's good. By tomorrow, we'll know a lot more and you can go into this with something." Rosalynn replied.

"Are you thinking we may need to relocate her?" I asked.

"It's possible. At nearly ve thousand a feeding, her parents won't want to give up that kind of money. It'll depend on what else you, and Giselle, nd out." She said solemnly.

"I'll talk to you tomorrow, after I return from my hunt. Stay safe."

"You, too." She answered and hung up.

Springer had pulled another mattress from one of the bedrooms and made it up with sheets and blankets. Very low quality sheets and blankets. I curled my lip at the idea of laying there for the day, but there weren't many options. I lay down and closed my eyes, waiting for the sun.