

Shopping Trips

I left the room and headed to my oce. I wondered if Drew actually wanted to speak to me or not. When I opened the door, he was spinning around in the oce chair in front of my desk. I rolled my eyes.

"Really, Drew? How old are you?" I scoffed.

"Nearly two hundred in human years, Victor. I still enjoy spinning on these chairs. You're never too old to enjoy a good spin." He laughed.

"Tell me that again in six hundred years." I shook my head and closed the door.

After I was seated, I motioned for him to go on.

"So you didn't notice that innuendo earlier?" Drew chuckled.

"I could ask 'what innuendo', but that would give away the answer." I replied.

"When you implied you had a lot more to give the girl. Wink, wink."

"You have a lthy mind. How does Silence put up with you? You didn't say or do anything dirty with my Echo, did you?" I growled.

"Your Echo?" He raised his eyebrows.

"I bought her, she's mine. It's a statement of fact." I answered.

"I didn't do or say anything inappropriate. We left rst thing this morning. She asked me for help with the curtains before she bought them. I have never seen a woman shop as coolly as she did. She only tried a few things on, then just bought things in those sizes and brands. It was like she didn't even care how they looked and t.

Food shopping was the same. She went in with a list in her head and got exactly what she needed. No weighing her options, not meandering down aisles.

We stopped for lunch, and it was the rst time I saw her not know exactly what she wanted. She looked like she was about to cry, so I asked her what she didn't like and ordered for her. Echo said she'd never been to a fast food restaurant before and just couldn't decide.

She used my phone to make calls, then set a timer after we got the groceries put away and started washing the new dishes before cleaning all of the rooms down here, then putting up the curtains for you. No breaks, just working right along until the timer let us know it was time to start making dinner. She set timers every fteen minutes, so she'd know when you were awake.

Echo really is a natural at this. Within a week she'll have your house perfect. I can guarantee it. She prepped that snack tray before she made dinner. She bought all those things in preparation for your donors." He reported.

I smiled. At least something came of her horrible parents' behavior. It would be benecial to me to keep her around. Once everything was in order, she'd easily be able to run my house and have a life of her own.

"How is everything else coming?" I asked.

"Paris says he can assess her on Thursday. It's cutting it close, but he can print the transcript while we're here. I can get her enrolled on Friday and she can be in school a week from tomorrow. Cass called and told me he has everything in order to get her name change put through fast. We can have the documents by Wednesday." Drew stated.

"Good. I'll get a cell phone ordered on my plan with next day delivery. She needs to be able to use her own. You're not always going to be there for her. Take her to an electronics store and get her a laptop as well. She'll probably need one for school." I decided.

"Yes, sir. If you're done with me. My master wakes in twenty minutes, I would like to be there for her." He smiled.

"Go ahead. Thank you for your help today." I stood and shook his hand.

Pulling out my computer, I ordered a phone with a case for Echo, then got to work on the information Silence had given me. She was still running her audit, but there were already a few people who needed to be dealt with. I'd take care of a few once Echo went to bed for the night. I didn't want her to worry.

I could smell cleaning chemicals Echo was using as I worked. It was a nice change from dust and dirt. My mind seemed to focus more knowing she was working away.

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After some time, my phone rang. I looked at the caller ID, it was Rosalynn.

"Hey, Rosy, how's your trip so far?" I asked.

"I hate everything. I'm in the cargo container of a plane. It's cold, and my blood bag popped, so I'm covered in blood, freezing, and hungry. I can go a couple of days without any, but it's not exactly ideal. Anyway, I found a truck to deliver me to your house, so no one has to pick me up. I'll be there either Tuesday morning or afternoon. Can you have the blood broker send someone for me. I like B positive." Rosalynn whined.

"I remember. I'll let Echo know so she puts you somewhere safe and I'll call Silence to get your donor set up. Anything else?" I inquired.

"How's the girl? Are you managing to not taste her?"

"Echo is doing well. She's spent a lot of my money today and will spend even more tomorrow. Right now, she's cleaning. And I'm a little offended that you would ask me if I've fed on her. She's a child. I would never. I will help you with the testing, but that blood will be taken by a needle, not by my mouth. Rosy, she was shaking like a leaf when she thought I was going to feed on her last night. I'm surprised she didn't nd a way to run today." I told her.

"Well, she knows you're a member of the council. There's no reason to run from someone who's there to protect you." She scoffed.

That was what I forgot... I didn't tell Echo I was a member of the council just that I was investigating. I should probably let her know what was going on.

"You did tell her, didn't you?" Rosalynn asked in a rueful tone.

She knew I didn't.

"I may have skipped that, Rosy."

"You better x it before I get there, or you're in deep trouble, young man." She scolded.

"You're only fty years older than me, Rosy. And you're not my sire." I teased.

"Fix it, Vic. We need her to know what's going on. If your assessment is right, she's the rst half blood in three hundred years, the rst half blood ever not sired by a full vampire, and the rst half blood ever to be raised as something other than a warrior or a broodmare. We may need to check the siblings, too. They might be the same, but present differently." Rosalynn insisted.

"So, I'm guessing I can't keep her then?" I chuckled.

"Depending on who her bloodline belongs to; it might be a hard ght to keep her. Oh, I almost forgot. You're ocially being named master of the territory. There's been a council seat available in that area for a while. You can pick your two supports and start righting the area. I know you missed running a territory." She said in a sympathetic tone.

"Thanks, Rosy. I've already been working on cleaning it up."

"Why did you give everything up to chase that childe instead of just letting him go?" She asked.

"Not like I had anything better to do...." I scoffed. Everyone asked me that. "Seriously, Rosy!? He stole from me! I don't care that I didn't need the money! It was the principle of the thing! You don't bite the hand that feeds you, you don't steal from your f****g sire!" I shouted.

"Language, Victor." Rosalynn scolded.

"Sorry. You know how I am about honor and rules. It really gets my goat, Rosy." I sighed.

"Well, your other children are certainly afraid. You hunted him relentlessly and killed him as you said you would. Showing no favoritism and no sentimentality." She said softly.

That was what I had intended. The year I gave him was what I would have afforded any childe who made a mistake. The fact that I'd trusted him to come back, and hadn't sent trackers to nd him, made it seem like I was favoring him.

There was a knock on my door. I called out for Echo to come in, she was the only one it could be. She looked worried.

"Are you okay, Victor? I heard you yell." Echo whispered.

I set my phone down. "Did I scare you, little one? Don't be afraid. I was just a bit emotional. It doesn't happen often. You're safe."

"You sounded really mad. Is there something I can get you? I know you don't eat, but I could make you a milkshake or something with the bags of blood in the fridge and some sauces. I heard chocolate sauce goes well with O type blood. Would you like that?" She said quietly.

"Yes, please. Thank you, Echo." I smiled.

"I'll be back in a bit." She nodded and left the room.

I picked up the phone. Rosalynn was laughing.

"What exactly is so funny?" I asked.

"You. Oh my goodness, she treats you like a child. It's hilarious! Honestly, the best part of this trip! You had a temper tantrum and she offered you a treat like a doting mommy with a spoiled child." She snorted. She laughed so hard she snorted!

"She's just trying to be a good servant. Not treating me like a child. Now, stop laughing or you're going to be on blood bags your entire visit. You need my permission to feed on humans in my territory, remember." I warned.

"Okay, Mr. Grumpy. I'm going to sleep. See you in two days." She said as she hung up.

I could hear the blender going in the kitchen. Was she treating me like a spoiled child? Geoff used to give me treats when I got angry, too. He actually spent ten years perfecting several candies he could keep in a pouch for when I got moody.... Maybe I needed a little reaction on that.