Chapter 73 Paige is Back

I slept fitfully.  I had nightmares of being discovered as a demon, having the MIB capture me, and then neutering me while saying they were making the planet safe for the female gender.  I fought against the restraints while my parents stood over me, saying how disappointed they were with my activities.

I woke in a cold sweat and checked to make sure it had just been a bad dream.  I needed to fill up my aether pool so I could sleep in my mind space.  I drove Rob to school.  Sophia was taking the bus to study with a friend on the bus ride.  Rob asked how I had done on my exams, and I told him I had aced them.  He reluctantly asked if he could borrow $100 to take Yuki out Wednesday night.  I just waved to the glove box, and he grabbed the $100 bill.

I saw Mary talking animatedly to Iris in the hallway.  I didn’t see Rose, which I thought was curious.  I went to take my first test, not wanting to get sucked into their conversation.  Once again, the exam took only part of the test period, and I was bored.  At lunch, I sat with Rob.  The witch’s council of Mary, Iris, Abigail, and Bedelia sat in a corner together.  Rob saw me looking at the quartet and asked, “Girlfriend problems?”

He was trying to be funny.  Yuki was in the library studying for her next exam, Rob just had his calculus test and wasn’t worried about his next exam.  “Yeah, but I wouldn’t call them girlfriends.  More like opportunists.”

Rob looked confused and turned and studied the table.  He whispered, “did you have sex with all of them?”

I rolled my eyes, “No, just Iris and Abigail; Mary and I have just fooled around a few times.”  I realized Bedelia would jump me in a second if she was certain it would get her more powerful.

“Damn, you are the school slut, Caleb.  Sophia keeps saying it, and I am tired of defending you,” he said.  “Well, at least they all look like they are getting along.”

I chuckled darkly, “That just means I am outnumbered—well Abigail is almost always on my side.”

Our conversation was interrupted by Carrie, who stopped at our table but couldn’t find her tongue.  I prompted, “Carrie?  How are you doing?”  Rob was confused.

In a low voice, she finally said, “Do…do you want to model tomorrow?  I mean, neither of us has school.  Do you want to?”

Her baggy clothes and lack of makeup made her look plain.  She had some courage to approach me yesterday and today.  “Yeah, sure.  What is your address?  What time do you want me to show up?” I asked, pulling out my phone.

“My…uh…parents leave for work at 7:00,” she said brokenly.

“I can be there by 8:00,” I said, entering her address into my phone.  “Should I wear anything in particular?”

“A suit…the tux you had at the junior dance…if it was not a rental.  I think sketching you in a suit….” Carrie offered.  I nodded, and she backed away from the table.

Rob looked at me like he didn’t know me, “Caleb, Carrie Veritas?” He shook his head.  “I don’t think she has any friends.  She is a bit of a goth.  Why her?” Rob looked confused.

“She is an amazing artist.  She seems kinda nice too.  I am just doing her a favor,” I said.  I also needed some aether and not life essence.

After lunch, I took my last exam, knowing I had aced it, and drove Rob and Sophia home.  Rob had a date with Yuki tonight, so he wasn’t coming over.

Paige’s jeep was in the driveway when I got home.  Dad and Paige were in the kitchen drinking iced tea…with alcohol.  “Caleb, do you want a long island ice tea?” Paige asked.  Dad rolled his eyes.

“Caleb, you can have the rest of mine to celebrate finishing the semester,” Dad said, giving me a glass about one-third full.  He started mixing another drink.  I sipped the beverage and put it on the counter.  It wasn’t bad, a bit too sweet for me.  Dad said, “We are going to Vincent’s tomorrow for dinner.  Paige thinks her perfect GPA is intact, so we will celebrate.”

“Except for organic chemistry,” Paige said, “I don’t think I did well on the final.” My sister saying she didn’t do well on something was a rare occasion.  “I am going to shower and unpack.”

I talked with dad for a bit.  With football season ending soon, we would be switching to watching hockey games on the weekend.  I realized I hadn’t watched many games with him in the last few weeks and felt guilty.  I wasn’t going to age.  My parents would and would eventually pass away.  Maybe if I got strong enough before then, I could raise them to be demons too.  Next time I talked with Andromeda, I would ask her how to get strong enough to help my parents live longer.

I went upstairs and sat at my computer in my room.   I could hear my dryer and washing machine working.  Paige must have done her laundry in my machines.  I had to go through my Apollyon text messages to look at pictures of more furniture Amelia had sent me.  Paige walked in her bathrobe and wet hair held up in a towel while I was approving the images, “What are you up to, bro?”

“Just working on a project,” I said, not hiding the screen.

Paige looked at the screen but was here for another reason.  “Caleb, what did you do to my teammates?  Maya has asked me almost every day how you are doing, and Ashley asked me a few times if I was going home and that she wouldn’t mind getting away from campus for a bit. I know you gave both of them the fuck of their lives.  Both were on cloud nine for days.  What I don’t understand is how my little brother did it.”

I tried to flip this her, “You have so little confidence in my ability to satisfy a woman?  I am hurt, Paige.”

“Well, two months ago, you couldn’t look at a hot girl without trying to hide your boner.  I knew you were a virgin when you came to the Halloween party on campus and left the same,” she stated.

I decided to go over the top with my answer, “I got mystical powers at the party, and now I can seduce women with my eyes and pleasure them with my tongue.” I had a half grin while speaking that, and Paige frowned.

“You don’t have to tell me.  I don’t want to hear you drugging them with Spanish fly or something.  We do have random drug tests,” Paige seemed disappointed I didn’t tell her a believable version of the truth.  She went into the laundry room and changed into clothes that had finished in the dryer.  I remember when we were young, we used to run out in the snow in our underwear while our clothes were in the dryer, and we tried to stay out as long as we could while having snowball fights.  I always lost but loved the warm cozy feeling when putting on the clothes from the dryer.

The memory of Paige in her bra and panties stirred me, and I admonished myself for thinking about her in that way.  I would never harm Paige or do anything to her that could damage our relationship.  Paige emerged in only a long tee shirt.  Her nipples were hard, having responded to the heat of the shirt she had just put on.  As was Paige’s habit, she had no underwear on.  The tee shirt had shrunk in the dryer, and the shirt barely covered private parts.  I think this was on purpose, as Paige asked, “Do you want to play Call of Duty?  I have an hour before my second load of clothes is dry.”

Call of Duty was the only game of any kind I could beat Paige at before I became a demon.  “Yeah, we can do some matches I said with a smile and set up both Xboxes.”  I dominated not only Paige but every other gamer in the arena.  My reaction time and visual processing were so much faster.  Paige protested her treatment in the shooter game.  We teamed up for two rounds and won, and Paige bounced excitedly in her chair, her shirt riding up.  I forced myself to look away and was saved by the buzz of the dryer.

With the basket in her arms, Paige gathered her clothes and asked, “Do you want to go shopping tomorrow?  I need to get mom and dad something for Christmas.  Maybe we can get something from both of us?”

“Sounds good, Paige.  I have an appointment in the morning, but how about the afternoon?” I replied.  She agreed and turned around, the lower curves of her ass clearly visible as she exited the door and descended the stairs.  My incubus inner demon was telling me I was no longer human or her brother.  What remained of my humanity fought back the impure thoughts of my sister.

When I got myself under control, I  came up with a goal for tomorrow.  I would get enough aether to open a portal.  Then in the transit, I could gather aether much quicker.  Maybe I could gather some aether from Danila, Kiri’s mother.  I should probably plan to bring the saliva tabs for Borseen and Laith.  The two elves were tasked with selling the tabs in the elven cities as an elven aphrodisiac.

I texted Iris asking if she had the litmus tabs to make saliva tabs for the elves.  It was only a few minutes before she texted back that she had the litmus paper, but she still needed to test the dosage before cutting them into squares.  I texted her I would stop by tomorrow night.

It was very irritating that I couldn’t use my mind space at will.  I wanted to practice my martial skills, but my aether pool was so low.  I slept restlessly.  My dreams were scattered.  I was running through the woods in the transit chasing a naked Danila who was giggling and staying just out of my reach.  No matter how hard I tried, I couldn’t catch the mature elf womanin my human form.

I woke early and went downstairs to make breakfast. Paige had her door open and was hugging her pillow on her side.  She had just a sheet pulled across her body.  The tee shirt had ridden up, and her ass was clearly outlined underneath the sheet.  I shook my head and put Paige out of my mind.  I made frozen waffles in the toaster and smothered them in butter and maple syrup.  I left a note on the counter that I was going out and would meet Paige at the massive shopping plaza to go shopping at 1:00.  That should give me enough time to get some aether from Carrie.

I drove to the forest and got in some flying.  The enhancements to my strength and speed greatly increased my capability.  I definitely needed the wing upgrade.  I was guessing advancing my incubus wings would give me another jump in the wing’s efficacy.   When it was time to visit Carrie, I dressed and drove to her house.

The house was small, and the yard was a mess.  I want sure this was the right place.  If you went to my high school, then you had money.  I knocked tentatively on the door, and Carrie opened it, “You came!” She said excitedly.

I entered the house, and it didn’t smell great.  Two cats spied me at the end of the hall, and I was not sure what to do.  One cat took two steps toward me but suddenly turned and ran, the other cat following.  Carrie looked confused, “Weasley usually likes everyone.”

I quipped, “He probably realizes I am more of a dog person.”

She graced me with a forced smile, obviously thinking my joke was lame. “My studio is upstairs,” she turned and ascended a narrow staircase.”

I asked, climbing behind her, “What do your parents do?”

She paused, “My dad works construction. He is usually gone twelve to thirteen hours a day. My stepmother is a teacher’s aide at the public school. They have classes today.” I followed her into a small room that had her drawings plastered on the walls. There were a few spaces where it looked like she had taken down a few drawings. She looked like she preferred to sketch people. Portraits and action shots dominated the images. Only a few had added color, and most were just done with the pencil.

“Damn, my pencils are in the kitchen. I will be back in a second,” she said while rushing downstairs. I heard the clatter of pencils spilling across the floor and Carrie swearing loudly. It looked like I was going to have a few minutes. I went to the table and, paged through some loose drawings, opened the closet with dozens of sketchbooks of all sizes. I took one and paged through it. It had mostly naked bodies. I guessed she had been practicing her nudes. The next book I looked at had some fantastical creatures in it. Most were humanoid beast people. At first, I thought they had played from her imagination, but then I reached one that looked exactly like James. Two pages later, and this one was definitely Mandy.

Carrie came stumbling into the room with two big coffee cans stuffed with pencils, “Sorry I dropped one of the….” She saw me looking at the images and froze. Her breathing got heavy, and tears started forming in her eyes.

“These are good, Carrie. No need to be ashamed of them,” I said while checking her aether core. It was weak, and she was definitely not a demi. She started crying anyway.

“I am sorry I didn’t mean to upset you by going through your old books,” I said, confused by her reaction. I thought maybe she had glasses like Iris around here somewhere so she could see through disguises. She was definitely not a mage.

Carrie retreated down the hallway and closed the door to what I assumed was her bedroom. I was at a loss for what to do. How had I screwed up? I knocked softly on the door and opened it. Carrie was face down, crying into her pillow. Her room had more pictures, but one caught my attention immediately. It was me in my incubus form, flying in my favorite chasm.

I looked at the young woman sobbing on the bed and needed answers. I was certain no one had seen me practice my flying. I climbed onto the bed, and all sound ceased. I took her shoulder and slowly turned her over to make eye contact. There was some fear in her eyes just before my charm took effect, “Don’t worry Carrie. I am not going to hurt you. I just want to know where you got that image from.” I pointed at the flying incubus.

“I dreamed it,” she said slowly.

“Is that where all the other images of beast people came from as well?” I asked, referring to the book.

She shuddered under my hand, “Most were from my dreams, but sometimes I see them in flashes during the day.”

I considered her words and then asked, “Why are you crying?”

“My birth mother had the same visions, and they got more and more frequent as she got older. She was crazy and eventually killed herself. I assumed you knew and thought I was crazy too,” she said neutrally. My charm had a firm grasp on her. I stood and took out my phone.

“Don’t worry, Carrie. I don’t think you are crazy.” I turned my attention to the phone. I decided to call Bedelia instead of Iris. She seemed to have a firmer grasp of the supernatural world than Iris. She picked up immediately.

“Caleb! We are all at Iris’ house. Are you coming here? Wait, why are you calling me instead of Iris or Abigail?” She asked suspiciously.

I sighed, “I have a question that you might be able to answer. I am with someone who can see demis in their dreams and sometimes during the day in flashes. But she doesn’t know demis exist,” I explained.

A long pause, and then Bedelia said, “Do you know how large her aether core is?”

I pulled my sleeve up and got a reading from my bracer on Carrie, “My device says 0.11.”

Some silence on the other end, and then Bedelia said, “She probably has an innate true seeing ability but not enough aether to use it effectively. I had an innate ability that I don’t have enough aether to use as well. I need to consume a lower tier 2 aether stone to use it. But sometimes it works when I sleep.”

I was about to ask Bedelia what the ability was, but Bedelia said, “I will tell you in private. Not right now.” I could hear Mary and Iris talking in the background, so I guessed they were all in a room together.

I thought of something, “This person can also see things far away in her dreams, not just through illusions, “I stated while looking at my flying incubus drawing.”

“Bring her over here,” Bedelia said without hesitation, “True far sight is an extremely valuable skill. Even with a small aether core someone would pay for her skills. I can talk to her and explain it to her. My spell has a range to it of a few miles. A true seer can see anywhere, they just need to be aware there is more out there than this one planet.”

I looked at the beguiled Carrie and the images on her walls. “Ok, but just know that her mother had the same ability, and she thought she was insane and killed herself.” I hung up and sighed. Now that I had charmed Carrie, I wasn’t going to harvest aether or life essence from her anyway.

“Carrie, pack what you need for the day. I am going to bring you to some friends that can help you. Text your parents that you are going to Iris Cartwright’s house, so they know where you are,” I said, resigned to look elsewhere for aether today.

On the drive, I asked Carrie, “Why did you want to sketch me? You seem extremely shy.”

Still, under the charm effect, she answered honestly, “I was trying to overcome my fear. I saw you as a horned demon in my dreams. Also, I was hoping to have sex with you. The rumor is you will drop your pants for anyone who asks.”

Yep, I was definitely getting the reputation as the school slut. I walked into the house, and Bedelia met Carrie and brought her to the backroom, “Do you want me to remove the charm?” I asked as they dragged her away.

“No, just tell her to answer my questions,” Bedelia yelled with some excitement.

Iris came out holding a packet of what I assumed was the litmus paper with a salacious grin on her face, “Mary, Eilina, and Abigail are studying in the spell library room. Kiri is out shopping….” Iris was excited to get access to my saliva again. She had developed an addiction to it the first time she used it.

I didn’t want her to go down that same road, and I quickly disappointed her, “I think I already know the correct size we need.” I remembered the size of the tab used in Miami, which should also be the correct size for the tier 2 saliva. Iris looked upset and gave me the paper and 4000 tiny ziplock bags for coins. She was so angry with me that she went to help Bedelia instead of helping me.

I saw Vida staring at me from the kitchen and decided to leave. There was too much going on in this house, with Mary and now Carrie being new additions. It was only 10:00 am. So I had three hours to kill before meeting Paige. I guess I had to buy a lot of Christmas presents, so I headed to the plaza early.