

[David Lance POV]

The night had already fallen on the mountain, where I had come to have some alone time, leaving Dinah and Oliver to enjoy the weekend alone, leaving me with no one else but my thoughts, in a small room in a cozy-looking inn. Outside the old inn, the wind howled ferociously, making the old walls of the inn creak worryingly, as the inn was mostly made out of wood.

Currently, I was at the inn's restaurant, sitting at a table waiting for my meal with a book in hand reading, a book Rachel had recommended for that matter, an empty plate of garlic bread a few inches away from my hand.

When I had come down to eat, the restaurant had been empty, but over the few minutes I had been waiting for my steak, some men and women had arrived, spreading out around the tables lit by antique chandeliers.

"Here you go, sir," The waiter said, arriving at my table with my food on a small silver tray. Steak with mash potatoes and a salad on the side, the

mash potatoes with extra cheese and bacon, and the salad with the dressings on the side.

I smiled at him, giving him a slight nod as he put the food in front of me. His service so far was promising a big tip; what can I say? The garlic bread had been to die for.

"If you need anything, just raise your hand, and I'll be here in a flash,"
The waiter smiled, giving me a quick nod.

I nodded in appreciation before getting ready to dig into my food, grabbing the silverware on the plate.

I was enjoying this, having time alone. It was refreshing. And the best part was that my therapists had recommended it, meaning Dinah and Oliver had no reasons to complain; heck, Oliver had given me a credit card to use for that very reason, for my alone time.

"Help," However, before I can bite into my delicious dinner, someone opens the restaurant doors, croaking faintly, their voice barely audible over the sound of the howling wind. "Please... someone.... help!"

With a sigh, I rose from my chair, walking towards the exit of the restaurant, seeing the silhouette of a man standing in the doorway, bleeding into the floor.

Seeing this, I rush towards the man, seeing no one else around with any intention of assisting him.

Now I felt terrible for sighing.

I had wholeheartedly expected his ask to be for something silly.

"Help," The man croaks, collapsing into my arms as I inspected his wounds. It looked as if he had been injured by a large animal, a bear perhaps, possibly something bigger. But what could be bigger than a bear in the mountains?

No time for that. First, I needed to treat his wounds to prevent him from dying of blood loss or an infection before the ambulance arrived, which I hoped someone had already called.

"There's a man dying in the inn! Please send someone!"

I guess they were calling now.

Luckily for the man, I never left my house without my first aid kit.

"There's a monster in the forest..." The man whimpered as I tended to his wounds, waking up as I started to clean his gashes, his hand reaching out towards my arm weakly. Immediately after this, the man faded back to the unconscious level.

Usually, I would rule the words of a wounded man as non-sense because, more than not, factors like blood loss and trauma affected the perceptions of oneself; however, in this very specific case, his words were nothing but the truth.

His wounds corroborated his words; there was no animal on earth with claws that left marks like these.

I knew that.

Batman had made me memorize every type of claw in the animal kingdom, amongst other things, in order to be able to rule out certain parameters during an investigation.

"Sir, do you need any help?" The waiter offered nervously, his face morphing into one of horror upon witnessing the state of the man lying on the floor.

I nodded, hoping the offer was still up, even after seeing what he would have to deal with.

"W-what do you need to d-do?" The waiter nodded, taking a deep breath, averting his gaze toward me.

Seeing the waiter didn't know sign language, I pointed at an empty table and then at the cleaning bottle dangling on his belt.

"You want me to clean that table?" The waiter asked.

I nodded, turning back to the man to continue treating his wounds. After I stabilized his condition, I would go out for a walk in the woods to see what I was dealing with.

"Hi... I-I'm a n-nursing student. Do you need help?"

I turned around to see a woman in her late twenties, as well as many others behind her, coming to help.

So that's why no one had rushed to help but me. They had been under the psychological phenomenon known as the bystander effect, which states that sometimes the presence of others discourages individuals on a subconscious level from intervening in an emergency situation.

I smiled, giving her a slight nod. Showing her my first aid kit, the one I could carry around without telling the world I was a superhero, which had more than enough things to treat wounds like this.

"The ambulance will be here in five minutes," Someone in the back said.

"O-okay, I can do this," The nursing student stammered, applying pressure on the wounds as I finished cleaning them. "Do... do you have antibiotics?"

I nodded; I had some amoxicillin and trimethoprim in my first aid kit.

"Then we need to administer him with some to avoid any possible infection he might have acquired from spreading," The nursing student added, doing a wonderful job keeping her stammering in control.

I nodded once again, pointing at my first aid kit.

"Good, you have amoxicillin... that works for animal-related wounds," The nursing student muttered, grabbing the antibiotic from my bag.

I wonder what kind of monster attacked this man...

Or why the thought of going out to find the culprit made me feel somewhat uneasy. It wasn't fear, far from it, frankly, but it was enough to tell me I had to keep my guard up.