

Eyes

“Another outdoor session?” Mando commented with a distracted smile. “That’s two in a row. Is this going to be a continuing trend?”

“Perhaps,” Walter replied absently.

“Are we going to go ahead and get started or wait a little longer for Misty?” Virge asked from his position on a picnic blanket close to Danni.

Walter turned a questioning look to Carla who shook her head. “Since Carla can’t raise her on the cell phone, we’ll go ahead and get started and hope she shows up partway through our discussion.” Carla walked away as Walter moved to a more central location within the small gathering of vampires.

Jules declared from her position up in the tree, “Misty’s a big girl. She can take care of herself.”

“Quite,” the group leader replied dryly. “Now, our topic for the evening is ‘eyes’. What do a person’s eyes tell us? Keith?”

“Like Danni says, they’re a window to the soul. Most people allow us to use their eyes to gauge their current emotional state. They can also give a clue to whether a person’s telling the truth or not.”

“Quite true,” Walter agreed. “Now lets set aside the generic, mundane information and move on to some more interesting and relevant facts about eyes. Randy, what do glowing red eyes tell us?”

“That the person is a vampire and they’re using their ability to see into the infrared end of the light spectrum,” Randy replied with a little grin.

“Exactly. And glowing is notably different from reflected. Reflected red eyes tell us that there’s a nosferatu in the dark. Looking around the clearing should be enough to confirm any doubts about this as soon as you manage to catch another’s gazes. Exactly. Now, if everyone will focus their attention on the bush across the clearing. Yes, the one at the base of the oak tree. What do you see?”

“Animal eyes,” Mando stated immediately.

“There’s too many shadows around the bush to see what’s attached to the eyes,” Virge said with a frown in his voice.

“*Large* animal eyes,” Danni declared with concern as she stood up on the blanket next to him.

“You are all quite correct,” their mentor told them. “And that’s why this is our topic of conversation. There is a very practical side to this particular discussion or exercise if you prefer to call it thusly. Hiding in the impenetrable shade of the bush is a large creature. His eyes are all you can see. At least until you learn to see into the infrared. Note the distance from the ground to the reflection you see in the back of his eyes. As Danni pointed out, this is a very large creature.”

“Werewolf?” Randy asked, sounding as though he didn’t believe it.

“Yes, he is,” Walter agreed with perhaps a hint of smugness bleeding through.

“But a regular animal’s eyes reflect the same way,” Jules said, now perched on a limb located much lower in the tree. “And a mastiff or St. Bernard would be close to the same height.”

“Quite true,” the group leader agreed with a grin. “And quite a bit more than just your dogs. The mechanism that allows werewolves to see at night is the same mechanism that dopplegangers and the living vampires use for seeing in the dark. And you know what’s really scary?” Not waiting for

an answer, he continued on, “The same holds true for trolls. In fact, trolls will sometimes lay flat, close one eye, and make whining noises like an upset puppy to lure children to them. Trolls are not particularly smart, but they are wily.”

“Like the cartoon coyote?” Keith asked with a grin.

“More like the four to eight hundred pound killing machine that sometimes hunts other supernaturals,” Walter replied with a light reprimand in his tone.

“Sorry,” the youngest of the assembled vampires mumbled.

“So, of the possibilities mentioned,” the eldest vampire continued as though he had not heard Keith’s apology, “Why is troll the least worrisome?”

“It’s very, very rare for a troll to actually hunt other supernaturals,” Randy replied. “And the Lady Selina does not tolerate them within her territory. For a troll to be here, it’s an automatic death sentence without an exemption from her.”

“That’s one reason,” Walter nodded. “What else?”

“While trolls are clever,” Mando began slowly, “they’re not really that smart. Werewolves, living vampires, and doppelgangers on the other hand.... Now those are dangerous foes because they are every bit as smart as we are.”

“Yes,” Walter agreed with a smile. “That is exactly right. As smart if not smarter than you and me. And as your older, more experienced brothers will tell you, a smart opponent is a dangerous opponent. Every supernatural has built-in weaponry. And the ones we’ve mentioned are quite capable of bearing other weaponry and setting all manner of traps and snares. A pair of eyes may be all the warning you get. Be aware... but don’t let paranoia set in. Being paranoid is Carla’s job.

“Now, a couple of quick notes on other types of eyes you might possibly see. If you see eyes that look like they’re actually burning, that would be some sort of demon. Your best bet would be to run away as fast as possible. On the other hand if you were to see a being with blue light shining through where his or her pupils should be, you’re likely in the presence of an angel. In which case your best bet is to run away as fast as possible.”

“Wait,” Danni said with a frown. “You’re saying that angels and demons are real?”

“High and low order members of the supernatural community. Well, they’re both pretty much outside our community. Still, they exist and sometimes they visiting here. Usually, they’re in disguise so you’ll never see their eyes as I just described them. But perhaps one of them might deign to show you his or her true nature. And if they do, now you know what the proper response is.”

“To turn and run away,” Keith replied, his voice deadpan.

“Yes, quite.”

“What about the oriental vampires?” Virge asked. “What do their eyes do in the dark?”

“To be honest,” their leader replied with a smile, “I have not the faintest idea. I’ve never met one. To tell the truth, I didn’t even think of them when I was preparing for this lesson.”

“What about the afore mentioned intelligent others during the day time?” Danni asked. “Do their eyes look odd or are they perfectly normal? What about when they’re in deep shadows?”

“Those are excellent questions Danni,” their leader replied with a bright smile. “A doppelganger’s eyes will typically be normal during the day. They can change their eyes to suit their current needs, so there’s not much reason for their eyes to be anything other than what’s needed for the situation at hand. Only in deep shadow during the day will you be able to catch the reflection in the eyes of a werewolf. As for the living vampires, there is something about their eyes that typically draws attention. It is not hypnosis, but their eyes are almost universally intense in their color. Doesn’t matter what color. Their eyes stand out. Part of their natural allure to humans. However,

so far as I know, they do not reflect during the day as they do at night. Why is this? I have no idea to be honest.”

“Illusion,” growled the werewolf, mostly hidden within the bush. All the vampires except Walter startled, surprised by it speaking.

“Ah! Quite right my friend,” Walter nodded, still smiling. “He’s not referring to living vampires using illusion to enhance their eyes or to hide their night-time reflection during the day. Rather, as a reminder that all of what I’ve told you about could be duplicated by an illusion. Those with the skill to create such illusions are rare. Those with an interest in using such a glamour against a vampire rarer still. I’d hazard a guess that they are quite a bit rarer even than a troll attacking another supernatural unprovoked, but it could happen.”

“Remember,” a deep voice growled from right behind Randy so rough it was barely recognizable as speaking English. Shocked by the sudden appearance and immediate proximity, the vampire reflexively jumped in as did the others. “The eyes you see, may be the eyes you are *meant* to see.” And with that this new werewolf strolled with a deadly grace across the clearing, joined the first, and the two of them disappeared into the night.

“Sweet Jesus,” Randy whispered after they’d been gone for a few minutes. “He scared the crap out of me.”

“No,” Carla disagreed, walking into the clearing from the same direction where the second werewolf had appeared. She was now wearing night vision headgear, body armor, had a battle axe on her hip and carried a large caliber assault rifle. “His name is Eddie, not Jesus. But he *is* a nice guy. Usually.”

“Being paranoid is your job,” Jules whispered from her place in the tree.

“Yes.”

“And now we all have a much better idea about what eyes tell us. And what they don’t,” Walter finished, his eyes serious above his grin.