

Preparations

“Hey!” Veronica called loudly, “You awake yet?” After listening to her husband’s indecipherable reply, she decided he was awake enough. It would still be several minutes before he got out of bed but she knew he would be up and about inside of ten minutes. After eighty two years of marriage, she could gauge within a couple of minutes when he would be on his feet based solely on those odd sounds. Jeff Daniels was one of those people for whom they’d coined the phrase ‘sleep of the dead’. In his case it was literal as both Jeff and Veronica were vampires. Of the two of them he was definitely the heavy sleeper.

“If I tell you something now, are you going to remember it?” she asked more loudly than necessary. She knew even this close to sleep that he wasn’t hard of hearing but acting like he was might goad him a bit into waking up a bit faster. He made more noises. A couple of them sounded somewhat similar to the English words ‘dunno’ and ‘maybe’. She took this as a good sign and walked out to the kitchen to warm him some blood. The fact that she’d asked him about remembering something and had immediately dropped it would help further speed his start into this new night.

When she returned to the bedroom with a martini glass full of blood, she found that he’d rolled over and had his eyes open. “What?” he asked clearly, if grumpily. She began sipping from the glass. “You have the air of a pleased cat about you, woman,” he muttered just before his nostrils flared. “Izzat for me?” he asked, sleepily eyeing the blood.

“I suppose it could be,” she replied, licking her fangs which had slid out when she’d started sipping.

“Bring thyself and thine burden hither, wench,” he called with a yawn, propping himself up on one elbow.

“Wench?” she asked with a smile and a hint of warning.

“Buxom wench?”

She laughed and glided across the room with supernatural grace to sit beside him. She dipped her finger in the blood and began running the finger gently over his lips. He licked the blood from his lips and then sucked her finger clean. Reclaiming her finger, she again dipped her finger in the blood, but this time she painted her own lips with it. Looking down at him with a smile, she arched an eyebrow at him.

“Oh, God woman, you’re making me hungry,” he declared, sitting up.

“My lips won’t keep this blood warm all evening,” she replied softly in one of her best sultry voices. Which was all the incentive he needed to lean across and kiss her passionately. Somewhere in the kissing all the blood on her lips disappeared. Despite the fervor of their kissing, she spilled not a drop from the glass. Unearthly dexterity was only one of the benefits that partially countered losing the light of day.

“You seem to be waking up faster than normal this evening,” she observed with a toothy grin.

“All thanks to the dual incentives of an interesting agenda and a lusty wench,” he replied with an equally toothy smile. “This,” he added, taking the glass from her hand, “Might also have a little something to do with it. But not much.”

“Right,” she smiled, sashaying across the room to a chair upon which she immediately commenced lounging. For the next couple of minutes they remained silent. Him slowly drinking the

blood and occasionally stretching. Her kicked back in the chair observing him. Watching him wake up was what she considered a good way to start an evening. It reminded her of watching a one of the great cats awaken. The flash of sharp teeth, the flexing of lean muscle, the raw power of his incredible strength. Where her blood conveyed most strongly the more subtle influences such as dreamery, his blood most strongly carried physical might. While he was nicely built, his body held strength far beyond his lean good looks.

“If you keep doing that,” he said without directly looking at her. “We’re going to end up using more blood.”

“And just what would it be, good sir, that I am doing?” she asked, sitting up to the edge of her chair.

“You’re looking at me. And you’re enjoying it. I can smell your lust. It’s beginning to stir my own. *Not* that I mind in the least. However, I vaguely recall you mentioning last night that you wanted to get an early start on tonight’s agenda.”

“Really?”

“And just which part of my statement might you be unsure of?” he asked quietly, setting the empty glass down on the nearby nightstand.

“You can smell my lust?” she asked with a small smile.

“Yes,” he breathed in her ear, having moved across the room almost too fast to see. “It comes off you in slow, tantalizing waves.” He kissed her softly just below her ear. “It’s almost like a heat shimmer. It reminds me of what I feel when I look at you,” he finished, kissing her neck now.

“Umm,” she purred, “and there’s so much lust for you to smell. However,” she said, leaning away from him and giving him a quick kiss on the cheek. “You were right about us needing to get an early start. Let’s take a quick shower and get on with matters.”

“Hmm,” he replied with a speculative look. “Let’s... as in ‘let us’? As in you and me showering. Together?”

“Yeah,” she smiled. “You and me. You like?”

“I like,” he agreed, scooping her up as though she weighed nothing. “However, I don’t know how quick it’ll be. Cleanliness can’t be rushed.”

Holding onto his neck, she began kissing him just under the line of his jaw. “You say the sweetest things. Clean me up, loverboy!”

With a laugh he carried her into the bathroom.

“So,” he began after they were cleaned, dried, dressed, and otherwise sated. “Find out anything new via dreamery?”

“I was able to contact Lou while we slept,” she replied, brushing her shining black hair out. “He’s bringing Elaine, the girl we met at the dock?” At his nod, she continued, “He’s also bringing a friend of his and one of his cousins. By this time he should have already told them that we’re vampires. At least that’s what he’d planned on doing. Pretty much as he’d mentioned previously.”

“Could you get a feel for how serious he was taking this?” Jeff asked, strapping on his concealed belt and holster rig for his pistol. “If he’s bringing his girlfriend and a couple of pals, that doesn’t bode too well for any real business getting done. Especially if he’s looking at this like some sort of spring break road trip.”

“In this case it would be a summer vacation road trip,” she corrected, now putting on the

scant makeup she usually wore. “Or, a double road trip I suppose since Dallas is only the first leg of the trip. However, I got the feeling that he was taking this very seriously. I’m pretty sure he didn’t see it, but floating behind him in the dream was an image of a veritable arsenal of heavy weapons and assault gear. It was enough to make a soldier blush.”

“Well, that’s certainly interesting. How nervous did he seem?” Jeff asked, pulling on a light jacket to cover the weapon and belt.

“He actually seemed relieved,” Veronica replied, finishing up her makeup. “I think him asking them along had been something he’d been worried about. Concerned about at the very least. That and telling them about us being vampires. He kept his word and never told them about us. But, I think it’s worn on him a bit. This time when I contacted him, he was just a little shy of being relaxed. The occasional dreamery contact seems to have gotten him used to our presences quite nicely.”

“Very good,” Jeff smiled, stopping on his way out of the bathroom to kiss her neck again. “What time should we expect them to be here?”

“He was going to try to time getting here about an hour after sundown. If they’re running early, then anytime now. Otherwise, we’ve got a little less than a half hour.”

“What a waste,” he said, shaking his head and sighing dramatically. “We would have had time for another round of clean-the-buxom-wench.”

“Mmm,” she replied with a sultry murmur. “I’ll take a raincheck on that, Mister Daniels.”

“Well,” he told her with a boyish smile. “Just make sure you don’t say anything to Mrs. Daniels. She’s the jealous type.”

“My lips are sealed,” she replied with a grin.

“I’ll take care of that, too,” he said with a quick rise of his eyebrows.

Laughing anew, she headed off to the kitchen with him in tow.

“Bets on whether or not Kristoff answers his cell phone,” she asked curiously as she picked up a telephone.

“I’ll pass on that,” he told her, sitting down on a nearby barstool. “I’m a lousy gambler and I know it. But, based on what I know of Kristoff and how much he’s been looking forward to meeting the person who provided the blood for his healing, I strongly suspect that he’s near a phone or just over the side fence in shouting distance.”

“So,” she declared, dialing the phone, “You changed your not voting to a ‘yes’ vote.”

“I didn’t say that,” he contradicted.

“Yes, you did,” she retorted as he shook his head. “Oh, hello Kristoff!” Jeff’s head shake very smoothly became a head nod. She mouthed ‘too late’ with a grin. “It’s good to hear your voice as well. We’re up and about, perhaps you’d like to come on over?” She paused a moment obviously listening, “Okay, that sounds good. See you shortly. Goodbye.” She hung up the phone.

“Good thing I said he’d be available,” Jeff told her slyly.

“Hah!” she countered. “Despite my best efforts to help you win, you blew it Mister Daniels.” She shook her head in mock sadness, “It’s really a shame that you won’t follow my advice.”

“Whatever,” he replied, watching her from the corner of his eye and smiling with the side of his face that was away from her. “It’s my manly duty to ignore most of your advice. It’s just another facet of being the man of the house.”

“Man of the house?” she asked with a raised eyebrow. “Manly duty?”

“Of course. It’s a man’s duty to keep his woman from becoming too upity,” he informed her sincerely.

“Oh, really?” she asked a bit darkly.

“Absolutely,” he told her with perhaps a bit too much sincerity. “As a matter of fact, I think I’m going to have to spank you soon to help keep you in your place.”

“Oh!” she replied with raised eyebrows that quickly turned into a thoughtfully naughty smile, “We’ll, I suppose a man’s gotta do what a man’s gotta do.”

“Yes,” he growled into her neck, suddenly right beside her again. “And if the others don’t hurry up and start showing up, I’m going to be doing you, right here and now.”

“Mmm. You really do say the sweetest things,” she said, giving him a quick kiss. “I’ll also have to take a raincheck on that and the spanking too I’m afraid. I just saw headlights flash in the driveway and Kristoff is on his way.”

“Why is it that the rest of the world has such lousy timing?” he asked in a normal voice.

Walking to the front door, she replied with a sigh, “I’ve often pondered that very question myself. While we’re packing, lay out your police uniform for when we get back.” At his puzzled frown, she explained, “While I enjoy a good spanking as much as the next girl, bad cop is my preferred game.”

“How in the world did I ever get along before I met you?” he asked as they paused next to their door.

“Probably the same as I did before meeting you. Poorly. Now, let’s go meet our guests,” she told him, opening the door as she smiled in anticipation.