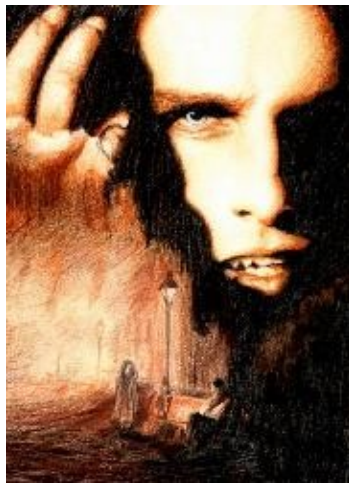


the protector-headless chickens

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After Arabella's little outburst the rest of the protectors are in mayhem.



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Chapter Five-*Headless Chicken*

Helena sat in a large armchair in the corner of the dining room as people rushed about, screaming and panicking. She watched as Damon and Dartemis calmly tried to sooth everyone, but it wasnât working. Aonie was sitting on the floor, her orange eyes shut tight as she attempted to meditate and block out the panicked people around her, again, it wasnât working. Helena could see Aonie getting angry, droplets of sweat were breaking out on her brow as her temper and control began to reach their limits.

After a few more minutes of trying to calm herself, Aonie cracked. Helena could see it, it was like a steam train going off inside her head, horn and all. Aonieâs eyes shot open then focused and narrowed on the wall on the opposite side of the room. Somehow, the large table with all its chairs had ended up slammed against a wall. Aonie stood slowly annunciating every movement with staccato. She filled her lungs and, to Helenaâs appal, prepared to scream the world to shreds.

â *Be quiet!*â Aonie screamed. She sounded like a spoiled six-year-old who wasnât getting her way.

Every single living thing in the room froze. Obviously, Aonie in a rage was a common thing and a dreaded one at that. Helena shot her a respectful glance, Aonie certainly wasnât what she was expecting. Aonie felt her gaze and gave her a look that was only passed between close friends. It filled Helena with warmth and pride. Aonie wasnât finished though, she turned back to the silent room in front of her and glared at them again.

â One silly, little inkling has you all hyped up, something that isnât even going to happen. You are all so pathetic, a human girl with no awakened powers asks one question in the wrong way and all of a sudden youâre all running around like *headless chickens*.â Aonie snapped. Her voice was only quiet but as she spoke, her audienceâs hearts filled with fear. Aonie had a strong reputation for her temper-tantrums. It was a thing that she always lived up to, and loved doing so. Helena ducked her head, she wasnât to know that she was the cause of this fracas.

Before anymore could be said, Arabella came rushing through the double doors with Hunter hot on her tail. They both looked flushed and curiously nervous.

â Whatâs going on in here. Is someone dying?â Arabella questioned, her sentences had been jokily made but she was deeply serious.

â Helena asked a question and everyone started screaming and jumping to conclusions. Nothingâs wrong though, Iâve sorted it.â Aonie replied with a smug grin. Arabella didnât ask anything else, she didnât need to. She knew that any second people would remember what she had done to Riley and begin backing away and looking at her like she was some sort of monster.

Hunter came up behind her and laid a long, strong hand on her shoulder. â No oneâs going to do anything.â Hunter promised, his voice just a soft whisper in her ear. But afterwards everything seemed alright. *Riley went off to his quarters, he was rather shaken by your little outburst. But donât fret, no one will judge. You have my word, my dear.*

Arabella made her way over to where Helena was sitting in the high-backed, leather armchair. Arabella offered her hand to Helena and she took it, eager to get away from the multicoloured people that surrounded

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her.

“Ready to go? We’ll have some dinner sent to the room, so we can pig out while we watch a movie of your choice.” Arabella offered as Helena stood. Helena grinned wildly, Arabella was always fabulous to watch films with.

“Wait, can Aonie come too?” Helena asked eagerly. She put on one of her Arabella melting smiles.

“Okay. Aonie, are you coming?” Arabella caved. It was obvious that she would let Aonie come even if Helena hadn’t pulled the melting trick on her.

“Definitely.” Aonie exclaimed. She skipped over to Arabella and the three of them strode out of the room, arm-in-arm, leaving the room behind them full of gaping on-watchers. They carried on through the winding hallways until they got to the end one, the one that led to Arabella’s chambers. A large, old key appeared in Arabella’s right hand and she bent down to open the enormous double doors that seemed to be plastered all over the building only in different colours. Helena wondered if the key that Arabella held would open all the other double doors.

Arabella led the way through the doors and into the entrance hall.

“Take your shoes and coats off and leave them in here. Helena I brought the DVD collection, it’s in my room on the shelves. Choose as many as you want and I’ll be in in a minute, I’ve just got to order junk food and goodies.” Arabella instructed as she slipped out of her shoes and cloak.

“Can we wear pyjamas, please?” Helena asked. Her voice was higher than usual in her excitement.

“Of course go through and get changed. Aonie you have your own don’t you?”

“Yes, I’ll go help Helena while you order din-dins.” Aonie replied with a hungry grin. Helena and Aonie strolled down the hallway laughing at something that Arabella knew nothing about.

Helena made a stop at her own room to collect pyjamas and undo her hair. It swung down to her shoulders as soon as it came out of its holder and, instantly, the curls undid into her usual straight hair. Picking up her cosiest, fluffy pyjamas, Helena skipped out of her room and joined Aonie back in the long, echoing hall.

“If you cut through here, you can go straight through to Arabella’s chamber.” Aonie informed Helena as she changed direction and headed straight for the wall.

Aonie ran her fingers horizontally across the sandstone wall until she found an invisible crack. A door creaked open, the door was made out of a metal that was exactly the same colour as the powdery sandstone that surrounded it. Aonie strode through into the darkness and Helena trustingly followed. She would have to remember this door in case of emergencies. Helena stumbled forward in the darkness following the light of Aonie’s luminescent hair. There was a slight draught coming from another hidden doorway.

“There’s another door that leads to the outside. In case anything ever happens and something unwanted gets into here, Arabella can get out quickly and, hopefully, safely. You know that if anything ever happened she would be the only one who could probably survive. I mean, Dartemis is probably stronger than her but he’s growing weak from years of loneliness, he has Riley but he wants a woman, someone that he loves. After him, Arabella is the strongest and she has no problems with loneliness, especially with Hunter around.

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That's why everyone flipped at your question, if Arabella dies then they know that we're done for. If Arabella's gone, and Dartemis, then there'll be no one to take over. Hunter can't, he'd be too distraught over Arabella to even consider leading us. Riley is unworthy of even being a protector, he deserved far more than what Arabella did to him earlier. And Damon and I are nowhere near experienced enough to run this, neither of us want to either. Arabella is the only one capable of running this if Dartemis goes, which I prey he doesn't. Aonie stated as they emerged on the other side of another in, supposedly, Arabella's room.

The room was remarkable, with lack of better wording. The first thing that caught Helena's attention was the floor, it was made of a magnificent stone that looked like black onyx. Helena swept her eyes up the room, she found a romantic, gigantic four poster at the far wall in the centre. A crimson, opaque veil hung down from the posts making the bed look mysterious and alluring. The sheets looked heavy and a shimmering violet (Arabella's favourite colour). Two sets of long windows spread across the walls on either side of Helena, the outside world was obstructed by a thick, heavy, shimmering violet material, the same one as the cover on the bed.

The walls were painted in a fiery orange that matched Aonie's eyes, a strange colour but one that suited Arabella impeccably. Now the ceiling - well the ceiling was a dome that led to - the only way to describe it was oblivion. The dome was rimmed with platinum that reflected the rainbow of dark colours below it. Inside the platinum rimming was a moving picture, the picture was made up abstract colours and precarious shapes that were nothingness to anyone but Arabella probably. The colours were thick greys and blacks, heavy purples and deep blues (the colours of storms). Behind the stormy clouds was a sky of curious colours that showed the true obscurity of the painting, the sky was made up of deep reds, oranges, yellows, red-browns, hot pinks.

As Helena gazed into the picture, the clouds seemed to evaporate and the sky cleared showing a thick band of ugly green. Something began to emerge through the acidic green but Helena wasn't going to stay to find out what it was. She dragged her eyes away from the moving picture and stared at Aonie, appalled at what she had just seen and that Aonie had let her see it.

It's okay. It shows you what you truly desire, what even you don't know that you want. Your hearts desire. Corny isn't it? Aonie commented reading Helena's expression.

Wow, everything's so real here. I better pick a movie to watch. Helena mumbled. She scuffled over to the right hand side of the four poster where three long shelves filled with DVDs lined the orange wall. Arabella had ordered the films in alphabetical order, typical. Helena caught sight of a title, a film she hadn't watched in many years, not since it was playing on film4. She tugged the case out of its carefully chosen position on the shelf and turned back to Aonie. Helena dropped the films on the bed and began to change out of her clothes, into her fluffy Pjs. Aonie had considerately turned her back to Helena, a sudden set of pyjamas in her hands. As Helena had done, Aonie changed. Her pyjamas were a white velvet. They looked carefully woven and somehow looked just as comfortable as Helena's.

All ready and changed? Have you picked a film? Arabella exclaimed as she came in through the main entrance. Arabella's hair fell to her waist and glistened softly in the candlelight. She was wearing Pyjamas that were almost identical to Helena's only they were a deep magenta and had no design on them.

Yes, an interview with a vampire. I know it's your favourite, and I love it too. Besides we haven't seen it in about four years. Helena answered with a cheesy grin. Arabella chuckled at how close Helena and herself had become over the years.

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“I’ll sort it out then, Eloise is bringing in the food any second. You two sit down on the bed or sofa and get comfy. I’ll just be messing around with this.” Arabella insisted as she took the DVD from Helena. She strode over to the wall with the secret entrance and pressed a button that was camouflaged so well that Helena couldn’t even see it after Arabella had pressed it. A plate slid out and Arabella placed the DVD on top of it. She ran back to the bed and leaped onto it next to both Aonie and Helena who had lounged on the bed waiting for something unexpected to happen.

A shiny, white cinema screen rolled down from the ceiling and created a board for the film to produce itself on. Eloise scuttled into the room with three other young girls and placed a selection of junk food in front of the girls. Arabella thanked them and they left as quickly as they had come. The trailers began to flicker across the cinema screen, Aonie giggled as Arabella tapped her repeatedly with her foot. Helena shushed them angrily but then snorted at her own impatience. After a second all three girls were giggling hysterically.

They all breathed calmly as the film began. Helena reached for food, and soon the other two did the same. The sound of voices came from hidden speakers around the room and the acoustics were incredible. Helena had picked a good film, the echoes highlighted its eeriness. The film began to get interesting and the girls left their food, too absorbed to bother about anything. Arabella, Aonie and Helena all cried at the end, when it showed you Brad Pitt crying over the dead Kirsten Dunst who he had thought of as a daughter. They sniffed and laughed at their own patheticness. The film stopped and the girls cheered and clapped. Helena stood to collect another film.

The night continued with movies blaring, odd occasions where the girls would eat or laugh or cry. It was seven hours later when all three of them fell unconscious and the film ended with a final note of music.

Dartemis’s voice came bounding through Arabella’s head. She looked at him and he smiled warmly at her. He’d never thought Riley’s antics with Arabella had been appropriate, he knew that Riley deserved what she had just done (as did the entire room, including Helena and Hunter).

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