

Chapter I

Zurik sat handcuffed to the table in the Starsboro Police station's interrogation room. He pulled at the cuffs in time to Volbeat's *Still Counting*, which he sang under his breath. The steady biting of the cuffs on his wrist helped him keep his cool. He was careful not to break the weak metal with each tug. The room was cold, he could see his breath. They had turned the AC cranked up, trying to make him feel uncomfortable, no doubt. Unfortunately for the cops, it was a nice change from the North Carolina summer night, that was still hot enough to fry eggs on the sidewalk. *These officers are just doing their job and I need to coexist with them if I want to continue to do mine.*

Starsboro PD was small time. *There was no way they could gather enough evidence against me anyway. This is just a scare tactic to get me to confess.* He laughed at the thought.

"Something funny, Mr. D'Vordi?" Starsboro's only female detective entered the room, trying to project an authority. The attempt almost made him laugh again. If she only knew. "I'm Detective Jennifer Morgan," she said, looking over what he assumed to be his file.

This was not his first time in this interrogation room, but he had not

seen her before. He smiled at her. She might not be intimidating, but the way she tried was hot as hell. She was just his type too — tall and well curved. *Though, it's difficult not to be my type.* She had shoulder length auburn hair and wore a light grey suit with a cream blouse, that gave her an air of professionalism he found exceptionally attractive. Which was interesting considering he never wore anything but torn jeans and band tees. There wasn't much point given his profession.

"You are twenty-eight years old and already wanted for questioning in... nine missing persons cases?" Her tone was disbelieving as she looked up at him. Noting his lingering gaze, she said, "I don't date suspects, especially those involved in multiple murder investigations." She was nervous — or at least he hoped she was.

"I wouldn't be so sure."

"You killed five men in front of a security camera."

That nearly succeeded in breaking his smile. *Shit, what a rookie mistake. I should have checked for cameras more often.* He had been fighting the forces of darkness since he was just a kid — nearly fifteen years. He ran a hand through his raven hair, reaffirming his smile as Morgan brought in a TV. This might be a little trickier than he originally thought, but he would get through it one way or another. His grandfather was the richest man in the state; though he hated the idea of using the system against itself, these were extenuating circumstances. He could not do what he needed to behind bars.

Morgan hit play on the VCR and he stifled another laugh. If it was recorded on tape, chances were good, they would barely be able to tell that a fight took place let alone who fought it.

He sat back in his chair, folding his arms over his chest as the film

began. A few seconds in, a group of teenage girls came into frame. Before they were even out of view, the first of the fey jumped out in front of them. The fey were magical beings with an appearance similar enough to humans to pass unnoticed.

This was a group of young males setting up a nest in Starsboro. They were kidnapping young women and taking them back home to bear fey children and keep house. Zurik had been tracking this particular group for a few weeks now — ever since young women began disappearing. They knew he was onto them, which is why they planned to take so many this time. After that group, they would not need any more for a few years, and Zurik would have to wait until they started hunting again to find where they were hiding.

The detective watched Zurik as he watched the tape. He wasn't sweating or doing much of anything, guilty or otherwise. Until the group of six males moved to actually attack the girls. Then, he leaned forward. Zurik appeared on the tape, or at least the person she believed to be Zurik. He killed five of them while the teens ran for their lives. The sixth also escaped. His plan had been to follow the last one back to where they were keeping the women, but he had not seen which way the fey had gone. He would at least have that from this little experience.

"Why did you let the last one go?" Morgan asked as the video ended.

"Alright, 'Benson,' I don't know about you, but I couldn't recognize any faces on that tape. Maybe if you find those kids, or better yet the sleeze-bucket that escaped the vigilante, they can tell you who it was."

"We have it on good authority that this vigilante, as you call him, is you."

“Whose authority? The person who anonymously sent you the fuzzy tape?” Zurik asked. She knew he had her now; the tipster had remained annoyingly anonymous. They need a confession from him. Without a confession, a judge would never sign an arrest warrant. It would be too easy for a defense attorney to argue that it could be anyone on the tape, but she knew in her gut that this was their guy. “All you have is a blurry tape that may or may not show a guy kicking the crap of some pervs. So unless you have some more evidence you want to lay on me or a line up you want me to make an appearance in, it's time you come over here and uncuff me.”

She glared. That was not what she wanted to do. However, he was only partially right, and she had one more trick up her sleeve. “I can hold you for twenty-four hours before making an arrest. I can come up with a lot of evidence in that time.”

His smile faded; if looks could kill she would have been a pile of ash. “You are not going to leave me here for twenty-four hours.”

Her smile grew.

“I want my lawyer,” he growled. “Now.”

“Sure, what’s the name?” she asked playfully. “Or do I need to contact a public defender for you?”

“No, I have someone.” His smile returned as he spoke the name, “Jack Turner.”

Morgan’s heart sank. Turner was the best defense attorney in the state bar none.

Twenty minutes later, Zurik walked out of the police station and into oppressive heat and humidity, Turner by his side. Trent was at the bottom of the stairs leaning against Zurik’s car, a red 1969 Camaro with

two white racing stripes. Zurik practically skipped to the car.

“Thanks for picking up my baby,” he said to Trent as he looked over the vehicle. “I was afraid she might get stripped where I had to leave her.”

“It was the least I could do after I got your message,” Trent said, looking ashamed. “I am so sorry I didn’t answer when you called.”

“Yeah, I will yell at you about that later. Lets hit Frank’s before it closes. I could kill for a burger.”

“Be careful where you say things like that Zurik,” Morgan’s voice called from a few feet away on the department steps.

“Are you threatening my client?” Turner shot back.

“*That* is who arrested you?” Trent gawked at Morgan. “I suddenly don’t feel so bad. You probably enjoyed it.”

Zurik shrugged.

“No I wasn’t threatening,” Morgan said looking at the brothers through narrowed eyes. “Just promising.”

“Don’t sweat it, Turner,” Zurik said shaking the man’s hand. “I owe you one.”

“After what you did for me last year, I don’t think you will ever owe me, Zurik. But try and stay out of trouble ’til I can get this before a judge.” Turner said, referring to how they met. Zurik had been tracking a ghoul through Charlotte when it had targeted Turner’s daughter. Zurik killed it before any real harm could be done and Turner had offered his services as payment. At the time, Zurik had refused, not knowing that the day he would need a defense attorney was right around the corner.

“Will do,” Zurik said as he hopped into his car. He started the engine and peeled out of the lot, barely giving Trent enough time to get in.

“You’ve got your hands full with that one, don’t you,” Morgan

asked Turner as she watched the red Camaro fade into the distance. She could still hear the engine long after it was gone from sight.

“I owe him more than I can ever repay,” Turner said. Part of him hoped his response would help deter the detective from looking at this any deeper.

“What do you mean?” she asked.

“He saved my daughter’s life,” he answered stepping off the curb toward his car. “This world is a much better place with Zurik in it.”

Morgan frowned. Did he just allude to another vigilante instance Zurik was involved in? He had mentioned something Zurik did last year. She turned and ran back into the precinct to find out where Turner had been living a year ago and look into unsolved homicides in the area.

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“Zurik,” Trent said, trying to drag his brother’s attention away from the burger he was devouring. “You really need to take this seriously.”

“Yeah,” he said with more burger stuffed in his cheek than one would think was humanly possible. “I know that Dick is out to get me.” He smiled at his pun but Trent seemed unamused.

“I mean it Zurik,” Trent tried again. “She can put you away. A lot of the things we slay have the outward appearance of being human.”

Trent was right, as usual, the little buzz kill. “Alright, I will lighten up after I find the fey nest.”

“No,” Trent said as if he had the authority to order Zurik about. “I will find it. You go party and have fun. Make lots of appearances with pretty girls and you know... do what you do.”

Zurik narrowed his eyes on his brother. "Are you telling me to sleep around?"

Trent shrugged and Zurik laughed. He was definitely no saint when it came to calling a girl back the next day, but he never thought his sensitive little brother would actually encourage him to have one night stands.

"Look, the point isn't to break hearts, it's to be seen doing things other than committing homicides."

"I can do that," Zurik said with a smile as he took a swig of his beer, "after I find the fey nest."

Trent shook his head. If Zurik was anything it was a work-a-holic... and a womanizer.

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Morgan pulled in just as the brothers were finishing their meal. She would kill for the ability to lip read. Zurik certainly didn't look guilty. But with the way he cut down those men on the video, she would not be surprised to learn he was a psychopath. She discovered a murder in Charlotte around the time Zurik was said to have visited there last year. She was just waiting on the case file to check into it further. The detective she spoke with also seemed to hold a torch for this guy. *What was it about him that had everybody fooled?* She wondered.

Her phone rang. She did not recognize the number. "Morgan," she said as she looked back to the diner.

"This is Special Agent Hawk with the FBI," the male voice came over the line.

"What?" She asked unable to believe what she had just heard.

"You are looking into Zurik D'Vordi?" the voice ignored her. "You need to stop."

“I’m sorry who is this?”

“Stop investigating Zurik. That is an order,” the voice barked before the line went dead.

She was staring at her phone trying to view the number again, but it just said “unknown.” She jumped when someone knocked on her window. She looked up to see Zurik leaning down, looking at her. She rolled the window down just enough to talk.

“You OK?” he asked. “You look startled.”

“Who was that?” she demanded holding up the phone.

“I wouldn’t know; I wasn’t talking to them,” Zurik said slowly as if she were a child.

“He told me to stop investigating you,” the words slipped out before she could stop herself. “I think he threatened me.”

Taking new interest in the mystery caller, he took the phone from her. After realizing there was nothing to be gained from the phone itself, he returned it to the startled detective.

“Did he say anything else?” he tried.

“He said he was Agent Hawk, with the FBI.” She paused. “I think that’s what he said.”

Zurik looked at Trent, who was standing next to the Camaro giving Zurik an annoyed look.

“If he contacts you again, let me know,” Zurik ordered. He moved to walk away but heard her car door open.

“I’m the police; you don’t order me around,” she shouted, stopping in her tracks when he turned to face her.

“You have no intention of listening to him.” It was a statement not a question. “He’s not going to like that.”

“He’s the FBI. The most he can do is call my captain,” she decided out loud. “I will find out what you’re hiding Zurik.”

“You don’t want to know,” he replied honestly. Knowledge of his world would only complicate hers.

Without another word, he and Trent got into the Camaro and left.

Morgan was left to ponder who Agent Hawk was and why he cared

about Zurik. *Did this investigation interfered with one of theirs? He might have a carefree attitude but the feds were not a fun loving group. If they were involved maybe he had committed all those murders. A serial killer?*

She stared at where the red muscle car had been parked. “Who are you Zurik D’Vordi, and what have you done?”