

Chapter 11

What Am I doing?

Amanda isn't abandoning me. For that to happen she'd have to care about me.

I need to get out, so the first thing is to take out this sword. I'm surprised at how much more painful it is removing it than it was when she put it through me.

I manage to pull myself up by using one of the mainframe columns, but I can't move for a moment to pain is so strong. I can't stay here. Amanda has just tried to kill me. She's gone to get someone to do the job properly.

I walk to the door holding my stomach; my shirt is red from the blood. I've never bled this much before. In the corridor there's no one. Good. It's the middle of the night, while there's someone from security around at all time, I know the few on duty like taking it easy at night. But I don't have long.

I hold on to the wall as I walk, leaving bloody hand prints to make my trail. I know hardly anything about taking care of wounds, but I know I need to stop the bleeding.

I make it to my destination; fortunately the supply closet is never locked. I get in and close the door behind me. Once the light is on I search through the shelves. I need something to apply pressure on the wounds. I find a stack of clean rags. That'll do. There's a roll of duct tape, I'll use that to hold the makeshift pressure pads in place.

I take off my shirt and look at the wound. It's a clean slit through which the blood is flowing. I can't see any signs it started healing. Why isn't it healing?

I get a long strip of tape ready and grab half the rags. I apply them to the wound and wrap the tape around my body. I do the same for the exit wound. Then I add layers after layers of tape to make sure it will stay in place.

I don't feel any better, but at least I'm not dripping blood anymore. I wash my hands and arms in the large sink at the back of the closet. I listen at the door before exiting. No sound in the corridor.

I stay alert for the sounds around me as I head to the elevator. The only way out of the building is on the ground floor. No one is waiting for me, and the doors open as soon as I call it. No one inside. good.

I lean against the wall to catch my breath as it goes up. Why am I so out of breath? I've run for hours without feeling this bad.

The elevator jerks to a stop. I press on the ground floor button a few times, but nothing happens.

"Really Derick?" Amanda's voice comes from the ceiling. "You take the elevator? I guess demons are so straight forward

you never learned to plan ahead for traps. Don't worry; I'm going to have someone there in no time at all."

I don't know what she means, except that I don't want to be here when the people she's sending arrive. I force my fingers in the crack between the doors and pull on them as hard as I can. Only to double over as the pain in my stomach flairs.

Okay. I have to be more careful. Whatever she did to me is affecting more than just the stomach. More gently I pull the door apart, the pain increases a little in doing that, and I'm left panting and sweating.

I'm between floors, but there's enough of a gap for to pull myself through. It takes a me a moment to catch my breath and then I pull myself up, ignoring the pain until I'm out of the elevator, then I curl up in a ball for a long minute.

I don't want to get up, but I hear a door open in the distance, and from the way the footsteps echo I can tell it's the stairwell. I can't tell how many men are coming, but I can't be on the floor when they get here.

With groans of pain I get up and start walking. They're in front of me, getting closer, but I have to get going. If I can't use the elevators, the stairs are my only other option. I have three floors to go until I can escape.

I turn a corner just as they turn the one at the other end. they raise their machine guns and I duck back. They don't fire, but I hear the safeties come off. They aren't moving for the moment.

I lean back against the wall and rub my arm. It's still throbbing.

Can I take them on? Sure, even in my current state, they're only human. But I have to be able to reach them first. Somehow I'm not healing, so a hail of bullets will stop me.

"Jensen, Magingson," A man whispers. It's probably the one in charge of the group. "Go back, there's an office that has a door on the other corridor, take it and get him from behind."

Two set of footstepmove away. It's good to know about the way to get behind them.

"Derick," the man calls out. "I don't know what's going on, but just turn yourself in and we can resolve this."

I chuckle. "No thank you. I saw the weapons you're holding. I'm going to stay right here for the moment." I try to run for the intersection behind me, but my wound won't let me, so I walk there as fast as I can.

"We won't shoot you. We just want to bring you in. I'm sure whatever you did isn't that bad."

I ignore him and focus on listening for the footsteps. yes, I heard them, getting closer. They stop just before the turn, and I prepare myself.

The muzzle of the rifle appears. I grab it and lift it. I step in front of the man holding it and hit him in the face with as much strength as I can muster. It isn't as much as normal, but he still goes down.

Before she can react I use the rifle as a club and she goes down too. I check to make sure they are both still alive before taking out the handguns at their belts.

I go the way they came, and find the open door they used. I can see the other door so I go there as quietly as I can, which is a lot quieter than they were moving.

"Jensen," the man whispers, "Are you in position?"

I peak in the hall and there are four of them with their back to me. The one in front has a radio to his mouth.

"Jensen, come back."

I step out and throw the gun at his head. Then cross the distance using the butt of the other gun to knock them out before they even realize I'm here.

I check as I catch my breath, and they are alive. Good. I don't want to kill any of them. No matter what lies I've been told, they are still humans. I take the radio, and head for the stairs.

"Amanda, are you listening?"

"So you've killed them."

"No, they are just unconscious. I don't intend to kill anyone you send to stop me from leaving, but I'm hurt and I'm having trouble focusing, so I can't be sure I'll be able to pull my punches."

"Why are you telling me this?"

"Because I think you should just let me go."

"That isn't going to happen. You're my property, and there's too much I can learn from dissecting your body. The next one I make will be better. I'm sure Jason will come up with a cute name for that one too."

I enter the stairwell and go up. "So you don't care how many people might die trying to stop me?"

"They're expendable."

"You told me I was made to protect humans. Was that a lie?"

"Of course it was. I can't believe how naive you truly are. You're an experiment. If you'd been successful, I'd make more and the lot of you would wipe the demons off the face of the world. We'd finally be rid of those things."

Two floors to go.

"Then why send me out to protect humans?"

"That was Jason's idea, a way to validate your existence to yourself. He gave you moral center and a mission to go with it. I thought it was ludicrous, but it did have the advantage of

pitting you against actual demons. It let me find out what your limits are."

One more floor to go.

"The news?"

She takes a moment to reply. "Oh, that, another creation of Jason. let's you think there are other out there like you, creates a sense of community, of belonging."

"He was right. I really though I belonged. I was happy to protect the humans, to help make the world a safer place." I put my hand against the bar. "Except I wasn't was I?"

"Sure you were. every demon you killed made the world a safer place."

I push the bar hard and I throw myself to floor. Bullets fly about me. I feel something burn my shoulder as I roll and stand with a grunt. I punch the woman before me, catch her before she falls and move behind her. Her body jerks in my hold as multiple bullets hit her. I back away, using her corpse as a shield until I reach an intersection.

There's no one is in so I drop her and walk as fast as I can. Something wet flows down my left arm. I have a bullet hole in it. I can't let that stop me. Once I'm out and I've found a place to hide I can deal with my injuries.

I'm on the south west side of the building. The garage is on the north side, but there's no point going there. I can't drive and Amanda has to be expecting me to go there.

There's an emergency exit somewhere around here. I remember seeing it in my exploration of the building. I just have to find it before they catch up to me, or run out of strength. My stomach is now numb rather than painful, so that's good, but my feet feel heavier than before.

I see the exit sign at the end of the hall. and I try to hurry. I'm almost out. I'm almost free.

Two woman in uniform appear at the junction where the door is and look in my direction. Surprise register on their face and they go for their guns.

They don't have rifles and that's what saves me. By the time they pull their guns out I've reach them and knocked them out.

I push on the door, and it doesn't budge. I put my shoulder into it but it resists me. With a cry of frustration I take a step back and kick it open. As a result I almost black out from the pain, but I manage to force myself forward.

I lean against the open door trying to decide which direction to go in when a small white van turns the corner and comes to a stop before me. The sliding door opens and a woman motions for me to come in.

"Get in. We have to get out of here."

It takes me a moment to realize who she is. "Juliette?"