Chapter 90

I woke with a naked Artica draped over me.  Mary was on the other side of her with just her panties on.  She was still saving herself for her virginity, but it hadn’t stopped her from joining us last night.  She gave Artica and me oral and then cheered on Artica as she rode me for over an hour.  I harvested a slight 12 life essence from Mary and topped off my aether with Artica.  I deemed Artica’s core was still too fragile to create life essence.  But I was finding Artica had an insatiable sexual appetite.  I had used my lust aura and saliva to increase their pleasure, but even then, she brought an intense energy and wanted to go again and again.  Artica was my little nympho, which was not bad for an incubus to have.

It was a little after three in the morning, and I had spent four hours in my mind space getting abused by Lilith in the dojo.  I was actually considering dissipating Lilith’s construct after just one day.  Besides being absolutely gorgeous, she had not been a great addition to my mind space.  She made me feel—inadequate.  I had created what amounted to sexy librarian outfits for her, complete with thick-rimmed glasses, in order to get her to practice martial combat with me tonight.  And then she just beat the crap out of me instead of really teaching me anything.  I missed Pandora. This was almost like some kind of self-abuse since she was a facet of my subconscious.

It felt like my subconscious was rebelling against me.  Or perhaps she was training me like a dog—I would give her a little something, and then she would reward me.  I also sensed Lilith wanted to be independent and free of the mind space.  It was like she was an unwilling occupant of the space.  I did find her enjoying the park when I entered. She was reading a book and lying on the small hill.  I hoped when Andromeda returned Pandora, she would give me more answers.

I left for hockey practice really early, planning to get some practice in with my incubus wings.  Mary had driven them to the hotel so they would be able to make it to school on their own.  When I got to my little isolated chasm, I stripped and started to weave between trees.  I was so much faster than my first time.  I did crash twice as I increased my speed and misjudged my turning radius.  Maybe taking a class in physics was actually a good idea.

I was mostly healed when I dressed for hockey practice.  It was Tuesday, and we had our makeup game tomorrow.  It felt rushed with just two days of practice to play a game.  Our team was pretty terrible.  Both varsity goalies had left the team, and the JV goalie, only practiced twice a week, and was 120 lbs soaking wet.  He was quick but didn’t have a good feel for the game and had tunnel vision on whoever had the puck.  Now, our defensive pairings had all freshmen and sophomores.  The good thing was coach Adams simplified everything.  At least it would let everyone remain on the same page but make it easy for the opposing team to expose us.  James and I were still on the same forward line, but we barely talked to each other.  I showered at the rink and went straight to school.

I decided what I could do in classes was add more books to my mind space. I told myself it was not for Lilith but to give myself something to do.  I would check out ten books in the library at study hall and then spend the next day paging through them to add them to my library.  And then switch them out in the study hall to repeat the cycle.  I would focus on the science books for now.

At lunch, Eilina sat next to me and reminded me a half dozen times that Kiri had said it was for me to take her.  Vida was also tuned into the conversation, clearly interested. Vida wanted the experience too, but that was not going to happen.  Even though she had a mature body, her mental age was too young for me.  Bedelia was excited about the delve this weekend, and I gave her the coordinates to do the planning.   It was a four-hour drive and almost an hour’s hike to the location.  Bedelia and Iris would plan the trip.  Jade had meetings for her governance and was upset she couldn’t come.

I was leaving lunch, and Bedelia caught up to me, “Caleb, do you have a minute for a private conversation?”

I stepped into an alcove with her, and she continued, “I know you have been raising the aether cores of women.  I know you are a demon and an incubus.”  My face remained neutral.  She pressed, “I am willing.”  She looked a little panicky, “A contract for ten years of service is what I am willing to offer.”  I was speechless, and my eyes opened in surprise.  Bedelia misinterp[reted my expression, thinking her offer wasn’t enough, “Twenty years then, but I will not go higher,” her pulse was racing, and her breathing increased.

Bedelia was willing to sell herself to increase her own power.  I couldn’t blame her.  My biggest confusion was that I hadn’t gotten a contract from anyone else.  So why was she willing to offer one?  I was actually proud to learn Abigail hadn’t spilled my secrets.  My hesitation caused Bedelia to whine, “Twenty-five years.  I don’t want the life contract.  Abigail is going to be a Medicus. I can be your seer,” I saw the desperation on her face and a tear forming.

“We can talk again after this weekend and work out the details,” I said while walking away.  I didn’t want to commit to anything.  Not only did I not have the *demon-binding contract* ability but the idea of enslaving someone put a bitter taste in my mouth.  I kept telling myself that Artica was an employee.  I was essentially Vida’s guardian.  Abigail was following me freely, and everyone else was on the periphery, taking whatever advantage they could of the situation.

When I entered the library for the last period, I selected ten physics books to check out.  The librarian gave me a weird look but completed the process.  I left school and tossed the pile in my car.  This was tomorrow’s project.  Right now, I had to go and help Amelia unload and set up the furniture.  Maybe I could convince her to break her moral compass again.

I parked in the driveway at the cabin this time, not having to hide my car. The place was swarming with contractors and two large moving trucks.  I found Amelia in the garage, “Caleb!  Thank god you are here!  My two movers started unloading, but the contractors seemed to have multiplied.  We have so much to get inside.  These are the first two trucks; a third one is coming in an hour!”

I got to work, and this was not an intimate afternoon with Amelia.  She was hectic and slightly overwhelmed, checking the furniture for damage and getting everything to the right room.  I hope she never visited the cabin after the job was done.  Almost half of the furniture she had purchased would be gone, changed for the expensive antiques from the Van Holfe mansion.  One thing was for certain, Amelia was taking this job seriously. The place was immaculate.  I caught Amelia and asked, “Who is this guy?  Is this the job that got you the new Escalade?”

Amelia placed the clipboard down, “Yeah, some private millionaire.  He actually was here talking to the contractors earlier this week, but I know he was just checking in on me.  I need everything to be perfect for this one Caleb.”  I could sense something from Amelia.  Was she interested in Apollyon?  Amelia was not a gold digger and made a lot of money already.  I don’t know why I suddenly found the idea of taking Amelia in my Apollyon erotic.   No, it couldn’t happen.  My adult form still looked closely like my teenage form.  She would be able to tell.

We worked until 10 pm, long after the contractors had finished for the day.  Amelia said, “I have never seen contractors work so damn hard before.  I want to know what Mr. Silverhorn said to them.  I think we will actually meet the deadline.  They are pouring the pool, patio, and retaining wall on Friday if the temperature is good.”  Amelia sagged into the plush leather sofa in front of the grand living room fireplace with a cathedral ceiling and a view of the mountains.  She was tired, and I moved behind the chair and began massaging her shoulders.  She moaned in pleasure.  I tried sneaking my hands down to her breast, but she jumped up and faced me.

“No, we are done with that!”  She rasped.  I tried my sad face and thought about turning on my lust aura.  “Caleb, we can’t.  I love you.  I love you like my own son!  You don’t know what having sex with you has done to me.  I hate myself!”  She was shedding silent tears.  I knew what I had to do.

I activated my charming eyes, “Amelia.  Please listen to my voice.  We never had sex.  Everything that you think happened was just a fantasy that you dreamed.  You are strong enough to resist your impulses.  You will always think fondly of me but never act on your impulses.”  I left the charm effect lock in place.  It would fade in time, but what I had told her would be her new truth.  I would unload her conscience.  Maybe a version of Apollyon Silverhorn would seduce Amelia in the future, but Caleb Silversmith was off the table.

I smiled, acting like nothing had just happened, “Hey, Amelia, this was fun.  This guy is loaded.  How much do I get for helping you tonight?  It has been almost seven hours!”  My suggestion and reprogramming had settled.  Amelia confusedly whipped her tears.

She quickly regained herself though, “How does four hundred sound!” She said, smiling and pulling out the four bills. I pretended to be awed by the sum and gave Amelia a thank-you hug.  I left Amelia and drove home.

With no practice in the morning, I picked up Abby for a run in the forest.  With it being unseasonably warm, there were a number of runners this morning.  We didn’t have time to sneak off for a tryst.  We ended up doing a fifteen-mile run, talking the entire time.

It was obvious Bedelia had won over Abigail as she talked fondly of her mage teacher.  Abigail was running track already.  She promised not to win her races by too large of a margin.  Abigail was planning to become a magical healer, so she didn’t need a scholarship to a conventional college.  She was running track because she loved running and competing.  We showered together at Iris’ house together.  My favorite part was using the luffa on her abs while standing behind her. Abigail’s core was still healing, so it was just some conventional sex and only one quick round, as we had to get to school soon.

At school, I started my new routine of adding books to my mind space during classes.  Paging through the books didn’t seem to bother my teachers. I finished by lunch, and I got a new set of books.  Maybe I could do twenty books a day. I started to work on personal finance books next. I was going to need to invest whatever sum I received from the sale of the estate and artwork.  So far, I had not received any update from De Roy.  I left for the rink and skated alone after school.  The game was in four hours, but I liked gliding on the ice in the silence of the arena.

Coach Adams popped in and ordered me to rest before the game.  I was going to be getting a ton of ice time.  When the game started, he wasn’t kidding.  I was double-shifting the entire game. I was holding back in using my true incubus physicality, just pushing near the top of what I felt were human norms. The problem was I couldn’t be everywhere on the ice.  The score was 6 to 5 entering the last period.  We were losing even though I had scored three goals and had two assists.  There was a huge chemistry issue between James and me. I couldn’t tell who was angrier with whom.

I had already taken the team on my shoulders, trying to will us to a win.  I got a penalty just two minutes into the 3rd period for a hard check that knocked down one of their players.  It was a clean body check, but he had cried in pain after hitting the ice, so a penalty was called.  They scored to take a two-goal lead.  I exited the box, got a steal shortly, and got an unassisted goal to bring us back to within a goal.  Four minutes later, I was awarded a penalty shot on a breakaway after being hauled down from behind.  I scored on the penalty shot to tie the game.

The game remained tied as we turtled up, and everyone was exhausted except me.  I repeatedly tried to get penetration into the zone but was constantly double-teamed with my outlet pass giving up the puck.  The good news was the opposing team was also exhausted from covering me.  With forty seconds left, I dug into my incubus enhancements for the first time, pushing me beyond human limits.  I was going to win this.  I juked and cut through their defense while controlling the puck to the net.  I saw the fear in the goalie’s eyes as I pressed in.  I went right, and he committed to that side of the net.  I pulled the puck impossibly fast to the left and buried the puck in the net.

The cheers went up, and I saw my cheering section of Iris, Bedelia, Kiri, Mary, Vida, Eilina, and Artica go nuts.  I saluted them with my stick as my teammates surrounded me.  We held on and won the game that we had no business winning.  We only had nine above-average skaters and a terrible goalie.  Our game on Saturday in Philadelphia was against a better team.  Should I put forth another inhuman effort to try and win?  I had only gone past normal human expectations once in the game.  I was sure that highlight goal was already hitting the web.  It might even end up on ESPN.

Coach Adams had a great rally speech after the game. Since I had skated 48 minutes in the game, he told me I was off from practice tomorrow morning and reduced the practice to just an hour for everyone else.  I left immediately and went to Iris’ house to celebrate the win and prepare for our delve into the transit on Sunday.

After a solo shower, Bedelia and Iris showed me the prep work.  They had gear lists and a plan.  Her transit maps were not complete even with Kiri’s help, but she thought we could find an elven village about ten miles from the portal, and then we could confirm the location of Kealon City, which would help us orient to the crab cave for a future delve. There were extensive maps of the transit, and you just needed a few locations to figure out where the portal exited. I thought about asking De Roy for more information, but I didn’t want him to think I owed him anything.

My parents called to let me know they were home and were going to sleep. They had seen my goal online and congratulated me on the tough win. They said it was fine if I stayed at Iris’ house tonight since they were recovering from jet lag.

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Mandy had left her house after her encounter with Caleb.  She had dosed him with a very expensive potion from a city in the transit that Agatha had obtained and shipped her.  Agatha had promised her a lot for her investigation into Caleb but had gotten impatient.  Mandy was certain Caleb had improved Jade’s core and was willing to do whatever it took to get the same benefits from him. Agatha was a master manipulator and was sure she had fooled Jade to have Caleb have sex with Mandy to throw her off. The key was making him lose control and enhance Mandy anyway.

Mandy was sitting in a penthouse in a DC hotel waiting for Agatha now.  It had been two days of waiting.  She had finally arrived.  The older tigerkin inspected Mandy under her gaze and asked, “It is done?  Do you feel different?”

Mandy paused.  It had been painful, and she was still in pain.  During the intercourse, she had only felt ecstasy, though.  She couldn’t sense any change in her aether core.  She finally said, “Yes, the drug worked.  He pinned me face down and fucked me.  I…I passed out.  It was not in the room with the cameras, but I sensed no aetheric magic.  He was more animalistic in his actions.”

Agatha licked her lips and had a small tight smile at the description.  “Good.  You did a good job, and that was expected with the power of the drug. He should have lost all inhibitions and given in to instinct with your pheromone perfume.  Well, let’s see if your efforts were rewarded.”

Agatha’s bodyguard came with a briefcase and opened it.  Mandy got nervous.  If her core hadn’t increased, this would have been for nothing.  Hopefully, Agatha wouldn’t be upset.  The bodyguard set up the device, centered it on her, and announced the reading, “Zero point five five eight.”

Agatha looked upset, “Do it again!”  He followed her orders and read off the same numbers before packing up the device.  Mandy was happy, but Agatha was not.  Mandy’s core had increased from 0.555 to 0.558.   It was a substantial increase, so Caleb had proved he could increase cores.  How much of a jump had Jade received?  How many times had Jade put up with his inhuman size inside her?

Agatha was still considering.  “Damn it!” She finally spat.  “He won’t let you get close again.  We did something wrong.”  She walked back and forth.  And finally looked at Mandy, “I will give you a reader.  I want you to get readings on Frost and Artica.  The two bodyguards Jade took with her, Monsoon as well. Artica’s contract has already been transferred to Caleb.”

“How has a human been allowed to take ownership of a catkin contract!”  Mandy voiced surprise.

“None of your business, girl!  Do as you are told.  If he does wish to mount you again, allow him to do it!”  Agatha ordered.  “Don’t read Jade’s core; she can execute you for trying, so there is no point in risking it.  There is another she took under her wing, a girl named Anya.  See if you can read her core if the situation presents itself.”  Mandy nodded, feeling Agatha’s simmering anger.

The bodyguard came forward and gave Mandy a device that could be strapped to her forearm and concealed.  It only read to the hundredth place but was still a costly device. Then Mandy was escorted out.  She had missed two days of school waiting on Agatha.  Now she was being dismissed like a servant.  She left Agatha, processing the information and plotting.