

Chapter One

Time was a strange thing.

Niel knew it couldn't be more than a day since Wieland and Fedor had been taken away. He too well how two days without sex felt, and he only felt a little of the hunger he'd initially confused with wanting food. So definitely not two days.

And yet.

Alone, in the dark with nothing to listen to other than his thought and the beating of his heart, he felt like it was at least a week since he'd been left alone. A week with the occasional nap and waking at imagined sounds. A week to consider what he could have done differently so that he wouldn't be in this place, feeling like a week had gone by when no more than a day had.

The first thing had been Fedor. If he hadn't had sex with him, he wouldn't be initiated and—only that was a lie. Olavo also had Survivor blood, enough the capybara believed he'd initiated Niel, and possibly he had. Had Niel had sex with the pallas cat or capybara first? How would he know?

So not being friends with Olavo was the solution.

Only that one was out of his control. The bat had given him so many memories with varying levels of friendship with each of the guys who had been at the frat back then that other than never setting foot on the university campus would have kept that from happening.

And the bat was because of Thomas. Niel had been pulled in because he was Roland's best friend, and if the bat was going to use Thomas's brother to reel him in, Niel would be pulled in.

So if he hadn't been friends with Roland, none of this would have happened.

If he'd been willing to sacrifice one of the best friendships, even before the bat inadvertently deepened it, he had. Today he would be safe, playing football and studying to become a history teacher, and probably enjoying the largest sandwich he could buy.

That's all it would have taken.

That was what a week left alone caused him. It had to be depression setting in.

If he could get out of the cell, he could fix this without sacrificing his past. He could tackle whatever guards were around, sneak among the dogs until he found the leader, beat him up, take the staff, and escape.

He'd steal one of the vans. There had to be one of those around. They couldn't all be back at the bottom of the trail.

What did the staff even do? What had Grant told him about how they were made? Nothing, that was what. Practitioners had them, the Chamber wanted them. How they came to be? Magic, as far as Niel knew.

Magic. If he knew more of it, none of this would have happened. He could have written phrases after phrases to keep him, Fedor, and Dario from being captured. He'd have known Isamu was a traitor and had had a phrase to stop his amazing reflexes for letting him win the fights.

If

If this, if that. If wishes were horsed and all that crap.

Maybe being stuck in here wasn't the worst thing that could have happened to him. After all, in here he was basically protected from whatever the Nazis were going to do out there, with that staff of unknown power.

It had to be powerful. Why else was it hidden all the way in here, behind not Practitioner magic, but keys only Survivor could unlock?

Okay, there had to be Practitioner magic involved. Niel didn't think archeologists and academics could build the devices they had to go through to get to the staff.

And basically hand it to the Nazis.

Fuck.

He needed to get out of here before he went insane.

Or was it already too late for that?

Maybe he was in a hospital bed, dying of sex starvation and this was all a dream because no one knew what was wrong with him. After all, what were the odds his father would know enough to recognize the symptoms? It wasn't like he had to live with this condition. Or the odds that he'd run into Fedor and Dario, the two other Survivors he knew about or knew at all? Olavo didn't count. He was Society, as far as Niel was concerned.

Fuck, wasn't there a trope about an adventure being all a dream? Which one was the better one for him? One had him on his death bed, the other had him becoming a sex doll for Nazis.

He chuckled. It wasn't like life could hand him easy choices, could it?

The ground shook, and he was on his feet. Did Switzerland get earthquakes? It shook again, and this time he made out the distant explosion. He relaxed. Not an earthquake.

Another explosion, closer, much closer. Then one further away. And another.

He smiled and wished he had a window. It sounded like the Nazis were under attack, and he wished he could see it. Hopefully, whoever they were would find him and they'd turn out to be friendlies.

It would be just his luck for the attackers to be Stalin Soldiers secretly waiting to use the staff to bring the dead Russian leader to life. And because his luck was that bad, in this scenario, Fedor would be a traitor, too.

Yeah, he needed out of here.

Especially since he had now devolved to imagining a two-inch tall naked rat slipping into his cell through the bars. It was too late for him. He was going to end up in a padded room babbling as he was used by the orderlies.

“Niel!” the figment of his imagination called, and while high pitch, the voice was familiar. Didn’t he know someone small?

“Roland?” he asked in disbelief.

Then the rat was full-sized again, and Niel took in his naked best friend. The cold air wasn’t kind to his junk, but that might be for the best. He might be tempted to have Roland fuck instead of finding out how he’d gotten here if that was full size. He opened his mouth, and it was covered as Roland kissed him.

His protest that they had more important things to do died in seconds, and he wrapped his arms around the rat, a hand on his ass and squeezing. Roland ground against him and whatever shrinkage the cold had caused was gone as the heat between them went up. Niel’s pants were getting tight in the crotch, but he didn’t think about readjusting himself.

Fuck, he’d missed kissing and holding a guy. That it was Roland just made it better.

“Fuck me,” Niel whispered in the second their mouth broke apart, panting. Before the rat replied, Niel was kissing him again, reaching between them to undo his pants. He could multitask.

Roland pushed away, chuckling. “Later, we can’t stay here.”

The cold air in his pants was enough of a shock Niel’s mind cleared and he hurried to put himself away. “What are you doing here?”

Roland rolled his eyes. “Rescuing you, duh.”

Niel stared at his best friend. “Naked?”

“I’m Society. What’s the point of wearing anything? And I can’t shrink clothing, so I end up naked, anyway. You’ve never had a problem with me being naked.”

“I’ve never had you naked while a prisoner of Nazis.”

“Neo-Nazis,” Roland corrected.

“Okay, but why you? I don’t really know how to say this politely, but exactly what are your qualifications as a rescuer?” There was another explosion further away again, then once more, that sounded too close for comfort. “Unless you can shrink me, I’m not sure how much of a rescue this is.”

Roland got down on all four and reached between the bar. He looked over his shoulder as he reached, winked at him, and raised his tail.

Niel was kind of peckish after a day without sex. He could probably—Roland was up, holding a key. “This was a bitch to carry over my shoulder for like a hundred miles.” He reached between the bars again and put the key in.

He still had his back to Niel, so he could still take advantage of—

The bars clanged back shut and Roland moved to the side, finger to his lips. Before Niel could ask, he heard the steps running. A doberman stopped by the door.

No, The doberman, grinned at him. “I’m not leaving without my future toy,” his kidnapper said. He frowned as he looked at the lock, but Roland was slamming the door in his face. Before the doberman regained his balance, the rat had a knee in his face, then an elbow in the throat, and the dog was on the ground, gasping for breath.

“What’s with the toy comment?” Roland asked as he pulled him into the cell.

“Seems all I’m good for is to be fucked, and as this is the guy who kidnapped me, sounds like he decided I was going to be his personal fuck slave.”

“He’s fucking lucky I don’t have the time to make him pay for it,” the rat said, pulling the pants off the doberman.

“If you’re planning on fucking him, it might not dislike it as much as he claims. He tried way too hard to play at being an aggressive top.”

Roland looked at the pants before putting them on. They were a little tight, highlighting his cock, but long. “No time for that. Not that he’s my type.”

“He’s a guy Rol, he is your type.”

Roland grinned at Niel, putting the boots on. “He kidnapped you. I don’t reward people for kidnapping my friends.”

“What’s with the clothes? Aren’t you going to lose them when you shrink again? By the way, I’m glad that wasn’t a permanent thing. As much fun as you were having while stuck at two-inch tall.”

“Me too, and I can still have that fun.”

“You’re weird.”

“Says the guy with the fetish for the ancient Roman history section of his university’s library.”

“It’s not a fetish. Everyone does it there.”

“But they aren’t all history nerds like you.”

“Getting dressed, Rol? What’s the point?” Niel wasn’t going to indulge him in this debate again.

“No plan to shrink with you tagging along. From this point forward, it’s about using the chaos to sneak around unnoticed and rejoin the others. Oh, you were asking about my qualifications. Those are the people I know.” He put on the shirt, then the jacket, and kicked the doberman in the stomach. “That’s for kidnapping Niel, asshole.” They left the cell and Roland closed it, breaking the key in the lock.

“Now you’re just being mean,” Niel said with a chuckle.

“If he didn’t want me to be mean to him, he shouldn’t have been a Neo-Nazi. I mean, come on, what does anyone siding with those losers expect?” He grabbed Niel’s hand and pulled him along.

The open area was the chaos Roland predicted, with fire burning. Then another explosion highlighted a form that seemed to vanish in the flames. Or just vanish, Niel realized as what he’d seen resolved itself into Roland’s brother.

He caught the flicker of an appearing rat again, fling something, then vanish. He had a bandoleer of balls over his chest. The explosion happened and Niel realized those were grenades. No wonder those were happening all over the place. The more light, the better Thomas saw and the more places he could teleport to.

“Here,” Roland said as a strong wind blew by them. Niel tried to figure out where it had come from, this deep inside the cavern. “Hold—” Roland said. Then Niel was elsewhere, his stomach still where ever he’d been before. He leaned against the rock wall and prepared himself for when it slammed back into him.

Thank god his stomach was always empty now.

The wind happened again, and this time Niel saw the hyena drop Roland off, then vanish in a burst of speed. Right, Chima.

“Nerve getting used to this,” Roland said, looking a little greenish.

“Petunias by the sun, Hertz,” someone said. “Chike, the wind’s behind you. Summer, what the fuck are you doing?”

A raccoon in a worn, dark brown leather jacket over a tan shirt and khakis looked over the chaos with way too large binoculars to his eyes. He pulled them away long enough to glance at Niel, then Jarod went back to looking over the battle and speaking in gibberish.

It was code, but Niel would not dignify the man with using code, not when he was dressed like that. Still, he had information they needed to know, and he was the man in communication with everyone else down there.

“The leader’s some wolf,” he said, and the old, young-looking raccoon didn’t react. Niel kept going. “He or someone near him will have a Practitioner staff that looks like a leg bone. I don’t know what it does, but it’s what they were after. They have a german shepherd named Wieland Stubber and a pallas cat called Fedor Shevet. Somewhere in these ruins should be Dario Cuevet. They need to be rescued.”

“Who’s the Suzuki?” Jarod asked.

“Isamu is with the Nazi, so he can go fuck himself. Or better yet, not be fucked for the next few weeks.”

Jarod nodded and began speaking that gibberish again, with the names slipped in. No thank you for the information, a well-done son. Not even warmth when he looked at him.

Niel bit his tongue and walked away to rejoin Roland, who was looking better. Now was not the time to give that man a piece of his mind. They were fucking blood. The least he could do was act like he gave a damn about it. His dad at least hadn’t let this development sour their relationship. Niel had been the one to do cause all of that.

He sat next to the rat and watched his biological father at work. From this position, he could see the holster and ancient revolver in it. Come on, that was going too far in imitating a movie—

“Oh, my fucking god.”

“What?” Roland asked, worried.

“He isn’t dressed as Indiana Jones. They fucking based the character on him.”

Jarod let out an annoyed sigh. “I should never have gotten drunk with that Spielberg fellow.” Then he went back to giving instructions.

Roland looked at Niel for more explanation, but he didn’t have them. Working out a series of movies, and a horrible series of remakes were based on his father didn’t tell him why the man was annoyed about it.

Chima appeared in a gust of wind, then fell to his knees.

Roland was beside him, checking him for injuries.

“Exhausted,” the hyena replied. “Just fuck me.” Then laid down.

Thomas appeared without even disturbing the dust at his feet and staggered until he leaned against the wall. “Hey Niel, glad you’re okay. Thanks for the info.”

“Did you find any of them?”

The rat shook his head. “As soon as the first grenades went off, they started moving out. Maybe a quarter got out before I could put enough explosions in their way to force the rest back.”

Bears and badgers in tactical armor joined them, along with others Niel figured were from different Society families. So maybe the amateur rescuers Niel had been afraid this was had proper

backup.

“No!” Jarod yelled. “That isn’t the plan, Summer. I don’t fucking care, that thing can’t cause widespread damage. Get your tail back here. I told you to—” he lowered the binoculars and looked into the distance in disbelief. The cursing went through a multitude of languages. Niel was impressed with the number Jarod had to be fluent in for them to flow so effortlessly. He could never curse in German because he was still at the stage he had to think about what he wanted to say.

“What happened?” Thomas asked, helping one of the badgers out of his clothes. Nearly all of them were in the process of undressing. Which meant, as far as Niel knew about the Society, that the bulk of this operation was done.

“That *friend* of yours,” Jarod said the word as if it was a curse, “just decided to go off on his own because he thinks he needs to get the staff back. I told him it doesn’t pose any immediate danger, but no, he thinks he knows more than I do about it and he’s going to go and get himself killed.” He looked at Thomas. “You need to teleport to his location and bring him back here.”

The rat shook his head. “I’m wiped. I doubt I could teleport to you and remain conscious, and I don’t know where he is. I explained to *you* how my power works. So don’t start acting like you know it better than I do.”

Jarod went back to cursing under his breath and looking over the cavern. Niel felt better for knowing Jarod wasn’t pissing off, only him.

Unfortunately, if they were shutting this down, it meant they weren’t going after those who had, and were still in the process of, escaping. Jarod was busy looking over the battlefield, giving instructions to the people still down there. Those here were getting busy with sex. No one was paying him any attention.

He moved cautiously to avoid being noticed until he was in the tunnel the badgers and bears had arrived from. Once they were out of sight, he ran for all he was worth. Maybe it was questionable if Wieland and Fedor were his friends, but they were victims of the same circumstances and he wasn’t leaving them to the Nazis’ less than tender mercies.

He made it outside without being stopped and located a fleet of abandoned trucks(I have no idea what those kinds of military trucks, with a tarp over them instead of a hard cube, that we always seen in movies) on the side. Fuck, he’d missed those who had escaped. Even if he drove away, how was he—

Motion out of the trees caught his attention. A pair of dogs were sneaking toward one of the trucks. Niel smiled his good fortune and move toward the truck they were edging toward. Once one of them opened the driver’s door, Niel ran for it. He grabbed onto the back and pulled himself in, grinning in victory, and he saw the kangaroo with his fist raised and a bundle of shiny things in his other hand.

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