Chapter One

The Ultimatium

He was a few inches shorter than I was and as I watched his back walk away from me I knew I had screwed up. That this might be the last time I saw his great ass or his sweet smile - the real smile. But I was fuming. He had the audacity to keep living that life. To treat me like some kid who just needs his protection. I stormed down stairs before he even reached the door.

I wonder if Nox turned back. I wonder if he even gave me a second thought after leaving me like that. I hope he fucking cried. I thought to myself as I hit the landing in the basement where my brother sat in a computer chair pounding away at hacking the disk that Nox had received months ago.

It felt like years. But I knew it wasn’t. Nox was so ingrained in my life in these short few months I felt that emptiness when I sat down with a heavy sigh.

Adam looked at me and frowned. “I thought you were done for the night. Nox was home.”

I shook my head. “He was. But he’s leaving. He’s going to go to fucking Europe and hunt fucking vampires.”

Adam’s eyes went wide. I had really said that. I fucking said vampires to my human brother who didn’t know anything about the life I lived in. Adam was a techno path like me, but he lived a human life like I tried to do until I met Nox.

Adam leaned forward. “Wait, you know about vampires too? Not like the movie ones or those stupid sparkling ones. Real vampires?”

I wasn’t sure if Adam was making fun of me or not so I shrugged.

Adam smirked as he leaned back in his chair. “I have this friend, he only comes out at night. He drinks blood.”

I asked, “How do you know he drinks blood? He could be just lying.”

Adam smiled. “He bit me, Sage.” His eyes rolled back into his head as he tipped it back to show how much he had fucking liked it. “Oh my god, Sage, you’ve never felt anything like it. It’s like sex without ever having to get naked.”

“Getting naked is one of the best parts of sex.” I quipped back.

Adam laughed, “Yeah and the best part about waking up is Foldger’s in your cup.”

I chortled which turned into a laugh and Adam and I had forgotten all about my ultimatum to Nox, and his subsequent departure. That was until my phone blipped and reminded me that the boys were still upstairs sleeping. But that wasn’t what Nox had said. He’d said Drake saw the whole thing. Our little dragon saw us fight. He watched his Dad walk out the fucking door. He had to be broken up about it, he loved Nox more than anything in this world. And I couldn’t figure it out.

Nox essentially killed his family. And Drake loved him for it. In what world does that even make sense.

I wanted to throw my phone at Nox, but he wasn’t here, not that I’d throw it anyway. But it was how I felt. Adam shook his head and took my phone away from me. “He was just a good fuck anyway. Don’t worry about him. Let’s see what juice details we can find out about him and not tell him about.” Adam said as he got back to work.

Adam put his hand on my shoulder and I nodded. “All right. Let’s do this.” I cracked my knuckles and we got down to work - again.

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I feel asleep on the couch in the basement after Adam left for the night. I didn’t want to go up to an empty bed. It was my bed. I don’t know why I felt like it was our bed. Our family. Our life. Our house. But it was. He was so much apart of me that I knew I should call him before he left. But things Adam said to me last night after he’d left made me think. Maybe he and I weren’t meant to be.

I stretched my neck and back and wished I’d gone to bed. I ached.

I smelled food coming down from the kitchen and my heart leapt. Food meant Nox was home. Maybe he decided not to go. I rushed upstairs to find Matt in the kitchen with the other two boys perched on the bar stools chatting away about their day like nothing happened.

Matt looked at me with a frown. “You okay?”

I sighed. “I’m just tired. I stayed up too late.”

Fae was up off the stool and so was Drake and both of them were wrapping their arms around me. “We love you.” Drake said.

I looked at the young Ventori who was happily flipping eggs in the pan with a smile on his face. “Drake told us what happened. Nox will be back.”

“Why aren’t you mad at him?” I asked. I almost wanted to scream at them, he left you too.

Matt shrugged. “Nox is just doing what Nox does, Sage. He saves people. He helps them when they need to. It’s who he is.”

“No, he was done with that.” I blurted out.

Fae squeezed me tighter then let go and walked back to his bar stool. “He’s miserable too.”

Drake giggled and I picked up the little dragon and he kissed my cheek. “Daddy saved me. He saved Fae. He saved all those boys in the forest - remember.” Drake ticked down a few fingers then looked back up at me and grinned. “Daddy’s saved me lots more times, that icky black thing, and those other kids with the demon. “

Geez, how much did this kid know. As if Matt read my mind he answered my question. “Drake collects all of Nox’s saves like he collects cars. If you let him, he’ll go into detail about it.”

I nodded and set Drake down. “You need to eat breakfast so you can go to school.” I looked at Matt, “Do you have this?”

The sixteen year old boy with dark hair and dark eyes looked back at me with a grin reminiscent of Nox’s and nodded. “We got this. He won’t be gone forever, no matter what you said.”

I wasn’t so sure about that but I went up stairs and took a shower. And by the time I was done the boys were already gone. School beckoned them. They were all integrating well - well maybe not all of them, Fae still had a lot of things to work on. He was about as messed up as Nox was. I shook my head and headed down stairs to do work - real work - not fucking chasing vampires and getting myself killed.

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Work flew by. I was so busy I hadn’t eaten all day and when I smelled food upstairs I stopped and my heart fluttered. Nox was home. And then I remembered he wasn’t. But by the time I had remembered that I was upstairs already. Dee was cooking at my stove like Nox used to do. I sighed and she turned around to look at me. “I figured with Nox gone, I could cook for you.”

I kissed her. “Why don’t we go out?”

Dee smiled. “See, this is why I love you. Of all our boys, you are the practical one.” She kissed me longer and harder than I had kissed her. Her tongue sliding past my lips until our tongues danced with each other.

Dee asked, “Where are the boys?”

I glanced at the clock on the wall and frowned, “They aren’t home?” That’s when the memory of Ant shadow walking into my basement jumped out at me. “Fuck!” I sighed. “They went with Ant.”

Dee looked at me, “So we are alone?”

There was a third voice in the hall, “Well not completely alone.”

Dee shrieked and ran towards the door and draped her arms around Dev’s neck. Their kiss was as hot and wet as ours had been and I was getting more than turned on by watching them. I could feel the heat creeping up my neck and cheeks but I didn’t stop watching. I loved watching my lovers together. It was the reason I had more than one now. Nox had changed my world and I had told him I was done. But everyone was acting like nothing had changed.

Dev came around with Dee under his arm and he pressed a soft kiss to my lips. A shiver went through my body and it took all the power I could muster not to grab him and take them both upstairs.

Dev broke the kiss and smirked at me. Fuck! He heard.

My face grew hotter and Dev chuckled. “You are too cute.” He pressed a kiss to my cheek. “I have a favor to ask you both. I want to try something, we all need to talk and Nox is away and…”

Before Dev could say anymore Dee was pulling away. “He walked out, Dev. He doesn’t want to be here with us.”

Dev sighed. “Yes he does. He just needs to find what’s missing. He’s not like me and you and Sage. He lived an exciting life before this. Now he does chores and cooks and lives a mundane life.”

“We aren’t enough for him.” I said.

Dev shook his head. “We are. But Sage, tell me this. If you had to stop touching a computer for the rest of your life would you be happy?”

I knew the answer was no, I’d be miserable, but that wasn’t what came out of my mouth, “It’s not the same. And a computer isn’t dangerous.”

Dev laughed, “In your hands it is.” He sighed. “We have to let him to do this. Please come with me.”

There was a singular thought in my head when I sat down on the couch with those two and it had nothing to do with what we were talking about. I just wanted to sleep. And the moment I sat down my body got heavy, my eyes closes and I drifted to sleep with such ease I must have been exhausted.

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I opened my eyes and I was standing in a green pasture staring at an old gnarled tree. The stars were shining and the sun was out. I’d been here once before. But this time it was raining. I looked up and there were no clouds in the weird sky, but it rained.

Dee was next to me and so was Dev. Nox was curled up in front of the tree and he looked like he was having a panic attack. I glared at Dev. “We were going out.”

Dev smiled at me, “You can go out after you talk to him.”

Now I was not only made at Nox but peeved at Dev for bringing us here without our permission. I was still wondering how that had happened. I hadn’t agreed to it, neither had Dee.

Our conversation passed in flits and sputters like a dream. I woke not really remembering what it was, but I felt damp and drained and Dev was still sleeping. Dee was looking at me and asked, “Why was it raining?”

I shrugged. “I don’t know. You ready to go?” I didn’t really remember why I was upset with Dev but I didn’t suggest we wake him up. The only thing I knew was Dev had ticked me off.

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Dee and I went out on a date, just the two of us. It was sweet and fun and we forgot all about our problems. Until we got home to find Dev curled up on the couch watching Supernatural. It was the first season episode 1. Damn they looked young back then. Dev looked up at me. “I’m watching Supernatural, you want to join me?”

Dee groaned and sat down in the recliner with a book. My book, no that was Nox’s book. The City of Bones - book 1 of the Immortal Instruments. I’d just finished it a few days ago. I had the second one up by my bed. They weren’t Nox’s favorite books, but he’d read them so i figured what the hell. And he’d been right it was a good book. I didn’t read as much as he did, but that was starting to change with him always around. But he wasn’t going to be I said to myself you threw him out.

I sighed and Dev sat up and patted the couch next to him. I sat down and he laid down in my lap. His dark hair splayed across my leg and his head laying just right so that he was displaying his neck. I ran my fingers down his neck and a smile spread over his face. He whispered, “Everything will be all right.” So the three of us watched Supernatural until the wee ours of the night.

We were drained, Dev took Dee home. I had suggested they stay but they had work early and didn’t want to wake me. Dev said he had a gig in the Hamptons and had to get out there early to set up. I didn’t think anything of it as I made my way to bed. The house was empty and quiet and it all felt so strange. I sighed as I crawled into my bed with just my boxers on - alone. I laid down and tried to fall asleep but it wasn’t going to happen so I flipped the light on by the side of my bed and picked up my book. I’d read until I fell asleep.