



PROLOGUE

THE DAY WAS JUST ANOTHER ORDINARY DAY, DULL AND overcast, the grey clouds threatening to unleash a torrent of rain down amongst those who meandered about. In the heart of winter, the night drew in quickly as evening approached.

A rumble of thunder grabbed his attention as he studied his next victim while she rounded the corner. Vibrant and full of life, the young girl was on the cusp of her maturity, reaching the tender age when all creatures came into their powers. He licked his lips in anticipation as he scented the ambrosia in the air. After weeks of preparation and patience, it was finally time for action.

His ruby-haired girl hugged her companion, a human girl, and bade her farewell. Straightening up in the seat, he slowly guided his run-of-the-mill car into the terrace. He knew his Carly's routine, he knew it by heart, and he had everything planned down to the last second. He was nothing if not meticulous, and it had

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never steered him wrong before.

Adrenaline pumped in his veins at the thought of feasting on unbridled power as the curly-haired teen bent over to stick her laces back into her shoes. Teenagers these days were willing to put their safety at risk by wearing unlaced sneakers. Her stalker slowed his car to a stop. His mouth watered as rain began to dance on his windshield. He would enjoy this, he always did, and as time went by, he realized he craved it more and more.

As Carly straightened up and, almost on instinct, cast her gaze in his direction, he smiled, drinking in her frightened, green eyes and opening the car door...



CHAPTER ONE

DEREK DOYLE SLID UNDER THE POLICE TAPE, HIS HEAVY footsteps crunching over the gravel as he made his way down to the crime scene a short distance from the Garda station where he worked. He held back the growl that clawed at his throat. The smell of blood and urine disturbed his already-heightened senses, and he clenched his fists as the lingering scent of fear threatened to unleash his temper. Going all wolf in front of a dozen or more cops with silver rounds in their guns might not be such a good idea, but Derek wanted nothing more than to catch the crazy monster who had slaughtered an innocent. The idea of making the perp scream like he had his victims was running rampant in his mind.

Traffic had halted on the bridge above him as crowds gathered to catch a glimpse of what had happened. Derek cracked the bones in his neck as he nodded a greeting to some of the uniforms, who, in turn, eyeballed him. The world might have come to terms with the fact that

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werewolves, witches, and all the in-betweens existed a few years back, but there would always be bigots, especially on the force.

Ignoring the officers, he let his nose guide him. His eyes soon focused on the teenager's body. She lay half in, half out of the little stream of water, her vibrant hair tangled with blood as her green eyes stared blankly up at him. The growl he had been holding back bubbled to the surface. His chest vibrated with the sound. The few men and women who were not in his special task force took a step away, none of them eager to be near an angry werewolf. Not that he really blamed them. As old as he was, Derek had a handle on his inner beast, but a human would never be a match for a pissed-off werewolf.

He held his hand up in apology. They relaxed, the tension evaporating slightly from their scent. Derek slipped down the short embankment, digging his heels into the muddy ground. The medical examiner for all things paranormal—a young witch who had a knack for seeing inside a victim's body and assessing the damage—was examining the girl. She looked up as he stepped up next to her.

“Poor dear, whoever did this wanted her terrified, Derek. It leaks from her... just like the others.”

Derek put a hand on her shoulder. “We'll get him, Anna. I swear it; I will get justice for all of them.”

Anna brushed a tear from her eye with her arm and nodded. This was the third body in three months, and they were no closer to finding a suspect. From the trauma, it was obvious a supe was responsible, but why attack human teenagers? Most of those in the supernatural community wanted to live in harmony with the humans and would not do anything to jeopardize that, especially

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considering a few years back, when their existence had become known and the world leaders had wanted to round them up and tag them like animals so they could keep tabs on them. Well, that was until one of the most powerful men in the world had turned out to be one of his kind.

Derek squeezed Anna's shoulder before he dragged his gaze from the slain girl and headed over to join his partner. Tall and thin, with black hair pulled back into a ponytail, Richard 'Ricky' Moore looked like he was a member of a Goth rock band rather than one of the finest cops and supes he had the pleasure to work with. He and Ricky had been teamed together and had quickly become friends. The other members of the Paranormal Investigations Team, or P.I.T. as Ricky liked to call it, were like Derek's family. He would die for any of the men and women on his team.

"Yo, D, we really need to nail this monster."

"Preaching to the converted, Ricky. What have we got?"

Ricky narrowed his eyes as he spoke. "Young female, age approximately fifteen years old. Been out here maybe four to five hours—tops. Rainfall overnight washed away most of the evidence, so not even your keen smell can pick up on much. Unsub must have dumped her during the shift change. Same dumpsite as the other two victims. All three drained of blood with bone marrow extracted."

Ricky stopped as another snarl rumbled from Derek. This unsub was sick and twisted.

"D, I have more bad news. There was a girl took about a mile from her house in Waterford. He dumped her schoolbag with her, and this time, we got an ID. Girl's

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name is Carly Saunders.”

Derek raised an eyebrow. “As in Graham Saunders, head of the Munster banshees?”

“One and the same. Anna needs to do more tests, but it looks like the girl hadn’t evolved into her powers yet. She wants to go over the tests again to see if the other two vics come from supernatural families, ones who may still be in the closet.”

Derek nodded. “It’s possible. The perp has never taken a victim from Cork, but he has dumped them here. We have to assume this is his comfort zone. It helps. Let’s just hope it helps enough to track this sicko down.”

A beep interrupted them. Derek pulled his phone from his jean pocket and read the text before looking back at Ricky. “Sarge wants us back at the station for a briefing. Anna’s going to be taking Carly back to the morgue now anyway... Come on—the uniforms can keep watch.”

Without another word, Derek turned and headed up the embankment. Flashes of light blurred his vision as the social media nation on the bridge above him took snaps of the grisly murder to upload to the web. He shook his head in disgust. Making his way up the grassy hill, he soon stood on the concrete bridge amongst the vultures.

The reporters spotted him. Their voices melded into one entity as they screamed at him and asked him for comments or information. Not even bothering to say *no comment*, Derek crossed the road and jogged around the corner to the Garda station.

The brazenness of the killer bugged him. He dumped the bodies five minutes away from the police station as if to taunt them. Things had been much simpler in his

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day. When he had been human, the bad guys were the bad guys and the good guys were the good guys. Nobody had had a clue that werewolves and vampires existed. After a childhood where it seemed possible that he was more likely to end up on the opposite side of the law, he had joined the army at eighteen. Being in the army had straightened him out. When he was just twenty-four, he was recruited to a special operations team. He had gone on many covert missions, but one night in Cambodia had changed his life forever.

After he was made lycan, he had been forced to serve under a brutal alpha who demanded he keep the fact he was alive a secret. So Derek told no one. He'd made no contact with his family, not because Neville had ordered him to do so, but simply because Derek hated what he had become—a monster who reveled in blood and death. He had fought through the ranks until Neville became afraid of him and set him free.

He'd wandered for a bit, unsure if he would be welcomed home, but when Derek had shown up at the barracks back in Ireland, the men who had once known him were stunned that he had not aged a day in ten years.

After intense questioning and debriefing, and after telling his commander the truth about what had happened to him, they honourably discharged him due to PTSD. It was something they did not put in his medical records, however, which allowed Derek to apply to the guards. This worked out for him for a couple of years until questions about his youthful looks threatened to unleash his secret, and he was forced out. At that point, the world had found out about his kind and wanted to hunt them down. It wasn't until Sarge had phoned and offered him a job on the new task force that he'd felt like

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he had a purpose again.

Living until you were almost a hundred while looking twenty-seven would do that to you.

Derek shook off the demons of his past as he walked through the gates of the station and bounded up the steps with a gasping Ricky hot on his heels. Silently, they shuffled down the hallway before coming to their operations room. Derek pushed the door open with a loud creak, and Ricky slipped in under his arm, flopped down at his desk, and propped his muddy boots up on his desk.

“Sarge will have your guts for brekkie, bro.”

“Pfft. D, you worry too much.”

“And being your partner has aged me like ten years.”

Ricky grinned up at him. “D, you’re older than most of us combined and look younger than all of us. Stop flaunting your youthful grace at us, pretty boy, and sit your fine ass down.”

Derek smirked despite the horror that still lingered in his mind and eased himself into his own chair. Checking his email, he frowned as he spotted another ‘invitation’ from the Munster pack to come speak with them. Derek had been a lone wolf for half a century, keeping himself free of pack politics as much as possible, but the latest alpha seemed overly keen to have him join the pack. Derek deleted the email as the door flew open. In filed the rest of the team with Sarge hot on their heels.

The rectangular room had one solitary window, and because everyone had a desk, the tiny space often became cramped. There was a series of whiteboards on the wall behind each desk, with the main suspect board freestanding in the center of the room. It didn’t leave a lot of elbowroom.

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Sarge must have called them all in because even members of the night shift had braved the sunlight for this. Donnie and Caitlyn, the resident vampires, wore dark sunglasses and heavy clothing to hide their skin from the sun. Hollywood directors had gotten some of the truth right—vampires had fangs, had an aversion to sunlight, and needed to drink blood—but they tended to exaggerate a little. While his friends preferred to be one with the night, the sun did not reduce them to ashes on the wind. It did burn their skin so they looked like victims of a terrible fire, but kill them... it did not. However, a stake to the heart would do the job nicely.

Donnie was built like a rugby player, all broad shoulders and thick thighs. He had played professionally for Ireland until one night of celebration had ended with him getting stabbed and turned by Caitlyn. They were loyal as hell to each other and the team, but as far as Derek knew, the two weren't romantically involved. Caitlyn held all the grace of a movie star from the fifties—à la Dita Von Teese. Even now, in ripped, faded blue jeans and an olive-coloured, hooded sweatshirt, the female oozed sex appeal. Black curls framed her face, and eyes of slate grey were behind those sunglasses.

The vampires perched on the edge of Ricky's desk, Caitlyn pushing his muddy boots off the desk with a *tsk*. Ricky muttered something in Latin under his breath, and his boots instantly cleaned themselves. The warlock grinned and set his now-clean boots on the table again. Derek grinned as he waited for Sarge to speak.

Melanie quietly slipped into the room and sat down in front of her computer. Unlike the rest of the team, Melanie was human. She was gifted with computer skills. The youngest member of the team at twenty-two,

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the girl had been recruited to join just about every task force in Ireland and more. But she had settled on their little operation. Derek had never asked why, and Melanie had never offered an explanation, but he thought she was brave. She was a tiny wisp of a thing with Christina Hendricks' red locks and big-rimmed glasses that took away from the subtle beauty behind them, and she had the courage to join a team full of supes.

Just as Sarge cleared his throat, the forever-late Fionn burst through the door. Derek wrinkled his nose as the smell of cat stabbed the air. The ginger-haired cat flushed the same colour as his hair. "Sorry, Sarge."

Their boss just snorted as Fionn padded to his own desk and tucked his legs under himself as he sat, resting his chin in the palm of his hand. When the unit had first started out, they'd had almost a ten-member team from various backgrounds, but some had died in the line of duty and some in conflicts from their own species. Now there were three shifters, a warlock, two vamps, and a computer geek, giving the team seven unless Anna was included as a team member, which rounded them to eight.

Sarge cleared his throat again and the room hushed, the bear discernible in that authoritative voice of his as he said, "Three vics in, and we're still no closer to getting a hit on the unsub. Mr. Saunders has already barged in here, demanding we pull our heads out of our..." Sarge paused, glancing at Melanie before continuing. "Anna is running tests on the previous two victims to see if there are any traces of supernatural in their DNA. Ricky, I want you and Fionn to drive to Clare and ask the family of the first victim what they are, face to face."

Ricky made to protest, but Derek caught his eye and

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shook his head. Fionn and Ricky did not get along, and it was quite possible the two would kill each other before they reached the victim's house. Donnie and Caitlyn smirked.

Sarge stared at the vampires. "I need you two to stay here until dark and help Melanie try to see a connection between the victims. We know they all come from different counties, different sections of society, but there has to be something that links them all together. I've got people from all over breathing down my neck about our lack of progress, so we need to find this SOB now."

Fionn hissed but got up and headed for the door. Ignoring Ricky, he let the door slam behind him, and Ricky groaned.

"C'mon, Sarge, you know the cat hates me... let one of the vampires go instead."

Sarge stared him down, and Ricky lowered his gaze. "Maybe if you hadn't broken his sister's heart, he might like you more. You have a job to do, so do it—that's an order."

Derek stood and clasped his friend on the back. "If you told Fionn the truth, he might feel more receptive."

Ricky shook his head, keeping his secrets to himself before turning and storming out as well.

Derek spied Melanie watching as Ricky left, and the young girl blushed when she noticed she'd been caught. Poor girl would get her heart broken if she ever became the subject of attention from his friend. Derek loved him, but Ricky had more demons than he did, and that was saying something.

As the vampires began rearranging the suspect board and putting up a school picture of Carly Saunders, Sarge beckoned Derek forward. He followed Sarge's lead,

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sitting when the bear sat, folding his arms across his chest.

“Ricky and Fionn don’t work well together.”

“Ricky will have to get used to working with a new partner in the near future. I’m easing him into it.” Sarge sighed. The bear was younger than Derek by almost twenty years, but something about the aging process with bears meant his lifespan was shorter. Sarge, whose real name was Tom Delaney, had been threatening to retire for years and wanted Derek to take over; Derek was happy being a cop and did not want to be a leader.

“We’ll see. What do you need me to do?”

“I need you to go speak with a consultant. She teaches various subjects over at the College of Paranormal Studies and is expecting a rep from the team to escort her here after her twelve o’ clock lecture.”

Derek groaned as his wolf growled inside him. “I’m not a babysitter, Sarge... let me work the case.”

“Derek, it is four days from the full moon, and according to reports, you have been a little on edge this week. All I need you to do is bring the woman here so I can babysit her. Maybe you will change your mind after meeting her.”

Snorting, Derek asked, “Why this lecturer? What is so special about this woman?”

Sarge stretched his arms over his head. “Girl is all kinds of smart and has an eidetic memory. She holds degrees in criminology, psychology, paranormal anthropology, and paranormal species. Our unsub leaves no trace of himself and drains the vics of blood and marrow. A fresh pair of eyes may help.”

Derek wanted to catch this monster as bad as Sarge did. He let out a defeated breath and said, “Tell me the details.”



CHAPTER TWO

DEREK CURSED A BLUE STREAK AND TIGHTENED HIS grip on the steering wheel as he drove. Perhaps Sarge had been right, that his control was stretched to the limits at this moment. His wolf clawed at the edge of his mind, and he eased off the steering wheel as he heard it crack under the pressure. Blowing out a breath, he counted to ten to try to calm himself. However, being this close to the full moon hammered at his self-control.

If he were being honest with himself, Derek hated what he had become. Sometimes, when he thought hard about it, he considered the reason why he had joined his team was because he believed himself to be as much of a monster as those he chased down. He had explained this to Ricky one time, but his friend had shot him down. Ricky told him he could never be a monster like the ones they hunted down... that he would never let him be.

As the College of Paranormal Studies came into view, Derek turned on his right indicator and pulled into

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the first parking space he saw. The building loomed in his vision as he rolled up the window and popped his sunglasses on. It was a rare sunny day in Ireland, but Derek was worried that his wolf would come to the forefront and show in his eyes. All he needed was for some poor student to piss themselves at the sight of him all wolfed out.

His wolf snorted at the thought, liking the fact that they had power over mere mortals. Derek shook his head, opening the car door. His skin ached, so he stretched out his muscles. Despite the fact that he could channel his wolf at any time and change whenever he wished, for the most part, he tried to suppress that part of himself. This made the days leading up to the full moon more painful and the change excruciating on the night of, but he needed it to remind him that he was still human... to some extent, anyway.

He shut the car door and rolled up the sleeves of his shirt. Behind the shade of his sunglasses, he could still see the admiring glances from the students bustling around campus. They smiled and batted their eyelashes at him, but he swiftly walked past them. Derek knew he was considered good-looking, handsome even, but he knew the wolf genes made him appealing to others. It made him more attractive with pheromones or something like that.

Striding forward, Derek made his way across the campus to find out where he could find his consultant. Sarge had barely given him any details at all except that the woman's name was Ever Chace and she had helped him out a few times with different cases. If Sarge said she was the right person for the job, then Derek was inclined to believe it. Sarge had earned that from him—

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from all the team.

Derek paused for a moment to take in his surroundings. The college was a newly built facility, barely a decade old. When the supes had been revealed to the world way back in the 90s, Cork City center had gone through a metamorphosis. Originally, the college had been a small building with just three floors, and a vast array of businesses on the outskirts of the city centre. When the government had passed a motion to create a new college where humans and supes alike could study whatever they wished in paranormal studies, a lot of the businesses were bought out. A vibrant, state-of-the-art facility that was four stories high and spanned about four blocks stood in their place.

Both humans and supes studied there, and they even had night classes for the nocturnal creatures. Derek had been pleasantly surprised that the world had accepted them as openly as they had. Of course, there were those who'd said they were abominations, creatures spawned from the devil himself and set forth upon the earth. The largest group was called Humans Matter, and they staged protests and rallies all the time trying to sway people to their cause of banning supes out of Ireland altogether.

His wolf bared his teeth, snarling at the humans' way of thinking. Derek sighed and shook his head as if he could somehow shake the wolf from his brain. As he moved forward, his heavy boots crunched on the asphalt. He had never been inside the college before. Glancing around for a sign that would lead him to a reception area, all he saw were building names. The Dracul Building made him smirk, while Wolfsbane House made him itch.

Derek was so busy trying to figure out where he

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was going that he walked smack into something... and the most amazing thing happened. His wolf instantly stilled—calmed and laid down in his mind's eye. For a moment, he didn't know what to do. He blinked away the confusion and stood there like an idiot for a few heartbeats.

His mind was clear, and he could think. Derek's thoughts were just his thoughts; he wasn't competing for headspace with his wolf. For the first time in a long time, he was just Derek. He felt human.

Then he heard a groan and shook the shock away as he gazed down at what he had collided with—or actually, *whom*.

Papers had scattered all over the ground, and a woman in her mid-twenties tried to scoop them up before they blew away. Derek knelt down and gathered up some before handing them to her. She cursed in German under her breath, and Derek's lip curled up. He rose when she did and was about to apologize when the woman spoke.

"You'd think, being a wolf, you'd be a little more observant."

"And if you're smart enough to be attending college, then you should be smart enough to watch where you're going." The words left his mouth before he had the chance to think. He was about to apologize again when the girl burst out laughing.

It was then Derek had the chance to take her in—this girl who had calmed his wolf. She stood around 5'6" with silky smooth, golden-blond hair that shimmered in the sun and blue-grey eyes that sparkled as she laughed. Her outfit made her look older than he imagined she was, but the faint hint of sneakers underneath faded

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denim jeans intrigued him. A black blazer over a loose, sky-blue blouse accentuated her eyes. With pale skin that matched her hair, she was classically beautiful, and Derek was captivated by her. She smelled of sunshine and sand; he could almost taste it on his tongue.

He was struck by a primal urge to taste her, to press his lips to hers and see if she tasted as good as she smelled. Although calmed, his wolf whimpered in agreement, and Derek had to take a step back to prevent him from acting untoward.

“I’m sorry for being so rude,” he began, but she waved him off.

“That’s okay. I probably shouldn’t be rushing around. Lost track of time... Are you lost?”

Derek bobbed his head. “I’m looking for the reception area.”

She came to stand beside him and pointed straight ahead. “If you cross the quad and go into the main building, it’s just inside the door. You can’t miss it. Look for a heavysset woman who looks like she could eat you alive. That’s Norma.”

His grin widened. “Should I be scared?”

She smiled back. “Nope, I don’t think wolf is her idea of a good meal. You should be safe.”

She swept her hair off her face, and Derek wanted to run his fingers through it to see if it felt as soft as it looked. What the hell was wrong with him?

Before he had time to articulate another word, the woman looked at her watch. “Shit! Sorry, I’m late for class! Nice running into you.”

And with that, she was gone, the scent of her lingering as his wolf whimpered.

He watched until her golden hair disappeared from

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sight, and that was when the wolf-rage punched back inside his head. Derek stumbled with the brunt force of it, grinding his teeth and clenching his fists to his sides. People around him gave him a wide berth, moving farther away as he tried to calm himself so he wouldn't change.

When he had reined in his wolf, Derek wondered just who the hell that woman had been and how he was going to track her down to see her again. His phone beeped, dragging him from his thoughts. Pulling it from his pocket, Derek slid down his shades and squinted to read a text from Ricky. After claiming he had not killed the cat yet, Ricky told him they should make it to the first victim's house by one.

Glancing at his own watch, he saw it was twenty past noon. Thrusting thoughts of the mysterious woman to the back of his mind, Derek focused on the job at hand. He followed her directions after crossing the quad, pushed open the heavy oak doors, and stepped inside. The corridor was dark, so he removed his shades and crooked them in the V-neck of his shirt.

He almost smiled as he laid eyes on who could only be Norma, glaring at him from behind a high desk. It was evident straightaway that Norma was a witch; he could scent the sage that clung to her clothing. She was indeed a heavysset woman whose shoulders gave Donnie a run for his money. A crooked nose and beady eyes watched him from behind thick glasses as he walked forward and leaned an elbow on the edge of the desk.

"Can I help you?" she croaked.

"Yes, I believe so. My name is Derek Doyle. I'm with the Paranormal Investigations Team." He flashed his badge, and Norma's frown deepened. "I'm looking for a

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Ms. Ever Chace. Her presence has been requested by my captain to help with a case.”

Norma cleared her throat. “You just missed Ms. Chace.” As she started tapping away on her keyboard, she left him waiting for a few moments before she responded again. “Ah, yes. Ms. Chace is in the middle of a paranormal offenders lecture over in Dracul Hall. You’ll find her there.”

He flashed his most charming smile, but it seemed to have no effect on her. “Thank you so much, Norma. You have been a great help.”

The quad was now quiet, with just a few stragglers rushing to get to class. Not bothering to shield his eyes, he made the short trek across the quad in only a few minutes. He held open the door for a young student, who blushed profusely as she thanked him before she melted into the darkness of the hallways.

Derek checked the board and spied the name and room number he was looking for. Taking the steps two at a time, he bounded up the stairs and strolled down the hall as the time on his watch indicated he was far too early to collect Ms. Chace. Derek came to a stop at the open door of the lecture theatre, and his wolf silenced once more. He couldn’t stop himself from going in, as if a siren song were calling him and his actions were not his own.

The lecture theatre was massive and packed with about two hundred students. The stage loomed below him, and his eyes wandered down until they landed on his mystery woman. He swallowed hard and leaned against the doorframe. His wolf curled up inside him, content to listen to her voice as she spoke.

“There are many misconceptions that can happen

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when it comes to paranormal profiling. Not all vampire killers drain their victims of blood. Not all shifter deaths are a result of dominance fights or loss of control of their animal. Like humans, serial killers and murders exist in the supernatural community as well. Sometimes, a human will even use a typical method of killing used by a supe to divert suspicion away from them.”

Derek inclined his head and listened intently as she continued to speak.

“For example, take the case of Philip K. Bourke, who raped and murdered seventeen men in the UK. Philip managed to use a nail to hammer two identical puncture wounds into the neck of his victims to give the impression a vampire had committed the murders. He even figured out how to drain some blood from the victims, but after good police work and investigation, it was soon discovered that the murderer had been human all along.”

Derek remembered the case. In the end, it had been Bourke’s cocky ego, thinking he could not get caught, that had done him in. He’d created a blog and posted detailed stories on how the murders had gone down, information only the murderer could have known. Bourke was now doing life in prison in the UK.

“When it comes to profiling a person of paranormal descent,” she continued as she walked from one side of the stage to the other, “we must leave our prejudice and beliefs to one side as we would if the offender were human. Some of the supernatural communities are as human as you and I. They have the same rights to a fair trial and to be innocent until proven guilty.”

There was a pause and a nod before a new voice piped in. “But isn’t there an increasing chance in the

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days leading up to the full moon that violence amongst the werewolves is increased, and thus can only indicate most murders that happen around the full moon are indeed done by wolves?”

Derek snickered; he couldn't help it. Eyes turned in his direction, and her eyes danced mischievously as the woman on stage peered up at him.

“Brendan, we have a unique opportunity to have a wolf with us so close to the full moon. Now, I know we usually ask Declan about wolfie matters, but he is too young to be around us this close to the full moon. Would *you* mind?” she coyly asked Derek, but her facial expression betrayed her as she grinned.

Derek straightened and smiled back at her. “Not at all. Brendan, is it?” he asked, flashing his teeth at the poor boy. “Any occurrence of violence would have happened way back before the supernatural community came out to humans. When wolves are forced to conceal a vital part of themselves, reduce shifting to when necessary, and basically never fully accept their other halves, that, of course, could lead to violent outbursts and losing control of their wolves. But, having alphas and being part of a pack strengthens the human half and lessens the spate of murders that could occur if a wolf is not properly disciplined. Any person, wolf or human, can succumb to rages if they bottle up their emotions. Wolves just tend to use claws when they lash out.”

“Thank you, sir.”

Derek nodded, barely taking his eyes off the blonde.

A bell chimed, signaling the end of class, and the students clambered free of their desks and hustled up the steps. He waited until the room was almost empty before he descended. His mystery girl stood talking to

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a grey-haired woman, who he assumed was Ms. Chace. The woman was small with a kind face. She smelled human, and Derek wondered how she had ended up being a paranormal studies professor.

He came to a halt as both women glanced in his direction. Remembering his manners, Derek held out his hand and addressed the grey-haired woman. “Agent Derek Doyle of the Paranormal Investigations Team. Tom Delaney sent me to escort you to the station. He speaks very highly of you, Ms. Chace. It’s a pleasure to meet you.”

The woman clasped a hand over her mouth and giggled. He raised an eyebrow as she doubled over laughing. The golden-haired girl next to him just shrugged and smiled. His wolf inclined his head, intrigued. When the woman had finally regained her composure, she waved a hand, and Derek wondered if Sarge knew his consultant was crazy.

“Dear, I’m afraid you have the wrong person. I’m not Ms. Chace.”

Derek wondered if he had read the board wrong and frowned. “Oh, I’m sorry. Can you tell me where I could find Ms. Chace, please?”

“I’m right here.”

Derek turned and looked into cobalt eyes. This time, she extended her delicate hand and said, “Ever Chace. Nice to see you again, Agent Derek Doyle.”

Derek took her outstretched hand, and his wolf wagged his tail at the simplest touch of skin. He pulled back, raising his eyebrow again. “You’re Ever Chace—*Doctor* Ever Chace?”

“Guilty. Now, shall we go? I don’t wish to keep Tom waiting.”

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His wolf bristled at the casual way she spoke of Sarge, purely jealous of the familiarity and evident fondness in her voice. He backed away, the confusion of being in such close proximity with Ever beginning to unease him.

Ever said her goodbyes to the other woman and gathered her bag before following after Derek. They walked in silence until they were out in the fresh air again. Even though his wolf watched Ever with an intensity that shocked him to his core, Derek wondered how she could calm his wolf so much as to turn him into nothing more than a puppy dog.

“So... are you going to speak to me again or not?” Ever smirked as she caught up with him despite his long strides.

“Depends on if you knew who I was when you ran into me.”

She snorted. “You were the one who ran into me, Mr. Agent. Besides, other than knowing you were a cop, how was I to know you were the one Tom had sent to bring me to the station?”

He blew out a breath and stomped out to the car park. Derek had no clue why he was so pissed off, but he knew he needed to get Ever to Sarge and leave before his wolf decided he didn't like being docile anymore. He could feel the rage build up inside him, and he longed to punch something. It was not a good feeling for a wolf on the cusp of a full moon.

Derek went to the passenger side of his car and opened the door for Ever. Looking surprised, she gave him a genuine smile and slipped into the seat of his BMW. As he closed the door, he gave himself a minute before getting into the driver's side. After putting the

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keys in the ignition, Derek started the car and reversed out. It was a little after one and the lunch traffic was beginning to build up.

“If you’re going to be all silent and broody, Mr. Agent, can I at least turn on the radio?”

Derek grunted a *yes* as he maneuvered his way through the traffic, groaning as Ever turned on the radio and an overly poppy track vibrated out of the speakers. She tapped her fingers on the window and hummed along to the song. Both man and wolf were utterly captivated by her.

This was going to be a long day.