

“Pick it up Marius. Nita making you look bad.”

Marius picked up the pace realizing that his father, Chaos and Nita had nearly reached the end of the pier while he lagged behind. They’d been running for almost an hour and a half covering what he estimated to be about six miles. They’d slowed their usual pace to make sure that Nita could keep up which she’d shown early on in the run she could. Normally, the distance wouldn’t have been an issue, but with the added humidity and the sun beating down on them along with the sandy beach he’d found it a little more difficult to keep up.

By the time he reached the end of the pier where the others stood Nita was sliding out of her shoes and shorts and before he knew it she dove into the water. The other men didn’t appear to notice. Instead, their attention was solely focused on him and the fact that he appeared to be on the verge of collapsing. Marius stopped mid step as a sense of darkness rolled within him. The feeling was vaguely familiar yet his mind fought placing the pieces to the puzzle together. Before he realized what had happened Chaos was right in front of him keeping him from tumbling face first onto the pier.

“What the hell?” Marius felt his legs give way and Chaos immediately lowered them both to the ground. His head spun as he tried to shake the feelings.

“I knew you hadn’t been doing what I told you to do,” G said with disappointment in his voice.

Marius looked up at his father as he glared down shaking his head. “What are you talking about?”

“I’m talking about your training; those very specific instructions that I gave you. You’ve been too busy running around trying to be grown that you’ve been neglecting your control exercises.” G knelt next to his son just as Nita joined them. “I told you, for the rest of your life you are going to have to deal with this. If you don’t take the time to hone your control when you reach a point of exhaustion it’s going to rise and you won’t be able to do a damn thing about it.”

As Marius understood his father’s words he asked, “I wouldn’t…”

“Yes, you could kill and you probably wouldn’t remember a thing. You have to always work on this. I don’t want to see you end up like your grandfather.” G looked away as the thoughts of his father surfaced.

“What happened to him?”

G didn’t talk much about his father. Whenever Marius brought up the old man he immediately changed the subject. Marius suspected that something bad had transpired, he just had no clue as to what it was.

“He used to always tell me that no matter what, we had to always tend to the Reaper. Sometimes that meant making sacrifices but it was for the greater good. As he got older and his mind started to deteriorate, the Reaper became more and more difficult for him control. Eventually, doctors diagnosed him as Schizophrenic and he spent his last few weeks of his life in a mental health facility where his physical health took a downturn. By the third week he was on a respirator and begging to die.” G remembered the look on his father’s face when he’d granted his last wish requesting that the contraption be removed.

Marius inhaled deeply as a shudder moved through his body. It was as if the information that his father had finally revealed stirred the Reaper within him. “Is that what all of the meditation is about?”

“Yes. My father discovered that it wasn’t just the physical aspect that kept the Reaper at bay but also the mental strength. He was fortunate enough to have access to people who taught him how to properly meditate but by then he was already on the verge of the mental break. He instilled it in me as I have done in you. I do get the whole moving meditation thing with you but if you are going to be with us when this mess goes down I don’t want to have to have my focus pulled in multiple directions because you’ve lost control.”

“Point taken. What can we do about it now?”