

Vampire!Severus 6: Dilemma

by MHaydn

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Chapter 1 of 1

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Theo had had it with writing prologues and watching others get the good parts.

It was only the Dark Stranger's extra senses that let him turn and face the menacing shape before it was upon him.

"What brings you to these parts, Stranger?" asked the werewolf.

"A dilemma. How can I get rid of the bounty hunters?"

"You do have a problem," said the werewolf. "If you eliminate them in such a manner that discourages others, the girls will recoil from the horror of it. On the other hand, the bounty killers won't hesitate to harm the girls to get to you, and you want to protect them."

"Rather the opposite," said the Dark Stranger. "The girls driving off the gang-of-six is getting embarrassing."

The werewolf sniffed the air. "I detect growing attachment."

"Aren't we getting off the topic?"

"You're the one who arrived reeking of two lovely ladies. But there has not yet been a union. What are you doing with them, anyway?"

"I'm teaching them how to compute interest rates," said the Dark Stranger. "I don't want the Malfoys and others of that ilk to take advantage of them."

"I can't say I approve – too much bonding. When you finally bed them, they will consider you part of their lives. Is that wise for one of your kind?"

The editor read Theo's passage with dismay, but she realized it was partly her fault. She and the others, because of his flair for introductions, had not let him write the more exciting episodes, and now, he, in an attempt to create tension, had exposed the central problem which the story line was ill equipped to handle. Well, she could only do her best.

How often it falls to the least regarded of the group to repair the damage done by those who, believing they have real talent, extend the arc of the undertaking beyond what its framework can support, threatening the very success of the project for which they had high hopes and into which they have invested so much of their ego that they wished to reach the heights on a vehicle designed but to produce modest results, and is it not the way of things that the modest one will bear the brunt of their scorn when she brings the endeavor back to its intended norm, in which case, all our hapless heroine can do is defend her actions with a quiet dignity and hope those currently irate with her will see reason as they themselves think through the consequence of their actions, but even so, she can never expect any overt acknowledgement of her contribution and will have to rely upon her self-sufficiency to sustain her through the trials and tribulations which will soon be upon her.

"The editor is as jittery as a novice facing her first ski jump," said Biff.

"Perhaps she hadn't had her morning pot of coffee yet," said Cho. "Let's not make the same mistake."

"Right," said Biff. "Shall we visit the Caffeine Palace?"

Theo wrote it without me, thought Cho. I'm not his inspiration.

"We'll get buzzed, and then we'll write," said Cho.

After her first double espresso, Cho asked Biff if he thought she was repulsive to which he replied that she wasn't.

After her second double espresso, Cho asked Biff if he thought she was capable of writing like the editor to which he blanched and said, "I suppose so."

Her inner being shaking from Theo's betrayal and her outer being shaking from the third double espresso, Cho gripped her pen.

How does one describe the feelings of a young girl at a possible turning point in her life, when her anguish is doubled, nay tripled, because she is not certain it is a turning point and, if it is, she is dubious about the ethics of what might be her one and only chance to escape a dreary life? But would the opportunity she has, if she indeed has one, destroy her soul even as it lets her talents thrive? Oh, what were the Malfoys up to? Her spirit had soared when they mentioned they had a place for her in their San Francisco office. San Francisco, land of dreams. Her spirit had shriveled as she watched the pastor approach them, hat in hand, asking if they could make the same generous loan they had made others so that he could replace the stained glass window. She wanted to scream at the pastor that they were robbing him with a pen, but to her shame, she had thought of San Francisco and kept quiet. And were they sincere about the offer, or were they hoping to get in her pants? At this point, she wanted to believe the offer was sincere since, she realized blushing, they didn't need to make the offer to get in her pants, but she was intelligent enough to recognize the weakness of that argument. Perhaps she should pray. Pray in the place of shattered glass about her shattered illusions.

Biff sighed. It was his turn to provide connective narrative. Well, he would rise to the occasion like a mature adult.

The dark demands of necessity overcame them like the long shadows of twilight snuffing out the last of the day.

"Have we turned bushwhacker?"

"I don't like it any more than you do," said Lucius.

"I know," said Draco, "but this town can't settle down to business as long as those mercenaries keep riding in and blazing away."

"Or they ride in and Pansy blazes away," said Lucius.

They unlocked the chest, and their choices gleamed at them like the sparkle of good intentions leading to damnation: Vetterli sniper's rifles, Winchester 73's, two Colt 44's each, and Bowie knives.

"I hate to say it," said Draco, "but we're out of practice. That means up at dawn, calisthenics, and a jog followed by hand-to-hand combat. Target practice in the afternoon."

"It'll clear our minds," said Lucius. "Remember what we learned from that wizard from Okinawa?"

"All that hair-pulling, eye-gauging, neck-snapping stuff," said Draco, watching the red ball of the sun disappear as inexorably as his veneer of civilization.

Biff watched Cho down another espresso and decided he should escort her home. If someone accused him of being with a young lady, he could say what he had wanted to say for ages, "That was no lady; that was a writer."