

London Nights

Book 1: The Lost Boy

Von Ulysses

Kapitel 8: It's a kind of magic

At the same time, up in Richard's room under the roof of Whitechurch Manor, Kearon asked the obvious question after Jonathan had joined them: "What are we doing up here?"

Velkan put his hand on the Banshee's shoulder, smiling at him calmly as Kearon flinched.

"Let Jon do his thing, it'll be alright."

"Wow, no pressure, eh?" Jonathan turned on the spot. "Okay, we have no clue where Richard is, but I should be able to track him down." He pointed at the shelf next to the window. "Thankfully Tariq is addicted to those scented candles. Gather as many as you can find, Kearon, at least nine. Shouldn't be hard."

"On it." The Banshee said eagerly.

"Next I need something from him. As personal as possible. Best would be a bodily fluid. Spit or blood..." Jonathan sighed. "But since we have neither... I can't believe I'm saying this... Velkan, check our boy's bed, okay? Let's hope he jerks off into his boxers or the sheets."

"Are you kidding?"

"Do I look like I am kidding?"

"Why do I-"

"Because you have a better nose. Sniff out some of his cum. Doesn't matter if it is dried up."

"Can't we use his toothbrush? He puts that in his mouth and-"

"And then washes it out afterwards." Jonathan raised his eyebrows. "Get sniffing, wolf!"

Velkan growled at him but then turned towards the bed and started sifting through the sheets.

"How did my life end up like this?" he muttered as he held Richard's boxers under his nose.

"I ask myself the same thing. A lot." Jonathan said but he couldn't quite suppress an amused snicker.

While the other two were doing their part, one of them, Kearon, with much more vigour than the other, Jonathan swept aside the thick oriental carpet, got a piece of chalk out of his pocket and started to draw a complicated sigil onto the wooden floor. "Here." Velkan's voice clearly showed how much he enjoyed his tasks. He held up the underside of Richard's duvet. Barely visible on the red fabric was a smeared white

stain.

"Well done. What about the candles?"

Kearon had placed seven next to the sigil and just came back with two more. Aside from one, all of them were scented.

"This is going to be an interesting aroma." Jonathan groaned. He set the candles up around specific points of the sigil and lit them with the lighter which he always carried. Several (and partly seriously incompatible) scents began to mix in the room. Velkan held the back of his hand under his nose. His sharp senses were attacked by the wild mix of oriental fragrances, flowery aromas and an assortment of sweet smells like Cupcake or Vanilla Fudge.

"Okay, here's what I will do: I'm going to astral project to Richard's location. However, I need you two to keep an eye on me. Astral projection isn't without risks. I'm literally leaving my body behind and if I don't get back to it fast enough, it might... well... die."

"Oh, if death is the worst that can happen." Velkan groaned.

"It's not going to." Jonathan flipped him off. "Think of it as the package insert of some prescription drug. Might cause all kinds of side effects. In this case, death is one of them but it's highly unlikely. I admit, astral projection isn't my favourite pastime but it's the fastest way of finding the puppy."

He inhaled deeply. "Let's do this. If anything happens, anything at all, just break the sigil by smearing the chalk. That will drag me back instantly."

"Don't worry, I got this." Velkan said and Jonathan knew that he could trust his partner. Velkan loved adventures just as much as Jonathan did but he was also fiercely protective.

"I know, my wolf. Hand me the duvet."

Velkan did as he was told and Jonathan looked at the stain for a moment, contemplating his life choices. Then, with a last heartfelt sigh, he licked over the spot.

"Ewww!" Kearon gasped but quickly shut up as Jonathan glared at him.

Even though everything in him objected, Jonathan ran his tongue over the stain two more times just to make sure before handing the duvet back to Velkan who clearly tried not to laugh despite the seriousness of the situation.

"The expression on your face is priceless."

"Yeah, fuck you, too, wolf."

"I hate to be the voice of reason but don't take any unnecessary risks." Velkan replied instead of continuing to tease and held on to Jonathan's hand a little longer than needed before taking a step back.

"I won't, don't worry."

I'm worrying enough for both of us, Jonathan added in his mind, even though he was determined not to show it.

He lay down in the centre of the sigil and closed his eyes. It had been ages since he had astral projected last and the thought of doing it again wasn't the most tempting. The things one did for the family. It was his fault, really, for giving up and starting to care for the others in the house more than he had ever expected to.

Jonathan began to quietly recite the spell. He had barely finished the final word when he suddenly got a nauseating falling sensation and his conscious tumbled into the cold emptiness of the void.

"What do you mean; I have taken something from you?"

The woman shook her head and crossed her legs casually while never dropping that smile on her face which was somehow both benevolent and unsettling.

"Please, Richard, don't insult my intelligence. We both know what or rather who I am talking about."

Of course, Richard knew. It wasn't hard to guess. And he had to admit that fear had taken over his mind. One thing he admired Jonathan for was the witch's ability to bluff himself through every situation. Jonathan was a talented liar and his poker face was near perfect. Something Richard could only dream of. He was still playing with his ring and he felt the sweat on his forehead. This was anything but a poker face.

"Kearon..." he said quietly.

"Exactly." The woman folded her hands. "The poor dear came to me with his deepest desire and I granted him his wish, but all magic comes at a price."

"If it is money you want, the Ward family is-"

"Richard, darling, do I look as if money is the problem here?"

"No." Richard forced himself to stop fumbling with the ring. His hands were now clenched into his thighs to keep them from moving nervously.

"Kearon offered me his services. The powers of a Banshee are invaluable, especially in my business. Fear is a very potent motivator."

You don't say, Richard thought. His stomach was twisted in knots by now and for the first time since they formed "Team Young Whitechurch", Richard was afraid that he might not survive. He had never been faced with a situation like this all on his own and the thought of never seeing Tariq, Velkan and the rest of his family again echoed through his mind.

"You look very pale, Richard. Dearest, you really must think me a monster." the woman sighed. "I was just-"

She was interrupted by the sudden arrival of Jonathan, who appeared right between her and Richard, his legs passing through the white coffee table. The poker face Richard had been thinking so highly of had cracked as Jonathan realized that he was in plain sight of everyone in the room.

"So nice of you to join us, Mr Bouchard."

Jonathan tried to turn towards the woman but he couldn't move his legs. He was stuck in the position he had appeared in, unable to look at her.

"What have you done?"

"Bound you to this spot, my dear." The woman continued. "Astral projection, so naughty."

"Seemed like the fastest way to find him."

"I didn't expect any less from you." She gestured at Richard. "You found him. There he is."

"Are you okay?" Jonathan asked directed at Richard. "What happened to you?"

"I'm fine. She didn't do this. Happened earlier." Richard said, feeling a wave of relief to see a friendly face.

"You didn't think I would hurt such an illustrious guest now, did you, Mr Bouchard?"

"Of course not, I was just making-" Jonathan broke off and gasped. His hand shot up to his chest. "What...?"

"The binding spell cuts you off from your body, Jonathan. It's a precaution. If someone gets so close to me, I rather have them unable to return to their body." the woman said. "So we better make this quick since I prefer talking in person over astral projection."

Jonathan tried to answer but all he could muster was a pathetic croak. His face was

contorted into an expression of immense pain.

"You have to let him go!" Richard rose up with a start. "Please! He only wanted to find me!"

"Shush, my dear." The woman put a finger to her lips. "Mr Bouchard needs to listen to me. Do I have your attention?"

"Yes." Jonathan pressed out through gritted teeth. He was leaning forward, holding his chest with both hands by now.

"Your heart is about to stop so I'll send you back." she said as if she was talking about the weather. "Come to the apartment entrance of the Shard, my men will be waiting for you."

Jonathan barely managed to nod before the woman snapped her fingers and his eyes widened as he faded from view.

"You keep very interesting company, Richard." the woman smiled. "Tea?"

As Jonathan regained consciousness, he found himself in Velkan's arms. He desperately gasped for air, resulting in a violent cough. Disorientated, he tried to remember where he was and what had happened.

"Jon, babe, say something." Velkan's voice was barely audible over the ringing in Jonathan's ears.

"Is he okay?"

Jonathan took a moment to figure out whom the other voice belonged to. Kearon leaned in a little too close for comfort.

"He's okay, get out of my face." Jonathan croaked and tried to sit up but his body betrayed him and refused to function. "Well, not quite okay...."

"We tried to get you back when you started to convulse, but it didn't work." Velkan said. He still held on to Jonathan tightly. "What happened?"

"The Shadow Queen happened." Jonathan accepted his situation for now and allowed himself to lean into Velkan's embrace. "She bound me there, cut me off from my body." He smiled warmly at his partner. "Don't look so disturbed. There was nothing you could have done."

"That was too close for comfort."

"All part of the job, eh?"

Jonathan propped himself up against Velkan as his body finally allowed him some control again and kissed his wolf lovingly.

"I'm fine." he whispered between two kisses. "I'll always come back to you."

"Reckless git." Velkan replied before he kissed him again.

Kearon was suddenly very interested in blowing out the scented candles, his pale face flushed with a dark red.

"Don't look so embarrassed, Kearon." Jonathan chuckled. "If there is one thing you have to get used to in this house, it's this." However, the moment passed just as quickly and Jonathan freed himself from Velkan's embrace to stand up even though he was still a bit shaky.

"We need to get to the Shard."

"The Shard? Of all places?"

"Yeah." Jonathan shrugged. "It's a temporary hideout, that's for sure. One of the empty flats waiting for a bored Russian oligarch to buy and never use."

"Is Richard--"

"He's fine. A little worse for wear. I think he gave those guys a run for their money when they attacked him."

The expression on Velkan's face was downright endearing. He looked like a proud older sibling who had taught his little brother how to beat up bullies.

"So she didn't hurt him... thank goodness." Kearon was gathering the candles and putting them back on the shelves.

"No, she knows better than that. It's a member of the Ward family she has there."

Jonathan paced up and down Richard's room to gain back full control of his body. This was his element. Jonathan had moved in these circles for years, worked his way up to a point that his name held significance even to elusive figures like the Shadow Queen. Knowing how people like her ticked was essential. She had caught him by surprise with the binding spell. That much he gave her but not more. Living in this house had made him rusty but this was his game and he'd be damned if he lost.

"She won't risk Jeremiah's ire nor does she want to go up against Elisabeth. That's our trump card."

"You sound very confident for someone who almost died just a few minutes ago." Velkan remarked.

"And that's why you love me, wolf."

"What about me?" Kearon asked sheepishly, the final candle in hand. "Do I have to come with you?"

"And deliver yourself right to her? No way. You're staying here with Castor and Myra to keep an eye on you. And yes, I mean that both to your protection and because I still don't trust you entirely."

Jonathan caught Velkan's disapproving gaze but he ignored it. Velkan was too soft for his own good when it came to the young ones. Kearon's big teary eyes might move the wolf but at this point, Jonathan needed more to fully trust the Banshee again.