

Sheiba

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Sheiba's a solitary werewolf who sells her "abilities" to make ends meet.

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1 - Present Day Sheiba

As she looked around the deserted factory, Sheiba had a really bad feeling. The message she had received told her to meet her new employer here, but why such an out of the way place? Granted, not too many people were willing to openly acknowledge that they used her, but as a werewolf, her skills were invaluable to many. Along the same lines, she had made many enemies with her unique abilities. So, she had come early to scout the place and crouched in the shadows, testing the air for any strange smells, and listening for any movement within the factory. Suddenly, her sharp eyesight caught a flash of light from a doorway opposite her position. As she remained hidden in the gloom, she watched as two men came out of the doorway, two .45 revolvers grasped in their hands. "Marcocio says she's not gonna be here for another hour," said the first, a burly-looking guy who looked like he lifted cars for fun. "We should be able to find good spots to sit and wait, then when she shows up...." He paused dramatically and looked over at the other guy, a mousy looking dude with greasy hair and a mouthful of teeth, which he flashed at the first guy. "Yeah, we'll get her good! We got enough silver in here to take her down!" Sheiba ground her teeth in fury. Unbelievable! She'd been tricked before, but this was ridiculous! These guys obviously didn't know what they were doing or who they were dealing with. Idiots! They just signed their own death warrants. She stayed completely still in the darkness, fuming, as they fanned out to find somewhere to hide. As the big guy looked around, he saw something shining in one of the corners where the shadows were deepest. He looked again, thinking it looked like a pair of eyes, but it was gone. *Spooky place*, he thought to himself, *but perfect*. He backed into a doorway, then jumped as the door slowly opened behind him. He chuckled, a little nervous, but feeling stupid to be so jumpy. He turned his back to the door, and started to crouch down, when an arm came around his throat and yanked him into the room behind, slamming the door. The mousy guy jerked around and pointed his gun in the direction that the noise had come from. Eyes wide with fear, he called out. "Kane, you there??" He heard a noise that sounded like a scream that'd been cut short. Breathing heavily, he worked his way over to where he'd heard the door slam just a moment before. He could hear nothing but the occasionally scurry of a rat from the far corners of the factory. As he approached the area where he thought he'd heard the commotion, he looked down, and saw marks on the dusty floor. It looked like someone had been dragged into the doorway, but it couldn't have been Kane. Kane was huge! He slowly approached the doorway, and tentatively tested the knob. It wasn't locked, so he swung it open. As the swirling dust cleared he saw a figure on the floor surrounded by blood. Scanning the room with his .45 in front of him, he worked his way over to the figure, then gasped and started to back out. Kane's throat had been ripped out!! What on earth could have done that?? "Mios Dio!" he whispered to himself as he began backing out of the room. "God's not gonna save you now!" A growl erupted above him as he felt himself lifted by his head into the rafters. He swung the gun around, desperately trying to sight on something, but then the hands around his head squeezed. The last thing he saw were the shining fangs and gleaming eyes in the darkness above him, then his eyesight dimmed and he knew no more.
As Sheiba dropped the second guy on the floor next to the first, she growled again in frustration. Why would someone do this?? Did they really think they could just sneak up on her?? As she dropped out of the rafters, she knelt down, avoiding the blood on the floor, and checked their pockets for any ID. Nothing. Figures. Staying close to the floor, she looked out of the door. As she tested the air, she could

smell something that didn't come from either of the dimwits on the floor behind her. It was a cologne, a very fancy, nasty-smelling concoction. "Is that you, Marcocio?" she called out from her hiding place. A dry chuckle responded, and a tall, very good looking man stepped out of the doorway that the two goons at emerged from earlier. "Yes, it is I," he replied with a half smile on his face. "I didn't expect you to be able to dispatch them quite so quickly." He looked around, then waved. "You can come out, I promise, there's no one else here. That was a test to see how well you work." Her eyes narrowed as she stood in the doorway. "I'll stay here, thank you. Whatever you have to say, can be said without me coming out into the open." Marcocio chuckled again, then pulled out a large envelope. "Inside is the name of the person I need information on, and if you can get the chance to put a little hurting on him, that would be good, too. But I don't want him killed, at least not yet." Sheiba stared at him from the doorway. "Do you have the money? You know what my fee is, you said in your message that you'd have the money with you." "Of course!" he scoffed as he pulled another, larger envelope from his jacket. "Your fee, plus expenses. Of course, if you're caught, I'll deny any knowledge of you." It was her turn to laugh at him. "I won't get caught! Just lay the envelopes down there on the floor and walk away, I'll get them when I'm sure it's safe." Shaking his head, Marcocio lay both envelopes on the floor, then turned and left the building. Sheiba stayed in the doorway as she heard Marcocio exiting the building, then she stayed there another ten minutes, just to be sure, constantly checking the air for smells and listening for anything that shouldn't be there. Finally satisfied that there was no one else alive in the factory except for her, she cautiously approached the envelopes, checking for any triggers that could still trap her. Gently picking up both envelopes, she looked them over carefully, and finally opened the larger one. Sure enough, there was enough cash to see her through this next assignment. Stuffing it inside her shirt, she opened the smaller one, and gasped out loud when she saw the name of the person she was to stalk.[br]

2 - The Past

She arrived at her apartment in the slums just as dark was falling across the city. Although Sheiba had no fear of the darkness, others that lived around her did, and people were quick to use their weapons and ask questions later. She could have easily gotten in through the fire escape, which led to her apartment window, but she saved that route for emergencies only. After closing the battered door, she looked around. *Home sweet home*, she thought cynically, eying the small, one-bedroom apartment with loathing. At least it was neat and clean, something Sheiba would ensure no matter where she lived. But the spacing was so cramped, what little furniture she did have took up almost all the room! A couch and small coffee table with a small TV completed the living room area in one corner. Next the kitchenette took up the other corner and at the end of the counter was a petite dinette set, with only 2 chairs (as if she'd ever have anyone over to fill the other chair). Her bed completed the room with a large chest at the foot, set in the back by the window, so she could look out at night and see a glimpse of the stars winking down. In between the bed and the couch was a small end table, with a small glass lamp, her only source of light. She walked over to her bed, and sat on it with a sigh, glancing out the window. Oh, how she missed being able to look up at the night without having to look through a dirty pane of glass and a smog-filled sky. [br]

Sheiba thought back to her younger years, when she was still with her parents out in the country, far away from the filth of the city. Her father had been a successful agriculturist, growing many unusual varieties of plants that the government had used for testing. Her mother had been a sweet and loving soul, dedicated to her daughter. They never wanted for anything; her father would go to the ends of the earth to bring whatever was needed. But, in the end, there had been nothing that either of them could do to help her. They could not even help themselves..... Sheiba shook herself out of the morbid memories, not wanting to relive those agonizing last days. *One day*, she promised herself, *I will return and avenge them*. [br]

Rolling her head to try and relieve the tension that had built up in her shoulders, she sat quietly and listened to the sounds of life around her in the apartment building. Next door, she could hear the TV going, sounded like the kids were playing video games, with the mother yelling at them to finish their homework. Down below, the sounds of a baby crying were accompanied by a man and woman arguing, probably over whose turn it was to change the diaper. Above, she could hear classical music, softly playing. Sheiba was pretty sure whoever lived up there played the violin, because sometimes, late at night, she could hear the haunting strains of music floating through the night air to tickle her ears. Pulling the envelopes out of her shirt, she opened the trunk at the foot of the bed and placed them inside, under the clothing. Rent was due, and she would be able to make it on time this month.[br]

Sheiba flicked on the light beside her bed, and walked over to the sink. She needed to clean the caked blood off of her hands, and she didn't feel like going down the hall to the bathroom, just in case anyone happened to see her. Thankfully, the dark clothing helped to disguise the smudges, but she didn't want to take any chances. It would just be easier to clean up in here. As she washed, she thought again about the name that Marcocio had given her. He couldn't have known the significance of that person in her life, she was sure. Since coming to this city, there was only one person that Sheiba had ever been able to trust, and she kept that relationship an absolute secret. She removed her clothes, wrinkling her nose

in distaste at the metallic smell of old blood. She did not make friends easily, and had only happened to stumble across this guy while tracking a blood-mad werewolf. After dispatching the rabid beast, she found out that this guy was the head of a local Research and Development lab, and she almost killed him herself. But something had caught her and held her back. Sighing, Sheiba stuffed the old clothing into a bag to be washed, dressed in a long T-shirt and a pair of bike shorts, went to the small refrigerator, and found some left-over Chinese and a soda. *What could Marcocio be up to*, she mused, forking some rice into her mouth. She walked over to the bed and set her dinner and drink on the end table while she pulled out the envelope with the name on it. "Trevor Montclair" it read, plain as day. The address was the same, too, so it had to be the same person. Grabbing another forkful of food, she considered calling Trevor, but decided against it for now. She was due to see him in a couple of nights, and she was always very careful to keep their meetings covert. [br]

Sheiba considered what she knew of him. Trevor lived alone in a very nice apartment uptown. Although it was not a penthouse suite, it was quite spacious nonetheless. His parents had died when he was young (something they both had in common), and he had managed to get on as a researcher with the R&D company that he currently headed up. Trevor was not only smart, but also inventive, and had risen in the ranks quickly. Lately, he had been working on some clinical trials of a plant-based formula that would enhance a person's senses. Well, that was top-secret, but Trevor had told her about it, partly because he felt guilty about what had happened to her parents. [br]

Although he had not been involved directly, her parents had been the unwitting participants in one of these trials, where the researchers had blended animal and plant DNA in an effort to enhance physical aspects and sensory perception of the subjects. Her parents had turned into horrendous creatures filled with blood-lust, and no one could tell her what went wrong. The worst part of it was when the creature that had been her mother had bitten her, the beast backed off with such a human look of horror in its eyes, Sheiba was sure that her mother was still there somewhere. Before she could do anything, they disappeared, and reports began surfacing in the area of beasts in the night that would attack humans, sometimes killing in the process. Her parents' bodies were found months later, up in the mountains. No one could be sure what had killed them, but by then, Sheiba discovered that something in their saliva had changed her. Her eyesight and hearing had grown sharper, her sense of smell was more sensitive, and she found that her strength and endurance had increased almost ten times! Some of the people who had been bitten by them were discovering these same attributes, while others turned into the raving, blood-mad beasts her parents had become. When someone was bitten by one of these beasts, there was a fifty fifty chance of either becoming like her, or becoming a monster that must be killed. [br]

The one bad thing, though, was like any other curse. Once a month, she did become a raving beast, and although Sheiba had learned to recognize the signs of the upcoming change and lock herself up, she would come out of it to see the destruction she had wrought around her. Since she had met Trevor, he had been helping her by locking her in a room near the R&D facility, where she could go through her change, and not worry about destroying anything or hurting anybody if they happened to come upon her. And in between times, if she became very angry, she would go through a mini change, her teeth and nails would sharpen to become fangs and claws, her ears would lengthen and sprout little tufts of hair on the tips, and hair would sprout along her forearms. It was enough to scare the heebie jeebies out of anyone who made her that angry! [br]

After finishing her food, Sheiba laid her dish in the sink, turned off the light, and laid back on the bed, staring out at the heavens. She would talk to Trevor and find out why Marcocio wanted her to stalk him so badly. What did Marcocio want with Trevor?? The formula? But that was secret, and he shouldn't have any information about it, unless he had a spy on the inside. As she lay musing, her ears caught a whisper of sound that would have gone unheard by ordinary hearing. Someone was at her door, and they were trying to open it without her knowing. *Oh, man*, she groaned to herself. Was she going to have

to deal with another idiot? Why didn't these people do their research before trying to surprise her? She slowly crept to the door, easily seeing in the darkened room with her vision, and waited as the intruder quietly slipped inside.[br]

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