

It was three in the morning and I stood at the zoo entrance. I had spent the last few hours on my bed wide awake, unable to close my eyes without seeing Bane; his eyes, his hands, the tattoo on his right shoulder blade. I needed to do something and that strange woman in the nocturnal house held the key. I needed to talk to her.

I walked under the cover of the trees around the edge of the car park, revolver at my shoulder under my hooded jacket, knife at my ankle. The sight of a dark figure stood by the wall made me stop. I turned to walk away.

'Emily?'

I turned back and met Ray's eyes.

'What're you doing here?' I said.

'I could ask you the same question.'

'Couldn't sleep,' I shrugged.

'Darren woke up asking for his mummy,' Ray said.

'Who?'

'My nephew.'

'Oh.' My shoulders sagged.

'Fat lot of good standing here does.'

I gave Ray a small smile and looked up at the wall. I noted the CCTV cameras and bit my lower lip thoughtfully. I wondered if I should shoo Ray away, but he deserved to find his sister, and I could do with the help. 'You're welcome to join me, but I'll understand if not. I'd appreciate it if you don't mention this to anyone though.'

'What? What're you doing?'

'Going to find answers.' I've never had much luck with CCTV cameras and I'll be honest, I was tempted to just take out my gun and shoot the damn things out.

'You're breaking in?' Ray paused. 'Ok.'

I pulled my hood up and over my eyes. Ray offered me his clasped hands to step into, pushing me up. I carefully peered over the top of the wall. It was overgrown and dark on the other side. A soft grumble told me we were close to the lion enclosure. There was no sign of human life so I searched for a pathway. There were the walls of the enclosure directly in front and a narrow path of paving slabs. I followed the path and saw that it led around the building. Well, the keepers had to get out somehow.

With all of my strength, I hauled myself up to sit on the wall, taking care to keep my back to the nearest camera. Gingerly, I touched the camera and attempted to turn it. It did so with a creak. I pulled the wires from the other nearest camera with a short buzz and spark. I helped Ray climb the

wall as quietly as possible. He fell, landing with a loud crash in the brambles on the other side. I froze and waited for security to come running to investigate. No one came. I dropped down, ignoring the shooting pains in my ankles as they jarred against the paving stones. Shaking the pain out, I pulled Ray to his feet.

‘Ouch,’ he squeaked.

‘You hurt?’

‘I’m fine.’

‘Good,’ I turned and began walking around the lion enclosure until I reached a locked gate.

‘Now what?’ Ray was nervous, probably wondering what he was doing, breaking into a zoo late at night with a girl he hardly knew. I wondered if his heart was racing, if there wasn’t just a tingle of excitement mixed with that fear. I held the padlock that locked the gate and then looked up.

‘Best climb.’ Ray gave an exasperated noise. ‘Unless you have some bolt cutters on you?’

I gripped the gate and found a first foot hold. Ray watched me climb the gate and drop to the ground, before shakily starting his own ascent. I kept an eye out for any keepers or security. I fleetingly wondered what I was doing, bringing this man with me. This civilian, as Bane would have called him. I smiled sadly, despite myself. That was why; I needed Bane back. Even if I hadn’t decided what capacity I wanted him in my life, I knew I needed him in this world.

Ray landed clumsily beside me.

‘You do this often?’ He was out of breath already. He followed me as I trotted down the zoo terrace and to the locked entrance of the nocturnal house. The police tape was gone, bad for publicity, but the closed sign was still stuck to the door, giving apologies but no explanation.

Bending, I pulled out my knife and slid it between the double doors, moving it down until it bounced off the catch. I moved it until I felt it move the catch. Pushing against the door, I pulled and pushed on the knife, wondering if this would really work. The knife caught and the door moved. Shocked, I placed the knife back in its sheath and searched the ground. Ray stared at me with wide eyes.

‘You carry a knife on your leg?’

‘You don’t know the half of it,’ I muttered, finding a rock and using it to wedge the door open.

‘Come on,’ I said. ‘We don’t have much time.’

The house was lit up, simulating daytime, and there was not one animal to be seen.

‘Where are we going?’

‘To the bat-eared fox enclosure.’

‘You still think this is all because of a fox?’

We reached the narrow corridor that led to the enclosure and I felt Ray hesitate behind me. There, in front of the enclosure, was the woman in the white dress.

'Hello?' I said. The woman turned, startled, and looked at me with violet eyes.

'My name is Emily May. What's yours?' The woman cocked her head and studied me. 'Ok. Some people we love have gone missing. Do you know anything about that?'

The woman looked away. I glanced into the fox enclosure.

'Is Silver in there?'

'Silver?' Ray hissed.

'The fox.' I didn't take my eyes from the woman. She stared back at me. 'I don't think she is. I think you're Silver.' My mouth had gone dry, my chest aching.

'What are you talking about?' Ray said.

'They did name me Silver,' she said with a quiet silken voice.

I moved to respond when the floor shook beneath our feet. I gripped onto the wall but it fell away. Ray's arms found mine and we clasped each other as the world began to spin, colours blending into one another, the bile rising in my throat as the world fell away before our eyes.

We were on our knees, still grasping one another tightly. I lifted my head and waited for the dizziness to subside. I tried to pull myself to my feet and caught sight of Silver, disappearing amongst crowds. There were some gasps and I turned to them. A man, woman and small child stared at us.

Ray lifted his head, groaning.

I stood and studied the clothing of the family who quickly hurried away. Turning, I looked at the crowds around us. The place was full of noise. An elephant carrying a child on its back strode down the zoo terrace.

I couldn't breathe. I stared around the zoo, at the fashions, at the elephant, at the lion enclosure that was in the wrong place. My stomach churned, my head swam. Then I turned, walked to a nearby bush and vomited.