****

**CHAPTER TWO:**

His Story

*Septemly 44, 1106*

"Just great Gabriel, you've done it again!", Gabriel said to himself. What a bloody genius he was. He had been told to cooperate, but no, he just *had* to try to escape. Not only did he fail, but he barely got two feet before being harshly reminded that his legs were still bound.

Fortunately, he didn't think he'd broken anything, but his nose had sure bled a lot. "Hey, can you slow down a bit? Or at least try to avoid the bumps?" He shouted from the trunk. *THUMP!* "OWWW!" She could definitely hear him, he thought, and in fact, she was probably going over them just to rile him up. Though it struck him as odd she hadn’t bothered to gag him.

She could at he very least had cleaned out the trunk. It was bad enough being trapped in a small, dark place, but the smell was the worst of it. "Damn humans" he said to himself. Unlike many of the sentients across the world, the senses of humans weren't very… acute. As a result, they tended to be inconsiderate towards other species. Then again, she had probably put him in with her dirty gym clothes out of spite.

\*\*\*\*\*

Gabriel felt the car stop. At first, he tough she might just be getting ready to suddenly hit the gas, and toss him around a bit (she'd already done it a few times already). After a short bit of silence, the trunk opened. "Rise and shine, sleepy head," she teased. "Come on, we need to get a move on." Just as he was about to remark how he could barely even move, she cut his legs free. She left on his hand bindings; she clearly didn't trust him.

The sun was a harsh sight on his eyes, and as he stood up, he could barely see anything. After a few moments, he could make out a few details. It was late afternoon, and they appeared to be in an abandoned, run down part of the city. He couldn't be sure how long they'd been on the road, but he guessed it must have been for at least half an hour. Long enough to be just about anywhere, he thought.

After a short walk, they entered what looked like a town hall, which seemed like it was on its last legs. "What are we doing here?" He asked her, to which she shot him a stern look, "Sorry I asked." She clearly wasn't enjoying his antics. Eventually, they reached the main room. She sat him down, before going to check the main entrance. He looked around the room. He supposed he could try to escape, but he wasn't sure how far he could get. There were what seemed to be a few old nightsticks on a table. Maybe if he could knock her out, he get he could take her keys.

Just as he was about to grab one, he heard something from behind. "Drop your weapon, and get down. NOW!" He heard a male voice say. He had no choice but to comply. "Alright, now turn around, slowly." "Wetzel? About time." Jenna had come back, having heard the commotion. "I already checked the perimeter, its clear. You ready to get started?" "As long as this doesn't take too long, Jess. I've already used up all my sick days." Gabriel hoped they weren't going too torture him, or worse…

\*\*\*

They had set up two chairs, face to face. Gabriel was sat down in one, and Wetzel took the other. A rather large human male, with brown hair and brown eyes, Wetzel gave off the vibe as though he was used to having such meetings.

"Alright, first question," Wetzel said in a calm, composed voice, "What is your full name?" Gabriel hadn't noticed before, but this "Wetzel" had a bit of an accent: southern, maybe? Gabriel wondered where he was from, but he didn’t dare ask. Wetzel tried again, "Come on now, its a simple question." "Why don't you ask Ms. know it all over there?" Gabriel retorted snidely. "Listen," Wetzel began, "I’m not going to hurt you, but we need you to cooperate." "Is that why you beat me up and tossed me in a trunk?" Gabriel chided. "Actually, *she's* the one who tied you up and put you in her trunk." Wetzel said plainly. "And as for getting beat up," Jenna added, "you did a pretty good job of that yourself." Wetzel gave her a disappointed look, but then looked back to Gabriel expectantly.

They clearly weren't going to take no for an answer. "Fine," he relented, "My name is Gabriel Sebastian Smith. Now where the hell am I, and who are you people?" Wetzel got out an odd looking phone, and checked something off on it. "Good," he said, "Now: question two. What is your sex and species, as well as your height and weight?" Gods, it was like they were checking to see if he was a criminal or something. "Really?" he asked. "Really." Wetzel replied plainly. With a sigh, Gabriel said "Male Canis Lupis, 6’4”, 185 lbs." All average for a specimen of his nature, Gabriel thought. "All right, one last question. Why do you want to be a police officer?"

Gabriel wasn't sure what to make of this one. Was that was this; an extreme test of dedication, to see how much he wanted to be on the force? Or were they just a couple of crazy rejects looking to make a point? Whatever the reason, the tired Gabriel didn't care. "Same as anyone else." He said plainly. Wetzel frowned, "And what would that reason be?" Gabriel tried again. "I want to help people. That's it." Wetzel shook his head, seemingly confused, "There has to be more too it than that."

Gabriel rolled his eyes. "Fine. I like guns. There. I said it." Wetzel could clearly see through his lie. "Now, the real answer, please. Before we have to resort to more persuasive techniques." At this point, Gabriel was nearing the end of rope. He was sore, starving, and exhausted. He realized there was only one way to get out of this. Gabriel scoffed, looked down at the floor, took a deep breath, and reluctantly gave the real answer. "Ever since I was a cub, I've wanted to help people. Always trying to protect my friends form bullies, hell, even strangers."

\*\*\*

"As I got older, I guess I just started to see how much dark there was in the world; how much injustice. I guess it just made sense to join up as soon as I finished school. But really, I guess it was because of my dad. My dad was a cop himself, you know. But when I was nine, when he was supposed to come home, he just… never showed. Must have waited at lest ten hours straight. Fell asleep in the living room, on the couch. Well, the next day, this man from the force came by. Turned out, he was the Chief. He told us my father had been involved in a call to an arson case. Some teenagers messing around with matches near an old apartment building. It was supposed to be a routine call, you know?"

At this point, he was talking more to himself than his captors. It had been a long time since he’d revisited his past, and in his tiredness he fell into a sort of trance. "Apparently, by the time they got there, the entire building was on fire. The teens were already gone, but everyone in the building wasn't. It was in the poor part of Brooklyn, so there were a lot of people inside. You know how it is, poor families that can only afford small apartments, living in unsafe conditions."

"They were told to wait for the firefighters, but my dad knew they would take too long with all the traffic. He went in, and managed to start getting people out. By the time the trucks arrived, he'd already gotten five whole families out to safety. But the building was going fast, and there were still a lot of families inside."

"With the firefighter's help, they managed to get everyone out. But as they were doing one final sweep, a group of firefighters got trapped. It was too dangerous for anyone else to go in; the building could collapse at any minute. But my dad went in anyway. A few minutes after he went in, the trapped firefighters came out of the building. They were the last ones to ever come out. There were three of them. One had gotten stuck under a ceiling beam. The others tried getting him out, but couldn't… until my dad helped them."

"After he helped out the trapped firefighter, another beam went. One of the other two was right under it. My dad pushed him out of the way. He saved their lives. But it cost him his. See, the beam had cut them off. After it came down, they had no choice but to leave. They didn't want to, but they said he made them. He told them if they didn't leave, he was gonna shoot them. My father was not a violent man, but he clearly wasn't gonna let them risk their lives for his."

Gabriel took a few seconds to compose himself, "He had helped over forty people escape that hellhole. They… they said that he died a hero." After a few seconds, Gabriel looked up, tears visibly running down his face. "*That*. That is why I want to be a police officer. Is that ‘real’ enough for you?" "Y- yes. I’m sorry." Wetzel said, clearly put off by Gabriel's story. "Everything checks out, Jessie. I'll, uh, let you take it from here." ‘Jessie’ now took Wetzel's seat in front of Gabriel. "So, you said you wanted to help people." She asked him. "Yes. And what does any of this have to do with that?" He asked her, bitterly. She sighed, and almost had an apologetic look on her face. "Now that we've got that out of the way," she began, "we can finally tell you. Mr. Smith, I hope eventually you will understand why we've had to do this but our future; possibly the world's future, depends on." She leaned in, closer to him. "That was quite the story, Mr. Smith. Well now its my turn to tell you a story." "And what story would be?" Gabriel asked. ‘Jessie’ answered him, with a sudden stark look on her face. "The story of who *we* are."