Just Another Day On The Job

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by Genly

Summary

Sam and Dean go to check out a small town that has been dealing with unexplained nighttime attacks. When they get there, they soon find out that unlike most places they've been to, nobody in Pelican Town bats an eye when it comes to the existence of monsters, or the people who hunt them.

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Chapter 1

He was tapping the steering wheel in time to the music blasting from the speakers. Sam had complained, of course, saying he could barely hear himself think. But he couldn't really care. The music, the open road, the spring breeze blowing through the window, the satisfaction of completing another job, nowhere to be, no obligations. Just him and Sam and the rumble of the Impala.

"Hey Dean, this might be interesting. Small town, no unexplained deaths as far as I can see, but a lot of people claiming they were attacked at night by some sort of creature. Lots of discrepancies, though. Like they're all describing different things. Could be some mass delusion or maybe a shapeshifter of some sorts. Still, with that many attacks, maybe it's worth checking out."

He groaned. "Come on, Sam. Another shapeshifter? That means I'm either going to end up behind bars again, or covered in goo. Nope. Not interested."

Sam turned towards him. "I don't think it's a shifter, Dean. Like I said, no deaths. We could just check it out, maybe talk to some of the locals. Seriously, it might not even be our thing, but that means we can take it easy for a few days while we figure it out."

He still wasn't entirely convinced. He just wanted to keep driving for a while, keep his mind on the road. Small towns always meant it was either boring as fuck or a total life-or-death shitshow.

"They have a bar."

He waved his hand towards his right, not looking over. "Okay, Sammy. Whatever. Just tell me what exit to take."

They did have a bar here, and a library. But no motel. Man, this place was a dump. Half the roads were just dirt, and the other half were uneven cobblestones that were probably doing a number on the Impala's suspension. He vaguely wondered how people here even had enough of an internet connection to get all those crazy stories out. Sam was on it, though. He didn't pay attention to the conversation Sam was having, just eyed the selection of bottom shelf whiskeys and held up a finger to the girl behind the bar.

"Cheapest one you got, thanks. Oh, and a beer for the dork over there."

"You got it, honey! Don't think I've seen you around here before? We don't get many visitors in the valley."

Oh, great. A chatty bartender. He looked her over, noticing her blue hair and bright smile. She was pretty, in a way. Like she didn't give two fucks about how others saw her, with that strange hair color. Most people who dyed their hair like that did it to be edgy. However, this girl had no edges – she was all soft curves. He smiled and winked at her.

"Just passing through, sweetheart. Hey, now that I've got your attention, do you know of any places around here where me and my brother could crash for the night? Something not too fancy, but preferably without any bedbugs."

She laughed. "Like I said, not many people come out here. We don't have hotels or motels or anything like that, sorry. But the people here are a friendly bunch, I can ask around and fix you up with a spare room, at the very least. No trouble."

He raised his glass to her and turned towards Sam, still deep in conversation with an old dude who looked like he'd been a newspaper delivery boy during the Great Depression and stuck to that aesthetic ever since. Not that he had any right to criticize anyone for choosing a vibe. Chicks loved his leather jacket and his muscle car and his air of broody disinterest. Never mind that half of it was just stuff he got from his dad, and the other half was knowing that no matter what he wanted, he would always have to move on. He didn't have a choice.

Sam walked over, pulling him towards one of the booths. As soon as they sat down, he leaned over and said in a low voice, "I just talked to the mayor. Lucky coincidence, I guess. Anyway, he said that those reports are all blown way out of proportion, but then he also mentioned that usually when people are having problems, they just put something on the public notice board. I don't know man, that seems like an unusual thing to say when someone asks you about unexplained nighttime attacks."

He raised his eyebrows. "Huh. Weird town."

The blue-haired girl came over to their table to ask if they needed another drink, and when she returned with their beers, she told them that two people could offer them a place to stay for the night, but neither had enough room for the both of them. "I'd let you stay at my place, but my sister isn't picking up her phone, and I don't know how she'd respond to finding two handsome boys asleep in the living room." She winked.

He and Sam quickly discussed their options, and they agreed that Dean would drive Sam up to the place owned by someone called Robin, then come back here to follow Marnie, whoever that was, to her ranch just outside the city limits. Privately, he thought he might hang around at the bar a while longer, see what time this girl Emily got off her shift.

She turned out to be just as soft and curvy as he'd thought, but also extremely loud. Which he discovered just as he was bending her over the mattress and her sister walked in on them, giving him a scornful look and telling them to keep it down. Awkward. He finished things up and beat a hasty retreat, assuring Emily that everything was alright and he'd talk to her soon. It was nothing short of a miracle, how they always believed him when he said stuff like that. He got into the Impala, following the directions Marnie had given him. Straight out of town, first farm on the right. Easy.

Marnie came out of the farmhouse only seconds after he'd pulled up and killed the engine, her plump arms wrapped around her waist and a worried look on her face. "Oh good, you're here! It's usually safe in this area, but you never know, right? I've got the pull-out bed ready for you. But you might want to wait until Shane gets here before you go to sleep, he's always so noisy when he comes home from the bar."

He let himself be led into the house, smiling at her. "I guess it's none of my business, but your husband is an idiot, spending his nights at a bar when he could be having fun with such a lovely lady as yourself."

She looked puzzled, apparently not picking up on his flirting. Then she suddenly smiled back at him. "Oh! Shane isn't my husband, he's my nephew. I thought you were talking about Lewis for a sec. But we're not married." Lewis? Wasn't that the mayor Sam had been talking to? Man, small towns. He suppressed a small shudder at the thought of that wrinkly mustached face pressed between Marnie's ample thighs. She could do so much better.

Marnie sat him down at the kitchen table while she bustled around fixing them something to drink. "So, Marnie. You mentioned something about the area being safe. Are there other parts of town that aren't?"

"Oh, yeah. There's all sorts of critters, especially up near the old Allen farm, and I've heard that it can be dangerous near the mountain lake as well. I hardly ever go there, though. I almost ran into a shadow brute one evening taking the shortcut from the bus stop, and once was more than enough for me. I stick to the main roads now and let Shane handle the deliveries to the outlying areas."

Shadow brute? What the fuck? "Hey Marnie, will you excuse me? I'll be right back, I just want to give my brother a quick call."

Sam picked up on the first ring. "Dean! I was just about to call you. Hey, get this. Apparently, Robin's husband is a scientist, and he says there's all sorts of creatures down in the mines here, which doesn't make any sense. I asked him if anyone ever goes down there and he just shrugs and says there's a group of people who take care of the monsters when they become dangerous. He said monsters like it was nothing, Dean. Do you think this group could be hunters? Hunters living in this town and letting people in on what kind of work we do?"

"Huh. I don't know man, this place is weird. I was just talking to Marnie and she mentioned something about a fucking shadow brute. Have you ever heard of a creature like that?"

"I'll have a look at Dad's journal again, but nothing comes to mind. Maybe I can get this Demetrius guy to tell me a bit more. I have to say, I really wasn't expecting a scientist to be so... factual about the horrors we deal with. It's kind of refreshing, actually."

He laughed. "Of course you would go and become nerd soulmates with the first science guy you run into. Have fun and let me know if you discover anything, okay? I'll see you tomorrow."

"Night, jerk."

"Night, bitch."

Well, Marnie might have bad taste in men, but she was a damn fine cook. He couldn't eat another bite of scrambled eggs or slice of bacon even if his life depended on it. He took out his phone and shot off a quick text to Sam, saying he'd be there in 30 minutes. He could make

a quick stop at the general store in town on the way, pick up some snacks, see if they had any magazines.

When he stepped inside, though, someone grabbed his arm. His hunter instincts immediately kicked in, and he had them up against the wall with his arm pressed against their throat before he realized that he was, in fact, throttling a very young woman. Couldn't be more than 23. Bright purple hair, big blue eyes, some *very* nice boobs.

"Sorry. Reflexes. You really shouldn't be touching strangers like that, young lady."

To his surprise, she grinned at him. "That was seriously impressive! You were like a tiger or something. Just... woosh, pounce! Can you teach me how to do that? I'm Abigail, by the way. You're Sam's brother, right?"

"Yeah, I'm Dean. How the fuck do you know Sam?"

She laughed. "I'm best friends with Robin's son Sebastian. He hates interacting with strangers even on a good day, so you can imagine the non-stop complaining he's been subjecting me to since last evening. Especially because your brother seemed to hit it off with Sebastian's stepdad. Apparently they ruined his entire late night coffee routine by being in the kitchen, talking about research and shit."

"Yeah, that sounds like Sam, alright. Hey, listen, it was nice meeting you, but I got to go. Sam's expecting me."

She nodded. "That was actually what I wanted to talk to you about! Can you give me a ride up the mountain? It's much faster than walking and your car looks *awesome*."

Okay, unlike the girl from last night, what was her name again... Allison? Emma?... this girl was definitely dying her hair purple to be edgy. Black velvet choker, sleeveless denim jacket, combat boots, the works. But it was kind of working for her, to be honest. She seemed sharp. Not the kind to get scared easily. As he got into the car, she ran her hand reverently across the Impala's frame.

He tried to keep the pride from his voice. "I fixed her up myself, you know."

She dropped into the seat beside him, laughing. "Wow. A guy with many talents. You should talk to Sebastian, he loves restoring old motorbikes. But I guess we should gear up first, if you're wanting to check out the mines today. Seb will probably join us, he has all my weapons. My dad would have a fucking aneurysm if I kept that stuff at home."

He'd already started the engine and turned the car in the direction of the mountain road before he'd realized what she'd said. "Wait. Your *weapons*? The *mines*? Am I missing something here?"

She looked over at him. "Didn't your brother tell you? He was asking Demetrius about the monster attacks, so Demetrius said he should ask Seb since he has a lot more experience fighting than Demetrius has, he just records whatever we can kill. So then Seb asked me if I was up for a little expedition today, and I said sure, so here we are."

"Hang on. You're telling me you're *hunters*?!"

Abigail shrugged. "Uh, I guess? We just try to make sure that the monsters stay inside the mines. Most people here don't have the time to do any combat training, or they're getting old, so it's mostly just me and Seb and Maru, and sometimes Haley and Sam. Not your Sam, our Sam. Haley and Sam don't like going into the mines though, she says it's too dirty and he gets claustrophobic, so they usually only do outdoor patrols. But there's only so much five people can do, you know? So we really appreciate you guys giving us a hand."

What the fuck was up with this town? And why hadn't Sam told him that he was roping in a handful of fucking *kids* to take them into the mines? He really had to talk to his brother before he was going to agree to any of this.

Chapter 2

He had to hand it to these kids, they were in fact pretty good with a weapon. And okay, they weren't *actual* kids. This Sebastian guy was the same age as Sam, and Abigail was 22 (although she was very adamant about being nearly 23, which made her sound a lot younger). Sebastian was cool, calculated, scanning each level for possible threats. Abigail was intense and focused, always taking point, dispatching each creature they came across quickly and ruthlessly. He and Sam were hanging back, just trying to learn about the monsters they encountered, what dangers they posed, and what their weaknesses were.

The biggest issue was that they had to clear a ton of rocks each time they needed to go to a lower level. Carrying big chunks of stone while trying to hold a flashlight and a gun was not his idea of a good time. It was worse than digging up dead bodies for salting and burning, and that was saying something.

"Hey Abigail, how much deeper do these mines go? Are we getting to the end yet? I need a beer. No, actually, I need at least four beers."

She laughed out loud. "We're not even halfway down, old man. Grow a pair."

He huffed in annoyance. Nice boobs or not, the girl was a fucking menace. He wondered if she was this mouthy and bratty in bed as well.

Finally, Sam came to his rescue, telling the others that he wanted to head back to get his observations written down and compare notes with the science guy. None of the creatures they'd killed so far looked like anything they'd ever seen before. It might just be a hyper-local phenomenon, but it was probably a good idea to document things, just in case. Sam, nerding out like always. But the nerding was at least getting him out of the mines and much closer to a shower, a beer, and a burger, so he wasn't going to mention it.

He dropped off Sam and Sebastian, gave Abigail a ride back into town, and then headed over to Marnie's. He wasn't sure how much longer Sam wanted to stay in this place, "recording phenomena", but he figured he'd check in with Marnie to see if another night was a problem or not. And he really, really needed that shower. Some of the monsters they'd encountered had exploded in big chunks of slime every time Abigail sliced through them like a maniac, and he was covered in muck and other unidentifiable bits. Like any other day on the job, really.

Just his luck that after he'd talked to the older woman and got some clean clothes from his duffel bag, the shower turned out to be occupied. Thirty minutes later, he was really starting to lose his patience. Did whoever was in there pass out or something? He banged on the bathroom door a bit more aggressively, but hearing a muffled curse coming from inside, he figured he wouldn't have to break down the door, not for another five minutes at least. Not long after, a surly-looking dude came out, a towel wrapped around his hips, staring daggers at him. He had the build of someone who'd been a high school football player, but hadn't kept in shape afterwards. Still, Dean wasn't about to mess with him.

"What the fuck do you want?"

He held up his hands, trying to look like he was sorry. "Just wanted to get a shower, man. You were in there for a long time."

The guy's sneer was replaced with a small smirk. "Yeah? Were you listening? Did you enjoy hearing me? Fucking pervert."

Okaaaaaay. He hadn't actually, but he wasn't going to argue with a guy only wearing a towel. He just moved aside to let the other man pass and ducked into the bathroom. That must have been Marnie's nephew she mentioned yesterday. Glenn? Sean? No, Shane. He got into the shower, grateful to find that Shane hadn't used up all the hot water, and started washing the goo out of his hair.

Despite everything, he found himself inexplicably horny. Man, he really needed to get laid again tonight, if he was getting hard at the thought of another guy jerking off in the shower before him. Those big hands, everything soaped up and slick, drawing out the pleasure for as long as possible... *Ugh. Get a fucking grip on yourself, Dean. No, not like that. Oh shit... okay, yeahhhhh, just like that. Fuck.* He bit down on his moans. At least he had years of experience keeping quiet in the shower.

After he'd cleaned up and got dressed, he waved goodbye to Marnie and headed out, his stomach growling. Bar, burger, beer. He checked in with Sam to see if he was coming down to the bar as well, and Sam replied that he'd be there soon. He'd just ordered food when he noticed Shane leaning against the wall a little bit further away, still wearing that same small smirk and looking directly at him. Son of a bitch. He decided to ignore the guy and head towards the other end of the bar.

The bar was filling up as he wolfed down his burger, which was actually a pretty decent burger for a place like this. Not that he had standards or anything, but a good burger was a good burger. He wiped the juice from his face and, still ignoring Shane, wandered over to the pool table he'd spotted earlier. Probably not the best place to hustle some pool money, but he could play a few games just for the fun of it.

Just as he was racking up, Abigail and Sebastian walked into the pool area, followed by Sam and a tall blond guy. Sam immediately bounded over to him like an enthusiastic puppy. "Hey, Dean! Listen to this, apparently the things we found today are..."

He interrupted Sam with a loud groan. "For god's sake, can I just relax for five minutes? Sit the fuck down, Sammy."

"Huh, me?"

That wasn't Sam, that was the tall blond guy, looking confused and for some reason, embarrassed?

"Not you, Sam. He was talking to the other Sam." Abigail walked over, handing him a beer. "Dean, Sam, meet Sam. Sam, this is Dean and his brother Sam, they helped us out in the mines today."

A huge, sunny smile appeared on the guy's face. "Wow, that is so cool! Imagine both of us being called Sam."

Dean tried *so* hard not to roll his eyes at that. "Yeah, really uncommon name. You got us there, bud. Amazing. Now, who's up for a game of pool?"

Sebastian nearly managed to beat him. That cool, calculating look he'd had in the mines was evident in his game, as well. Fortunately, the angle on his last shot was slightly off, and set Dean up with a perfect line on the 8-ball.

He got them all a new round of beers and took a seat next to blond Sam, who was practically bursting with excitement. "I have literally never seen *anyone* beat Seb at pool. That was fucking awesome! Like you were mind controlling the balls, giving them orders and expecting them to obey. Man! I wish I could play like that."

He clinked his bottle against Sam's. "Hey, I don't give away my secrets to just anyone. Ruins my "mysterious yet distractingly handsome stranger just passing through" vibe. Tell you what, if you get me drunk enough, I might show you a trick or two, but only because you're called Sam and that's kind of my weak spot."

He took a deep swallow of his beer and tried to lean back against the couch without whimpering. Those mines and those stupid rocks had really done a number on his back. He was only 29, he shouldn't be feeling this old.

Blond Sam leaned over and put down his beer. "You in pain?" He waved him off, not liking how the concern in the guy's voice made him feel. He just needed a few more beers.

But Sam pressed on. "Hey, it's no big deal. I got some painkillers in my jacket, all of us have gotten hurt during patrols at some point or another. And if it's your back, I know all about that, man. Comes with being taller than most people. It's like our spines weren't made for this kind of thing, you know? If you want, my dad taught me how to work the kinks out whenever his back got really bad. Here, turn sideways, I'll show you."

He had no idea why he let this kid talk him into giving him a massage in a crowded bar, but he was fucking good at it. Jesus. It was better than that massage bed thing they sometimes had in motels. He let out an almost sinful groan when Sam's fingers found a particularly tight knot just below his shoulder blades.

Sam's voice, his own Sam, cut through his state of near bliss. "Dean, you're enjoying that way too much. It's kind of making me uncomfortable, dude."

"Sam, shut your mouth. No, not you Sam, the other Sam. He's just jealous. Hey Sammy, I swear, you gotta try this. The guy's got magic fingers. Oh yeah, *right* there. Me likey. Sam, why didn't you go to massage school instead of law school? Can I trade you in for a Sam upgrade? This one's prettier than you, too."

Far too soon, blond Sam's hands moved away from his spine. Dean felt more relaxed than he had been in weeks. Maybe longer. He was wondering if he could ask him to do it again some

time later.

"You want those painkillers now?" When he nodded, Sam stood up and motioned for him to follow.

He watched Sam grab his jacket and look around, coming over to him after a few moments and leaning closer to whisper in his ear. "Mind if we do this outside? It's not like these are illegal or anything, but Harvey, he's our local doctor, is sitting at the bar, and he can get a bit uptight about sharing prescription meds."

Before he knew it, they were outside, his back pressed up against the side of the building and Sam's tongue trying to French his tonsils. The guy clearly didn't believe in wasting time. Judging by the things going on in blond Sam's jeans, pretty much at the same height as the things going on in his own jeans, he was also very much into it. He placed his hands on Sam's ass and pulled him in hard and rough, the response an immediate low moan against his mouth.

Suddenly he heard a strange *creaking* noise coming from somewhere off to the right, and before he realized what was going on, Sam had already let go of him, drawn two daggers from beneath his jacket, and furiously slashed and hacked at the darkness. A few seconds later there was a high-pitched screech, slowly dwindling to a low sigh, and then nothing. Sam stood silently and at high alert for a moment, then put his hands on his knees and breathed out loudly. "Shit, that was close."

"What *was* it?" He wasn't going to admit that seeing blond Sam spring into action like that had been kind of hot, but also kind of humiliating. He hadn't even had time to get his own gun out.

"Stone golem. Real nasty assholes. They use darkness to get close to their victims, and they look like regular stone boulders unless they move. The only real warning you get is when they stop pretending and go for the attack."

He bent over, picking something up off the ground. "Dammit, coal. I keep hoping I get lucky and my next stone golem kill drops a diamond. But they don't come into town often."

Dean blinked a few times. Diamonds? Did those creatures shit them out or something when they died? But Sam was already putting his daggers away and placing his hands back on Dean's hips. "Wanna pick up where we left off?"

He still felt disoriented from the attack and how that monster had nearly gotten the jump on them. He shook his head. "Sorry, man. Outdoors activities of the hardcore hot sex type sound like an excellent idea in general, but a pretty bad idea in this situation. Either we head off to your place or we go back inside, that okay with you?"

Blond Sam looked slightly frustrated, but nodded. "Yeah, can't do my place unfortunately. So okay, let's grab some more beers."

He carefully adjusted himself before walking back into the bar, noticing in passing that Sam hadn't bothered and was still sporting a very visible bulge in his jeans. Maybe the backseat of

the Impala... but first, he'd have to check with the rest of the group if these creatures were capable of damaging his Baby. Sam was a hot piece of ass, but not worth getting his car ruined over. Besides, maybe it was time to have some self-control, tell his downstairs brain to shut up for a second, and figure out what the hell was going on in this town.

Chapter 3

They were all sitting around one of the tables in the main area of the bar. Abigail had asked the other two hunters, Maru and Haley, to join them. Haley turned out to be the girl who'd walked in on him fucking her sister last night. Small towns. Awkward.

Sam was nerding out over his notes, as always. He'd even found a map of the area.

"As far as I can gather from the information that Demetrius has given me and the fluctuations in monster activity patterns we saw in the mines, my guess is that the epicenter is somewhere up here." Sam tapped the map with his beer bottle.

Maru looked at the map and said, "That's past the old railroad. Local legend said there's a witch living high up in the mountains there, but we've never seen any proof of that."

Dean made a gagging sound. "Man, I hate witches. Always spewing their bodily fluids everywhere. Downright unsanitary, if you ask me."

Abigail chimed in. "I don't know about this. I mean, that location would explain the mines, those are right underneath, but not the sudden increase in attacks here in town. What's your theory on that, Sam?"

"Huh, what?"

"Not you, Sam."

Man, this Sam thing was getting tired. Dean turned towards blond Sam. "Hey, can't we just call you something else? Blondie? Hot stuff? Goku?" Abigail and Sebastian doubled over in laughter, while Haley rolled her eyes and blond Sam looked sheepish.

"Uhhh, this is so embarrassing... but my full name is Samson. Please don't make fun of me."

Dean snorted. "Nice. Very biblical. Sam here is a Samuel, but the way he's constantly obsessing over his hair, maybe he should have been a Samson too. Always wondered what would happen if I took some clippers and trimmed it all off while he was sleeping."

Sam gave him his best bitch face and turned back to the map. "I don't really have enough information about the attacks in town. What can you tell me about that?"

Haley said, "Well, we've always had the occasional creature wander in from the forest, but things started getting worse after the old farmer died, about a year ago. The attacks usually happen on that side of town, too. I've never seen any monsters on the east side of the river or past the bridge to the beach. How about you, *Samson*?" She snickered.

Blond Sam blushed. "I really shouldn't have said anything. But yeah, it's only been on the west side of town, the old bus stop, around the town square, sometimes near my or Haley's house, and once by the old community center. I always assumed that it was just monsters

getting out of the mines, but that doesn't make sense, now that I'm thinking about it. If that was the case, we'd also see them near Seb's house and the lake."

Dean thought for a bit. "That woman Marnie also mentioned something to me yesterday, about the Allen farm. Same farmer who died?" When the kids all nodded, he went on. "We should check out the property. Could be vengeful spirit, or a curse of some sort."

Abigail said, "Or maybe he was doing something to keep the monsters back. I liked the old man, he always let me wander around the parts of the farm that he couldn't maintain anymore. Good place for foraging and the occasional summoning ritual."

Sebastian smirked at her. "You mean good place for outdoor sex without getting an earful from your parents."

Maru and Abigail both turned on him and started pelting him with coasters, yelling at him to shut his mouth. Huh, interesting. He could picture those two girls getting it on in an overgrown field somewhere, their legs tangled together, their boobs...

Sam smacked his arm. "Dean. I know that look, you're confusing reality with porn again. Stop it, we've got work to do."

He gave Sam his sunniest grin. "Healthy, heterosexual, hot-blooded males get turned on by the thought of naked women making out, Sam. Not by research." He turned towards the rest of the group. "Sammy here loves research, he really does. He keeps all his research under his mattress, right next to his KY jelly."

He got up from the table as Sam pulled bitch face #14.

"How about I get us one more round of beers, and then we go and do some breaking and entering, huh?"

The town was quiet, but they were all tense and on high alert. Moving from lamppost to lamppost, getting out the flashlights when the streetlights ended at the edge of town, they settled into some kind of informal formation, him and Sam on the flanks because they had guns, Abigail and Haley on point, and Sebastian and Samson bringing up the rear. Maru had opted to go back home, saying she wasn't much good in a combat situation, but they could call her if they needed anything researched fast.

He'd grinned at that. Maru would be a perfect match for his baby brother. Well, if she wasn't a lesbian and all that. But then again, Sam always had a habit of going for the wrong women.

They got to the farm itself without any problems, but as soon as Dean started working on opening the locked gate, they could all hear sounds out among the fields. He worked faster. It wasn't a complicated lock, but picking it with his flashlight wedged between his head and his shoulder wasn't exactly easy, either. The gate swung open and they all filed in, weapons at the ready.

He'd seen Abigail, Sam, and Sebastian in action. The only one he wasn't sure about was Haley, she didn't look anything like the hunter stereotype. So he stuck close by her, ready to cover her if things got hairy.

The first attack came from the left. Two shadows suddenly morphed into teeth and claws, flickering in the light of the barely visible moon. To his amazement, Haley charged the first shadow with murderous intent, her sword a blur as she sliced it open from shadowy shoulder to shadowy waist. The monster dissolved with a sound like air escaping out of a slashed tire, soon followed by the second as the rest of the group caught up.

Okay, that was hot. Maybe he had a thing for attractive, blood-thirsty blondes kicking ass in close combat.

"If there's more of these shadow brutes, I don't think your guns will be of any use against them. Keep an eye out for bats and slimes, though," Sebastian whispered.

They carefully advanced on the farmhouse. As soon as they got inside, Sam took out the EMF meter and started scanning. No readings whatsoever, so they quickly gave up and started looking for hex bags, sigils or symbols. The others tried to help, but they all admitted they had little experience with this type of thing. In a way, he kind of envied them. Killing monsters always gave him a rush. It felt pure, simple. It was all the other stuff that gave him a headache.

The search yielded no results. The farmhouse was empty.

"So what do we do next? If we go back out there, there's only six of us, and god knows how many creatures. I don't like those odds."

Abigail looked thoughtful. "We could still try the old farmer's tomb. It's on the edge of the farm, near the forest. Might be dangerous to get there, but I can't think of anything else."

Sam hesitated. "I don't know how much good that would do us. If it is the farmer's ghost causing all of this, we would have picked up at least some readings by now. And if you're thinking of doing a summoning, all my supplies are still in the car."

She grinned. "Failing to prepare is preparing to fail, Sammy boy. I've got everything we need in my backpack. Herbs, candles, vial of chicken blood. Because I'm just that awesome."

"Hey, nobody makes fun of my brother, you hear? That's my job." Secretly, he found he really liked this chick. Bratty, but balls of steel.

They were attacked two more times on the way, but made quick work of the creatures each time. It was pretty amazing to be part of a group that worked so effortlessly and so well together. Nobody was barking orders, everyone was doing what they were best at. It made him think of the difference between hunting with his dad, and hunting with Sam. He was always taught that during a hunt, there was no margin for error, that you did what you were told to do, without questions. But he knew Sam hated it. Maybe it shouldn't always be like that. Maybe working as a team had its advantages too. Trusting each other to get the job done.

Getting to the tomb and summoning the old farmer's ghost was almost anti-climactic. The old guy told them he'd been the one keeping the monsters away from the town, and apologized for not telling anyone. He didn't know where the monsters came from, but gave some tips about how to set up wards and how to maintain them so the creatures would be confined to the property. Abigail was scribbling down notes and occasionally asking Sam for details on specific wardings. The man also said that if any of his descendants ever decided to move back to the valley, they'd be a great help in controlling the monster population because of their innate abilities.

When they released the farmer's spirit, Dean quietly pulled Sam aside. "Do you still want to do more research here, or do you think we should be moving on? I think these kids have the situation under control, to be honest."

Sam nodded. "Yeah, I agree. They don't need us. Other people do. I have to say though, it's been fun. I'm really tempted to spend a few more days here, help them set up the wards. It's been so nice, not having to lie about what we do, almost like... like it's just normal. I've wanted to live a normal life for so long, but here, it kind of feels like I could have both, you know? Saving people, hunting things, but still getting to go home afterwards."

Dean put a hand on Sam's shoulder. "Yeah, I know. You know what? Maybe we should stay for one or two days more. Relax a bit, eat a couple of good meals, get more than four hours of sleep. I've been wanting to ask Marnie if she knows how to make apple pie. You can watch some porn instead of doing research, it'll be good for you."

No bitch face this time. Instead, Sam smirked at him and said, "You just want a chance to get back into Sam's pants."

"Ew, that sounds *so* incredibly wrong coming out of your mouth. For your information, I'm not the slut you think I am, and I have no intention of fucking Sam."

But honestly, he was a terrible liar. He got to test out his idea about the Impala's back seat that night, after all. Twice. And then another round at Haley's place when she'd caught the two of them. That girl really had a habit of walking in on people. Not that he was complaining or anything. Both blondes could do things with their hands and mouths that put his wildest fantasies to shame.

Maybe small towns weren't so bad, after all.

Still, he was glad to be behind the steering wheel again, waiting for Sam to close the trunk and get in the car, hearing the familiar rumble of the Impala's engine.

"Right. Let's get this show back on the road." Sam nodded and turned on the radio.

The road stretched out before him. He briefly closed his eyes, then focused on getting back to the main highway out of town. No point in thinking about what they could have had. No sense in thinking about the future.

The world was still out there, and they had a job to do.

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