

Excerpt from The Unlikeable Demon Hunter: Fall

The five leaked song titles from Rohan's upcoming album that I found on the fan boards were either A) written about me because Rohan wanted to publicly profess his forgiveness, B) not written about me because I was no longer lyric-worthy, or C) written about me but in a completely unflattering light.

"Silver Lining" was the first title I learned about. A case for either scenario "A" or "C" depending on whether I was the silver lining to the tragedies Rohan had faced in his life or I *was* the tragedy. And if it was the latter, what was this silver lining's name? Because she and I were going to have words.

Next was "Tourniquet of Phrase," which was just mean and suggested that he had to staunch the words that came out of my mouth. Another one for the "C" column.

"Rhapsody in You." As the Magic 8 Ball that I'd had for all of three days as a kid before Ari had dissected it to prove it contained neither magic nor science would have decreed in favor of the "A" column, "All signs point to yes."

Unless the "you" in the title wasn't me.

Moving on.

"Asp." Like the death snake that killed Cleopatra? Did he think I'd be the death of him? Seriously? I'd saved his sorry ass from a magicless life. In fact, I'd probably saved him from a reality in which he moved to the top of a mountain in a fit of emo pique, went off-grid, and eventually ended up with a peg leg because he sucked at gardening and couldn't produce a single fruit or vegetable. The point was, I'd fixed things. Badly, perhaps, but he also wasn't a legless mountain man, so there. And he calls me the asp?

And then there was the final leaked title. The title that no matter how I spun it, never left the worst-case column, and in fact added a subsection of "get ready to be dumped and hard." "Age of Consent." Because we all knew how he felt about consent.

I decided to take it from the top again and see if perhaps reading them for a seventh time changed anything when a strange noise caught my attention.

I slid my phone into my pocket and peered across the kitchen.

Ari Katz, my twin brother, was humming. Sure, sunshine streamed in through the open glass sliding door, the late July sky was a picture-perfect blue with fat pillowy clouds drifting lazily by, and the pop song streaming off Apple Music was pretty catchy. It would have been

plausible, nay, likely even, that another blond guy would bob his head to Katy Perry and hum while doing dinner prep, but my brother? The guy who'd been tortured, liked weird art, and whose magic was the literal manifestation of darkness?

Not on your life.

I dumped more oil and balsamic dressing on the salad in the large wooden bowl that sat on the counter in front of me, pondering that Sherlock quote about eliminating the impossible blah-blah-blah to get to the truth.

And the truth's denim-clad bubble ass was currently bent over in front of the fridge.

Kane Hashimoto elbowed the fridge door shut, holding by a pair of tongs a raw slab of T-bone that glistened with marinade.

"Do you have..." he glanced around. "A plate?"

"Because your meat is dripping?" Ari asked in a mild voice.

"If it was?" Kane popped a hand on his hip, a cocky smirk on his face.

This foreplay made no sense, since no one, and I mean no one, at Demon Club was getting laid. While Kane's words sounded like some kind of sexy challenge, his arrogance was belied by a look of light panic in his eyes. It seemed unlikely to stem from needing crockery.

Ari, to his credit and my astonishment, didn't blush. He licked his lips. Slowly. Except again, less foreplay, more well, cheerful determination, like he was faced with a wild stallion he had to gentle and nothing was going to deter him from his path.

Kane broke out in a full-body blush: from his razor-sharp cheekbones, across his bare sculpted torso, and down into his waistband. He ducked his head; even his spiky black hair looked flustered.

My brother trained a fond expression on him and handed him a platter.

"That's it." I threw down the salad servers. "What is going on with you two? Because ever since you came back from that mission in Osoyoos, you've been all..." I circled my finger around at the two of them. "That."

Kane transferred all three raw steaks from the marinade bowl onto the platter. "You need a life, babyslay."

"We kill demons, remember? Lives are overrated. What I need is cold, hard information so I can stop driving myself crazy."

Blue-gray eyes met dark brown as Ari and Kane shared a look.

“When’s the last time you spoke to Rohan?” Ari said.

I thunked the salad bowl into my brother’s chest, making his faded green T-shirt ripple.

“Salt this. And don’t deflect.”

“There’s nothing going on.” Kane tossed the words out over his shoulder, oh-so-cavalierly, and stepped outside. He had the platter in one hand and the BBQ tongs in the other.

Ari shrugged and tossed a dash of salt onto our salad. “You heard the man.”

If I had a twin sister, I’d have had the details ages ago. No matter. I’d break him.