

The Night Hunters

Neal Blackwood

The old city was a dark and unforgiving place, a graveyard of former homes and businesses. The only people that lived here were those that were targets of The Night Hunters, monsters.

This was where Nathanael Wyatt currently wandered, he was tracking down two things, one: a vampire, and two: a werewolf.

Nathanael reached a crossroad, he looked down each road to check if no one was hiding in the shadows of the tall buildings that formed the base of the old city, and even behind the dumpsters, nothing was there besides a street cat and mice which both shrunk at the sight of him.

Nathanael was one of The Night Hunters newest recruits, and like all the other Night Hunters he was required to wear the same outfit, it was a uniform of sorts; it was a type of armour, to protect them from the elements.

Nathanael tiptoed in the shadows hearing everything around him including a high pitched scream further down an alley nearby.

He raced down the streets, his footsteps spraying droplets of water from puddles everywhere.

He chased the scream down a tight alley, stone buildings on either side. The alley was longer than expected and the scream was echoing, making it sound closer than it should be.

He stopped when he saw humanoid silhouettes take shape in the alley's darkness. One crouched over the other.

The vampire was too invested in drinking the now silent victim's neck to notice Nathanael. He activated the weapons cache located at his wrist and targeted it towards the vampire's head. Nathanael shot the dart, the vampire looked up in time to see the dart flying towards it but it was too late as the dart buried itself within its skull. The vampire burst into a cloud of dust.

Nathanael moved towards the victim to see if they were still alive.

Dust or ash coated the victim of where the vampire had been moments before, he bent down and took a pulse. Nothing. The victim, a girl in her youth no older than he was, was probably looking for some secluded party (which was banned years ago when the Night Hunters came into power) to attend and the vampire scented her presence and... killed her.

It was hard at first when the Night Hunters first came about. They killed so many monsters, but so many people along with them. People who didn't fit their ideal society, people who weren't cisgender or straight, people like him.

It was awful when he and his family watched the news all those years ago, the first of the murders, he'd never let it go.

There was nothing he could do now but hunt for the next monster on his list. A century-old werewolf.

He marked the spot on his map of where the body was, hoping he could do something about her later; he got up and started walking away.

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It was still very dark, and his footsteps were very loud thanks to the uplifted road, roots and gravel of all sorts of sizes and shapes crunched under his feet that made him trip left and right.

The buildings throughout became more and more dilapidated, rubble covered the road and he became increasingly more worried that he shouldn't even be here, but his mission was pinned to this area or beyond it, he might as well finish it.

The more he walked on, the more he could feel someone watching him. He stopped in his path, looking around and scanning the sights, nothing; he moved on.

The feeling got worse as he moved through that area, it began to feel like many beings were watching him.

HOOOOWWWL

He heard it loud and clear, the howl of a werewolf at full moon.

The howling became a few growls around him. He couldn't see anything more than a couple of metres directly in front of him. His hand slowly reached for the blade strapped at his right hip.

"Night Hunter," he heard one something utter.

He backed up and closer and closer the growling got until it was dripping saliva down his neck. Nathanael turned, and he slammed the blade into the beast's shaggy side, roughly above its hip. It howled in pain as he heard it stumble to the ground.

There were more of them, more werewolves, he counted five according to the direction of the sounds.

He remembered from a photo that these beasts were covered in thick shaggy fur, tattered cloth hung from their bodies. Their bloodied snouts were long and snaring, their canines gleamed yellow in the moonlight.

He might have enough time to get out of there, but that wouldn't look good to the Night Hunters when deciding he is the best candidate to recruit.

Either way, he might be dead, so he might as well go out fighting.

The growls got closer, too close for comfort. He still could barely see anything.

Something grabbed Nathanael's arm and yanked him down where he slammed on the hard concrete. His wrist cried out in pain.

The creature was on him, pinning him to the ground, holding his possibly broken wrist behind him and growled in Nathanael's ear.

"Night Hunter, you killed my friend..."

"My Condolences," the beast was pissed with that response. It flipped Nathanael over so he was now facing the beast.

"I have one word for you and your pesky friends," It was closer now and Nathanael guessed it wanted to devour him so badly "stay away from us and everyone you have on your hit list, monster, or human. Or we will have the pleasure to destroy all of you."

And then the wolves were gone, Nathanael got up and ran over the cracks and crevices with of course tripping over a few in his flight to leave, he never got to finish his job killing the century-old werewolf but it didn't matter now as all that matter was getting the hell out of that place.