

**“One Bad Night: Dominic’s Story”**  
**Written and Copyright by Anna Abner**

~~~This story takes place after [Bloodrinker’s Prophecy #3](#) and before [Shapeshifter’s Prophecy #4](#)~~~

Dominic Hull was having a bad night.

“We’ve all been there,” Ben assured, slapping him between the shoulder blades.

Dominic danced away from the unwanted touch as the pair of six-foot tall shapeshifters weaved against the flow of pedestrian traffic crossing Las Vegas Boulevard and headed toward one of Ben’s favorite clubs.

“Really? You’ve had two shots and walked around the rest of the night with puke on your pants?” Dominic retorted sarcastically.

Jesus, he was turning into a lightweight. It hadn’t been that long ago that he could take shots all night, dance in superheated clubs, and wake up the next morning as if nothing had happened. What the hell was wrong with him?

“Whatever,” Ben said. “I just want to have fun. This curfew has been a nightmare.”

Dominic agreed. His dad, the alpha, was going a little overboard recently with the check-in’s, the curfews, and the rules about going out in pairs. Dominic, though a beta wolf, followed the directives only about half the time.

“Don’t you wish you could be the alpha?” Ben sent Dominic a scrutinizing look. “Things would be different, then.”

Of course, he’d thought about it. But it was a useless waste of time. As a Hull, he was destined to be a beta forever.

“I wouldn’t want it. All that bureaucratic bullshit. Listening to everyone’s problems. No, thanks.”

Dominic’s phone buzzed in his pocket, and with a curse of pure aggravation, he yanked it free. A text from his friend Lukas Larsson, a bear shifter from the Netherlands currently residing in Vegas.

*Have you seen Mercy tonight?*

Dominic's guts twisted. A strange thing to ask. Mercy hadn't left her suite at the Le Sort Hotel since she'd been dug up from a twenty-year, forced slumber in the earth. Hell, she hadn't even left her bedroom.

Dominic stalled on the sidewalk and struggled through another wave of nausea before texting back.

*Isn't she in her room?*

Lukas didn't immediately text back.

*Isn't she??*

Dominic pictured the petite young woman with white-blonde hair and eyes perpetually registering panic.

"We gotta swing by Lukas'," Dominic told Ben. "Something's come up."

"What's wrong?" But Ben's tone made it very clear he wasn't thrilled with cutting their night short.

"Lukas can't find someone." Not willing to waste time, Dominic pushed his way back through the crowds toward the way they'd come. "It'll only take a couple minutes."

"Which of those vampires is missing?" Ben asked with a sigh.

Dominic didn't answer. He'd purposefully kept Mercy's name and story out of pack gossip. She was too fragile, too vulnerable, and frankly too important to him to share with anyone else.

"Just hurry up," Dominic growled.

The only sign of pandemonium on the team's floor of the Le Sort Hotel was Kayla. Mercy's best friend and self-proclaimed protector visibly shook with agitation when Dominic and Ben strolled into the room she shared with Mercy.

"You called *him*?" she demanded of Lukas, sending Dominic a disgusted look.

"I'd take his help before I let anyone else know we have an unstable vampire on the loose," Lukas replied. He graced Dominic with his own look of frustration. "She was here—"

"When I fell asleep," Kayla cut in. "She was in the other bed, rocking."

Mercy's emotional issues were sometimes calmed by rocking back and forth. When Dom came to check on her, he often found her in that position.

"And?" Dominic prompted.

"Something woke me up around 11:30," she continued. "That's when I noticed she was gone."

"Did you look for her?"

"Yes, you moron," Kayla snapped. "I searched the entire floor, then the hotel lobby, the promenade, and I was running up and down the Strip when I finally texted Lukas for help."

"No one else knows, yet?" Dominic asked.

"They'll overreact," she said. "They'll hunt her, or something, when all she really needs is to see a friendly face and she'll come right home."

"Which is why I called Dominic."

Kayla rolled her eyes. "He's obsessed with her. The feelings are not mutual."

That stung. Dominic recalled Mercy's cool, soft hand folded within his much larger one. She'd trembled everywhere but at their point of contact.

He wasn't obsessed.

And the feeling was *very much* mutual.

"I'll help you look," he said, though he realized too late he hadn't been asked. "I know her scent. I can track her more quickly than you can," he said to Kayla. To Lukas, he said, "I'll let you know if I find her."

Ben's phone chirped, and he reappeared from the corner he'd been hiding in. "Oh, shit. It's the alpha. He wants me inside the compound tonight."

"Then go. I've got this."

"It must be nice having an alpha for a dad," Ben grouched.

"You don't know what you're talking about."

Though faint, Mercy's scent – a mix of blood and calla lilies – lingered around the elevator doors. Without a thought for anyone else, Dominic sucked in a big breath of her scent and stepped into the next elevator heading down.

As he crisscrossed the busy lobby, Dominic asked himself what a vampire fresh off a two-decade long dirt nap would do. The lights on the Strip were calling to him, but to someone like Mercy, they'd be terrifying. The crowds, too, would intimidate her.

Dominic scanned the lobby for the least populated, least lit area of the hotel. He ambled away from the glittering main lobby, away from the promenade full of shops and restaurants, and deeper into the bowels of the hotel. Down a long hallway, her scent grew stronger. He followed her footsteps through an emergency exit door, across a patio covered in twinkle lights, and into a garden area that must be meant for smoking or doggie relief. It was unlit and probably free of CCTV cameras, too. The perfect place for a traumatized vampire to hide.

"Mercy?" Dominic hissed, following the ever-increasing scent of fresh blood. "Don't be scared. It's Dominic." He still couldn't see her, but he scanned and scanned, edging nearer the source of the blood. "Mercy?"

A rustle. An intake of breath.

Dominic zeroed in on a corner in the block wall, a junction made darker by a vine-covered lattice. There, crouched Mercy.

"What are you doing out here?" he asked gently, pausing ten feet away, not wanting to spook her. "We were worried about you."

"I'm so hungry," she whispered.

Dominic's sight focused more clearly in the dark. "Mercy, are you bleeding?" He blinked, and her entire figure came into focus. Her face and hands up to the elbows were coated in blood.

"I'm so hungry," she cried.

"Where did the blood come from?"

Mercy pointed off to the right. Immediately, a crumpled shape became obvious. Dominic rushed over. "Hey, buddy?" he urged, shaking the man.

He caught a pained groan, and relief like Dominic had rarely known flooded his system. *Thank God.* "You're gonna be okay, bud. Just sleep it off."

There was no reply from the man, but Dominic was confident he'd survive, the feeding marks would heal, maybe before he woke up, and Mercy wouldn't be implicated.

"Mercy?" Dominic returned to her murky corner. "Are you ready to leave here?"

She raised her big, blue eyes to him. "I'm so hungry."

Dominic crouched down low. "Then feed from me."

His words seemed to startle her. "But you're a shifter. If I infect you, it'll kill you."

It was true. Shapeshifters couldn't survive the vampire infection any more than regular humans.

"Then don't infect me." He lowered himself to the cool lawn, crossing his legs.

"Come here."

Mercy crawled hesitantly from her hiding place, her eyes locked on his.

Touch was a tricky concept for Dominic. Most of the time, it repulsed him. It usually didn't matter who touched him, but there was something different about Mercy. She was so damaged, he felt compelled to protect her. Hers was the only touch he sought.

Now, he held out a wrist to her, staying absolutely still to avoid spooking her.

He'd never been bitten by a vampire. Mostly, he was excited by the thought of Mercy's red lips on his skin, of her pointed white canines sinking into his flesh, of her sucking his life blood down her throat...

Dominic expected her to take his hand, but she pounced instead, biting deep into the fleshy part of his arm. It was quick, like a snakebite. And then she slithered into his lap, curling into a soft, blood-soaked ball.

The first few pulls barely hurt, and he recovered from his initial surprise. He petted her silken hair, one long stroke from scalp to the middle of her narrow back. Her heart raced in her chest, thumping like a bunny's.

"Better?" he prompted.

Her only answer was a re-shifting of her weight and a guttural groan of assent. He caressed her hair again, tangling his fingers among her tresses and digging his fingers in.

“I got sick tonight, too,” he said into the quiet. “I took a couple shots at a club and threw up. You can probably smell it.”

Tiny nod.

“It happens to the best of us.” Oh, his legs were numb. He clenched his jaw through a dizzy spell. “Maybe drinking so much bagged blood made you...” What was he saying?

Dominic’s spine softened, and he would have hit the turf if Mercy hadn’t reacted so quickly. She grabbed him by the shirt and shook him gently.

His mind cleared only enough to see into her eyes and sigh in pleasure. “Your eyes sparkle.” Good Lord, had he said it aloud?

She stood and hauled him to his feet, but when he swayed into her, his body brushing hers, she stepped away and forced him to hold his own weight. Luckily, his shifter DNA included rapid healing. Already, he felt fractionally stronger.

He cleared his throat, folding his arm closed over the bloody wound. “You okay?”

Rather than answer, she hung her head, no doubt listening to everything, but reacting to nothing.

“Well,” he inhaled deeply, sensing the blood, the victim across the way, and her unique lily scent. “Let’s get upstairs, then. I’m not feeling so good.”

She followed him into the main lobby, keeping to his shadow, using him like a walking shield from the lights and crowds they encountered the nearer they got to the bank of elevators. Dominic pushed for the fifty-first floor, keyed in the access code, and wavered slightly.

“You’re a heavy drinker,” he said, attempting a playful tease.

She glanced up at him in concern, however. “You tasted so delicious,” she told him in a small voice, “I almost couldn’t stop myself.”

On the team’s private floor, the elevator doors swept open, and Dominic recognized Kayla and Lukas at the other end of the hallway. Without a word of thanks or farewell, Mercy scurried away to her waiting friends, leaving the scent of blood and lilies heavy in her wake.

**The End**

Dominic and Mercy's story starts in [\*Bloodrinker's Prophecy \(Beasts of Vegas #3\)\*](#).

Find it and more on Anna's [Beasts of Vegas series](#) page!