

Mages & Mayhem Series

That Mafioso Magic

Chapter One

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“You sure this is the place?” Xavier asked me as he peered with a frown at the dilapidated building I’d parked a few houses down from. It looked like no one lived in it, but it wasn’t condemned. Just a major eyesore.

“I did the locator spell, this is the place,” I said.

“Let’s hope she’s in there, then.”

“The locator spell isn’t a sure thing when I don’t have the person’s blood or at least some form of DNA to work the magic. I used her mother’s blood, so this is the best I can do,” I said, then pulled out my state permitted handgun. Having concealed carry laws helped in the P.I. business, less paperwork I had to worry about if I ever had to use it in the field. I was also wearing my protective amulet and so was Xavier. I made sure he never left home without it. The world was a dangerous place, proven by my latest case.

Lacy Marshall was the third kid to go missing within the span of twenty-six days. Like with the other abductions, she was twelve years old, blonde, blue eyes, female and no doubt virgin. That is if the world wasn’t a complete fucking cesspool. The difference in Lacy’s case as opposed to the other two, was that her parents came to me. I was a damn good private eye, I trusted my instincts, but more importantly, I was also a mage. Magic was in my blood and there wasn’t many like me in this world. Those who were born with the ability to absorb magic elements from the atmosphere.

Mages weren’t the only things in this world, though. Vampires, shifters, ghouls, ghosts and you run of the mill crazy ass human hellbent on raising hell. The fact that the supernatural inhabited this dimension is what had me extra concern about these missing kids. Ghosts were known to use the bodies

of children to take possession of in order to get another chance to live again. Vampires... well, they came with various hungers. Some fed on fear, some on pleasure, some on pain and others on life itself. A child could give them the ultimate meal regardless of their feeding preferences. Shifters and ghouls, well, they loved to dine of flesh and blood and children were just a delicacy to them. Then you can human serial killers and who knows what the fuck motivates them to harm children. Bottomline was, I had an assortment of bad guys I might have to deal with and I needed to be prepared for whatever I found inside that raggedy house.

I walked to the back of my car, popping up the trunk with a little effort, because my car was damn near as broken down at that fucking house. With over two-hundred thousand miles on it, it was barely holding on. Thank god, Xavier was as handy with car maintenance as he was with a shotgun and knife. We both suited up with the extra weapons, silver daggers that worked on ghouls. Iron ammo, that worked on ghosts well enough to disperse them for a few minutes. God, I hated dealing with ghosts. Truth was, they were easier to exorcise when they were inside a human body. But that didn't mean the human would always survive the vacating process. Goal was to get rid of the ghost before they can take over a human being.

Shifters were also hard to kill. Only decapitation and fire did the trick. Silver didn't do shit, so forget what you saw in the movies. As for vampires, well, they were the bees knees of hard to kill. They could go out in the sunlight, wooden stakes will only piss one off if you're lucky enough to stab one with it. Holy water, garlic, crosses... leave that shit to the movies, too. Decapitation and completely removing their heart was a sure thing. But you had to do both. Just getting rid of their heart wasn't enough if their brain was attached and vice-versa. Oh, and fire, that worked too, but you better scatter their ashes afterward, because if you don't a few drops of blood could resurrect them. -So, considering what we might be up against, Xavier and I both had two sharp ass swords tossed around our shoulders. Xavier reached for the flame thrower before closing the trunk.

“Let’s do this,” he said with as much determination as he faced all of our cases.

“Just watch your back in there, buddy.”

“Don’t I always. And you do the same.”

I nodded and we ran quietly and as inconspicuously toward the house as possible. There were other homes on the block, but it was two o’clock in the morning. I was hoping they most people were asleep by this time. We both went around to the back, just in case we needed to force our way in, a little cover was better than none. There were no lights on inside the house, but there wouldn’t be if the bad guys didn’t want people getting too nose-y. I stopped by a window that wasn’t completely covered by plywood and motioned for Xavier to standby while I investigated.

I peeked inside, trying to let my vision adjust to the darkness. I didn’t hear anything and the place smelled of mold, dust, and death, rather it was rats or something else, the stink was there. I placed my gun on the ground and grabbed the plywood with both hands to give it a good yank. I didn’t make that much noise, but if I was dealing with a vampire or shifter, they’d be able to hear even a little bit of noise, so it was game on from this point on for sure. I tossed the wood board aside, picked up my gun and slipped inside with Xavier following closely behind me.

Unlike, vampires and shifters, I didn’t have twenty-twenty night vision, so out came the flashlight. I panned the light around the room, to see that we were in the basement surrounded by old, broken down furniture, empty boxes and your basic trash. Xavier had his flashlight out too, holding it over his pistol as he’d been trained to during his time in the service. I moved further into the basement, towards the front of the house, since we started out in the back. After searching for ten minutes, I didn’t mind anything. I was just about to tell Xavier we needed to check out the rest of the house when my foot stepped on a floorboard that dipped and creaked a little.

I tested it again, and Xavier turned to inspect the area as well. I knelt down, pulling back the moldy rug to see a definite door. I looked for a latch or something to open the door with and found a

little hole big enough to slide a finger inside. So I did and pulled slowly until the door lifted with a soft creek. I was holding my breath and had to release it slowly before proceeding. There was a ladder, and so I went down it first, with Xavier watching my back and his own before he followed me. For a human, he was pretty fearless. Unlike the majority of humanity, he knew what went bump and boo in the night and day. We met each other five years ago when I saved him from a vampire attack. With a bit of magic, I'd managed to scare the vampire off and Xavier and I spent the rest of the night playing catch up. Truth of the matter was, he's the reason I decided to get my P.I. license and probably why I was still alive.

The underlevel of the basement was dank, the ground muddy and our shoes squished with each step. It made for unsteady, slippery terrain if we ended up having to fight, so I was even more cautious now than I was before I descended into this rank abyss. The walls were cement and covered with slime, this was no place for a child to be, that's for sure. It seemed to go deeper under ground the more we traveled and I stopped dead in my tracks when I heard something click under my foot.

"Oh shit," I whispered.

"Did you just step on something?" Xavier asked.

I licked my bottom lip. "Yeah, can you check it out?"

"I'm already on it." I could feel Xavier moving the mud away from my foot to see what it was that I'd stepped on. "Fuck. It's a mine."

I was hoping it wasn't a fucking mine. I didn't know if my amulet would be able to protect me from being blown to smitherings. Probably not. I had to think of something, a spell to get myself out of this pickle.

"Don't move," Xavier said.

"Yeah, because that was my first thought."

"Don't get smart with me, either," he chastised.

"Go ahead of me, I'll figure something out. We need to save Lacy," I said.

“I’m not leaving yo—”

“Go. I will take care of this, and catch up with you.”

I could tell Xavier wanted to fight me on this, but I gave him my serious look and he sighed, hanging his head dejectedly. “You better not fucking blow up on me, asshole.”

“I won’t. Go.”

He nodded, then continued on, being more careful where he placed his feet than I had. I thought back to the book of spells I had trying to remember one that would help me out. I finally remembered one, the freeze an object. Lucky for me, it was a simple incantation that didn’t need any herbs or relics to make happen. Just some well-spoken Latin and a bit of magic syphoned from the earth, and viola! I was sweating bullets as I slowly slid my foot off the mine, because if my spell didn’t work, I was fucked. I didn’t let the breath out until my foot was completely off the mine and my body was still in tact.

“Oooohhh shit,” I sighed, then wiped my brow before looking for Xavier. I was sliding my feet through the mud this time and was able to avoid two more mines. Whoever was using this place as a hideout sure as hell made sure to boobytrap the fuck out of it. Not only did we have to avoid mines, but trip wire too, which Xavier pointed out when I’d finally caught up to him through the winding maze that was his hellhole.

Carefully, we stepped over the trip wire and pressed forward until a bright light shined on us, stopping us in our tracks. “That’s far enough,” a gruff male voice said from the darkness behind the blinding light. “I don’t know how you found me, but you ain’t leaving here alive.”

I had to take a chance that whoever this was, that maybe he wasn’t aware that mages existed. I also had to take a chance that this asshole was also human. “Shatter!” I said, causing the spotlight he had on us to do just that, sending glass falling in sprinkles to the muddy floor. That’s when I heard the gun fire off and saw the flash of light with each shot illuminating his face. He was shooting blind, but that didn’t mean he wouldn’t get lucky. I had to put him down and fast.

Shooting back would give away our position, but we had to take a chance. I fired off in the direction he was in, but I could tell he lunged out of the way. This was his playground, light or not, he knew this place better than we did. Xavier fired too, and when he fired back in Xavier's direction, I saw his position. I took the shot, and when I heard him cry out, I kept blasting away.

Xavier stood up, shining his flashlight in the direction of the groans and I saw the son of a bitch crawling away from us to what looked like a metal door. "Oh, no you don't," I snarled and dashed over there and placed my foot on his back. "Move and you get one in the back of your fucking head."

"Do it!" he spat.

"And spare you the nice accommodations of prison. I don't think so," I snapped. "Where are the kids?"