

Creatures of the night

Kiss (Rock Band)

Von Aqua111

Kapitel 1: Hide your heart

"...two people died, fourteen are injured. Detroit..."

"Can't you turn that shit off? I'm trying to think", Gene complained.

"Sorry, curly. I can write the better stuff when I'm surrounded by noise. Lock yourself in the bathroom if you have a problem with it."

"I can't. The Beast King is drinking out of the toilet again. That's more disturbing than a stupid radio. Paul, I thought you already had him far enough we could take him on stage again without having to explain why our drummer is ripping his drums apart and biting his stick."

The Starchild sighed. Why on earth had he let all three of them into his apartment just for some quick song brainstorming?

"It's not his fault Gene. He was stuck in his role for so long time. Do you really think it's so easy to get him out of this again? Sometimes he has a relapse to his animal behaviour. I'm glad he's just drinking and not destroying it."

"At least he isn't peeing into plant pots anymore", Ace cackled.

Meanwhile Peter had sneaked back into the room and started rubbing against Paul's legs like a cat would do. The problem: This was a very big cat. He nearly knocked Paul off his seat.

"Do we really have to get back on stage or start making new songs, curly? Just being the Four Who Are One is quite okay as well."

"Do you think we live in a Power Rangers world?" Gene snapped, "Every day some monsters will come and want to destroy the earth and we're just here to save the day? Wrong thought, buddy. We're still rock stars after all. And I also want to be one in the future and not just stupidly sit around and wait for some monsters to appear."

"...and been attacked by some winged creatures in the inner city. Unless very many people are drugged the same time there's absolutely no explanation..."

"Welcome to Power Rangers world, curly."

"What the fuck...?" Gene stared at the radio but they seemed to have missed the biggest part. The reporter was already talking about something else.

"Do you think it would be interesting if I take the cat talisman this time, curly?"

Gene gave him the death glare. "You stay with what you took from the beginning. And stop with that 'curly' after every sentence."

"C'mon, I wanna kick some monster butt", the Beast King growled.

The Starchild sighed, "Okay, Ace, please teleport us to the inner city. And please stop your fights against each other. We are the Four Who Are One and not the Four Who

Fall Apart. Let your anger out on the creatures."

"Alright, c... guys", Ace said. "Initiating teleportation."

~~~\*\*\*~~~

Being the Demon on stage or being changed to the Demon by the talisman, it was a major difference. One was a role he played, just a game to please the crowds, the other was dangerous, a play with fire. One wrong action could mean a sudden death. Gene never knew what he liked most. One was his dream, his ladder to fame and success, the other was the thrill he needed at some times.

Somehow those winged brown creatures looked familiar. The Demon burned his way through them and had to avoid the Beast King's claws – he was raging in what looked like a brown cloud – and made it closer to Paul.

"Haven't we already seen those things once?"

"I have thought the same. There's something very familiar but I can't remember what. It's like someone's playing with my memory."

"Oh how fleeting and volatile human memory is", a voice echoed through the empty streets. "And how easy to control."

Gene looked up "I somehow know this voice ..." He paid his second of inattention with a slash through his cheek. "Hey you little creep, watch out where you put those claws." He grabbed the creatures head, whirled it around and slammed it against another one somewhere close the – now rather crimson – cloud around the Beast King who gladly took care of that enemy as well.

"It's funny to watch you. Mostly because you're now fighting more with your own memories than against my minions. Do you remember? I am the shadows in your mind. I am your childhood terrors solidified. I am the unholy agent of the outer dark."

The last remaining creatures now let go off the four and fluttered over to their master.

"The Dark Czar", Ace whispered.

"But that's impossible", Paul said, "We defeated him, locked him up in another dimension."

"Dark who?" Peter asked.

"You know, this guy who once had you under control", Gene answered.

"He doesn't know. His memory already is too modified", the Dark Czar said. His voice sounded familiar but it wasn't the voice sounded familiar but it wasn't the voice they heard when they met him last time. Everything on him had stayed the same, his armour, his cloak, even his horse Xanthus, but the voice was different. He only made them forget where they knew it from.

"And don't you know you can't defeat me, foolish humans? My body might have been damaged but after years my soul found a way to your world, gained control over a new body. It was only a matter of time until I was back at full strength. Back to destroy you."

"But so far you haven't done anything else than sending a few ugly birdies and changing our memories", Peter growled.

"You know, kitty, that memories can be dangerous as well. Some people even went insane because they got lost in their memories. And even the best can hurt you the most. I can show you."

Gene noticed that Paul beside him stiffened. All of the others looked as if they were hypnotised, just kept on staring at the Czar. And even Gene could barely move

anymore. Pictures from the past were passing by his inner eye. He found himself on Bruce's wedding party and danced with Eric cheek to cheek, was at a photo session with the rest of the band and cuddled the Fox as if he never would have wanted to let him go anymore, saw Eric jumping around between the fans, talking, shaking hands, giving autographs until the security nearly had to drag him away because otherwise Kiss would have been late to their interview. And it was hurting to see him so full of life while the same time Gene knew he was dead, that there was no way to see him again, to talk to him again.

When the demon finally managed to snap out of those memories he noticed that he was kneeling on the floor, arms clasped around his belly and his body slightly bowed forward as if he had been close to barf.

"Awful, wasn't it?" he heard Ace's voice. Whatever memories he had, he was gasping as if he had been running for miles. Paul who was kneeling next to him looked as if he was close to tears. The Dark Czar was gone, only several dead creatures remembered of the battle.

"Where the deuce is he?" Gene snarled, "Why didn't he just finish us off?"

Peter sniffed the air. "Where he was before the attack, I guess – in his own dimension. I think this pussy wants to play with his prey a bit."

"And that means a whole lotta work for us", Gene sighed. "We'll have to follow him unless we want him to return to the city."

Paul finally had found his speech again. "But the portal was sealed years ago."

"He must have opened it again somehow. I don't know any other ways. Ace, can you bring us to the tunnel?"

"You bet, curly."

"Not that word again..."

~~~\*\*\*~~~

It was depressing to walk through a building that once was known as the Simmons Foundation, but in this dimension it was just an ordinary dungeon. It was even more depressing to see most of the cells had prisoners locked inside, some of them in chains as well.

"The last time we were here, we were the only prisoners", Starchild whispered. "I feel sorry for them. Can't we...?"

"We can't let them free now", Gene whispered back, "We don't even know which universe they belong to or if they would attack us once free. Besides we won't stay unnoticed much longer after."

"Hey, look", Ace shouted and made the others (and some of the cell inhabitants) wince. He pointed into another cell. A small, nearly vulnerable looking figure was cowering in an edge, tied to the walls with more chains than an elephant with rabies would have needed. Long black locks were falling in his face, his clothes were in rags. Gene rushed to the cell, clasped the lattice bars as if he wanted to rip them apart.

"Eric?!"

The Fox lifted up his head but they weren't sure if he recognized them or if he just looked because someone had started shouting.

"Nice, isn't it? The jewel in my collection because he's from the only world I have been locked out before. Although he had already been dead before I got him."

Unnoticed the Dark Czar had stepped closer until he was nearly behind them.

"What do you mean, he 'had been dead'?" Gene asked without turning his gaze away

from Eric who now looked straight at him, mouth slightly opened in astonishment.

"Well, he is here so he can't be dead. I found his soul floating between the worlds many years ago. Recreating his old body was easier than gaining control of my new one. So what are you doing here? Searching for a quicker death?"

"Actually we came here to lock you in your universe once and for all", Ace stated.

"New body or not, we'll destroy that as well."

"I don't think you would want to destroy that one..."

Gene didn't even listen to the conversation behind him. He still was staring at Eric whose eyes now nearly were screaming 'Get me out of here'. He knew they couldn't win a fight. All they did last time was locking him up in his world by destroying the tunnel. Their priority should be the same again. And getting the Foy out of here. Suddenly he had an idea. He took a deep breath, turned his head and spitted fire but not at the Czar. The locks of several doors melted and the prisoners used their chance. The same way he opened some more doors on the other side.

Even after the Czar called his minions they couldn't get this hullabaloo under control. Spitting fire against Eric was impossible but the Beast King ripped the chains out of the wall.

"Ace", Gene shouted, "get us outta here! Back to the tunnel!"

They landed harder than normally. When they looked around they only saw empty streets and detritus.

"What the deuce... Ace, you have brought us somewhere in the middle of his city."

A little streamlet was dripping out of a broken pipe and wind was blowing but else it was silent.

"It wasn't my fault", the Celestial defended himself, "I was kinda ripped out of the air. And now I can't teleport anymore."

"What is that supposed to mean?" Paul asked.

"It means what I said. I feel blocked. It might be the Czar's fault. We will have to walk to the tunnel."

"Oh great", Gene threw his hands in the air. "Does anyone know where the deuce we are?"

They all looked around. Not a single street name to be found. A walk could have lasted for hours, in the worst case for days.

Meanwhile Eric had started drinking from the pipe.

"Don't do that", Gene warned.

"The water looks clear enough", Paul said. "Besides what else can we give him? No one of us carries water or food."

"Has anyone noticed that he hasn't said a single word so far?" Peter asked, "Not even 'thank you'."

"His gaze said a thousand 'Thank you's so far", Gene said, "Maybe the Czar didn't recreate his voice or he forgot how to speak over all of those years. At least he knows who we are. Maybe."

So far he had no prove if the Fox really knew them or if he just followed them because they got him out of his cell.

"Eric?"

The Fox turned his head.

"Uhm, you still know us? I mean our names and such things?"

He nodded.

"And you also know who you once were?"

Eric made a movement as if he was playing air drums then his fingers drew the outlines of his Fox make-up on his face.

"See? He still knows."

"I don't want to interrupt you", Paul said, "but it's getting dark and we still haven't found the tunnel so let's go."

It now really was dark and they still hadn't found anything. A ruin should give them a bit protection for the night. Not even the Four Who Are One had the ability to see in the darkness so moving on would have been hard. They had found some burnable things to make a small campfire. Big enough to keep them warm, small enough so that enemies wouldn't notice it too quickly. After this universe was very similar to theirs they had searched something in the ruins that looked like it could have been stores in their own world and found some drinkable water and food that hadn't already started to rot away, mostly dark chocolate – emergency ration for soldiers. Eric was lying between Gene and Paul sleeping. The four others alternated in getting some rest.

"Why haven't we found anything?" Gene asked. "I mean we already know those streets, we were able to find stores."

Paul shrugged. "This is his world. I don't think he can seal the gate and also don't think he wants to. But maybe he has switched around the streets or the buildings. Maybe he is still in our heads and controls us a bit so we won't be able to see the tunnel."

Eric sighed in his sleep and pressed himself closer to Gene's legs. The Demon resisted the wish to strike through Eric's hair.

Why on earth? He was the ladies' man Gene Simmons so why could he have feelings for men? No, not really men, just one man. He still would go for the ladies. But somehow that little Fox had caught him.

"I know what you're thinking", Paul suddenly said.

What the...? Had the Starchild really read his mind?

"We also have a little problem with Eric now. I mean he's dead or at least should be. We can't just take him with us."

Gene suppressed a sigh of relief. No, Paul would never read the minds of his friends without their allowance.

"But now he's alive", the Demon said, "and if we wanted to send him back where the Czar took him from we would have to kill him. Look into his big brown eyes and then tell me you can do that."

"I didn't mean it that way but the other problem is we also can't send him anywhere else."

"Where's the problem? Give him another name, a new haircut, let him wear glasses and we can say he's a new roadie. We started our careers with hiding our personalities."

"What if he wants to see his family again or old friends?"

"Well ... lemme think ... Let's give the people some more time to realize the Four Who Are One are back into action. One year was still too short. And then when there's another mighty enemy we have defeated we'll just tell them the truth how we got back Eric but add the other enemy instead of the Czar."

Paul still didn't look convinced but at least he didn't insist on further discussion and changed the topic. "We have to split up tomorrow so we might have a higher chance of finding something. Each one of us four – Eric should go with one of us – takes a

different quarter of the city. And we'll need a spot to meet again. I'd suggest one of our houses. Even if they are destroyed in this world all of us will find the way to them."

"I'd say your house after it was the last place we've been before this all started."

Ace yawned. "Isn't it already napping time for you chitty-chatters? Feels like half of the night is already gone. I'll wake up Peter so you two will get some rest as well."

~~~\*\*\*~~~

It still was too dark to even consider getting up when Gene was woken up again.

"Move your ass, curly."

For the Demon Ace sounded too happy for that time of day although he was speaking with normal voice, not sounding any happier than some hours before when he had to wake up Peter.

"It's dawn and we should use that bit of darkness to walk around undetected for some time."

The only one of them who might have gotten enough sleep was Eric. Not the best condition to survive the day but they couldn't lose more time.

"I think Eric should go with you, Gene", Paul said. "Neither me nor Ace could compete with you or the Beast King when it comes to fighting or pure strength. But the Cat might get a bit too enthusiastic in battles and accidentally hurt Eric. Besides you can fly so you have the better chance to quickly get away from danger."

Gene suddenly felt his heart pound so hard he actually was afraid that Paul might hear it. So often he had wished for some inconspicuous time alone with the Foy and now he finally got the chance.

"Alright, it won't be too much of a problem."

Hide your heart; don't show your feelings, especially in this case.

They all departed. Eric followed Gene like a shadow, silently and inconspicuously. For some time they just walked until the complete silence was growing awkward for Gene.

"You can't tell how happy we were to see you again", he started, "Not even in my dreams I would have expected that. But at least for some time we have to keep your real identity a secret. People might think we're crazy if we tell them Eric Carr is back alive." He shortly paused when he noticed that Eric's lips were moving as if he was silently repeating Gene's words. "You're learning how to speak again?"

"Uh-huh." It wasn't really a word but still it was the first time he heard Eric's voice after so many years.

"Well, you'll have enough time when we get out of here. I can tell you Space Ace had to learn it again as well after he had returned from whatever planets he had been. I can tell from your face you're confused. Don't worry; I think I have enough time to tell you the long story about the Four Who Are One. Besides the more I talk the more you learn to speak. I hope you don't mind if I can't offer you popcorn."

The Fox chuckled.

He told about the talismans, the time they fought together as Four Who Are One, when they started to go separate ways – the Celestial travelling through the space, Starchild and the Demon concentrating on their careers and other problems, Peter unfortunately never finding out of his Beast King role – and about their reunion – Ace

had to learn their speech again, Peter had to be freed from the Czar's control and regain knowledge about behaving like a human. The Fox still tried to lip synch from time to time but mostly he just listened.

Now it was afternoon and the awkward silence returned. Gene desperately tried to find something he could talk about but it was hard to find anything where no answering conversation partner was needed. The last thing he had said was when he offered Eric a piece of chocolate for lunch. He self couldn't see any chocolate anymore. It was making him sick. But it was all they had since one day.

Suddenly Eric gave a surprised – and also frightened sounding – call and pointed at the horizon. A swarm of winged creatures was coming closer. Gene tried to guess how many. At least less enough for a very close win. But then he thought about Eric. Fighting and protecting the same time against this amount of enemies – no way.

"Fucked about it... we better do what Starchild suggested."

Gene wrapped his arms around Eric's waist and spread his wings. First he feared that he wouldn't be able to carry the extra weight but the Fox was lighter than he had thought. He even could fly at full speed. He could feel Eric shiver and it surely wasn't because he was afraid of height or because he was fearing to slip out of Gene's grip- "Don't worry", the Demon called. The headwind made it hard to speak. "Before I let them get you again I rather fight until death."

He turned his head to see if their enemies already had lost trail.

"Gene!"

Just in time he could avoid the giant claw.

"Holy crap! What the fuck is that?"

The creature in front of him looked like a mix between a giant bat and a dragon... And it looked as if it was out for blood.

"Hold on, this flight might get a little rough."

A few times he tried to spit fire against the dragonbat but he always ran the risk to set Eric's hair on fire. Beside the Fox made it hard to breathe because he was clinging so tight to Gene. All he could do now was flying as fast as possible and avoiding the claws. The ruins – if he could only manage to let one collapse over dragonbats head.

"Cover your eyes!"

He rammed a wall – Eric buried his face into his shoulder – and shot out of the way again. The dust made it impossible to see but a furious scream told him that he hadn't missed his target.

'A bigger wall might do the job but I can't ram that down alone.'

Gene shot through a window, dragonbat right behind him crashed through the wall. He tried to fly around as many barriers as possible to see if his plan would work and the dragon really did as expected, rammed it all; broke through everything just to be faster than the Demon.

'He's destroying the supporting walls so let's bring this damn house right down.'

The ceiling showed more and more cracks, first only small boulders were falling then they got bigger.

Gene's eyes were fixed on the window in the distance. Their only way to safety. Rocks were raining down. Dragonbat roared behind them. And then they were out again, flying over the city. The building behind them collapsed.

The Demon landed on a more or less stabile looking roof and let down Eric. Longer he wouldn't have been able to carry him. The Fox was still shivering and for a second

Gene thought about pulling him into embrace. But then he just put a hand on the other's shoulder.

"Everything okay? We've made it. This thing is gone."

Eric looked at him then reached out a hand and stroke over Gene's cheek.

For a moment the Demon was stunned then he also noticed the slowly dripping blood the Fox tried to dry with his sleeve.

"Oh, this was from an earlier fight. The wound must have opened again. Stupid flutter things. This was my favourite cheek."

Now that the adrenaline rush was over the awareness of how close they had escaped death had time to sink into their minds. And Gene came to the conclusion that he didn't want to go any further without having told or shown Eric how much he cared for him. It still could be a long way out of this dimension and who knew if there wouldn't be another attack.

He gently placed his hands on Eric's cheek – the Fox just blinked at him in confusion – whispered, "Forgive me, but I have to do this. Can't carry on without", and kissed him. He had awaited for Eric to back away in disgust but instead he returned the kiss, gently, carefully as if he was afraid of hurting the other one. Gene could still taste the slight hint of chocolate but this time it wasn't making him sick at all. First he still tried to push the Fox into his rougher kissing style but then he just gave in. Why pushing him into something he didn't want to do when this style was quite perfect as well? Shyly Eric placed his hands on Gene's hips. If only the place was a different one. Something more romantic.

After what seemed to be too short and too long the same time they broke apart again, still looking into each others eyes for a few seconds until Eric's gaze wandered down to the floor.

"Uhm ... well ... yes", Gene cleared his throat. "We better move on. The sun is going down again and maybe we should try to search some more. Or at least to find a place for the night. We can fly if you want to."

Eric nodded and a few seconds later Gene took off, the Fox clinging to him again.

Nothing, absolutely nothing, it made Gene wonder if they still were in the same city. Or if he would be able to find Starchild's house after they were done scanning their area. The landscape seemed to change every few minutes, they suddenly passed streets which should be located in the north of the city while they were heading south, half destructed buildings that should have been in other districts – or even other cities ("I can't remember the Eiffel Tower standing in the south of New York", said Gene, "The Czar must be completely insane.").

If at least moon or stars had been there. Just a little bit of light and they could have wandered through the night. But not a single light was seen. Gene hadn't even lit a campfire. The risk of being attacked again seemed too high. Eric was sleeping cuddled into the other's arms. After Gene couldn't watch him sleeping he was just listening to his breath. The more he was thinking about it the harder it was to believe that this was really Eric Carr he was holding in his arms. One of his greatest dreams might have come true but no one ever should learn about his feelings for him. What would the people say if they knew what Gene Simmons felt for another man? No, he would have to hide it away.

A few times the Demon dozed off but not for long. The night remained calm though and so did the next day.



On the late afternoon Gene decided that they had searched the whole quarter. Paul's house was easier to find than he thought at first. He had taken that way so often he knew it by heart, no matter how many times the landscape changed. Two of the others already waited there as well. Paul's body had so many scratches as if he had been through a fight with a cat tribe. "Those winged things", he explained, "First it looked like they were heading south but then they changed their route and came right after me."

Ace looked so dreamy as if he had just stepped by Paul's house by accident.

"We also had some little problems with a dragon or whatever it was. But the tunnel we found nowhere."

"Neither."

"Ack!"

"Well, we still have to wait for Peter", Paul sighed. "It seems like the Czar is testing us or something. Why else wouldn't he have sent out more troops to get us?"

"He's playin'", Eric said.

"You can speak again?" Starchild ask.

"Yeah, told him our story", Gene said, "and he tried to copy my words. But so far he's only saying two or three words a day."

"I found it guys."

"What?" Four heads were spinning around.

Peter was balancing over a fence any other person would have fallen off immediately.

"The tunnel, our way out, I found it. After hours of searching I decided to trust my instincts, close my eyes and just start walking. My feet have walked this way so often they should have been able to find it again. I ran against a few walls – one of them looked like part of the Great Wall of China, and that in the middle of New York – but I finally found it and I'm sure I can lead you there again."

"Then what are you waiting for, you big kitty? Bring us there."

Peter had closed his eyes again while he was running through the streets. Sometimes he walked through what was looking like a solid wall but when he passed through it immediately changed into a street. It got foggy now and harder to see anything.

And then it suddenly was there, growing out of the floor in front of them, the entrance to a tunnel with glowing light in it.

"We have to destroy it like we did last time", Gene said.

"And then?" Ace asked. "You saw what happened. He just created another one after he found a new body."

"Your friend is right", a voice echoed through the streets. "Destroy this one and I'll make a new one. You'll have to destroy my body again to stop me", it now sounded as if he was getting closer, "but I don't think you want to do that."

"And why not?" Gene shouted.

Xanthus stepped out of the fog and stopped a few meters away. The Czar got off his back, went closer and took off his helmet while walking.

"Because of him."

"Vinnie...", Paul whispered.

"Haven't you once said he has some demons inside of him?" Vinnie, the Czar asked, "And that they sometimes come out to hurt him? You know for sure what's inside his soul now. Kill me and you also kill him. But you can destroy this entrance if you at least want to stop me for some days."

"And you just would let us go like this?" was Gene's question.

"I spare your lives because you have impressed me. I thought you would need longer than this. But still you were interesting enough. Go, but we'll meet again."

"And what if we don't care what body you are in and still attack you?"

"Gene", Paul held him back, "we can't kill someone innocent."

The Czar suddenly vanished and the world around them got blurry and darker.

"And now we can't go anywhere else than back to our world", Peter said. "He started to destroy this one again, or at least our memory about it. We have to wait for him to return if we want to do something against him or help Vinnie."

Gene sighed. "You're right although I don't like to give up so easily. But we will get our chance."

They all entered the portal and the Demon spit his fire to destroy the way behind them.