

## Predators in the Night

by  
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Paul settled into the soft cushioned chair and looked nervously around the bar. The music was muffled somewhat in the corner Ted had chosen for them, but it was still almost painfully loud. Places like this were way out of his comfort zone and he still wasn't sure how he had let Ted talk him into coming here.

Ted slid into the chair across from him, depositing two drinks on the table. "Here you go buddy," he said with a grin. "This'll get you primed."

"Thanks," Paul answered, but Ted wasn't paying attention. He had spun his chair to survey the room.

"We've got some tasty action in here tonight," he said, as he looked at the girls on the dance floor. Something about the way Ted watched girls made Paul uncomfortable. He looked like a hungry shark hunting for prey.

"Ted. I'm not feeling very good. I think maybe I should just go home."

Ted spun his chair around. "Hold on there buddy. You're not thinking of abandoning me are you?"

Paul was locked in Ted's hard gaze. "Well...I...uh...I was just thinking..."

"That's your problem pal. You think too much," Ted flashed a smile that never reached his eyes. "You get worked up and make yourself sick. Just relax and let ol' Teddy do the thinking for both of us. Ok?"

"Well...uh...I...uh...guess so."

"That's better." Ted spun his chair around to check out the room again. "Just let Teddy handle everything. I'll find you a little something that will take your mind off everything. In fact..." Ted's gaze became more intense as he zeroed in on his target. "I think I've found just what we both need. Check it out. Fresh meat, right over there."

Paul followed Ted's gaze to a table where two very pretty girls were sitting. They were similarly dressed in stylish, tight black dresses, one a tall, willowy blonde, one a petite brunette, and they were smiling back at them. Ted had a carnivorous gleam in his eyes that made Paul want to crawl under the table. "Ted. Are...are...you sure about this? I mean... I don't think we..."

Ted's head snapped around, and he glared at Paul. "I said let me do the thinking!" he snapped. "You just put on your friendliest smile and chat the ladies up when I bring them over. I'll take care of everything from there. Got it?"

“Y...Y...Yeah. Got it.”

“Now stay here and get your act together. I’ll be right back.” Ted got up and sauntered over to the girls’ table. They chatted and laughed for a few minutes, then the girls got up and followed Ted back to where Paul sat.

“Paul. This is is Lucy,” he indicated the brunette, who sat down and shook Paul’s hand, “and this is Cindy,” Ted rested his arm casually around the blonde’s shoulders. Cindy sat down next to Lucy and shook Paul’s hand.

“How ‘bout I grab us some drinks?” Ted said with a sly wink at Paul before heading to the bar.

Cindy turned to Paul. “So Paul. I’ve never seen you around here before. First time?”

“Uh, yeah,” Paul croaked. “Not really my kind of place.”

Lucy giggled. “You do seem like a fish out of water. But don’t worry. We don’t bite...hard.”

Paul gasped and began coughing. The girls laughed.

“She’s just teasing you Paul,” Cindy said. Then she glanced toward Ted, who seemed to be rearranging their drinks on a tray. “Your friend seems pretty comfortable here.”

“Yes,” Paul said as he glowered at Ted. “He sure is.”

Then he looked back at the girls. “Look, you seem very nice. I don’t mean to be rude, but I think you might be better off if you didn’t sit with us. I mean...”

Lucy patted his cheek. “Don’t worry honey. We aren’t that nice.”

Cindy smiled. “We’ll be fine.” Then she turned to help Ted with the drinks. “Why thank you. What a gentleman.”

“So has my friend Paul been keeping you company?”

Cindy took a large gulp of her drink. “He sure has.”

“He has indeed,” Lucy agreed, as she brought her drink to her mouth and tilted her head back.

Ted watched them drink, and licked his lips hungrily. “I’m glad to hear it.”

“But don’t worry Teddy, we didn’t forget about you.” Cindy smiled at him. “In fact, we were waiting for you to get back.”

“You were, were you?” Ted’s eyes flicked back and forth between both girls.

“Yes we have. You are the one we came here for.”

“You did?” Ted looked confused.

“Well, not you specifically, but guys like you,” Cindy’s voice took on a sinister tone as she looked Ted in the eye. “By the way, what did you put in our drinks?”

“What makes you think I put anything in...” Ted started to get up.

“Trust me. I know a potion when I taste it. Now sit down!” Paul could have sworn that Cindy’s eyes glowed bright red. Ted dropped back into his seat like his legs were cut out from under him.

“What is going on? What did you do to him?” Paul was yelling, but his voice seemed muffled and didn’t carry past their table. He tried to get up, but his legs wouldn’t work.

Lucy smiled sweetly at him, her eyes glowing. Paul knew he wasn’t imagining it this time. The innocence the girls had radiated when they first came to the table was gone, replaced by something different...something...predatory. Now they reminded Paul of hungry tigresses on the prowl. “Nothing worse than he deserves, I assure you, although he may not agree. Relax Paul, our interest is in him, not you. But we can’t be having you getting in the way. So I’m afraid that you won’t be able to move or do anything to draw attention to us until we’re gone. The spell will wear off once we are safely on our way.”

“You bitch!” Ted hissed.

Cindy smiled at him, her eyes red and feral. “Close, but you have the first letter wrong. Now be a dear and shut up.” Ted’s eyes bulged as his mouth snapped shut. Cindy ran a long, black fingernail along Ted’s neck as she looked up at Paul. “You see Paul, there are two kinds of predators in the world. Those that prey on the helpless, and those that prey on predators. We come to places like this hunting for predators like Ted here.”

Lucy got up and leaned over to kiss Paul on the cheek. “You are a very nice young man Paul. Stay that way. Don’t ever make us come back looking for you.”

Cindy kissed him on the other cheek. “Goodbye Paul. So very nice to meet you. Please choose your friends more carefully. There are those who may not be able to tell the difference, and you wouldn’t want that. Come along now Ted.”

She waved her hand and Ted rose stiffly and followed them out the door. The girls were giggling maniacally as they led him away. Paul could see the fear in Ted’s eyes, and he knew that he would never see him again.