



# RAVE

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# CHAPTER 1

## HUNTING DOGS

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**D**rinking to excess, snorting the goods, and smoking the rest—what other way would you spend your post-high school days living in a depressive logging town? Certainly, college wasn't an option. That's for rich kids, seriously. Besides, life is too short. You don't know when you're going to bite the dust, so you might as well party hard, and party well, with gnarly music, consumption, and sex, before death comes for you.

Punk rock? Yeah! Industrial? Oh yes. Electronica and techno? You know it. Music is a tough thing to come by in Prince George, so the subcultures blend a lot, making it a real shit show of personal tastes, fashion, and outlooks on life. It's cool—you get used to the chaos, and truthfully, it makes for some hilarious situations. Other times, it means you need to be on your guard in case a fight breaks out.

Seth is a veteran. He's been in and around the scene for as long as he can remember and isn't too picky. His roots are in industrial—Nine Inch Nails and RevCo, right? But still, he can enjoy some shredding nu metal from time to time. Plus, this party is off the wall.

Dancing girls. Headbanging boys. Graffiti artists. Everything the eye can feast on is here, right now. Not to mention the party supplies are more than aplenty. Wildfire. One would be a fool not to indulge. Oh, but BYOB. Trade them if you'd like, but take care of yourself.

The bonfire roars loudly. Some hotshot decided to toss in the last bit of his vodka, making the flames' light ignite. All right! People cheering. Not Seth. Oh no, he's nervous, taking a sip of his beer, watching as people rock out to some knockoff of Korn or something. He's not familiar with the band. Besides, his mind is elsewhere. His hand is a little shaky, with sweaty palms, eyes on the crowd, scanning to see if he can spot his target. Seth is on the prowl.

The target? Dimitri. Seth has had his eyes on him for a while. Seth has to act. The turmoil has been boiling inside of him for months. He's kept it a secret amongst the scene, but not now. Now he will make his bold move and surprise everyone by engaging with a top player.

"Hey, homeslice!" a gal calls out, punching Seth in the shoulder.

The hunter loses his trance. He'll have to return to the game later. As it is now, his balance is off. The hit is annoying and totally uncalled for. "Hey, what's up?" Seth says, looking over to see a gal with snake-bite fangs—Tanis.

She adjusts her leather jacket, eyes slightly closed. To be a kite so high is admirable. "Just gonna stand back here all night? The fuck?" she asks, grinning. There's the cute smile with the dimple.

"Nah, this party is phat," Seth says.

"Stop being a pussy," she says, wrapping her arm around his neck, pulling him into her leather jacket. His right eye barely avoids the metal spikes. She squeezes him tight.

"I'm not!" Seth pushes himself off her and takes another gulp of his liquid courage. The hunter needs fuel.

"All right, take a chill pill," Tanis says.

"Cool. Nice to see you let loose," Seth says.

"Well, I gotta take care of all your sorry asses next week. So you gotta put up with this." She points to herself with pride.

Right, the rave next week. The big underground party Dimitri is putting on with the other top dogs. You'd be a fool to miss such an event. DJs from all around will be mixing new, unheard-of European tracks. There will be dozens of people, if not a few hundred. So, as mentioned, you'd be an idiot to miss it.

"You got the tickets?" Seth asks.

"I called the number we got from Aina. It was some dude named Justin."

"Word," Seth says. His mind wanders back to Dimitri. He needs to engage in the pursuit. Tanis should go be crunk somewhere else. The hunter needs to feast.

"Hey." Tanis slaps his arm. "I think we can get some blow. You in?"

The hunter's eyes are keen, not blinking. Bingo. Past the fire, there's some concrete rubble. It was probably the foundation for something at one point in time. Now, it is another wing to party-land. Some of the top dogs are there. A sign that Dimitri could be near.

"You got some?" Seth asks, then finishes his beer. More. Coke? Better.

"Fuckin' Buddy has some, eh?" Tanis says.

Great, *Fuckin' Buddy*. Most people know him, and everyone detests him. He's one of those guys that always shows up to every event despite no one inviting him. People tolerate Fuckin' Buddy because he gets some of the cleanest snow out there. Everyone hates him at the core, hence refusing to say his real name.

"Yeah," Seth says. Coke will do. The hunter's eyes stay on the concrete rubble. The dogs will know where Dimitri is. That prized elk will be his.

Crunked-out Tanis takes the lead. Seth follows, watching his friend's swaying steps that make her ass move. It's nice; it always has been. The hunter's instincts are simply amplifying the primal needs. Seth knows it. He's cool with it. That coke will wind him up, letting him latch onto his prey with fangs of lust.

Another beer. Confidence is good but not too intense. Seth pulls out a can from his hoodie and cracks it, pouring the cheap ale down his throat. It's not about the taste; it's about the buzz.

Fuckin' Buddy is standing in the shadow of a tree, hands in his hoodie, just as you'd expect from the prick. A couple of cuties got their supplies from him. You can tell by their twitching noses. Fuckin' Buddy's hood is up; he has a scheming grin and predatory eyes on the gal with the boy. Knowing his style, he'll try to separate her from the guy and make his move, feeding her more drugs until he can fuck her. What a piece of shit.

"Fuckin' Buddy!" Tanis says, approaching the three.

The newcomers cause the three to straighten. Tanis's voice booms when she wants it to. Good, they can get down to business with Fuckin' Buddy and get back to the game.

"Hey sweetheart," Fuckin' Buddy says. The words ooze out of his raspy smoker's throat like sewage sludge, enough to make even crunked-out Tanis shiver.

"We want a couple bumps," Tanis says.

Seth stands beside her, finishing the rest of his beer. That'll hit fast.

"Yeah? Anything else?" Fuckin' Buddy says.

"No," Tanis says, reaching into her pocket, pulling out some cash. It's best to be quick with Fuckin' Buddy before he tries to fondle you or steal something.

Fuckin' Buddy takes the cash, noticing Seth for the first time. The grin vanishes. "A Hazen kid, eh?"

Great, Seth had known this would come up. He holds back the simmering anger. It'll grow. Give it time if this keeps up. "Yeah, you got the coke?"

"It's comin, it's comin," Fuckin' Buddy says, reaching into his pocket. The grin returns, scheming. "No shit, yeah, your cuz's that psycho, ain't he?"

"Yeah," Seth says. His word is quick. Now *he* is being hunted. The breath is tight, muscles tense. His eyes see the boy and girl leave as they know the story. Everyone does. Seth is known only for his cousin, nothing else. It was ten damn years ago—actually, a week away from ten years—but still. It pisses him off.

“You got the blow or not?” Tanis says, attempting to grab her cash back.

“It’s here!” Fuckin’ Buddy finally raises a hand from his pocket with a small baggie of snow. “So, what is a Hazen doing here? Gonna fuck up some gal?”

The hunter will not be prey. He boldly lunges forward to grab the baggie. Fuckin’ Buddy is fast. Too bad for Seth, as his foe snags his arm. A flicking noise. Seth is thrown against the tree as a switchblade pokes his throat.

“Mothahfuckah!” Fuckin’ Buddy says. “I’ll slice your neck open just like your cuz did to that chick.”

“Hey!” Tanis shouts, snagging Fuckin’ Buddy’s bicep. “Cut it out!”

Despite Seth’s heart pounding, he knows this is all a show, or so he hopes. He actually doesn’t know as he stares into Fuckin’ Buddy’s dark, soulless eyes. Tanis shouts some more, but Seth and Fuckin’ Buddy are in a lockdown of masculinity. Who is the real alpha?

“I can make you a bitch,” Fuckin’ Buddy sneers. The moment drags on. Tanis keeps talking, but the words are gone. Neither man blinks nor breathes.

Fuckin’ Buddy cackles and lowers the knife. “Mothahfuckin’ Hazen.” He steps back, chucking the baggie into Tanis’s chest. She stumbles but maintains balance.

Seth rubs his neck; blood smears from a shallow slice. It’ll scab.

“You know what I do to fucks who disrespect me?” Fuckin’ Buddy says. “Especially a Hazen freak . . .”

“Let’s go,” Tanis says, grabbing Seth’s hand.

Seth is resistant to move but goes with her. His eyes are locked on Fuckin’ Buddy’s. The battle of masculinity isn’t over. Tanis tugs Seth again, forcing him to move with her. The lockdown is broken. Who won?

“... Ask those dead pussies, ya hear me, Hazen? Those dead pussies!”

“It wasn’t my cousin!” Seth shouts. Yes, the hunter’s final strike. A winner of the masculine showdown.

“Seth . . .” Tanis’s voice is so sober. “Cut it out.”

He gets a drag from his back pocket and lights it. Puffing out smoke, Seth says, “It’s bullshit.”

Tanis rubs his back soothingly, leading him away from the crowds. She can really switch into sobriety mode. “I know. Here, let’s forget about it. We got what we wanted. Fuckin’ Buddy is a waste of breath, anyway.”

“Yeah,” Seth says, puffing intensely. Of course Fuckin’ Buddy had to bring up Seth’s cousin. It doesn’t matter how many years go by. People only see Seth as the cousin of his fucked-up relative. He doesn’t want to think about it. Tanis is right—they got what they wanted. They need to keep the party alive. “Let’s do some rails,” he suggests.

Tanis carefully dabs some white powder from the baggie onto her outer palm, passing the bag to Seth. He does the same. *SNNNNIIFFFF!*

One line down. The two of them go again with another ripping *SNNNNIIIIFFFF!!* They both sniffle a few times, letting the drug take them to new heights. Seth finishes his drag and chucks it aside, feeling the buzz begin to hum through him.

There we go. The hunter can feel his adrenaline spike. His heart pumps. He is aware of everything, like time has slowed down. The final ingredient to the courage mixture that Seth needs to find Dimitri and finish this.

“This stuff is shit,” Tanis says, rubbing her outer nasal cavity.

“Fuckin’ Buddy. Of course he’d give us the shitty stuff,” Seth says, spotting a guy straying from the party. He’s walking towards them, broad-shouldered, muscles, fitted tank top. Nice.

“Yo, you guys do some without me?” the guy calls out, brushing his shaggy hair from his eyes.

“Sorry, Joel,” Seth says. “All done. Go talk to Fuckin’ Buddy.”

Joel scratches the back of his head. “I’d rather not.”

“Tough shit, then,” Tanis says with a grin.

The coke is roaring now! Seth’s heart thumps. *Thump, thump, thump.* It may not be top quality, but it’s what he needs. Seth is the king of the

world. The apex predator. He must act now. Coke doesn't last forever, and his mental amp-up can only hype him for so long. Tanis and Joel can do whatever.

"Catch up with you guys in a bit," Seth says, hurrying off. He isn't even sure if they heard him for how fast he bolted away. Too bad. It's game time.

The hunter slows his pace. He's got to remember he's on coke—confident, not intense. His stride mutates into a prowl, weaving in and out of the crowds, circling past the blaring boombox and bonfire. That song sounds good. Keep moving. He passes studded-up punks—wicked jackets, glow-stick ravers—those dance moves, raven-black goths—probably good music taste, average joes—lame, and sexed-up jocks and bar-stars—the hot ones.

He sees it all but refuses to be distracted. Seth's eyes are locked on the broken concrete foundation where the top dogs hang. Wait. He holds his breath—the heart thuds. Dimitri is there now. His long, shiny, curly black hair is iconic. It elegantly guides the eyes downward, ending above his waist. Let your eyes explore a little further, and you'll see that well-toned, tight ass. Perfect. The hunt ends now.

Those top dogs laugh, smoke, and are so self-absorbed that they don't even see the hunter closing in. Eyes up—those biceps. His broad smile and stubbly face. God, that boy radiates sex. The closer Seth gets, the harder he feels his heart pound on repeat. Stay cool.

Another smoke. Seth lights the drag and puffs while approaching. The hunter needs to blend in, act like one of them before making his strike. Confident. The dogs are laughing deep cackles and girly shrills. Seth recognizes one, Aina, from her rainbow kandi-kid-style bracelets and hair ties. She's a good entry point, as going in for the kill is going to come across as desperate.

Aina spots Seth, smiling. "When you'd get here?" She steps out from the top-dog circle, going in for a hug.

"Hey!" Seth extends his arms, smoke in his mouth. Puff puff.



The girl leans in, and Seth gives her a tight squeeze, spotting Dimitri from the corner of his eye. He's looking at him. Good.

Seth rubs her back before releasing her. "Not too long ago," he says. There's a lie. He's been here most of the night. If you're cool, you show up to parties later and don't stand in the back nervously watching everyone and not saying hi to your friends.

"Rock on. Figured this was your kind of crib." She pats his chest. The girl is clearly referencing the bonfire and boombox—all Seth's jam. She plays with her hair, smiling at him. Seth is pretty sure Aina has had a thing for him for a while, but she's just . . . kind of annoying.

Seth inhales. Puff puff—jumpy. He says, "Yeah, it's my wheelhouse for sure. Tanis got us the tickets, eh? For next week."

"Awesome! It's going to be a hell of a time." Aina jumps.

Hold on—Dimitri strides towards them. What? Seth hadn't expected such a move. They'd exchanged words in group conversations. They'd made eye contact, but neither had directly gone to the other.

"Got a smoke?" Dimitri says. His voice is silky. The liquor is fresh on his breath. Still, the confidence in those three words is far more than anything the hunter can fake. How . . . how?!

"Yeah." Seth's cool is lost. He scrambles in his pockets, looking for the pack. Damn it, Seth, keep it together. He finds them, pulling out a drag for the prey. That'll be the bait. It has to be.

"Lighter?" Dimitri says. His eyes are fixated on Seth, taking the smoke.

"Totally," Seth says, handing him the lighter. Think of something, Seth. Don't act like the unappealing, insecure, boner-killer that sober Seth is . . . Be the hunter. "So, you both behind the rave next week?" Seth asks. Work isn't the best discussion topic, but it'll do.

"Yeah," Aina says. "Dimitri here is pulling in some of the DJs."

Dimitri lights his smoke, passing Seth the lighter. Their fingers touch, a little too long, as the prey's index finger glides off Seth's. Oh, that was a subtle hint. Right?

"I'll be spinning some myself," Dimitri says.

“Word,” Seth says. Puff puff—the smoke is gone before he knows it. “Stoked to hear it.”

“I hope to see you moving,” Dimitri says, winking—a more direct approach. It’s quick enough that Seth may have been the only one to catch it.

Seth laughs. It screams nervousness as he chucks the butt of his dart away. “Yeah, I’ll be there.”

“There’s going to be a lot of hot asses shakin’ there. Should be fun,” Dimitri says, exhaling smoke towards Seth.

“Including yours?” Seth says. Whoa! Smooth. Seth, you got this.

Dimitri guffaws, and brushes his hair from his face. He sways slightly. Now it is clear how thrown the guy is, like everyone at this party. Okay, hunter, go in for the kill. Don’t mess this up.

“I bet you taste good,” Seth says, taking a step forward. Bold. His heart is racing, wanting to escape. The thrill is too much.

Aina giggles, a sheepish one, while brushing her hair aside. “Okay,” she says, wandering away. That’s how you get rid of a pest—ignore it. Excellent; it’s just Seth and Dimitri. Make the strike, man.

“That so?” Dimitri says, finishing his smoke. He’s taller, by half a head; more brawny, meaty. This is the biggest catch Seth has ever attempted. He can do this.

“Totally. You seem to be my type,” Seth says.

“Really?” Dimitri says.

“Yeah.” Seth is almost nose-to-chin with the guy.

Dimitri’s hand snags Seth’s arm, pulling him in. Another shock. He stumbles into the prey, head up as their lips collide. Wow. That was fast and not according to plan. Then again, there was no plan other than making a move and maybe getting his number. Dimitri beat him.

The scent of booze, smokes, and pine rushes into Seth’s nostrils. Their soft lips are doing what they do as the tongues tease. Dimitri tastes good. The coke-hum transmutes into a full-on horny desire as Seth embraces Dimitri’s forward hands, feeling up his lower back and going to cup that ass.



WOOP! WOOP! Cheers? WOOWOOOP! No, sirens. Shit.

“Cops!” someone shouts.

Dimitri breaks free, far more coherent than Seth, pushing the hunter aside. He glances around to find the sirens while Seth tries to exit his passion-induced trance. They kissed. It was precisely what he wanted, but so sudden. Their moment is over!

“Dimitri!” Aina calls out.

Red and blue lights illuminate the scene. Seth looks around to see the top dogs are gone. Aina is nowhere, and Dimitri has vanished in the night with no goodbye and leaving no number. Dammit. The only way Seth will see that boy again will be at another party, as it always is. Seth needs that number. Maybe he can find him.

Seth runs into the dark forest, away from the cop lights, trying to spot that curly-haired boy. It's too dark. The hunter isn't equipped for this. He slows down and exhales. The forest spins a little. All that liquor is hitting.

“Stop staring into nothing, homeslice,” comes a girl's voice. Tanis.

“Let's bounce!” Joel says, running past Seth.

Tanis snags Seth by the arm, pressing him to go with her. *No!* is the only word Seth can think of. He'd lost his prey with only a taste of the goods. Dimitri was faster and more experienced; he decided when they kissed and when it ended. Top-dog DJ Dimitri calls the shots, not Seth.

Seth is no skilled hunter; he barely proved dominance to Fuckin' Buddy, if that. Who the hell does Seth think he is? A bitch.

