

# VAMPIRE GEMINI

THE GUARDIAN HEART CRYSTAL SERIES



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**Vampire Gemini**

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The Guardian Heart Crystal Series Book 6

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Chapter 1 ###Dangerous Things##

Tasuki watched as Kyoko rose up and leaned across the table to reach for the medieval-looking book he had opened in front of him. His amethyst eyes nearly glowed as her already low-cut shirt loosened and sagged on her shoulders before she righted her body. He was sure he would forever have the tantalizing vision of Kyoko's cleavage with the barest hint of black lace peeking out at him.

He blinked then pointed at the passage on the page he'd been telling her about. He smiled softly as their eyes met briefly but he had already forgotten what he'd been saying, so he just let her read. Tasuki squirmed a bit in his chair trying to make his discomfort disappear but just that one innocent peek had made his veins race with fire, and all that heat was making his jeans tight.

His amethyst eyes darkened attractively as he filed the picture away for later. ###You know Kyoko, one day we will be married##! because both of us know I am the only guy who would be crazy enough to think this is a hot date.## It was supposed

to be a joke but the huskiness of his voice gave away his true feelings.

Kyoko flashed her emerald eyes up at him. He was probably right, though she didn't admit it, or deny it, and that seemed to suit him just fine. Most of the time they were out this late together, they were killing vampires or at least walking around in the dark making good targets for them.

It was only within the last few months that he'd started pressing the issue, everyone had labeled them boyfriend and girlfriend for as long as she could remember, even though he had never asked and she had never agreed, only now he wanted to add hormones to the mix.

She nearly jumped out of her chair when half the lights within the library flickered off. The first thought that went through her mind was that some scheming demon had caught her not paying attention. She heard distant voices and it dawned on her that the library was just closing down for the night. They were supposed to have left over an hour ago but the people who worked there always stayed late.

"Come on Kyoko, it's time to find the exit before it gets locked," Tasuki whispered, as he took her hand and quickly led her out of the building without anyone noticing they were there after hours. Part of him wondered if getting locked in with Kyoko overnight would be such a bad thing.

Once out in the parking lot, Kyoko's steps slowed as she looked up at the sky seeing the eeriness of the cloud formation

around the moon. She wasn't superstitious but it reminded her of the night scenes straight out of the horror movies the kind of movies that gave her the wiggly-boos.

She didn't need Hollywood magic to feel the shift between good and evil. It would be a good idea for Tasuki to go straight home. He was a great fighter but she depended more on her instinct, and it was telling her to get him out of there the problem would be in getting him to agree to leave.

When they reached his car, Kyoko looked up into his strangely lit eyes knowing he was the only one besides her grandfather that actually knew her secret. She trusted him enough to let him come along on a lot of the demon hunts. He could hold his own and never once had he given her secret away or let her down. Like today, they had looked up demons of all kinds in the newest books in the huge library. No one bothered them as they hid out in a secluded corner and they'd had fun for hours.

Get in. I'll drop you off at your house Kyoko. Tasuki held the door open for her. They were standing so close it would have been simple to lean down and kiss her, and in his mind that was just what he was doing.

Knowing it would throw him off, Kyoko leaned up and gave him a quick kiss on the lips. No, that's alright. My grandfather will be here any minute to pick me up and I don't want him to see us out here alone together, so you go but call me when you get home so that I know you made it safely. She smiled sweetly at him hoping he wouldn't argue. Besides, he

knew how overprotective her grandfather could be.

Tasuki looked around hoping he wouldn't see her grandfather's old truck parked somewhere in the shadows. He sighed gratefully when he counted only three cars. The old man had caught them together last weekend coming back from a midnight hunt at the cemetery and threatened his anatomy. The muscles in Tasuki's jaw flexed knowing he would never get anywhere with her if he didn't stand up to her guard dog of a grandpa.

Glancing back down at her, he raised his fingers to his lips still feeling the heat of hers and nodded. "Okay Kyoko, but if it's all the same, I'll wait here with you." He gave her a mischievous smirk, "You never know what kind of creepy monsters are lurking in the darkness ready to attack." He grinned just before he pounced toward his friend in mock humor, making her giggle and run just out of his reach.

"Tasuki come on, I'll be fine." She couldn't help the excitement that leapt into her eyes as she backed up and he followed, stalking her with heat shimmering in his amethyst gaze. Since he had started letting his hair grow, it had become wild, very dark, with blue highlights, and the dangling cross earring had transformed his looks from college prep to bad boy eye candy. It was getting harder for her to look away.

Tasuki shook his head as he closed the distance between them, "And give someone else the chance to pounce you?" His voice became a touch darker, "I don't think so."

“Like you have dibs on who pounces,” Kyoko exclaimed, feeling things start to tighten in her lower abs and upper thighs.

“Actually I do,” Tasuki said with a bit of pride in his voice. “I have dibs on dibs.”

Kyoko laughed and shook her head before pointing in the general direction of Tasuki’s house. She liked this cat and mouse game a little too much tonight, and knew she had to put a stop to it before the speed limit got changed. “Tasuki’s home now.”

“I love it when you go all dominatrix on me but—”  
Tasuki said as his eyes darkened attractively. “You should know that’s not gonna work.”

“Dang it!” Kyoko said stomping her foot because he was getting closer, and she wanted him to get closer. “Remember what happened the last time Grandpa found us out together this late? Do you really want to lose that!?” she demanded, pointing at his crotch. As soon as she looked at what she was pointing at, she gulped, seeing it straining against the fabric.

Tasuki growled, “Not really but—” He looked at her and grinned. “I’m starting to think it’s worth the risk.”

Kyoko yelped when Tasuki sprung forward again, and this time she found herself pressed up against the side of his car. Her emerald eyes were wide but unafraid and her fingers tightened very slightly on his jacket-covered arms. She could feel the flexing of his muscles underneath her fingers as he tightened around her.

Tasuki watched her deep green eyes become stormy with passion and lowered his head until his lips rested against the soft skin of her neck. He felt a thrill run through his body and settle in his groin where it caused pain that felt really good. Unable to resist the temptation, Tasuki nibbled on her neck. His body pressed up against hers and he groaned when her long legs parted slightly, granting his thigh access. He quickly slid one of his thighs between hers as he leaned against her.

“What are you doing?” she whispered, unable to stop him from not wanting to stop him.

Tasuki pressed his thigh up against her core lifting the young woman up until her toes barely touched the ground. He groaned when he heard Kyoko whimper softly, and kissed a long slow trail from her neck to her lips.

“I want you,” Tasuki whispered in a ragged breath against the velvet suppleness of her mouth before capturing it in a demanding kiss.

Kyoko’s eyes fluttered closed, and she swallowed the moan that threatened to surface. This wasn’t the first time Tasuki had managed to steal a kiss from her but he’d never been this passionate before. She whimpered when his tongue brushed against her lips then slowly pushed past them.

Tasuki did moan, tasting the sweetness beyond Kyoko’s lips. His arms slid around her small waist, lifting her up just a bit, keeping her trapped between himself and the car. He pressed his leg harder into the apex of her thighs and rocked against her.



Tasuki was elated when Kyoko returned the kiss with a passion that rivaled his own.

Kyoko felt one of Tasuki's hands move up her side to her shoulder, and bury itself in her auburn hair. At the moment, she was glad her grandfather wasn't coming to pick her up because she never wanted the kiss to end. Not for the first time, Kyoko was tempted to let Tasuki take her home with him.

She almost suggested it herself when he ran his hand down her leg and wrapped it around her knee, jerking it forward so he could press himself harder against her core.

How would it feel to wake up next to Tasuki first thing in the morning? Would he smile at her latest fashion of bed head? Would he make her breakfast in bed before ravishing her again? There were so many questions that Kyoko was very, very tempted to learn the answers to, just another reason she was considering going home with him.

Just as she struggled to get even closer, the eerie sensation that they were being watched shivered its way up her spine, making her pull away from Tasuki's dominating lips. She had to push against him to be able to slide down his leg and stand on her own. The action wasn't without repercussions however, as it sent shocks of sensations up and down Kyoko's body.

For a moment they remained close with their foreheads pressed together, trying to catch their breath. She closed her eyes wondering if his thighs were throbbing as hard as hers.

Her voice was shaky, and she had to try twice before she could

say the damning words. "Go home Tasuki, I'll be okay." She saw the expression on his face and almost changed her mind. However, she needed to stick to her guns. "I promise!"

Tasuki gritted his teeth to keep from begging, as he reigned in his emotions. He knew they had taken another step tonight in the direction he wanted, so instead of taking it as a loss, he knew it was a victory. "Fine, but next time I will be the one who takes you home." Of course his idea of taking her home landed her in his bed, not hers.

Kyoko backed up under the light of the street lamp in plain sight as Tasuki hesitated, then started to walk toward her. He paused, as if fighting a silent war within himself but when Kyoko smiled and shook her head, he fisted his hands at his sides and started back toward the car.

Wondering at the tightness in his chest, Tasuki glanced worriedly over his shoulder at her.

His amethyst gaze glowed in the dim light causing something to stir in Kyoko's heart. She knew he was confused but she couldn't do anything about it tonight, not without putting them both in danger. She smiled brightly and waved at him, telling him she would be fine.

Making up his mind, Tasuki returned the smile. He got in his car and drove past her, honking his horn in farewell as he went. He felt the cold fingers of dread gripping his heart, and knew if he didn't circle back around, he didn't watch over her, that somehow she would slip away.

Her smile slowly faded as she watched his car turn the corner. Standing very still, Kyoko flexed her hand slowly making a fist and releasing it. A small spirit dart appeared and disappeared within her grip. This weapon was the only thing that could keep them safe.

She had refused Tasuki's offer to take her home for a reason—ever since they had come out of the library, something had been watching her from the shadows. She could feel its eyes on her now, leaving her cold. She growled at herself for letting Tasuki distract her like that. She blamed herself, not him.

Tasuki had been helping her fight the demons almost as long as she'd been fighting them. They had even bought him a weapon awhile back and it seemed to suit him well. She had taught him many moves that helped during a fight, but still if he got hurt, it would be her fault.

She had lied to Tasuki saying her grandfather would be there any minute to pick her up. The truth was her grandfather wasn't coming at all. But if she hadn't sent Tasuki home, then the demon would have found them in a compromising position and killed them both and the more her feelings grew for Tasuki, the less she wanted to risk him getting hurt.

She knew he would stay with her and fight. But lately she'd had recurring nightmares about Tasuki being bitten by one of the monsters, and it robbed her continuously of sleep. Kyoko didn't think she'd be able to live with herself if Tasuki became one of them because then she'd have to kill him.

right?

Inhaling softly, she started walking in the direction of her house, knowing it would take at least an hour to get there. Whatever was stalking her, she hoped it wouldn't wait that long to show itself.

After walking a couple of blocks without being attacked, Kyoko started to get annoyed. She even flipped her hair over one shoulder to expose her neck like a dinner plate, hoping the demon would hurry and make its move because she was tired, and wanted to go home.

Tasuki had probably already called to check on her, or at least she hoped he had. She had a flashback of being between his car and his body, making her groan in frustration. She was going to kick this demon's butt for interrupting her, if it ever got around to attacking.

Her walk took her down another neighborhood street, and she heard a dog growling deep and low from somewhere close by. Her lips thinned, knowing dogs hated vampires. They probably hated them because if a vampire couldn't find a human to feed from, then the dog would suddenly make the menu. Her teeth clenched when a high-pitched sound followed the growl, the same sound you hear when a dog gets injured really badly.

The sound made her stop, and Kyoko felt cold knowing the poor thing was dead.

She frowned as she kneeled down and placed her books on the ground pretending to tie her shoe. "Come on already,"

She added like the statement was directed at the shoestring she was jerking on.

The demon would probably come from behind her because most of the vampires she had fought were cowards by nature and didn't want to give their victim a fighting chance. That's why she made a good target with her petite figure and her 110 pounds; if she had been a normal human girl, she wouldn't stand a chance.

She rolled her eyes when nothing happened. Standing up, Kyoko turned full circle trying to find her target and flinched when she spotted him. She stared across the street into a shadow, where a small boy stood staring at her. The lifeless dog lay at his feet. The child's skin and hair were white as snow, but even from this distance she could tell his eyes were solid black.

How unusual! most vampires looked exactly like humans. That was what made them the most dangerous out of all the demons that secretly roamed the earth. This boy didn't look human at all. As she watched him, she was caught between the sadness of one being turned so young and the knowledge that it no longer mattered.

Yuuhi locked eyes with her, almost wishing he were the one who was going to drink her. He liked the pretty ones. He called to his half-breed children, wondering how long she would last against them. He inhaled but couldn't find the scent of fear that normally heated his cold blood. He did however find her scent to be a mixture of purity and danger and wondered at it.

Yuuhi watched as the vampires under his thrall came from the shadows behind her.

Feeling a tingle of warning sweep across the back of her head, down her neck and spine, Kyoko swung around knowing it had been a setup to get her attention and sure enough she was surrounded. She'd been waiting for a vampire, not three or four if she counted the boy.

Well, I guess I got what I asked for, Kyoko mocked herself as she tried to focus on all of them at once.

One preppy-looking vampire sneered, which really ruined his good looks. Got what you wanted, huh? I got what you want baby. He flashed his teeth at her as he tried to capture her gaze and put her under his thrall.

Kyoko knew what he was doing and felt instant satisfaction that no vampire had ever been able to take her will away during a fight. She looked him up and down. I doubt it, she taunted as she wondered if the loudmouth would make the first move. The sexually frustrated ones really are not my type, She smirked when he growled.

At least these vampires looked normal. Well, about as normal as three young men that looked like they belonged on the college debate squad, wearing fangs could look. It wasn't every day you saw a vampire sporting Armani. Hell, these three would probably cry their undead eyes out if they got dirty. And, of course, she couldn't forget the deadly child that was watching them like some sick voyeur.

That thought made her shiver inwardly. She'd heard stories about that kind of stuff among vampires. Some of them would descend on the victim of their choice, and commence to drink or rape them while others watched. One thing the movies did have right is that vampires were very sexual creatures and many of them had no preference man or woman it didn't matter they did both.

I wouldn't quit your day job if I were you, She laughed at her own pun then kneed him right in the groin. Another thing about vampires, they might be faster and stronger, but the males still had the same weaknesses as their human counterparts.

She ducked just as one came at her and was surprised at the speed it had so much for normal. She'd never dealt with anything this fast before. She clenched her fist feeling the power of the spirit dart form in the palm of her hand.

Sidestepping another demon, she twisted her upper body as one of the vampires lunged past, striking at him with the dart. A cold and clammy hand wrapped around her wrist and yanked, causing her body to twist further almost painfully. Kyoko used the momentum and let the rest of her body follow the move, grabbing the vampire by the sleeve of its jacket and slamming it to the ground.

They rolled once on the ground and came to rest with Kyoko sitting on loudmouth's stomach. She had to move quickly or she knew she might not get another chance at this.

Here is something for you," she informed him. Raising her arm up, she stabbed down with the spirit dart. The third vampire slammed into her from the side, making her roll and skid across the ground. This time, she found herself on the bottom looking up.

Okay, this was starting to piss her off. Glaring up, she noticed this guy looked like a straight A student who had decided to bring a gun to school. The sadistic hint of murder in his eyes was a dead giveaway.

I don't think so buddy. Bending her wrist at an odd angle, she touched the dart in her hand to his arm slicing it with only a small wound. She was rewarded when the vampire's skin started to smoke, making him scream in agony. Bringing her knees up against her chest, she used her feet and legs to throw the demon off. It sailed a few yards away still screaming as its arm slowly melted from the rest of its body.

In a few moments, he would be nothing more than a bubbling puddle of dusty goop on the sidewalk that would vanish before the sun announced a new day. Kyoko had never thought much on where it went; she was just happy not to have to clean up the mess.

Jerk," Kyoko threw the insult as she quickly regained her footing. She had been spoiled with fighting one-on-one over the years, so this was a new one for her.

She arched an eyebrow as the vampire's scream quickly vanished. Obviously not a direct descendant," she thought



to herself. Her grandfather called them the gutter trash of demons, not pure blood vampires or demons—just half-breeds. But they still carried the same name. The better grade of vampire, the slower they melted—gross but true.

She knew the ancients were said to be much more powerful than this, but even Grandpa Hogo wasn't sure if the pure blood vampires could withstand her spirit darts. He'd once told her the spirit dart was nothing more than sunlight harnessed into a weapon that could only be conjured up by a priestess or a guardian.

Kyoko saw a fist coming for her face and turned her head to the side knowing she didn't have time to do anything to stop it. If she took the time out to play dodge ball, then there would be consequences and she would be on the losing side of them. Feeling the impact of knuckles split the skin on her cheek, she suddenly crossed the line from annoyed to pissed.

The last thing she needed was to go home looking like she'd been in a gang fight. She growled when loudmouth got close enough to slash her shirt almost wide open, leaving four deep scratches across her left breast.

“Pervert,” She hissed at him, knowing he'd done it on purpose. The leering grin he gave her confirmed it.

Her mother would worry if she came home wounded, but Grandpa Hogo would only help her get patched up and let her go to bed. He knew she healed ten times faster than a normal human. He'd spent the last few years training her to be what

she had become.

Grandfather had known about her long before she had ever been born or so he said. The old scrolls passed down through the family told about the guardian heart crystal and the priestess that possessed it.

At first she hadn't believed him, but her mind was abruptly changed when she was only ten years old. She saw him fight a vampire while he was walking her home one night from Tasuki's birthday party. She'd been having so much fun that she had stayed even after the other kids had gone home.

When they were attacked, it had been very strange to see a man his age move with the same lethal grace of a skilled warrior. What was even stranger was that the demon had been very real. She'd run up to help her grandpa and hit the monster on the back with her fist that was when she had first seen the spirit dart. It had still been in her hand as the vampire melted.

Once the fight was done and over with, Kyoko remembered asking her grandfather what exactly had attacked him. Grandpa Hogo then explained that while he was strong enough to fight the demons, he did not have the same power as Kyoko nor the ability to heal as quickly from injury.

He insisted that she had been born with a gift. He'd seemed proud to witness it come to pass during his lifetime. This led to a long-winded explanation that the vampire was actually after her, that the demons had been stalking her since her birth because of the holy power she housed within her soul.

He didn't know what the creatures could possibly use it for, but their lust for it had only become stronger over the years. Grandpa had come to the conclusion that maybe it had been placed inside her only to draw the demons toward her, so she could destroy them.

Kyoko still shivered in revulsion at that bit of news. Sometimes it made her wonder what else her grandfather had been hiding from her. One thing was certain she hadn't looked at him the same since neither had Tasuki, because Tasuki had followed them home that night and was a witness to the fight. That had only bonded her and Tasuki even closer together.

She shook the memory from her mind as she focused back on the fight. She quickly decided loudmouth needed to be the next to die before he somehow figured out a way to slowly strip her.

She lowered her arms, feigning pain so he would come at her once again. Despite their usually sexual nature, she wondered if all vampires were perverts or if it was just the ones she met. Just as he slammed into her and took her down, she watched as fear registered in his overly bright eyes. The spirit dart had impaled him in the last place he'd ever thought it would.

Yuuhi silently watched her fight wondering how a simple human female could take that much punishment and still be fighting. A normal girl would not fight at all. They would simply fall under the vampires thrall and do as asked. He was not pleased with this development. He'd sired those three vampires within the last year, wanting to know what it would be like to have

brothers.

The only other family he had was his sire, Tadamichi. As of late, the master's attention had turned from him to the twin brother that had returned to the city.

Wanting to get his new family away from the hyper nightlife of the city and the danger of the approaching conflict between the twins, Yuuhi had decided to take a trip outside the city, where their attention would be solely focused on him.

The city was a crude place to learn the basics of their kind, and he thought the suburbs would be best to test their abilities. The city breed of new vampires was sloppy, and reminded him of nothing more than hungry animals. During their outing within this small town, they had actually been able to bring on new recruits. But, the newbie vampires kept vanishing without a trace.

Yuuhi at first believed the new half-breeds had just moved on, abandoning him. But now he knew differently. They were being killed one at a time by nothing more than a human female. The demon child hid his emotions well as he watched his self-made brothers being killed. Deep inside, he was somewhat angry, but more curious.

Maybe this would get Tadamichi's attention away from his twin brother. Would he care that someone was killing off his family?

Kyoko watched with satisfaction as the last vampire began to melt and she knew it would only take about an hour before the puddles were gone without a trace. She rubbed the back of her

hand across her cheek, leaving a trail of smeared blood in its wake as she jerked her gaze back around to look for the creepy little boy.

Yuuhi moved into the shadows where she could no longer see him. Some sixth sense told him he did not want to tangle with the girl right now, though he did not take his eyes off her or the way she was holding that strange glowing weapon hard within her hand.

Kyoko blinked into the darkness thinking that it was disturbing on many levels that the child had vanished.

“Did I scare him off?” She asked herself refusing to move. She stared at the spot where the child had been standing. Minutes passedâ€” hoursâ€” or maybe it was just a couple heartbeats. Finally releasing her clenched fist and letting the spirit dart disappearâ€” she shrugged her shoulders.

Yuuhi’s lips hinted at an evil smile as Kyoko picked up her discarded books and started walking again. He noticed as she came close to the objects around her, their appearance shifted and changed until she had passed itâ€” like a halo of magic. He glanced at the trees ahead of her. The tops of the trees were like black claws reaching for the skyâ€” but when she came closer to them, they became a thing of beautyâ€” until she was once again out of its reach.

His black gaze leveled on her as if she were a target. Moving through the still air, he followed her. She would make a powerful new addition to his family of darknessâ€” a gift for his sire. She

had a high survival instinct unlike the careless fools she'd just killed. Even now there was a small trail of blood on the sidewalk; as if it was stalking her but she paid no notice of this. She held magic within her and he wanted to be a part of it to see things he had not seen since his turning.

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Grandpa paced back and forth in front of the window wondering where Kyoko was. It wasn't like her to not tell him if she was going to be out late. He ran his hand through his white thinning hair in worry. They had an arrangement and she was supposed to always tell him before she went hunting for the creatures of the underworld.

He swung around when the phone rang and grabbed it up before it could wake the rest of the household.

Tasuki hadn't been able to shake the weird feeling he had since leaving Kyoko alone in the parking lot. He drove around for only a few minutes before swinging back by and finding it empty. He cursed silently as he hit his steering wheel in frustration. Doing a doughnut right there in the parking lot, he left the library but instead of going home, he staked out Kyoko's place.

The longer he sat there the more unnerving it got until he couldn't help himself he had to call. When she answered her phone so fast he smiled. "Thank god you made it home Kyoko."

"You're sick, you know that?" Grandpa glanced

back out the window as he held the phone to his ear. He raised an eyebrow seeing Tasuki's car parked only a couple houses down. "Calling a young lady this time of the night!? What are you, a pervert?"

Tasuki almost dropped the phone as all the color rushed out of his face then quickly raced right back up his body making his ears burn. Only the old man could make him feel like a total idiot this often. Closing his cell phone, he continued to watch Kyoko's house waiting for her to get home. The phone call verified that her grandpa was definitely not picking her up.

Tasuki rubbed his temples and sighed wearily. She'd lied to him, but why? Staring angrily at the only target within striking distance, he slapped the steering wheel with both hands then one more time for good measure. When was Kyoko going to face the fact that he could take care of himself? Well, maybe not as well as she could, but still well enough to help her out in a jam.

He was distracted from his silent rant when he heard a noise close to his car and was about to look around, thinking it was Kyoko. He felt something strike the side of his neck, just behind the ear, making him inhale sharply as stars burst within his eyesight.

Tasuki's head fell forward on the steering wheel, rendering him out cold.

Yuuhi reached through the open window for the young man but jerked his hand away when an amethyst spark shot between them. The demon child calmly looked down at his fingers, then

slowly back to the young man in the driver's seat. Being told not only made him want it more and the corner of his lip curved upward in the hint of a cunning smile.

Hearing distant footsteps, he pushed away from the car and looked down the street feeling her closeness. Stepping back into the darkness again, Yuuhi waited.

Grandpa hung the phone up with a knowing grin. He tapped his chin wondering when Tasuki was going to get up enough nerve to take Kyoko's virginity. He had read in the ancient scrolls that as long as the priestess was a virgin, she would be an even bigger target for the demons. But so far, he refused to tell his granddaughter to have sex. He just wished Tasuki would hurry up and hit puberty or something.

Seeing movement from down the block, he focused his old eyes back on Tasuki's car, wondering if the boy was going to grow a set of balls and get out. There was something outside the driver's side door but it was too little to be Tasuki, and it was too quick for him to tell what it was. His attention was taken by another shadow on the other side of the street as it came closer.

His eyebrows drew together as her injuries came into view. What had she gotten herself into? Something appeared behind her and his gaze latched on to it.

As Kyoko stepped in front of the house, the motion detector lights came on and she looked up at the window and waved to her grandpa. When he didn't wave back, she noticed the look



on his face and the wideness of his eyes. He was looking directly behind her.

“Well! that’s just creepy.” Swinging around, she sucked in a chilled gasp seeing the eerie boy not but a couple feet from her. He was standing as still as a statue in the middle of the street. The only life within him was his unruly silver hair blowing in the night breeze. She gritted her teeth at her own carelessness! “How could she have been so stupid?”

Yuuhi could smell her panic and was surprised by how quickly it was replaced by fearful anger. His gaze curiously rose to the old man gaping out the upstairs window at them. She was protecting him? He let his mind wander throughout the house and detected two more life forces! one was a child. Bringing his gaze back to the girl, Yuuhi wondered if the male child was her brother. She had taken his brothers away! it would only be fair if he took hers.

“Don’t even think about it,” Kyoko warned, seeing his interest in her home. Her eyes narrowed with determination as the spirit dart formed in her palm.

A wicked light appeared within her fist and something Yuuhi had not felt in over five hundred years swept through his lifeless body! fear. His ebony eyes locked with hers; knowing if he tried to take her or her brother! he would die this night.

Kyoko’s mind went into overdrive realizing she’d led the little demon straight to her own house. She had put her whole family in danger and that was something she had always avoided

at all cost. She could feel the eeriness of the boy reaching out to her, as he remained silent and unmoving. In looksâ# he seemed to be the same age as her little brother Tama. Although, she could feel he was so much older than that, the oldest demon sheâ##d ever had the misfortune to come across.

â##I will tell him I have found you,â## The childâ##s emotionless voice whispered hauntingly, as if they had just shared a long peaceful conversation.

Hearing the front door slam open, Kyoko quickly glanced over her shoulder and yelled, â##Grandpa, get back inside!â##

She raised her weapon and turned back to the demon ready to fight, only to cry out because the child was no longer there. She didnâ##t know which thought crept her out the most. Seeing himâ# or knowing he existed and not seeing him.

Closing her eyes, Kyoko let her life force span out in search for the iciness of his aura. Feeling nothingâ# she let a quivering breath escape knowing everything had changedâ# and all within an instant. The one thing sheâ##d promised herself she would not doâ# was put her family in danger.

She felt a heavy hand land on her shoulder and quickly turnedâ# throwing herself into her grandpaâ##s arms. â##Iâ##m sorryâ# Iâ##m so sorry!â## Tears sprang to her emerald eyes. â##He knows where I liveâ# he will tell.â##

Grandpa wrapped his arms around her feeling the heaviness of loss within his chest. He would have to move the family back to their other home near the sacred shrine before the weekend

was over. They would be safer there where the ground was blessed. This had already been the plan if anything like this ever happened. His eyes grew sad knowing Kyoko would not come with them. They would lose her.

He held onto her tightly as he asked her the one question he already knew the answer to. "I'll take them home Kyoko, but what will you do?"

"Say goodbye," Kyoko sobbed, and then pulled her despair back inside herself. She let the wonderful numbness take hold knowing she had a lot to do before dawn.

Grandpa slowly let her go and watched as she walked into the house before he turned and started toward Tasuki's car. He heaved a sigh, knowing he would have to make sure the boy was okay.

Seeing that lover boy was unconscious, he mumbled, "You always were more trouble than you were worth." He opened the door and shoved the boy into the other seat almost grinning when Tasuki's head bumped the passenger window.

"Looks like I'm the one stuck taking you home," Grandpa mumbled. "At least before Kyoko finds out you got yourself knocked out." This time the older man did grin. "We can't let Kyoko know you got yourself hurt or she won't call you if she needs you." Starting the car, he peeled off down the street wanting to hurry and get back to his granddaughter.

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The next morning, Tasuki awoke with a start, jerking up in the bed from a nightmare he didn't want to remember. Something was wrong in more ways than one; he just knew it. Grabbing for the phone beside the bed, he hit the speed-dial clenching his jaw when her grandpa answered.

"I need to speak to Kyoko." His voice was almost manic as his grip tightened on the receiver. He didn't remember coming home last night; what had happened?

Mimicking Tasuki's mood, Grandpa's grip tightened on the phone as the cab pulled up in front of the house. Kyoko had made him promise not to tell Tasuki or anyone where she was going. It was the only way to protect them. It was a shame.

His voice was softer and wearier than it had ever sounded. "I am sorry Tasuki. Kyoko no longer lives here and there's no forwarding address." It really was a shame.

Tasuki listened as the line went dead; hearing his own heartbeat overpower the sound. Kyoko had told him once that if something went wrong with the demons, then she would disappear. "No." The word rushed from him as his eyes took on the most startling shade of amethyst.

"DAMN IT!" He yelled and threw the phone across the room. Covering his eyes with his hands, he fell back against the lush pillows as he felt his heart fracture and bleed painfully.

He uncovered his eyes after a few minutes; the amethyst color within them still hadn't faded. Tasuki decided he would bide his time. Just because the old man told him Kyoko didn't

leave a forwarding addressâ€¦ didnâ€¦t mean he was ignorant to where she was going.

Unseen to him, the staff Tasuki kept locked in its case by the bed began to glow ominously.

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Kyoko opened the taxi door but turned back toward the house when her younger brother came running down the steps and across the yard. She threw her arms around him as he tackled herâ€¦ barely keeping her feet.

â€¦I donâ€¦t want you to go!â€¦ he cried, fisting his hand in her shirt.

Kyoko smiledâ€¦ knowing she was doing the right thing. She loved him so much that it made the decision to leave hurt less. â€¦I will come back to see you soon, and once school is out, I promise you can come to the city to visit me. We will spend so much time together that it will be as if I never left.â€¦ She looked up to see her mothersâ€¦ gaze lock with hers.

Miss Hogo pulled Tama away from her daughter with an understanding smile. â€¦We will have your room ready and waiting on you. Wonâ€¦t we Tama?â€¦ She brushed the tears from his cheek as he nodded, then looked back up at Kyoko. â€¦See, everything will be fine.â€¦

Glancing up at the house one last time, Kyoko could see her grandpa in the upstairs window. She waved and gave him a smile that almost made her cheeks hurtâ€¦ then climbed into the cab. If she was leaving home because of the demons, then she was

going to go invade their home and wipe them out one at a time.

“The city please,” Kyoko told the driver and refused to look back.

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In the heart of the city, Hyakuhei lay in a state of semi-sleep when he heard his twin brother’s voice calling to him. He knew not to open his eyes because there was no use. His brother wouldn’t be there, so he just inhaled sharply and listened to the darkness.

“So, my younger brother still refuses to join me?” The voice held a hint of longing mixed with anger.

Hyakuhei opened his eyes and ran a hand through his long, ebony hair. Without saying a word out loud, he answered the intruding voice. “Younger brother? We are twins Tadamichi, you are no better than I.”

Tadamichi’s voice hardened, “Twins are alike, are we alike? Plus, I am the first born, so that makes you the youngest.”

Sitting up, Hyakuhei let the silk sheets fall from his naked body as he slid from the bed. It was just like Tadamichi to twist events to his liking. “No, we are nothing alike, so enough with the riddles.” He flinched, and then rolled his eyes when the lamp on the nightstand beside him shattered. He would have to learn to keep his temper under control or everything around him would be destroyed. He assumed it was his punishment for losing his temper so long ago with his brother.

“I don’t hate you,” Hyakuhei growled as if trying to convince himself.

“How generous of you,” Tadamichi’s voice took on a melancholy sound as if he didn’t believe the confession. “The last time we were within the same realm, we killed each other. Such senseless acts for immortals, don’t you think?” There was a pause before he continued. “Once the banishment was over, like a faithful brother, I waited on your return.”

“We are destined to be alone,” Hyakuhei cut in with the lie. He knew his brother was no longer alone; Tadamichi had made sure of that.

He could hear his brother’s silent laughter. It made him wonder if it hadn’t been a mistake to think he could come back and face the wicked family his brother had created in his absence. The only way he and his brother were alike was that they didn’t like to be alone, though they had two completely different ways of correcting that problem.

“I knew you would return, here where the night is never dark, here where you will never be alone among so many humans and the children I have created for us.” Tadamichi’s voice had become wishful.

Hyakuhei walked into the bathroom, turning on the shower then whirling to face the mirror. No reflection looked back at him so he just pictured his brother’s face, his own face as he answered. “I want nothing to do with the abominations you

have sired. He backed into the shower as he tore the link apart so he wouldn't have to hear his brother's haunting voice any longer.

No, he had not come back to his homeland to join them like some twisted family reunion. His brother was the most destructive of all the demons and the children he sired were disturbing to say the least. Those children were now spawning others and their numbers were growing like the black plague.

Hyakuhei placed his hands on the ceramic walls of the shower, letting the hot water warm his frozen skin. What did it matter to him? The last time he'd tried to stop his brother from infesting the human world with half-breed demons, it had ended in both their deaths, a false death that took centuries to rise from.

Their punishment for that crime was banishment from each other and this world of humans. They had become Shades who walked the realm between realms, casting only shadows of loneliness. That had ended over a century ago. Yet, he'd stayed away from his twin. Even from the darkness on the other side of the world, he had heard this city calling to him until he couldn't fight the summons any longer.

His brother was right about one thing, he was exhausted from being alone. But now that he was home, he could smell the taint of his brother's sins plaguing the land. True blood demons he could abide by, but the rape of the city by the half-breed vampires that spawning had created, was provoking.



His twin brother stayed underground most of the time within the lavish catacombs they had once shared during the medieval era, only to resurface once in a while, long enough to bring another victim into the deadly fold.

Hyakuhei looked up into the waterfall of the shower, trying to keep his rage from seeping out, but knew his failure when he heard the bathroom mirror crack.

Tadamichi had accused him of hiding himself away from the world but that wasn't true.

It is Tadamichi who has chosen that path, He thought darkly. He cannot see the destruction he is causing. The night is no longer dark nor is it silent. Hyakuhei turned off the shower and stepped out, not bothering to wrap a towel around his lithe form. Instead, he grabbed the soft black cloth and began drying his long ebony hair. Within moments he was dressed and ready for the night.

Walking back to his window in the living room, he sat down on the sill and looked out at his view.

Hyakuhei smirked at his own dark humor and looked down at the side of the opposite building.

The darkness is alive with demons Brother. This city with its high walls has made it so, he mused aloud.

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Yuuhi reappeared within the downtown area of the city minutes before daybreak. He could already feel the sun's heat on his skin and quickened his pace toward the Grand Hotel

in the center of the metropolis. Beneath the massive five star establishments hidden away from the world was his sire's underground dwelling. It was just as beautiful below ground as what housed the humans above; his sire had arranged it to be so.

Yuuhi stepped through the front doors of the Grand and strode across the lobby. Ignoring the friendly greeting of the human woman behind the desk, Yuuhi stepped through the door that read "maintenance". Making his way down to the basement, he boarded the maintenance elevator that would take him down to the sub-basement level. From there, it was the opening of the hidden passage that would take him to his sire.

Feeling the darkness close in around him like a protective blanket, the platinum-haired child raced through the winding tunnels as though trying to outrun the darkness or keep up with it.

Yuuhi was one of the privileged few allowed in Tadamichi's private lair; only the ones Tadamichi had personally sired were permitted. The small boy had been one of Tadamichi's first and the bond that held him faithful was what led him to warn the master about the girl; and the power she possessed. The bond also allowed him to feel his master's emotional states, which could prove troublesome at times.

He could sense that Master Tadamichi was angry and knew the cause behind that rage; Hyakuhei. Only the master's twin brother could provoke this kind of reaction. Jealousy and

rejection could be a dangerous thing with one so powerful.

Yuuhi quietly slipped into Tadamichi's chambers but stayed in the shadows to observe his master. The young boy was patient and knew to wait out the storm of his master's rage.

Tadamichi glared at his reflection in the Mirror of Souls then looked away with an angry hiss. His brother had broken the link between their minds, banishing him once again. Every opportunity Tadamichi took to speak with his brother was terminated rather abruptly, angering him. He was starting to believe their bond would never return to what it had once been.

Had the centuries away from each other not been long enough of a punishment? Would Hyakuhei forever keep his distance?

Seeing movement within the shadows, Tadamichi angrily waved his hand in its direction, every half-breed within his chamber and within a thousand yards of his solitude spontaneously combusted, leaving behind the scent of sulfur in the air. There would be no witnesses to his brother's rejection. However, he turned his head in the other direction and laid his eyes on the only one of his children that he would trust with his secret.

Ignoring Yuuhi for a moment, Tadamichi slowly walked across the room and stood in front of a portrait with his hands clasped behind his back. As the screams and flames died down, Tadamichi continued to stare at the painting as if nothing was amiss.

The painting was created long before the medieval wars had

taken placeâ€” before their civil war. One would assume it was a self-portrait showing two personalities. In truth, it was he and his brotherâ€” so hard to tell them apart. How could they be so alike in looksâ€” and be so different? Had his brother never learned the meaning of loveâ€” the pain of rejection?

Tadamichi dusted his fingertips across the image of his brother, his brow furrowing slightly before his face contorted in rage. He suddenly lashed out at the painting in a movement so fast it was virtually unseen. The picture held for a moment, then ever so slowly a jagged rip appearedâ€” severing the twins from one another. The cloth of the portrait fell slightly to the side and Tadamichiâ€™s expression suddenly showed sadness.

Placing his palms against the painting, Tadamichi held them together for a moment before letting them drop.

His love for Hyakuhei was fathomless. Tadamichi merely wanted Hyakuhei by his side to share in this wonderful existence. â€œWhy do you forsake me and the life we could have?â€” he asked silently then felt the chill of having asked that same question to one other than his brother. He drew the memory deep within himself refusing to dwell on her.

Yuuhi stepped out of the shadow behind him, feeling his masterâ€™s melancholy. It amazed him that his sire could feel so deeply for his brother when he himself had barely felt a twinge as the girl had killed his brothers only a couple hours before.

â€œSo, you have lost them?â€” Tadamichi asked, never taking his eyes from the image of his brother.

Yuuhi nodded knowing Tadamichi could see into his thoughts. A flash of marble white appeared in his peripheral vision and he turned his head towards it. His gaze appeared almost thoughtful as he stared at the statues on his left. Slowly turning in a circle, he gazed at each, one by one. They had been here for as long as Yuuhi could remember but he had never asked about them.

“A girl,” Yuuhi whispered, wondering why a demon master would have statues of angels. It was odd, or he had always thought so. The angels were beautiful even to Yuuhi’s eyes and he wondered if creatures like these could have ever existed on this earth.

“I will tell you the story of the statues my child,” Tadamichi slowly glanced away from the painting curiously. “And you will tell me about this girl.” The corner of his lips turned up in the hint of a wicked smile. “Go on and take a closer look,” he coaxed. “Curiosity is an intriguing emotion, is it not?”

Yuuhi slowly walked around the room gazing up into the faces of the men with wings, stopping in front of the one that intrigued him the most. The long hair that reached past the small of his back swung out as if he was in the middle of battle. The expression that had been on his face was most beautiful and frightening. What was the angel fighting so hard for? What would have been the prize?

The stone hands held fast to a sword that was in a downward

motion and Yuuhi reached out to slide his thumb across itâ€¦ only to jerk back when a small thin line of blood welled up on his thumb.

Tadamichi was suddenly beside him, lifting the injury to his lips to suckle the blood from the boyâ€™s finger. Knowing Yuuhi was a child of very few words and even less emotions; Tadamichi released his hand and nodded at the statue. â€œThis statueâ€¦ Kyou, and his destruction sword,â€¦ he closed his eyes as he remembered the guardians, â€œVery powerful adversariesâ€¦ they all were.â€œ

Yuuhi turned toward his master and waited patiently.

â€œThey thought they could rid the world of darknessâ€¦ thought they could rid it of me and my brother. They should have known better.â€œ He opened eyes that now had a strange red tint to them. â€œThey were brothers you see.â€œ He stepped closer to the statue of the one who looked the youngest as he added, â€œOr at least they all thought they were true brothers.â€œ

He reached out and stroked the cheek of the statue, letting his fingers trace the path a tear had leftâ€¦ frozen in time. â€œMy dear Kamui. He knew what the guardians had done was wrong. That is why he looks so sad. It is a shame my brother never really knew him.â€œ

Tadamichi turned to the next sibling. â€œKotaro was strong in spirit, yet possessive of what he claimed to be his.â€œ His eyes glazed over as if seeing the past. â€œHe was willing to die if he had toâ€¦ all for the love of a woman.â€œ

Dismissing the statue with a wave of his hand, he stepped to the next one as his eyes darkened. This one was the most dangerous of the brothers. Toya he was a very interesting creature. So full of fire and rage, yet how he could love one woman with such ferocity was beyond me. It led to many battles between him and the other brothers. He was the most possessive of her. I'm surprised they never destroyed one another in their absurdity.

He turned toward the final statue. The man's hand was out in front of him as if he was casting a spell. Tadamichi knew the truth of Shinbe's spell; the void had been in motion as they had cast him through the time portal; sealing it behind him. Shinbe was wise beyond his years, yet he was foolish enough to alter fate; they all were. His eyes hardened as he wondered if the priestess was still with them.

The girl can destroy us. Yuuhi's voice held no emotion as he stood in front of the statue that seemed to hold the true meaning of rage. She reminds me of him, Sire.

Tadamichi glanced strangely at the guardian the child had indicated, Toya?

Yuuhi finally turned his black eyes on Tadamichi as his haunting words echoed, Toya, this is what is inside her; this is what can kill us.

Tadamichi's eyes rose to Toya's rage and he suddenly felt more alive than he had in a long time. What was life without a reason to live? So she has returned to this realm. He had

missed the wars of old. Angels and demons are one and the sameâ€” only one had a better reputation. If the truth were told, they were all killers.

Replacing the stone with the mental picture of what the silver guardian had once been, he lazily smiled knowing the guardian could hear him, they all could. Everything was silent and as still as it always had been. But deep within the souls of the statuesâ€” he could feel the power like an earthquake being restrained by thin shackles of time.

â€œSo even in this imprisoned state, you have all found a way to fight.â€ Tadamichi hummed his curiosity. â€œCould it be that you feel her? Do you want her?â€ He lowered his lashes as he felt a wave of power sweep across the room in answer. â€œMaybe you should have forced her to stay on your side of the time portalâ€” like you did last time.â€

He turned away from the statues, leaving them with a haunted warning. â€œIt is too bad you cannot accompany your priestess this time.â€

## Chapter 2 â€” City Heatâ€

Kyoko woke with a start knowing the sun was setting. It was like a biological alarm clock to her and had been sinceâ€” as far back as she could remember. She pushed herself up knowing it was time to go to work. She just wished she were getting paid for it.

Hearing a siren in the distance drew her attention to the window just in time to catch the last rays of light leaving the



city sky. She could hear the faint sound of thumping music from the nightclubs on the strip where she lived. She had picked an apartment right in the heart of the city for a reason.

She could feel the vibration through her bed. The Underground was the name of the club she lived above. Rent was cheap because there was no way someone could live here and expect to get any kind of sleep unless it was during the day. That's where Kyoko believed in luck.

Where else could she have found a place that had the same hours she did? There were no rude people running up and down the halls unless you counted Yohji, but he didn't usually stir up anything unless it was early in the morning when she got home or in the evenings just before she went to work.

Speaking of rent, hers was late. She would have to come up with it soon if she didn't want to deal with Yohji, the landlord's brother, who lived right across the hall from her. The last time she had been late with the rent he'd actually offered to work it out in trade with her. He had seemed so disappointed when she'd handed him the rent in full less than an hour later.

She glanced at her cell phone seeing the message symbol blinking and smiled. Clicking the buttons that could connect her with something familiar, she listened to her mom's voice, not even paying attention to what she was saying. She already knew anyway.

“Hello Kyoko it's your mother,” Kyoko mimicked the

words on the answering machine. "I really wish you would call, we miss you terribly. We'd like to know when you're coming home again so I can make your favorite dinner. Tama had a great time the other weekend and is already starting to have withdrawals from not seeing you. Are you eating well enough or need any money? Please give me a call, I love you."

Kyoko shook her head and let the voicemail continue playing the rest of the messages. One was from Yohji reminding her that the rent was due. "Yeah-yeah!" she said. She deleted his message. The other was from her younger brother Tama telling her about his latest girlfriend then warned her not to tell grandfather or he'd spread really embarrassing rumors about her and Tasuki. It was an empty threat and they both knew it.

"You're gonna have to do better than that little bro," Kyoko said into the phone.

She'd left home to keep them safe. There had been no way around it. Ever since she was little, she had been aware of demons in the world but that didn't mean she wanted her little brother to know the monsters from the movies were real and waiting out in the darkness. It was like she was the only one who could see them walking among the innocent feeding off them.

Demons usually looked like normal people until they had their victim alone. The demons within the city were multiplying at a dangerously fast rate and she was having trouble keeping up and helping to even the odds for the humans. As a matter of fact,

she felt like she was losing the war.

Those humans she was trying to protect had given the evil a name through books and moviesâ€”vampires. It was just a name thoughâ€”vampire, demon, to her it was the same thing. She shrugged. With her it was almost like a two-way mirror because although she could detect the vampiresâ€”they also knew when she walked into a crowded room. She didnâ€™t think they could detect her powerâ€”that wasnâ€™t what seemed to draw them to herâ€”it was more like a dinner bell with her as the main dish.

Sheâ€™d even gone to the doctor once to see if she had a strange blood typeâ€”thinking that was drawing them to her. But the doc had only given her a clean bill of health. What gave her cold chills was that when she was leaving the office, the doctor had stopped her and asked her to donate blood. Twistedâ€”it was just twisted.

For some reason, vampires were always drawn to her and she would have to fight them. Maybe the doctor just hadnâ€™t been looking for the right thing. A sad expression slid across her face knowing that was why she had to remain alone. Sheâ€™d put her family and friends in danger too many times to live near them. The last time one had followed her home. It was hard enough keeping her secret without having a demon in the front yard.

Her grandfather was the one who had brought her into this life, so it was him that she had asked the one question that plagued her. How did the vampireâ€™s sense when she was near and why did they always seek her out in a place full of hundreds? She

remembered he'd tapped his chin while deep in thought, but the way he was looking at her made her feel like he was keeping something from her.

I'll research it and let you know if I come up with a clue. Was all her grandfather had said.

She'd stopped questioning why she had the power to hit them and actually hurt them; it wasn't like they couldn't hold their own sometimes though. She had limped home too many times to think she was indestructible. But she healed faster than anyone she knew and she could take a hard punch better than okay, she didn't know anyone who could withstand what she could; any human that is.

Now that she had a safe distance between her and everything she loved; Kyoko had a reason to be angry and a reason to fight. She blamed them for it; the demons that stalked her. They'd forced her to leave home and abandon everything that resembled a normal life. Now her family had moved into the home at the shrine. Granted, it placed them closer to Tasuki and that made her feel better.

It's not that bad, She said aloud within the solitude of her apartment. Getting out of bed, she headed for the small kitchen and opened the refrigerator. Okay; maybe it is that bad, Kyoko smirked seeing it was still empty.

She would just have to go hunting for vampires tonight and if they had a wad of cash in their pocket when she killed them, then so be it; it wasn't like they could take it to hell with them.

Closing the door she turned to the one thing she knew she had plenty of. ##Thank god for coffee.##

She lifted the cup to her lips knowing it was going to be a long night.

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Hyakuhei lay in the bed listening to his brother's voice once again before it faded. This had become a habit, although in his opinion, it was better than being face to face. They would listen to each other's thoughts most nights for the few moments it took for the sun to set, then the link would vanish. As of late, the silent conversations had become more and more disturbing.

He glanced up at the canopy that covered his bed, seeing the gift from his brother. The Mirror of Souls had appeared in his room over a month ago, he'd seen it before. It was the only mirror that could cast the reflection of a vampire. It had once been his brother's prized possession.

When he had silently called to Tadamichi, asking why he'd given it to him, his brother had responded, ##I only wish to remind you of what you are.##

He now gazed up at his own reflection and knew there was another reason for the gift. It was a way to see his twin brother as he gazed at himself. Hyakuhei flung his arm over his eyes, refusing the sight.

He'd thought Tadamichi would be angry when he told him that he was killing the half-breed vampires within the city for the mere fact that they were in his way, or in the wrong place at

the wrong time. The knowledge hadn't even fazed Tadamichi. His brother only reminded him that the power to rule the human city and the demons within it was theirs for the taking.

Tadamichi had even confessed that it pleased him. In some twisted way his twin brother was happy he'd provided entertainment for him something to kill again reminding him of what he was. Hyakuhei glared back up into the mirror thinking about the manipulation. He and his brother were nothing but monsters in every sense of the word and he didn't need to be reminded of it.

One thing Hyakuhei noticed over the last couple months was that when his brother turned a vampire, then that vampire turned a vampire, and so on, all it created was weak, needy half-breed vampires who were greedy and sloppy. Where he was pureblood he only fed maybe once a year and left no evidence behind. He could survive on nothing if he chose to do so or even partake of human food. A newly turned half-breed vampire would feed every night and usually slaughtered their meal before they were through.

A true vampire didn't do that a pureblood vampire could seduce humans into their thrall then feed off them just enough to quench their thirst before leaving and taking the memory of it with them. No one was the wiser. In other words, the further down the line the vampire was from Tadamichi the closer they were to being an ugly liability like city trash.

He could feel the need to step out into the city and become a

part of it. He didn't need Tadamichi reminding him of who he was; he could already feel the need for the hunt. His hunger was growing not only for the need to feed but also for the need to feel a part of something. He blamed this craving on his brother.

Hyakuhei slid his black silk shirt on as he stepped to the window, drawing the curtain back now that the sun was gone. He narrowed his eyes at the view. "Nice wall," he said sarcastically. His scenery was the side of a brick building across a small alley and there was a reason for that. Although he could stand the daylight for a few moments at a time, the last thing he wanted was it streaming in through his bedroom window.

He almost turned and walked away but something caught his attention and he glanced down into the alley.

There, leaning against the far wall just out of the reach of the street lamps was a young man maybe in his early twenties. Hyakuhei glared at the well-dressed college look knowing it was deceiving. He could smell the blood of the underling's last kill even through the closed window. The shadowed face turned just a little and Hyakuhei could see the glow of unnatural light emanating from its eyes.

If there was one thing Hyakuhei could say about himself, it was that he was very territorial. Even he and his twin stayed on different sides of the city for this reason. He would not allow these greedy half-demons to feed so close to his building. If this was what his brother desired to watch him kill a killer, so be it.

Hyakuhei reached out and slid the window open without making a sound.

Before he could jump out the window, Hyakuhei heard footsteps coming from the far side of the alley and paused. He waited for the stupid human to walk into the deadly trap. Whoever it was they deserved it for traveling the dark alley.

Demons were not the only dangers of the city night; human riffraff like muggers and rapists also hid within the darkness of most city alleys. Maybe he would even let the vampire have its last meal before he killed it; it was the least he could do. It wasn't like he owed the human population anything. He owed no one.

He leaned against the windowsill with dark brooding eyes. The first thing Hyakuhei noticed was the long auburn hair as the human slipped from the shadows into the dim light below. Half of it was up in a bouncing ponytail, leaving the rest to cascade down her shoulders and back in silken waves.

She wore a short black mini skirt with trails of black lace coming down lower and covering some of her lower thighs. The shirt was matching with black satin cloth that came down just above her bellybutton but also had the same V shaped trails of black lace that moved as she walked.

He didn't miss a thing as his gaze caressed the small flashes of exposed skin. Her aura was the size of a hundred humans and it spread out covering most of the alley. As her aura passed mundane things, dull colors would become vibrant making even



the darkness seem breathtakingly alive.

He was so enthralled with watching the girl that he momentarily forgot she was walking into her own death trap.

Kyoko walked slowly as if she didn't have a care in the world. She knew she looked delicate and defenseless, little more than a child really. She was fine with that because she was a good target. The city night was alive and thumping but if you turned the wrong corner, it could turn into dark shadows with deadly edges for humans.

Her lips hinted at a deceiving smile as she turned and headed down one of those very long dark alleys. Hearing the slight echo of her own footsteps, she kept her gaze in front of her even though she noticed a shadow peel away from the wall about halfway down.

Lowering her lashes so she wouldn't give herself away, Kyoko took in his clothing and had to suppress a smile. He looked like he came from the rich part of town. One thing she'd noticed about the vampires in the city was that most of them could have had modeling jobs before they were turned, sexy and deadly.

She jerked her head up knowing the demon was about to make its move. True to her act, she gave an almost silent scream, it wasn't like she wanted to draw attention from the innocent people passing by on the sidewalk, it was only a ploy to act frightened and take off running.

Sprinting past him, she ran forward, and then steered off

toward the darkest spot within the alley as if trying to hide from him. Just as she turned, he slammed into her, placing his palms on either side of her head as if she would try to escape.

The aggressive vampire pushed his body against hers as he stared down at her with cold blue eyes. "Would you like to join me for dinner?" His voice held a wicked sense of humor that she wasn't supposed to catch.

Kyoko almost smirked hearing the double-edged request. "Sure, as long as it's stake." Her hands slipped around him and he smiled until he felt the pain slice into his back and out the front of him. He looked down at the tip of the glowing light that protruded from his chest and opened his mouth making no sound.

Seeing the girl pinned against the wall, Hyakuhei gripped the windowsill deciding he would be selfish and not allow the vampire that last meal. Pushing himself forward, his feet hit the ground just as the girl stepped out of the shadow alone.

Hyakuhei didn't move when she seemed not to notice him. He backed into the shadows and watched as she pulled a pair of pants from the darkness. He cocked an eyebrow realizing it was the clothing of the vampire that had just attacked her.

"There's got to be a better way to get rid of them," Kyoko muttered. "Who ever heard of a vampire melting anyway? I'll never get used to that. It should be more like in the movies, poof and they're gone." She continued while reaching into the front pocket of the pants and pulling out

a pack of cigarettes. "Save those for later, never know when I'm going to need a favor. Why the hell is a vampire smoking anyway?"

She held the pants out in front of her and made a face at the goop on the front slowly dripping down. "Eww," She said childishly before starting her search of the back pockets. "Let's see here," she whispered. "Comb, lighter, membership to the local gym, dental floss?" Kyoko stared at the dental hygiene product before tossing it behind her. "Now there's a gross thought."

Dropping the pants, she pulled his jacket out of the vampire's remains and started searching there. "Okay, this is more promising," She said a little louder. "Tiffany and Co., definitely worth pawning. HA, jackpot," Kyoko exclaimed when she fished out the dead creature's wallet.

Opening it, she took out the credit cards one by one looking at them. "Bank card, MasterCard, Visa, whoa, American Express card, Don't leave home without it." She dropped the credit cards on the ground and pulled out the cash. "SCORE!" Kyoko shouted when she saw how much was there. "Another month without having to have sex with Yohji for a place to live, life is good." She finished as she pocketed the money and dropped the jacket in a garbage can.

Hyakuhei arched an eyebrow listening to the young woman. "She's insane," he thought to himself. He let the briefest smile appear on his lips when she relieved the dead vampire of

all its cash. As she walked back out onto the sidewalk, he stepped from the darkness and slowly walked toward the spot where the other vampire had been left.

Seeing all that was left of it was a black dusty puddle, he reached in his pocket for a match and lit it, tossing it on the remains. The alley illuminated for about five seconds before burning out, leaving nothing behind.

He was having trouble accepting that a mere human woman had done this to a vampire. She was dressed indecently, apparently had a few screws loose in the head and was a master pickpocket considering all of the worthless jewelry she'd left behind. Proof of that being the Rolex knock off that had been burned with the rest of the dead half-breed.

He inhaled still smelling the lingering scent of the girl. How odd for one dressed so provocative to still be a virgin. He glared back at the burnt spot on the ground no longer caring how she had killed it, if she hadn't he would have.

As he stepped to the sidewalk, his gaze slowly turned in the direction she'd taken. For the first time in a long time, Hyakuhei felt a stirring within his blood. Tonight he would hunt and before dawn he would taste her.

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Kyoko groaned seeing the mob still milling in the doorway of the Underground. It was the weekend and the place seemed to be a hot spot. She slipped around the line and headed toward the bouncer, giving him a mere nod before ducking under the arm

that held the door open for her. All the bouncers knew her on sight because she lived above the club.

Once inside, she headed straight for the door that read, **Do Not Enter**. Punching in the code on the door lock, she reached out and opened it, letting it close behind her. She breathed a sigh as soon as the noise became a dull roar. Feeling the wad of cash clutched tightly in her hand, she headed up the stairs. Demons were not the only dangerous thing in the city and she was not walking around all night with her rent money in her bra.

Stopping by the small lock boxes at the end of the hall, she punched in another code and opened it to check her mail. Normally it was empty but Kyoko smiled seeing the lone envelope resting inside and pulled it out, recognizing her grandfather's handwriting on the address label.

Closing the mailbox locker, she headed up another flight of stairs. The secret to staying in shape: living on the third floor with no elevator. She stopped before hitting the top floor and counted out the money seeing she would only have twenty dollars left after giving Yohji her rent money.

Yohji she cringed. Kyoko knew he wanted her to ask him for more time to pay the rent but she'd be double dipped if that ever came to pass. Yohji was scum as far as she was concerned, but she had to be nice to him since he was the one who collected her rent every month. It was also up to him to fix things and he had the say so in who rented and who got kicked out.

She walked to her door and barely got her key in the lock before the door across the hallway opened. Kyoko inwardly groaned before turning around and giving Yohji a strained smile. What was heâ€¦ psychic?

â€œHowâ€¦ is it going Hot Stuff?â€ Yohji asked as he leaned against his doorframe as if acting all cool.

â€œItâ€¦s going,â€ Kyoko answered, suddenly wishing she were wearing a huge trench coat that hid everything he was so leeringly looking at. â€œOh, I got your rent money by the way.â€ She handed the money sheâ€¦d carefully counted out toward him knowing better than to get close to his doorway. The last time she had gotten to close, he had invited her in.

Yohjiâ€¦s shoulders visibly slumped as his eyes trailed down her again, â€œThatâ€¦s good, come on in and Iâ€¦ll get you a receipt.â€ Heâ€¦d hoped she would come up short this month and beg him to let it slide. The corner of his lip lifted in a smirk.

Kyoko shook her head as she counted to ten. â€œI can wait out here for it.â€ She folded her arms in front of her as if she were bored out of her mind waiting on him.

Yohji shrugged knowing that little gameâ€¦ theyâ€¦d played it before. He would go get the receipt and she would be gone before he made it back out. â€œIâ€¦ll give it to you later.â€

â€œThatâ€¦s fine,â€ Kyoko turned the key in her lock and opened the door to her apartment trying for a quick getaway.

â€œHas anyone told you how hot you look in that skirt?â€ Yohji asked suddenly right behind her.

Kyoko glanced over her shoulder at him and arched an eyebrow. "Are you flirting with me Yohji?" She'd always wondered what he would look like flat on his back with a bloody nose.

"Does it matter?" He asked, running a hand through his spiked hair and grinning, thinking he was finally going to get lucky.

"Actually it does," Kyoko stated. "I don't think my boyfriend would like it very much."

Yohji smirked at her knowing she spent her time inside the apartment alone, "Now we both know you don't have a boyfriend, Kyoko. If I didn't know better, I'd say you were trying to avoid the inevitable." He pressed his large hand against Kyoko's open door so she couldn't close it. "What's wrong? Afraid I won't be man enough for you, or are you saving it for that imaginary special someone?"

Kyoko glared at him, her emerald eyes turning stormy. If he was tired of being nice then so was she. "I'm sorry Yohji, but I'm more into guys that don't dip into a different flavor of sauce every night."

Kyoko gasped when Yohji suddenly grabbed the hand she had on the doorknob and pulled the door closed then pressed against her backside, pushing her body into the unforgiving wood.

"You can't tell me that you're not the least bit curious Kyoko," Yohji whispered in her ear while grinding his arousal against her bottom. "I won't tell your imaginary boyfriend

if you won't.

He's not imaginary. In fact, I'm meeting him downstairs in a little while, Kyoko ground out knowing if she lost her temper with the dumb ass! she would definitely get kicked out and he would leave in an ambulance.

Oh really? Tell me what he looks like, Yohji demanded as he felt himself strain inside his jeans. He liked the ones that put up a little fight.

Kyoko took a deep breath. He's got long black silky hair, pale skin, very dark eyes and a body to die for. She described and mentally smirked. Take that you ass! And he's very possessive.

Yohji made a sound that was supposed to be a growl. Kyoko almost busted out laughing! if Yohji only knew what the real thing sounded like. She finally decided she'd had enough and was about to turn on him when a door further down the hall opened.

Amni stepped out in a pair of tight jeans and black T-shirt that accentuated his athletic body. His sky blue eyes narrowed and the muscles in his jaw jumped as he took in the so-called landlord virtually mauling Kyoko. He watched as Yohji quickly pulled away from Kyoko and the auburn haired woman turned around with a glare.

Let me know when you want the rent, she said sweetly. On second thought! maybe I'll start mailing it to your brother Hitomi so I won't bother you anymore! okay?



Before Yohji could stop her, Kyoko slipped into her apartment and bolted all the locks behind her. Tossing her jacket onto a nearby chair, Kyoko ripped open the letter from her grandpa and started reading it. She slid down onto the sofa and rolled her eyes at its content.

“Oh, this is rich,” Kyoko growled softly. “Not only am I an eighteen year old virgin but that’s the reason vampires can sense me!” She huffed in disgust just before her eyes widened at the last line in the letter. “You want me to WHAT?” Kyoko screeched.

Her grandfather had just ordered her to find a boyfriend or he would tell Tasuki where to find her.

“Grandpa!” She seethed as she crumpled the letter in her fist. “YOU PERVERTED JERK, YOU COULD HAVE TOLD ME THIS A LONG TIME AGO!”

Amni had stared Yohji down until the creep went back into his apartment. “I’ll get even with you for touching her later,” he informed the closed door then turned to knock on Kyoko’s. His hand halted in midair wondering who she was yelling at.

There was a soft knock on her door and Kyoko stormed across the room. She quickly undid all the locks and nearly tore the apartment door off its hinges before glaring at the poor soul on the other side.

“WHAT?” She demanded.

Amni backed up a step and raised his hands in front of him. “Calm down Kyoko, I was just making sure you were all

right.â## Although he would admit anger looked very sexy on her, especially when her breast rose and fell like that.

Kyoko sighed and leaned her temple against the door jam. Amni was the bartender downstairs at the club. Theyâ##d struck up a type of friendship not long after she moved in. Amni was very cute with blonde hair that hung in layers around his face and down his backâ# the longest layers barely touching his upper thighs. His skin was clear of any blemishes and had a silky appearance that Kyoko was sure any girl could get used to.

He would have been her first choice for what Grandpa Hogo had suggestedâ# too bad he was a vampire. That was an odd, if not disastrous relationship waiting to happen if it ever came to passâ# which it wouldnâ##t. Amni had never made any moves to kill her or bed her for which she was grateful. It was all for the best anyway, because she wouldnâ##t be caught dead with a vampire as a boyfriend, not in a million years.

Amni stood patiently outside her door and studied her tired expression. Heâ##d first met Kyoko in this very hallway the same night she moved in. It still made him a little high when he realized the full implications of that very meeting.

Sheâ##d just come out of her room and was locking it when he stepped out of his. They both froze and stared at each other. Her right fist was balled up and he saw the glowing spirit dart clenched tightly within it. After staring at him for a few moments, she turned to face him but stayed next to her door, leaning on it.

Amni carefully walked down the hall toward the stairs and

breathed a sigh of relief when he finally made it down to the club. Later that evening, or early that morning if you will, he came upstairs ready to shower off the smells of the bar from his body. Again he saw Kyoko standing outside her door and remembered wondering if she stood there all night.

As he walked by her toward his own door, she finally spoke to him.

"I know what you are," Kyoko said softly.

Amni stopped but kept his back to her hoping she would see it as a sign of trust. "I have a pretty good idea what you are as well."

"Then I propose a truce," Kyoko stated.

Amni finally looked back at her curiously. "Why didn't you kill me last night?"

Kyoko crossed her arms over her chest having thought about it off and on all night. The truth was she simply didn't want to. "You don't kill humans to feed," She had been more than grateful to find all the empty Red Cross blood pints in his trash.

"My sustenance is delivered once a week," Amni explained secretly wondering how she already knew.

From that point on, Amni had become Kyoko's friend, brother, protector, maybe more. He wasn't really sure what word he would use to describe their relationship. All he knew was that they sort of looked out for each other.

"I'm all right," Kyoko answered, drawing his attention

back to the present. â##Just a bit stressed out.â##

Amni grinned, â##Yeah, Yohji can do that to you. Would you believe that he actually came onto me the other night? Talk about bent.â## It was a lie but the look on her face was worth it. The truth was, he had caught Yohji in the bar coming on to a girl that had already told him â##Noâ## way too many timesâ# but he would leave out that little detail.

Kyokoâ##s eyebrows shot up into her hairline and a disbelieving grin spread across her face. â##Oh my god, youâ##ve got to be kidding me?â##

Amni shook his head, â##Nope, I wouldnâ##t kid about something like that.â##

â##What did you do?â## She asked, wishing she had been a fly on the wall.

â##I knocked his drunken ass out and deposited him in his apartment.â## His smile widened, â##I would have loved to have seen his face when he woke up though.â##

Kyokoâ##s eyebrows raised a notch, â##What did I miss?â##  
â##Instead of putting him in his bedâ# I put him under it.â##  
His blue eyes sparkled mischievously.

Kyoko laughed and shook her head, â##You are priceless Amni.â##

Amni smirked, â##Now donâ##t go telling everyone thatâ# they might think Iâ##m a nice guy.â## His face softened knowing he had made her happy. â##I guess I had better head on downstairs before the place gets too wild without me.â##

“You are a nice guy,” Kyoko informed him. “I’ll see you downstairs in a little while.”

### Chapter 3 Hunger

Hyakuhei stood in front of The Underground. Normally he stayed away from this area of the city because it was heavily infested with half-breeds. It was also closer to his brother’s underground lair, making him wonder just who had named the small, overcrowded nightclub. It was not a good place for the girl to be.

He vanished and reappeared within its walls, taking a seat in the darkest corner.

Amni was still smiling when he opened the door and entered the club only to stop dead in his tracks. Something wasn’t right. His head snapped to the side and his eyes widened. Tadamichi? Jerking his gaze away, he took off behind the bar, completely disturbed.

Why was the Master here in his bar?

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Kyoko stood looking in the mirror wondering just how drunk she would have to get before she could go through with it. She fluffed her hair and started to change but didn’t decide what she was wearing would hopefully do the trick. She would just have to stop herself from punching whoever came on to her for once.

She nodded at her reflection, giving herself the pep talk of her life. “Ok Kyoko, you can do this. Think of all the vampires

you will be able to sneak up on if they don't sense your virginity coming. She rolled her eyes at the strangeness of that conversation. "Alcohol! that's what I need."

Within minutes she was sitting at the bar thinking about what Grandpa had said. She glanced up at Amni as he worked at mixing all the weird drink requests. She frowned wondering why he seemed so nervous. She tilted her head a little as she watched him completely miss the cup he was aiming for with the scoop of ice.

Hyakuhei felt her presence the moment she entered the room. He was in no hurry as he leaned back in the chair surveying her. The girl seemed not to pay attention to anything around her, leading him to believe she didn't want to be here at all, so why was she? He watched her in the mirror as she took a wall seat at the bar, confirming the fact that it appeared she would rather be alone.

He followed her line of vision and realized it was the bartender that held her attention, the blond vampire that had been nervously eyeing him.

Amni glanced again wondering if it was his imagination or not, but it seemed that corner had gotten even darker. Trying to pretend it wasn't bothering him, he leaned his hands against the bar and gave Kyoko a distracted smile, "Want a drink?"

"Yes," Kyoko informed him, the determination in her voice nearly making Amni fall over. "Long Island Iced Tea! strongest you can make it." She announced.

Amni faltered and looked around wondering if he stepped into the Twilight Zone for the evening. First, the vampire lord walks in and sits down like he owns the place, then Kyoko asks for an alcoholic drink. What next? Polar Bears performing the Nutcracker Suite?

His hand unconsciously went to his neck, remembering the night Tadamichi had turned him so long ago. Was he here looking to take another life? He pushed the thought forcefully from his mind.

Kyoko, Amni said quietly. I don't believe a drink is what you really want. Why don't you go back upstairs and get some sleep? That's better for stress than a hangover. I'm sure everything will look better in the morning.

Kyoko had told him many times that she was a non-drinker and there were already enough alarm bells going off tonight for her to be changing her mind. On many levels, he was glad she hadn't noticed the atomic bomb of all vampires hanging out in the corner and he would like to keep it that way.

No can do, Kyoko said with a pout. I've got some baggage I need to get rid of tonight and it's going to start with that drink you're going to give me.

All right, all right, Amni said now that she held his full attention. Retract the claws and stop hissing at me or you won't get any.

Kyoko glared and Amni chuckled. He wished he could fix whatever it was that was bothering her enough to make her drink.

She was the only one he knew whose life seemed to be just as complicated as his. Trying to cheer her up, he winked and turned on the charm.

“Well, it’s true,” He said while pouring the rum. “All that’s missing is the fur, tail and ears. You’ve already got the temperament and the attitude.”

Kyoko clawed the air in front of her playfully with a grin on her face. “Maybe I should go stand out in the alley tonight meowing off key and waiting for a furry boyfriend.”

Amni placed the drink in front of her before shaking his head. “And here I thought I was the only man in your life. You wound me Kyoko! I may need comfort.” He placed his hand over his heart for added affect, though somewhere deep down he wasn’t joking.

Kyoko paused with the drink half way to her lips. “Amni! stop flirting with me. It’s a bit disturbing.” She looked up still playing but as she held his eyes a second too long, her breath stilled within her chest. If only he wasn’t a vampire. Closing her eyes, she took a very, very long drink from the glass.

“I’m being serious,” Amni continued as they locked gazes in a silent battle of wills. “If you can’t tell me what is going on, then who can you tell?”

“I need another drink first.” Kyoko batted her lashes at him sparring for more time and courage to tell her dirty little secret.

Amni slowly made her another drink. He cringed at the urge



to jerk her upstairs and lock her in her room for the night. By the time he glanced back up and handed her the drink, her first one was empty. He started to press her but someone at the other end of the bar called out. With an agitated growl, he took off.

Kyoko watched him as he worked. Amni was right though, if she couldn't tell him, then who could she tell? In the entire city, he was the only one she could freely talk to, the only one she would call a friend. She felt her eyes water and wondered if she would be what they called a crying drunk.

No! She scolded herself and lifted the drink in a self-toast. Here's to losing one's virginity. She turned it up and didn't stop until the glass was once again empty.

Being a vampire had many perks and really good hearing was one of them. Amni pushed the mixed drinks in front of the noisy crowd but his wide eyes were on Kyoko as he watched her down her drink like it would save her. Lose what! He practically flew to her end of the bar and was staring her down when she opened her eyes.

Kyoko flinched seeing Amni so close so suddenly, then her lips parted as she realized, "You heard me?" She gulped trying to get over the burning sensation left over from the alcohol going so quickly down her throat. By the time she caught her breath, Kyoko could feel the drink start to work its magic.

Another, please. She pushed the glass back at him ignoring the giant elephant in the room that was now sitting between them.

The sudden anger that shot through Amni was tempered with pain. His blue eyes became a shade darker. His hands shook while he fixed ANOTHER drink for her. It didn't have the calming effect he was hoping for.

Yes I heard you! this is not the place for you to be getting drunk and horny. Keep drinking those iced teas tonight and you will be in the alley singing off key while a faceless male...

Kyoko's emerald eyes glowed defiantly, Sounds like fun! keep 'em coming.

Amni made a face. Oh that's low.

Kyoko grinned at Amni over the rim of her glass and the vampire couldn't help but return it. He had decided how he would solve this problem. He would let her get drunk! but he would not let her leave the bar! not in a million years. For now, he would play her little game of lets lose my virginity.

Kyoko sighed when Amni went back to the other end of the bar again. She reached across the counter and grabbed a straw this time. Why does it have to be something like virginity giving her away to the demons? It's not like she can ever fall in love with anyone. If she did love a guy! then she could never be with him because she would only put him in danger.

A face flashed in her mind's eye and she closed her eyes wanting to savor the picture! Tasuki. If she didn't love Tasuki then he would be her choice. It's because she did love him that she couldn't call him up and! let him help her solve her little problem. Slipping the straw between her lips, Kyoko

started drinking faster, trying to get up enough nerve to turn around and play â##Eeny meeny miny moeâ##.

â##Youâ##re really looking to get laid then?â## Amni questioned as he made her another drink.

â##Of course I am,â## Kyoko stated. â##But I donâ##t want to look like a slut by turning around.â##

â##Then use the mirror,â## Amni offered and breathed a sigh of relief when Kyoko brightened at the prospect. He didnâ##t want her turning around and spotting the vampire lord sitting in the corner. The ancient had been watching her since she came downstairsâ##! and in her current state, Kyoko was in no shape to protect herself and Amni wasnâ##t strong enough to fight him off.

â##What about that red head?â## Amni asked deliberately picking the worst looking guy in the room. If she were going to dream, then he would make it hard on her.

Kyoko squinted at the mirror before shaking her head. â##Heâ##s got no ass.â##

Amni rolled his eyes, â##Who the hell cares if heâ##s got an ass?â##

â##I care,â## Kyoko slurred. â##I need something to grab onto.â## For a moment, she remembered the imaginary guy she had described to Yohji a couple hours ago.

â##Okay,â## Amni conceded. â##How about the one with the spiked hair?â##

â##Can we just put an â##Lâ## on his forehead and cross him

off the list? Kyoko asked as she wrinkled up her nose then added, "And you happen to have crappy taste so far."

"That blonde over there is cute." He grinned knowing that guy only dated other guys she didn't stand a chance.

Kyoko shook her head and nearly fell over with the motion. "What are you trying to do Amni? He's about as unattractive as Yohji."

"You don't think the king of the third floor is cute?" Amni faked a look of horror then laughed at her deadpan expression.

The next twenty minutes were spent looking at the different guys in the club. One was a player, one was too thug, another was too old, too young, too fat, too skinny, too nerdy, too preppy and so on. Amni finally threw his hands in the air in surrender.

"That's almost every man in the club Kyoko," He informed her. "You're too drunk to really tell a good looking man and wouldn't know one if he bit you on the ass right now." He silently added, "thank god!"

Kyoko smiled drunkenly, "If he bit me on the ass, I wouldn't care what he looked like."

Amni's eyes widened knowing Kyoko was only trying to talk tough because he could smell her innocence.

"Big talk coming from a virgin who has never even been kissed properly," He grinned hoping he was right.

Kyoko coughed when the drink went down the wrong way. "What did you say?" She demanded then blinked refusing

to bring Tasuki into the conversation.

Amni smiled, "Don't be worried. I won't tell a soul unless you piss me off."

"What would you do if I pissed you off?" Kyoko demanded starting to really enjoy the high.

"Well, I'd probably stand up on the bar and announce very loudly that we have a virgin in house tonight and the bidding starts at five thousand dollars. Of course, you would only get twenty percent of it and the rest would go to me." He gripped the edge of the bar knowing he would outbid everyone.

"Why would I only get twenty?" she asked. "It's my virginity! I should be the one getting paid for it."

"Damn you're expensive," Amni grumbled.

"I heard that," Kyoko exclaimed and stood up on the foot bars of her stool. "I'll have you know I'm a very cheap date," she nodded.

"Cola and moon pies at my place after work," Amni said with a bright smile.

"I'm not going on a date with youuuu," Kyoko managed and caught herself before she fell over, then pointed a finger in Amni's face, touching the tip of his nose with it. "I'm going on a date with the first man that doesn't come onto me and treats me like a lady."

Amni arched an eyebrow, "This coming from the woman that's looking for someone to take her virginity? Do you even want to know what this guy looks like in the morning?"

###No,### Kyoko hissed and plopped back down on the stool but still didnâ##t lower her finger. ###I donâ##t want to know anything about him becauseâ#!### she paused searching for the words. ###â#!I have my morality.###

Amni chuckled, ###Kyoko, do you even know what morality means right now?â##

Kyokoâ##s face went blank, ###No,### She said in a deadpan voice. She suddenly looked down at her lap and back up at Amni. â##Iâ##m not wearing underwear.â##

Amni, with all his grace, fell over behind the bar while Kyoko continued to sit there with an expression of wonderment on her face over not wearing undergarments.

###Damn it!â## A disembodied voice muttered from behind the bar.

Amni stood up and looked at Kyokoâ##s face before he started laughing. He truly couldnâ##t help it. Heâ##d never seen the woman drunk and had to admit she was quite entertaining in this state. ###You never did tell me why you are so dead set on doing this.â##

Kyoko bit her bottom lip then told him the truth, ###IT is making me a target and IT is going to get me killed if I donâ##t get rid of IT.â## She chanced a glance up at him then quickly looked away. ###IT seems to be attracting moreâ#! dangers than I can fight.â##

Suddenly Amni knew exactly what she was babbling about and swallowed. ###Would you like another drink?â## he managed.

He had never thought of it like that but what she said was true. If he were to decide to drink from a human again, even he would pick her. It was a rare treat to find a virgin her age, it's like flavored blood.

“Another drink?” Kyoko asked then looked down at her glass. She held it up to eye level and turned it around as though searching for something. “It's empty.”

“No, really?” Amni asked mockingly before taking the glass away from her. “No more drinks for you tonight.”

“Hey!” Kyoko said a bit loudly. “I need that.”

“For what?” Amni inquired.

“So I can lose my virginity,” Kyoko answered. “I can't have sex without that glass.”

Amni placed the glass back on the bar and Kyoko glared at it.

“What's wrong now?” He knew it wouldn't be much longer before he helped her up the stairs and safely to her room.

Kyoko turned her glare on him. “Who drank it?”

“You did,” He informed her.

“I did not. It was full when you took it away. Who did you give a free drink to, and where's mine?” she accused.

“That was four drinks ago,” Amni pointed out trying to confuse her.

“Noooo,” Kyoko pouted. “I didn't even get a chance to enjoy it.” She pushed the glass back at Amni. “Give me another drink and make sure I enjoy it this time.”

“You enjoyed the last one,” Amni stated. “I’m cutting you off tonight.”

Kyoko smiled sexily at him. “What are you cutting off of me?”

“Don’t tempt me, Kyoko,” Amni answered then felt a silent threat. His blue eyes rose to meet the ebony ones across the room.

Hyakuhei sat watching the scene between the woman and the bartender, his eyes and his mood growing darker by the minute. He had silently observed as her gaze traveled around the room using the mirror to look at all the men in the bar. For reasons that eluded him, he was tempted to shut the place down just so everyone would leave. He did not want her looking at others.

This behavior, this sensation he was feeling, disturbed him.

The bartender was a vampire and the girl seemed very friendly with him. Hyakuhei looked the boy up and down while the girl conversed with him. He was young; still a baby in the vampire sense but something about the young man separated him from the other vampires Hyakuhei had encountered since coming to the city. The ancient shook it off; he would figure it out when the time came.

The bartender suddenly looked him straight in the eyes. He smirked and the man froze in place before visibly shivering and looking away. Now he knew what was so different about this one. He didn’t possess the uncontrollable bloodlust of most new



vampires. Perhaps he wasn't as young as Hyakuhei thought.

He latched on to the connection in the bloodline and peered into Amni's past, feeling his brother there. He closed his eyes as Amni's memories floated through him, so Amni had been Tadamichi's first, the one that had cured his loneliness. His eyes slowly opened now knowing why the vampire had been visually stalking him, he thought he was his sire.

For the underling not to feel the difference told of his relationship with Tadamichi, or was it evidence that he and his brother were truly the same? His amusement hit an all-time high when the young vampire placed another drink in front of the girl and she took a sip of it. The following scene made him want to laugh outright.

Amni took Kyoko's glass away from her and wanted to grin at the frown she gave him. He moved about grabbing the different bottles of rum to pour her another drink. Luckily, she looked away and he grabbed the non-alcoholic bottled mixture of Kyoko's drink of choice, Virgin Long Island Iced Tea.

Pouring the liquid over the fresh ice he'd just scooped into her glass, Amni decided to be cute and added a cherry and tiny umbrella to the drink before placing it back in front of her.

Kyoko turned back to Amni then looked down at the bar. Her face lit up when she saw her drink had been refilled. Instead of taking the first taste, she picked up the cherry by the long stem and placed it in her mouth. Amni swallowed as Kyoko's mouth moved around a bit before the cherry stem peeked out

from between her lips. She removed the stem and placed it on the bar.

“What do you think?” Kyoko asked after studying the cherry stem with intense scrutiny.

“I think you would be a lousy kisser,” Amni said in a deadpan voice after seeing the cherry stem had not been knotted with her tongue.

“What do you know?” Kyoko grumbled and took out the umbrella before swallowing her first taste. She froze with her head still tilted back before very slowly lowering her face until she was looking Amni directly in the eye. She swallowed the concoction and picked up the tiny umbrella. Without warning, she slammed the pointed end of the umbrella down less than an inch from Amni’s hand.

Amni, for once, was thankful for his quick reflexes as he jerked his hand away. “I told you that you were cut off for the night.”

“That tastes like crap,” Kyoko fumed. “If you’re gonna fix me something without booze in it then give me a ginger ale next time. And if you plan on cutting me off then you’re going to be paying my bar tab because I will be a very unhappy customer.”

“My god Kyoko!” Amni exclaimed dramatically, hoping the spark in her eyes would stay for a while. “You’re going to leave me broke. I won’t have a way to pay the rent.”

Kyoko smirked evilly. “Talk to Yohji! maybe you can cut

a deal.â##

â##You have a wicked streak, you know that?â## He put his palms down on the bar as he cocked an eyebrow wondering if she would admit it.

Kyokoâ##s wicked expression faded in an instant, replaced by one of complete innocence before tilting her head to the side. â##I do?â## She looked deep into his blue eyes feeling like she was falling into them.

Amni glanced down the long bar when he heard someone shouting for him. He leaned over the bar toward Kyoko, close enough that she could smell the cologne he was wearing. â##Donâ##t do anything stupid until I get back,â## he ordered and quickly went to get their drinks, leaving Kyoko alone.

Hyakuhei settled back in his chair, feeling a little calmer now that the bartender had moved away to wait on other customers. He watched as the girl leaned back a bit from the bar and pulled her hair up into a messy bun before continuing her scrutiny of the clubâ##s male populace in the mirror. By the godsâ##! she was tempting fate and didnâ##t even realize it.

He realized that his fangs had elongated to the point they were almost poking into his lower lip and his body was responding to her innocent action. His dark eyes were glued to her long slender neck and it wasnâ##t her blood he wanted to tasteâ##! it was her skin. He gripped the edge of the table just to anchor himself in place. The creaking of wood and metal reminded him of where he was and what he was doing.

Letting go of the table, he resumed watching her and saw that she appeared to be looking through the mirror right at him and smiling. He frowned and looked around before glancing toward the table closest to him.

He scowled when he saw a young man, barely in his twenties staring back at the auburn haired beauty and smiling in return. Hyakuhei released an uncontrolled growl low in his chest. He watched with immense satisfaction when the man's drink shattered in his hand, causing small bits of glass to cut into his skin.

The man cursed and quickly got up, heading toward the bathroom while cradling his injured hand. Hyakuhei smirked at the man wasn't looking at her anymore.

Kyoko frowned and sighed in frustration when the guy who'd caught her eye in the mirror suddenly jumped up and ran for the restroom. She let a pout appear on her face making the unseen stalker in the mirror smirk in amusement. Taking another drink of the non-alcoholic beverage Amni had given her, Kyoko decided not to look in the mirror anymore.

Her gaze, instead, drifted over to the dance floor where the lights were flashing in wild pandemonium. The sudden urge to join that writhing mass of bodies overcame her and she slid off her stool. Kyoko held onto the bar until she got her balance then started across the room intent on finding someone or anyone.

She wondered if this was what a cat felt like when it was in heat then blamed the thought on the alcohol and too much loneliness.

The atmosphere in the club suddenly changed, becoming thicker with dark power. Kyoko didn't feel it because the alcohol she'd consumed had dampened her senses to the point of uselessness. Had she been paying attention she would have seen four very attractive men step into the club.

Hyakuhei's attention was yanked from the girl when the four men walked in. He gave them a quick once over and sneered. On the outside to the unsuspecting humans, they just looked like four friends out for a night on the town. To Hyakuhei, they were vampires looking for their evening meal and perhaps a bit of foreplay.

He stood when the four vampires immediately split up going in different directions. However, one was headed for the dance floor with his eyes set on the auburn haired female that had captivated him. Hyakuhei's dark eyes scanned the room seeing the other three were now watching the dance floor with interest. As his gaze crossed the bar he noticed the bar tender felt the shift too even though he hadn't figured out where it was coming from yet. He had paled though and that was a neat trick for a vampire.

Kyoko swayed to the music, feeling a bit lightheaded but honestly, she didn't care. Even though her eyes were closed, she could feel someone's hungry gaze devouring her and it made her skin tingle nicely she could feel the gazes roam across her as if they were hands.

She slid her own hand across her body as she danced.

Concentrating on the music, she became lost in the motion as a pair of large hands placed themselves on her hips. They weren't hindering her movements, but instead were moving with her sensually.

Very slowly a warm body pressed up against her back and she leaned against it, letting her head fall back onto a broad shoulder. She couldn't help it and whimpered when the hands moved from her hips to her belly. She felt fingers brush her bare skin underneath the hem of her top while the other slowly moved up the front of her body, brushing over her breasts before gently cupping the side of her face.

"Dance for me," a dark, sultry voice whispered in her ear.

Kyoko felt her heartbeat slow down and she found it difficult to breathe. That voice was sex given resonance and she had to see the face that went with it. As she turned in his arms, the stranger pushed her outward then brought her back, closer than they were a second ago.

Her gaze met with a pair of deep blue, almost hypnotic eyes and her breath stopped in awe. He had long black wavy hair that swayed from side to side with their movements. Kyoko became contentedly confused when had she started dancing with him? His face was soft almost feminine in its perfection. He had a fading tan complexion that made her want to touch him with full lips that were a shade redder than normal.

Kyoko felt her body start to heat up from the inside or

maybe it was all the alcohol sheâ##d drank.

She could hear erotic music pulsing from somewhere and groaned when the manâ##s knee pushed itself between her thighs until his leg was pressed against her center. Kyoko couldnâ##t look away while her body started to move against his wantonly. It felt like every nerve in her body was alive with sensationsâ## she could even feel the air circling them in heat.

When she leaned back a bit to look up at him, his arm pulled her closer with a quick jerk and she gasped when she felt his lips against the skin of her neck. She could feel every inch of his body pressed against her as they continued the seductive dance. The rest of the room was spinning but he was very steadyâ## aligned with her and larger than life.

In her drunken state, she didnâ##t even realize that the music was starting to fade to a dull throbbingâ## all she knew in that moment was the man holding her.

Amni felt the wave of power rush through the club from the vicinity of the dance floor. It wasnâ##t unusual to feel it this time of night and he usually ignored it. Out of reflex, he looked toward the other end of the bar and noticed Kyoko was gone. His eyes widened and he did a quick sweep of the club.

The drink he was mixing fell from his hand and landed on the floor with a loud crash. He had chanced a look up at the mirrors behind the bar and saw Kyoko dancingâ## with herself! Her face was flushed with her lips slightly parted and eyes closed. He could have sworn she was in the middle of a climax.

Whipping around in panic, Amni rushed toward the opening in the bar so he could go out and drive off the demon holding her. He hadn't felt the craving to kill in so long it shocked him at how quickly the urge could return the urge to kill even his own kind.

Damn it, Kyoko. He growled from between clenched teeth. If she were this desperate desperate enough to take on a vampire, then he'd sleep with her and that would be the end of it.

Amni halted in his steps when he saw Tadamichi standing in his way. The vampire lord didn't even look at him but Amni knew he was standing there just to keep him from helping Kyoko. Amni moved close enough to be within touching distance of his master hoping he would take the subtle hint. When that didn't happen, Amni bowed his head slightly in strained submission. His blue eyes became overly bright and icy at the barricade but he would do her no good if he were killed for his insolence.

Sire please. She doesn't realize. Amni whispered knowing the ancient could hear him loud and clear. Let me by before she falls to the same fate I have. He silently cringed at the implied insult that had left his lips but never had he taken pride in the fact that he was a vampire. He had not asked for the curse. She is my friend.

The reply Amni received was a low growl that made the wine glasses behind him shake in their hanging devices.

I am not your sire, boy. Hyakuhei set him straight once



and for all.

Amni felt the shock settle within him as he nervously took a step back. His eyes widening knowing he had just met Tadamichi's legendary twin brother. This close, he could feel the difference between them and that difference made it hard to breathe.

He turned and grasped the edge of the bar while looking at Kyoko fearfully. That's when he knew for sure what the vampire on the dance floor was planning. Kyoko was so drunk, she didn't have a clue what she was dancing with or that she was a willing victim.

Hyakuhei crossed his arms over his chest while he watched the conceited vampire glance up at his comrades as if telling them he would get the first bite and they could have the leftovers. He felt complete calm settle over him but it was a lie it was the calm before the storm.

He felt the anxious presence of the bartender behind him. "You treat her as though she were yours." His voice held a dangerous tone as the mirror behind Amni cracked.

"No," Amni whispered finding courage and fear to be a fine line. "She is not mine. A woman like that belongs to no one." He stayed rooted to the spot not knowing what to do. He'd only heard Tadamichi talk of his brother once the night he had been turned. This was the man that had killed his sire, only to die himself as punishment for the crime.

Amni's thoughts flashed back to his master. Tadamichi had

placed him under a thrallâ taking his will to fight. The master had whispered to him of his lonelinessâ of his wicked desire for his twin brother. Amni had been privy to the knowledge of Tadamichiâs weakness and had therefore been turnedâ the first of Tadamichiâs children.

His gaze swept back to the brother whom heâd been a replacement for so long ago. Tadamichi had only wanted someone to witness his passing of timeâ the loneliness was too much for someone who craved attention.

Hyakuhei had to be a very powerful demon lord to have killed his brotherâ Amniâs sire. It made the blonde swallow hard at the sheer magnitude of killing intent the brothers possessed. For a momentâ Amni wondered what it would have been like to have Hyakuhei as his sire rather than Tadamichiâ to be his possession.

He could already see the difference between the twinsâ where one was a killerâ the other was deadly.

Kyoko was in a state of euphoria and her lips softenedâ opening slightly with pleasure while the manâs hands roamed her body, lightly touching under the back of her shirt. She couldnât suppress the shiver that raced down her spine when his hand brushed the small of her back. It was like soothing liquid fire roaring through her body, making her want more from him.

Hyakuhei watched the half-breed look away from the woman and nod over his shoulder at the other vampires that had come in with him. One by one, they started to move toward the

club's exit before stepping outside to wait on their evening meal. Hyakuhei saw the hungry looks in their eyes and knew it was more than just blood they would take from the girl.

His lips thinned as he tried to remain calm to wait it out. The sound of cracking glasses behind him told a different story. The hands that were touching her would soon feel nothing but pain.

Amni swallowed while his gaze went from the vampire lord, to Kyoko, to the glasses that were shattering one by one. He didn't need the attention of having a full out vampire brawl taking place in the club, but if that was what it took to save Kyoko, he would not stop it. The humans would only blame it on city drugs and violence. None would be the wiser.

Kyoko felt like she was dizzy, almost trancelike when the guy released her. She reached for him again thinking he was leaving only to have him bow slightly and hold his hand out for her to take.

"Come with me," tall, dark, and handsome whispered as if they were alone.

His soft voice seemed to echo within the room, drowning out the little bit of sound that was actually reaching Kyoko's muddled brain. She slid her fingers across his palm, feeling the fire and wanting it to burn, wanting nothing more than to go with him. His hand tightened on hers as he led her toward the door. "Come with me." The voice still echoed within her mind like a chanted request she couldn't refuse.

Hyakuhei observed as the half-breed led the hypnotized girl through the club, out the exit and into the treacherous night. He immediately moved away from his place at the bar, following the girl and cursing Tadamichi and his brood for getting in his way again.

His eyes widened when he heard the sound of his brother's haunting voice come uninvited within his mind. "Brother, you would slaughter my children for her? Save her then, you will only rip her to shreds later. You are a demon, a cold blooded killer, do you really think she will have you?"

Hyakuhei's vision swept across the room knowing his brother was close, watching him. "I did not ask you to stalk me Tadamichi. Have you become so bored with killing that you have decided to watch me do it instead?" With a deep growl he severed the link with his twin seeing the girl was already gone. He felt an uncontrollable jealousy flare within him at all who were trying to come between him and his target.

He felt more than heard an unseen whisper of movement coming from behind and abruptly turned, holding his hand out in front of him. His power blazed, hitting the bartender dead center in the chest.

Amni was thrown across the room, crashing into a mirror behind the bar and sending a shower of wine glasses spiraling in all directions. Almost all movement stopped in the club and Hyakuhei cursed at his own brazenness.

Amni stood up and met Hyakuhei's gaze a bit unsteadily.

They silently came to an agreement and turned their gaze to the other patrons of the club. Humans were not to witness such things.

Suddenly, everyone went back to what they were doing and Hyakuhei turned his back on the bartender, not waiting to see if doing a mind wipe on so many at once weakened the half breed or not. Let the underling clean up the mess! Hyakuhei had better things to do.

Stepping out into the night, he let a dark smirk spread across his face when he saw the three half-breeds start to fall in behind their friend and the girl.

“You want so badly to feel me brother? Feel this.” The words left his lips as his power surrounded him in a red haze that radiated outward. Feeling the shift in the aura, the three demons turned back to look at him, their eyes pitch black and glowing darkly. They hissed in fear and confusion, mistaking him for Tadamichi before slinking into the shadows in an effort to escape the rage within the air.

Becoming a blur of movement that the normal eye couldn't see, Hyakuhei slipped up behind the closest one and thrust his hand through the retreating half-breed's chest. He let a muffled gurgle escape from his kill before covering the demon's mouth with a clawed hand and twisting its head with a sickening crack.

The vampire stiffened as its face contorted, revealing its true identity before falling to the ground in a pile of dust and goop.

The other two half-breeds saw this and stared openly in horror at the vampire lord in their midstâ death had found them.

Hyakuheiâs eyes shown with fathomless ebony in the light from the street lamp before he slowly turned his attention on them. The remaining two demons hissed viciously at him before vanishing deeper into the shadows. Hyakuhei shook the remains of his kill off his hand in contempt and gave chase.

The second was much easier and soon found itself separated from its headâ quite literally. The thirdâ Hyakuhei decided to have a bit of fun with. Cornering him at the end of an alley, the half-breed demon made an attempt to scale the wall to get away from the ancient but Hyakuhei would have none of that.

Whimpering softly, the last underling made his final mistake and met Hyakuheiâs gaze. Taking a deep breath, Hyakuhei tilted his head to the side and held out his hand palm up for the vampire to take. The half-breed slowly staggered toward him, unable to resist the thrall of the vampire lord. Once within touching distance, Hyakuhei wrapped an arm around him, pulling him close.

âShe was not meant for you,â Hyakuhei whispered softly. He parted his lips, letting his fangs grow to their full length before sinking them into the throat of his kill. Part of him was disgusted with his actions but to take the life of another in such a way had its advantages. By taking the life of a vampire half-breed in this fashion, one could learn all of its knowledgeâ such as where others could be hiding.

Much to his disappointment, this one knew very little. He quickly withdrew his fangs taking a large chunk of flesh with them. Hyakuhei spit out the offending taste and let the body drop to the ground. He felt no sympathy when he saw the pleading expression on the face of his victim.

The blood that the scum had already partaken of for the evening was slowly running out of him; it didn't belong to him anyway. He would now be too weak to call for help in any fashion but Hyakuhei did not want to take the chance that the half-breed would live. Placing his foot on the half-breed's face, Hyakuhei put his weight on it, crushing its head.

He stepped back in satisfaction when the fluid burned off of his shoe and pant legs leaving the material untouched.

As the vampire expired and dissolved into a shapeless dusty puddle, Hyakuhei felt a bit more justified at robbing them of their prize and their lives. Now all he had to do was take care of their bold leader. He almost smirked at the title but it would best describe the filth at this point.

True, they did need a leader and Hyakuhei was pissed that Tadamichi hadn't taught these underlings manners or even vampire etiquette. All they knew was to bite them and leave them for dead as he'd recently overheard a half-breed say.

Tadamichi had turned them into nothing more than demonic bastards with no father to teach them morals of any sort, which always led them to make idiotic decisions. Didn't they know they were supposed to submit to an ancient if they ever

encountered one? Hyakuhei decided it didn't matter; he had killed them for their indiscretion.

He slowly turned in the direction the other vampire had gone. He fixed his collar and started nonchalantly following them. His feet moved silently across the pavement of the sidewalk and Hyakuhei resisted the urge to mentally fuck with the creature as he had so many others recently.

This new breed of vampire Tadamichi had created were a paranoid lot; ready to bolt at the first true sign of trouble. One thing they had not been taught was that only the strong survived beyond death.

He was starting to grow angry again wondering where this imbecile was taking the girl. The sidewalks were starting to get more crowded as they approached the center of downtown. Hyakuhei ignored the passes made at him by prostitutes; they were no better than the demons of the night. Every now and then a street lamp would suddenly shatter as he walked under it due to his repressed anger.

“What’s your hurry baby?” A whore asked as she stepped into his path. “If you’re chasing someone then I’d be more than happy to let you chase me.”

Hyakuhei gave the woman a death glare. At the same moment, the windshield of the car next to her blew outward, causing the people around them to cry out in surprise. The whore moved out of the way and Hyakuhei resumed his stalking. He knew at this point the girl would not get away from him; he would not



allow it. And if anyone else tried to stop him, he wouldn't think twice about ripping their heart out and shoving it down their throat.

The half-breed Romeo led the woman in his arms down the sidewalk. He couldn't believe his luck when his bloodthirsty friends suddenly disappeared from behind him. He quickly made the decision to keep her for himself, not wanting to share his dinner or the sex that would happen beforehand. He was in a hurry to make her scream one way or another.

He led the girl further downtown and smiled when he looked up and saw the classiest hotel in the city. With an arrogant smirk, he steered the girl past the front entrance and around the back to one of the pool areas that was always closed this time of night, perfect.

Reaching out, the hungry vampire barely used any effort at all as he broke the lock on the gate. Sliding past the privacy fence, he led the girl to one of the private pool cabanas and stopped. Turning the girl in his arms, he knew she didn't even remember the walk they had just taken. He hadn't even needed to put her under his thrall, whatever she'd been drinking had been enough.

He smiled wickedly before leaning down to kiss her, bringing her body back to life so he could take that life away.

Kyoko groaned in appreciation, so high on the alcohol that she wondered why she hadn't done this sooner. She gasped when she felt hands push upward beneath her top to slowly graze over

her hardened nipples before pulling the shirt over her head. The man started kissing his way down her neckâ# making her shiver and arch against him.

The hands roaming her body gently pushed her back to land on something soft. She turned her head to stare lazily at the pool just beyond the cabana entrance. A hand on her cheek turned her face forward again and she smiled when she saw the intense blue eyes of the man in front of her.

This had been what she wantedâ# this would solve everything. She closed her eyes loving the fact that her body was on fire, but even as the thought caressed her mind the flames turned into an inferno making her feel desperate.

She arched her back when his hands took full possession of her breasts this time, cupping and kneading them until she was whining with the ache deep within her body. Kyoko realized she couldnâ##t keep still as her body moved in rhythm as if she were still dancing only now lying down.

The vampire smirked down at her and decided to taste her before he entered her body. His fangs suddenly grew and he lowered his mouth to her neck where he whispered as if parting a dark secret, â##One thing I can promise youâ# this will hurt.â##

A strong hand on the back of his jacket suddenly pulled him away from his meal and he went sailing backwards through the night air into the pool, landing with a huge splash. He broke the surface of the water but froze when he suddenly found himself face to face with an actual vampire lord.

## Chapter 4 ###Heat of Possession###

###This girl has already been claimed,## Hyakuhei growled trying to shake the site of her response to this human turned cannibal.

The half-breed suddenly rose out of the water as if lifted by invisible strings and hovered over the water##s surface. Hyakuhei arched an eyebrow at the tenacity of this one. Granted, he was still only a half-breed but not a complete child to their ways## he summarized that this one had been turned decades ago.

###Get lost, she##s mine,## The vampire hissed. ##I found her.##

Hyakuhei glared at him, his anger reaching new heights making the pool water start to bubble much like a Jacuzzi.

###You wish to fight me for one single meal?## Hyakuhei asked in a low voice that had sent more than one creature running for their lives. ##So be it.##

The pool water was boiling now, splashing up onto the pool deck and hot enough to cause severe burns. Hyakuhei moved faster than the half-breed had ever seen and never would again. He didn##t even have time to try to protect himself, let alone fight back as his head fell into the boiling water, severed from the rest of his body.

The carcass fell into the water with a plop and started dissolving into a substance that reminded Hyakuhei of the slime that was found in children##s vending machines.

Turning away from the sizzling pool, he entered the cabana where the girl was still laying. She hadn't even noticed her partner was missing and was caressing herself with her eyes closed, desperately in need. He could feel the high of the sexual stimulant the other had placed on her mind and shook his head in dissatisfaction at the lingering taint of another man; he would erase it from history.

Leaning over her withering body, he reached out and grasped her chin, turning her face to his. He patiently waited until she was looking at him with those overly bright emerald eyes before he started his own process, by placing her under his own power. Normally when a female was placed within one's power, they would simply become obedient rag dolls who submitted to the vampire's every wish.

This girl seemed to be fighting back with such passion; such craving that it was almost painful to witness; as if displaying a thrall of her own. If such a weak vampire could send her into this kind of sexual height, then her need would now become such a craving that it would match his own.

The scent coming from her almost made him lose his grip on his building desire for the girl. This woman stirred that dormant part of him to a dangerous level. He had to get inside her and quickly.

Kyoko looked up at the man above her and for a moment didn't recognize him. Becoming completely still, she stared into what she had thought were blue eyes but now they had

somehow turned darker than midnight and fascinating. He looked like he was starving as he stared down at her. His gaze focused hungrily on her lips and she saw the raw longing in the depths of those midnight eyes.

Kyoko suddenly remembered describing him to Yohji and smiled when she reached up, sliding her fingers through his long black hair and touched her thumb to his pale cheek; he was even more beautiful than she remembered.

Hyakuhei abruptly pushed her back down against the soft padding of the lounge chair and held her there for a moment; glaring at her and her daring to captivate him. Hearing her whimper with need sent heat slamming through his body and almost brought him to his knees. His eyes narrowed wondering just who was more enthralled.

Unable to cage his hunger any longer, he quickly leaned down to capture her lips in a searing kiss and hummed in appreciation when she whimpered in response. Deepening the kiss, he slowly crawled up and over her, letting his hand trail up her thigh. Placing his other arm around her and lifting her slightly, he cupped her center fully in the palm of his hand and tightened his grip.

The woman instantly bucked against him and Hyakuhei was shocked to learn something he'd never expected; she wasn't wearing undergarments and the heat radiating from her felt like liquid fire. He felt himself harden in response, straining upward against his clothing. He growled refusing to lose control

so quickly and his need to dominate surfaced with a vengeance.

Despite his desire for her, Hyakuhei was still angry at her naivety and wanted to teach her a lesson about being more careful around men, especially ancient vampires that had a tendency to keep returning to a blood source that was pure and untouched by another. If he hadn't shown up, she would have been damned either way.

Dragging his lips from hers with a harsh breath, he ripped his hand from between her legs and placed it around her throat to keep her still, trying to calm them both.

Why would someone so pure wish to rid themselves of their innocence? Hyakuhei asked with a mesmerizing growl. Are you so eager to become a woman?

Kyoko swallowed hard, still under his thrall and stared up at him. Struggling to remember, her eyes widened as the words in her grandpa's letter came back to haunt her. I can't be a virgin anymore, will you help me? She whispered the plea and pulled at his shirt wanting nothing more than to rip it off him.

Hyakuhei growled low in his chest before standing up and taking her with him. He would be the only one she would ask that question, he would see to it. After giving her a chance to get her footing, he quickly pulled her shirt back over her head and swept her inside the Grand Hotel and into one of the empty elevators.

A few months back, Hyakuhei had found himself out in the early morning hours with no way to reach his home in time.

He'd been drawn to the Grand and now kept one of the penthouses there for his own personal use. With this amenity at his fingertips, he never had to check in.

It also helped that most of the night staff were vampires themselves and they were smart enough to treat him with respect. He'd later learned that Tadamichi owned the hotel but it made no difference to him as long as his twin stayed the hell out of his way.

Once the doors were closed, he pushed the girl up against the wall, slipping his fingers through hers and lifting her hands above her head. Keeping their hands locked above her would be the only way they would make it to his rooms with any sanity left. Unable to resist the seductive look in her eyes, he slashed his lips across hers hungrily knowing there was more than one way to be inside her.

Jerking her hands free, Kyoko wrapped her arms around his neck and lifted her legs until they were hooked around his waist. When he ground his hips forward and up, Kyoko gave a high-pitched whine and pushed down against him in response. She gasped for air when he pulled away from her lips and began leaving a fiery trail of kisses across her cheek and down her neck.

Her teeth sank into her lower lip when the tip of his tongue brushed against the tops of her breasts beneath the hem of her strapless top.

Her nails dug into his back while she pressed into the hard kiss. She didn't have a clue what she was doing so she let

her body respond the only way that felt right. Her body was screaming for him to take her and wondered why he hadn't done so yet. With all the pent up need the kiss was quickly turning savage.

After what seemed like an eternity, the elevator dinged causing both of them to jerk slightly at the sound.

Hyakuhei stepped back but didn't let her down. Placing his hands under her thighs, he kept her right where he needed her. He carried her to the door of his penthouse suite while his lips fed off hers. Reaching around, he pressed his thumb against the small black screen next to the door. There was a beep and the door unlocked. Hyakuhei pushed the door open with his foot only to kick it shut behind them.

The interior was dark but that didn't matter. With an impatient glance the fireplace lit as if obeying his command. Needing to regain his focus, Hyakuhei released her and let her legs slide down him to stand on the floor. Placing a firm hand on her shoulder to hold her still, he wanted to look at her, knowing this passion was not normal and was getting way out of control on both sides.

When the woman pushed him up against the wall with more force than she should have had and started kissing him again, a growl erupted from deep in his throat and he gently shoved her against the opposite wall of the foyer keeping his body only inches from hers. Her face was flushed and her hair had fallen down in disarray, leaving soft locks hanging down in her face to



sway with each ragged breath they both took.

She looked like she was ready to fight him and her emerald eyes had grown stormy, making bolts of desire streak down his stomach and up his thighs as he watched her. Hyakuhei suddenly felt it in his bloodâ€”thumping deep under his skin. Heâ€™d been waiting on something as long as he could remember and had now found itâ€”her.

Her hands were on his black leather jacket, nearly ripping it off of him. She tossed it aside and Hyakuhei heard it hit the back of the sofa before falling to the floor. His shirt didnâ€™t last long as she ripped it open, sending buttons flying everywhere. He had a feeling he was going to need new clothing for years to come for he did not intend to let her go.

â€”I want you,â€” Kyoko urged against his lips then forcefully pushed him away as if rejecting him.

He stood to his full height as a wicked fire began to burn behind eyes of darkness. â€”Itâ€™s too lateâ€” youâ€™re mine now.â€” His voice was deep as it echoed past them.

Hyakuhei wasted no time re-imprisoning her within the steel band of his arms and picked her up so she could not try that again. He felt his blood heat to a dangerous level as her legs wrapped around his waist once more.

Pushing back the urge to give her what she was asking for right there in the hallway, he carried her into the bedroom. He could taste the alcohol on her breath and wanted to kiss her so deeply that he would feel the intoxication as he drank her.

Dropping her none too gently on the bed, he stepped back as she quickly came up on her hands and knees and watched him circle the bed. Again he wondered who was stalking whom as he slowly disrobed from the little clothing she'd left him wearing. His hands were steadyârelentless as she followed his every movement with one of her own. He would later wonder who was undressed first.

Kyoko's lips parted when she found herself on her back surrounded by a curtain of ebony silk as his hair swung forward around themâblocking all else from her view. Her hands were pinned to the mattress on either side of her as he hovered just out of her reach, making her growl up at him.

Hyakuhei took it as a sign of defiance and the alpha male in him took over wanting to dominate her completely. Placing his thigh between hers, he swiftly pushed them apart and rose up on his knees. Bringing his hands slowly down her arms and ribs, he cupped her hips and raised them high into the air, surging forward as he kissed her inner thigh in a heated trail straight to the center of her.

Kyoko screamed, the movement had been so fast and before the scream ended, her breath stilled within her burning lungs as his tongue slid upwards across the opening of her nether lips only to trail back down them a little deeper. Her hands fisted in the sheets as she arched her back even more. She panicked feeling something within her break with such force that her body vibrated from the inside as the scream came againâsounding

more like the pinnacle between pain and pleasure.

Hyakuhei gripped her hips, wrapping his fingers around the softness as he deepened his kiss when she reached her peak so quickly. He wanted to devour her and growled with pleasure knowing he was the first and would be the last to ever taste her heaven.

When he growled into her, Kyoko bucked then went limp as she broke again. She could feel him drinking her and leaving her lost within the earthquake. As she whimpered, she reached out and grabbed a handful of his hair, trying to get away from the intense pleasureâ€¦ only to find that now she was holding him in place and moving against his mouth as she cried out.

Hyakuhei felt like he was being possessed by his need for her as he lifted his head and roared, dropping her back to the mattress and sliding his body back up and over hers in one fluid dominating movement. He had waited so longâ€¦ longer than timeâ€¦ he had always wanted to possess her even though he couldnâ€™t remember ever meeting her. He licked his lips before descending on hers and moving his lower body back between her legs.

Heat seared through him as the head of his rigid staff came flush against her entrance. The time for wanting was over.

All breath left her as the dark angel thrust forwardâ€¦ breaking her blood bond. She turned her head from side to side in fear, hearing frantic whispers all around her of things that were not meant to be. She could feel auras of light trying to pull her away

from him but when her eyes once again focused on him; all was silent except the thick pounding ache between her thighs.

He held himself still above her, having heard the same voices she had. Possessive jealousy swept through him daring the ghost to just try to take her from him. Seeing her gaze now centered on him, he withdrew from her tightness only to slam back into her while she watched him. Her lips parted as he gave her a new high; one the voices of the damned could not penetrate.

His arms shook as he slowed down to a hard thrust; never taking his eyes off the passion that glowed from her. They were equal now as she raised her hips to meet his, only to cry out with every pounding; leaving her struggling to get away and closer at the same time. He could feel her squeezing him tight from the inside and groaned as he fought to quicken the pace.

Kyoko grasped his ribs in an effort to hold on as she felt the lightning strikes race down her and across her thighs in rhythm with her heart beat.

Seeing he had won the battle, Hyakuhei slowed down teasingly and his lips worshiped hers, licking and scalding before becoming demanding once again as he sped back up, giving her no rest. As he moved up and down her, he knew he would never be finished with her; never satisfied enough to stop.

Sliding his arms around her, he reared back on his knees; bringing her up with him. Pulling his palms back around to her hips, he held her up, then lowered her back down on him; watching her head arch back and roll around to her shoulder,

bringing a tidal wave of auburn hair with her. Pulling her legs around him, Hyakuhei climbed off the bed, pushing her against the wall as he continued to bring her up and back down with more forceful movements.

As she moved, Kyoko couldn't take her eyes off his perfect full lips now that she was raised just an inch higher than him, only to come down lower with every thrust of his hips. She gritted her teeth as he ground up against her and she lifted one hand up over her head, trying desperately to find something on the wall to hold on to. Her world tilted as her back left the wall and he landed on the bed with her still on top.

Finally having the control she had craved, Kyoko grabbed his hands and held them fast to the bed as she lifted her hips almost releasing him only to slam back down on him. She could feel every inch of the man under her as she began to rock back and forth in a grinding motion. Lifting her gaze from him, she tried to catch her breath without stopping the motion.

Hyakuhei took in the goddess above him and knew it wasn't a lie. She'd been born only for him and he had waited so long that he'd forgotten her. He could feel her soul calling to him from the past and he twisted his hands from hers only to grip her wrist firmly and pull her down against him. Rolling over on top of her without losing rhythm, Hyakuhei marveled at the heat only she had ever created within his cold blood and he felt his fragile hold on sanity snap.

He could hear her rapid heartbeat, the pounding of her

lifeâ€™s blood was calling to him. This was the only heaven heâ€™d ever known as he surged forward, driving himself as deep within her as he could. Lowering his lips to the arch of her neck as she strained away from him, Hyakuhei couldnâ€™t hold back.

Refusing to rip into her like his mind was screaming for him to do, Hyakuhei laid his lips and teeth against her as he used his powers to take her to a speed she couldnâ€™t match. As she climaxed, he let his fangs break her delicate skin with the least amount of damage, wanting to taste her this time from deep within in every way possible.

She would become the most important thing in his life, eternal soul matesâ€”it wasnâ€™t a lieâ€”he could taste it.

What he had given and taken had now weakened both of them and stolen his will to hold back. Feeling her peek again, he jerked his mouth away from her sending echoes of harsh ragged sounds around them as he felt himself break and spillâ€”pumping into her with every heartbeat.

Moments later, his arms gave way and he rolled to his side, taking her with him. The room became silent as he listened to the sound of her breathing, knowing she had fallen into a deep sleep as a combination of the spirits she had drank, and the blood heâ€™d taken from herâ€”mixed with the passion of their mating.

Hyakuhei tightened his arms around her not wanting to miss a thing but he could feel the unwanted sleep creep across him like the uninvited hand of fate.

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Miles below the hotel room, deep within the catacombs, the violent screams and whispers of denial had finally stopped. Tadamichi raked his sharp claws from his red eyes, down his cheeks as his sight returned to him. He glared at the statues of the guardians around him knowing that was the closest they had ever come to breaking through the heart of time. They could feel her and the chains holding the time portal closed had almost been unraveled. They almost come for her.

He felt his brother's surrender to the priestess and now that the vision was gone, Tadamichi screamed out in rage again raking his claws across his face as if trying to tear off some unseen mask. It was the vibration of fury still coming from the statues that was making him lose his mind and he stumbled to his feet wanting no more of it he was already covered in it.

Turning, he ran through the tunnels his feet leaving the ground as he became the darkness he was so fond of. Releasing some of the rage within his body during flight sent echoes of power out in all directions leaving his underlings scurrying into hiding. Moments later he found himself within his brother's room staring down at the exhausted couple.

Tadamichi's eyes turned back to ebony as his gaze caressed his brother's body spooned so perfectly against the girl's soft curves. Their skin was still damp from their mating. He felt the same rage the guardians had and barely had the willpower to override it.

She was beautiful just like he remembered her. He thought

he would have felt the need for vengeance as he inhaled the fresh mating mark that surrounded herâ# and Hyakuhei. His brother wouldnâ#t even realize what he had done. Heâ#d trespassed across a line that was never to be breached and there would not be any coming back from this.

He would do what he could for his brotherâ# but the damage had already been done. His brother had betrayed himâ# not by making love to a girlâ# but by making love to this girl. He reached out to touch her only to pull his fingers back at the last instant in fear that he would not be able to stop. He and his brother would both die for herâ# by killing one another. There is no way Hyakuhei could ever love her more than him and that would be their downfall unless it stopped now.

Fate had separated them long ago and the guardians had sealed the pact, so why would the gods taunt him in such a way as to let his brother have the one thing he was denied? Or would the fates step in to leave his brother's heart bleeding as they had his so long ago? A deep sadness crossed his eyes knowing what must be done before it was too late.

Tadamichi tried to reach out with his mind to take away the memories of this night from her. He would only be able to skim the surface of her mindâ# he had no power over herâ# not nowâ# not in the past.

They had been lovers once, just as Hyakuhei and she were lovers now. He and his twin were more alike than Hyakuhei would ever admitâ# right down to their soul mate. Had she been



looking for him, only to find Hyakuhei instead? She might not remember, but her soul would never forget. His eyes darkened with the thought even while he fought the hope of it.

The thrall of a vampire would have never affected her if she hadn't weakened her mind with the strong alcohol he now smelled on her breath. If she'd never drunk the spirit water before, then its power may have been enough so that the thrall had never taken affect; he could not be completely sure.

The sad part is that once she had her powers back, his brother would have no hold over her either.

Using his powers on the priestess was staggering, making his body tremble with the effort. The most he could do was try to remove his face from her mind's eye; his brother's face. As he tried to go deeper, he could feel the screams of the guardians there and he quickly withdrew, refusing to give their memory any power. It was best they remained only phantoms within her mind.

Knowing he'd only been able to take the edge off her memory, Tadamichi fell to his knees beside her on the floor. So long ago he had fallen in love with her; was this now his punishment? He could not harm her in any way or the spell on the guardians would be broken and they would come for him with a vengeance. It would almost be worth it for a moment with her.

His gaze rose to his brother, thankful Hyakuhei had never met her in the past or the guardians that had stolen her from him; that was his cross to bear.

Giving fate the helping hand it needed, Tadamichi felt dawn coming and swept his fingers across the girl's aura to wake her, knowing Hyakuhei would not have the energy just yet to awaken. He watched as soft light began to filter within the thick curtains and he stood within its beams for a moment longer before he backed into the darkness.

He only hoped the priestess would be smart enough to leave and never look back. If Hyakuhei had found what he had longed for it would now be a fight between purity and the evil it attracted.

His gaze worshiped his brother for several heartbeats knowing this time evil had a heart. But if he couldn't have her then neither could his brother.

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Kyoko awoke in layers and placed a hand over her eyes. She half expected the sun to be shining in her face but after cracking her eyes a bit, she realized it was actually nice and gloomy in the room. She lifted her head, almost whistling in appreciation at her surroundings. Wherever she was it was a top of the line place.

She rolled to the side a bit but stopped when she felt the heavy arm lying across her waist. Glancing back, all she saw in the shadows was long black hair and the outline of a gorgeous body; she sighed happily. It had finally happened. Now Grandpa wouldn't have to send Tasuki to save her from her virginity.

She cringed silently knowing Tasuki would never forgive her

for this if he found out but it wasn't as if she would ever see him again. This guy or Tasuki. Her bottom lip pouted at the lonely thought.

Carefully sliding under the heavy arm and out of the bed, Kyoko realized she was as naked as her day of birth. Blushing twelve shades of red, she quickly grabbed her strapless bra from the floor, putting it on in record time.

"Please, please, let him stay asleep," She whispered nervously as she kept her back turned to the man.

Her cheeks were flushed with embarrassment over waking up next to an equally naked man. She'd caught a glimpse of his body when she threw back the covers. To make matters even worse, she'd decided not to wear underwear the night before. The man probably thought she was a total slut. Her movements slowed as she felt the ache within her body. She felt like she had lost a fight. Her arms and legs hurt but what made her eyes widen was the strange thick feeling between her thighs.

After searching for a few minutes, she found all of her clothes and realized she didn't have a jacket to cover up her low cut top. Her gaze fell on his leather jacket and she grabbed it without thinking twice.

She made it to the front door and stepped out into the hallway while trying to pull her skirt on at the same time. She froze when she heard the sound of a cart being pushed along the carpet. Jerking her head up, she caught the shocked gaze of a young man delivering room service down the hall.

Kyoko quickly zipped up her skirt and pulled the shirt over her head then slipped into the jacket before running to the elevators. Once inside the relative safety of the elevator car, she slipped her shoes on and tried to fix her hair in the mirrored doors.

When the doors opened, Kyoko walked as nonchalantly as she could to the entrance and stepped out onto the street burying her hands in the deep pockets of the jacket. Her fingers brushed against something in the pocket. She almost stopped and pulled it out but decided to wait until she got closer to home just in case she had woken him as she left.

Looking over her shoulder with a mixed feeling of sadness and paranoia she whispered, "Thank you! you'll never know how much."

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