

SHADOW OF DEATH

BLOOD BOUND SERIES BOOK 8



AMY BLANKENSHIP, R.K. MELTON

Blood Bound Book

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Shadow Of Death

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Within the heart of the Demon War nothing can be taken for granted as it sends the destinies of those involved into a most dangerous and seductive form of chaos. One man finds out that strangers can collide in the dark for a moment of blinding passion, only to be separated by the cold hand of fate without even a name to help in his hunt for her. Another man will find that when the Shadow of Death becomes a stalker, the most seductive of enemies can quickly become his strongest ally... even if it's against his will. And can the heart of one soul mate keep the two men who love her from killing each other?

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Shadow of Death
Blood Bound Series Book 8
Amy Blankenship, RK Melton
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Chapter 1

Chad and Trevor were currently participating in the battle of the century, one that only few could survive and walk away without serious injury... a glaring contest.

Finally Chad gave in and blinked his eyes, "I told you Trevor, there's nothing wrong with me. Trust me, if I had any supernatural powers I would use them on you right now. Even Ren says I'm still completely human and I don't have any side effects."

Chad looked away from Trevor and set his gaze on Ren, "Come on, back me up on this."

Ren shrugged but ignored Trevor knowing it would be Storm's decision whether Chad was off the hook or not. "I don't feel any kind of power coming from him... zilch. He's still human as far as I can tell. Kriss said that he might heal faster than normal... at least for a while."

"So we don't know if his resurrection is permanent?" Storm asked enjoying the comic relief of Chad and Trevor's argument. It was amazing at the things that seemed to entertain him lately.

Ren shook his head playing along with Storm's train of thought, "It's really hard to say. The only way we'll know for sure is if he's killed again and comes back to life."

Chad took a step back from the group and held his hand up, "Don't even think about it. I'm not a lab rat and I kind of like the fact that I'm breathing."

Storm's lips twitched but he held it in for Chad's sake. "Then we can safely assume he isn't going to sprout wings and fly off." He lost the little war with the suppressed smile when Chad looked at him like he'd lost his mind.

"Please tell me your joking," Chad stared at him hard because when Storm said something like that most people took it seriously.

Deciding not to answer that question, Storm turned his attention to Trevor who was also giving him an odd look. "I see no reason why Chad has to stay at the castle if he doesn't like it here. Have any clues turned up yet on why he was targeted in the first place?"

"NO, and I've had wolves watching and going over his apartment every day but the murderer hasn't shown his cowardly face," Trevor answered. "The wolves would have smelled a demon if it were still sneaking around. But still, I don't think he needs to go back there. It's obviously not a safe place."

"Will you stop talking about me like I'm not standing right here? I'm a grown man and can take care of myself," Chad narrowed his eyes on Trevor. "You can't still be planning revenge for my death when I'm not dead."

"You were dead," Trevor shot back. The two men squared off in another staring contest.

"Let's make a deal," Storm laughed at his own private joke. "Micah and Titus, along with most of the pack are living at Night Light. There's a lot of extra room in that huge club and, you already work with most of them at the station anyway. If you don't want to stay here, then why don't you agree to live there with the wolf pack?"

"Sounds good to me," Trevor said confidently. "It's not as safe as living here at the castle, but it's a step up from living someplace where a murderer can just walk in and kill you."

"Who died and made you the boss of me?" Chad nearly yelled at Trevor.

"You did dummy," Trevor smirked at how easy that one comeback was.

Chad frowned at the thought of going from lab rat to stray puppy. "What gave you the idea they would even want me there?"

"Your sister," Trevor sighed dramatically, using his trump card for all it was worth. "Actually, Envy threatened to burn down your apartment if she caught wind of you ever going back there to live alone."

"What?" Chad made a face at his partner, "You're making this up as you go... aren't you?"

"Envy didn't think you would like to live with her because of all the action going on at Moon Dance right now. It's been hectic over there since they started getting ready for their annual Halloween

bash and renovating the place at the same time. So, they all got together and talked about it... and since Night Light is shut down for the time being, it's kind of become the main hang out for all of the cops. They figured you'd feel right at home."

Chad resisted the urge to growl at the three men who seemed to be ganging up on him. He was starting to feel like he was being babysat, but at this point he was willing to do just about anything to get away from the castle. He'd swear they'd put him under a microscope if he agreed to it... it was a weird feeling to say the least. He was the only human living in this castle yet he was the one being treated like the freak.

"Come on Trevor, I'm sure Evey is bored. She can give us a ride to see Envy and while I'm having a chat with my sister... maybe you can introduce Devon to your very interesting car," Chad said with a glare then strode out of the office.

Trevor watched him go before looking over at Ren, "You know... if Evey hadn't grown on me, I'd be extremely pissed at you right now."

Ren smirked, "Just be good to her. She loves you." He laughed when Trevor rolled his eyes and followed Chad out the door.

Angelica looked down into the entrance of the subway then up at the sun knowing she was going to miss it due to the fact that she was getting ready to go underground. She'd needed to get away from the castle... to be alone for a little while and actually work. Syn had been very helpful as a partner for the last week... but for her own sake she needed a little bit of separation right now.

While she had to admit that she enjoyed Syn's attentions, when she'd woken up earlier and he wasn't there, she'd started looking for him. It was a bit of a wakeup call... she'd never looked for anyone like that in her life and here she was... craving him.

She was high strung enough as it was with all the sexual tension sizzling between them... the last thing she needed was for it to be her fault that she started depending on him for company. To make matters worse, she'd had another dream right before leaving the castle. She shouldn't have let it bother her, but since it was only the third dream she'd ever had in her life... it bothered the hell out of her.

The other two dreams had been nightmares about a creepy little demon girl and a city of blood... but not this one. She'd been making love... it was as if she'd opened her eyes in the middle of the dream to find herself laying under a man on a bed of moss and looking out at a waterfall that emptied into a lagoon only inches away from her.

Turning her head to see the man deep inside her... she'd locked eyes with Syn and jerked herself from the dream.

Unable to completely deal with how the dream had made her feel, she'd gone to Ren's office and searched his maps, picking the hottest spot of demon activity. She'd also packed an overnight bag with every intention of getting a hotel room for the night and snuck out of the castle with no one being the wiser. Just for one night... to remind herself that she would be just fine alone.

Glancing over her shoulder one more time to make sure she wasn't being followed, Angelica started down the steps into the subways that ran under LA. This was one of the places she had avoided so far due to the fact that anything could be down here ready to pounce. But Ren had marked this area on the map as a hot spot and as far as she could tell, it wasn't coming from the street. That left one other place it could be... underground.

She frowned when she saw a large man coming up the stairs toward her and moved a little closer to the wall to avoid him. However, the man must have been in a foul mood because he purposely bumped into her, almost causing her to lose her footing and fall the rest of the way down the steps. The people walking by didn't seem to notice and her frown deepened when one of the subway cops approached her.

"Are you all right Miss?" the officer asked wondering if she was high. "I saw you stumble and almost fall... do you need any help?"

Angelica's frown deepened and she looked back up the steps at the large man that had bumped into her. No one seemed to see him, yet people walked around him as though he were there.

"No," she said softly, "I'm fine."

The officer nodded and kept going but Angelica narrowed her eyes before looking back down into the dimly lit station. Syn had taught her how to hide her own energy so whatever she was tracking wouldn't know she was coming. Considering an invisible demon had just plowed into her and kept going... it seemed to be working just fine.

She frowned again wondering why she had the gift of seeing the grumpy demon plain as day when other humans couldn't. Deciding to deal with her identity crisis later, Angelica readjusted the strap of her overnight bag on her shoulder and continued on down toward the strongest source of demon activity.

Michael had been taking a walk through town making up his mind about what to do for the Moon Light Masquerade. He thought briefly about dressing up in costume but it didn't really appeal to him. Finally, he decided the best thing to do was to purchase a mask from The Witch's Brew, dust off his finest clothes he still had from the seventeenth century, and go as himself.

He'd just turned the corner when he saw Angelica standing at the entrance of the subway station looking down into it without Syn at her side. He watched as she looked up at the bright sky wishfully then descended down the steps into the dim interior.

With his interest peaked, Michael followed her discretely down the stairs. He didn't fear getting caught because the stairwell was full of people between them... he could quickly pull the shadows around him and hide from her if she turned around. Michael smirked wishing he'd known this trick when he was a child.

His eyes narrowed when he saw a large man purposely push Angelica against the wall and keep going. He was surprised by the instant rage he felt. Taking a deep, calming breath, Michael kept walking and blatantly put himself in the man's path. When the big man was in front of him, they both stopped and stared at each other. He suddenly had a flashback of something he'd once seen Damon do to a demon that had pissed him off.

"Where's the fire?" Michael asked with a cold smile.

The big man's lips parted, showing a mouthful of rotting teeth that made Michael almost sick. His hand flashed out and he palmed the center of the demon's chest... not hurting him, just simply touching him. He smirked seeing the demon's confusion.

"Ever heard of spontaneous combustion?" Michael asked curiously before pulling his hand away. "If not, you're getting ready to have a crash course on it."

Michael stepped back and quickly flickered out of sight when the demon looked down at his chest then screamed in agony. People around the man started yelling and running when his clothing began to smoke. Within seconds, all visible skin turned red before blistering and burning away like cinders in a campfire.

Angelica paused and looked back around the corner of the stairwell when she heard the man start screaming and wondered what the hell had happened. He had been a demon, she knew that much, but who had attacked him in such a painful manner? Angelica cocked an eyebrow actually wishing she'd thought of it first then sighed figuring it was probably another demon attacking it.

Shrugging her shoulders, she continued down the steps and smirked when she heard the unmistakable cracking of bones as they burned. Storm had been right when he'd said most of the demons would destroy each other. Angelica quickly moved out of the way when several subway security officers took off up the stairs to find out what had people in such a panic.

Michael wrapped the shadows around him and traced to the bottom of the stairs, staying out of sight as Angelica emerged. She walked right by him and he suppressed a smirk. He didn't know what she was doing down here alone but he was actually having a little bit of fun following his mother around.

He knew Angelica didn't remember him, but his own memories of her were crystal clear... even her name was the same. It was because of her that he'd never found a woman to love... no one compared to the way she had loved not only him, but the temperamental Damon as well.

He'd spent so long thinking the only form of true love was the love a mother had for her children. It wasn't until recently that the people around him had caused him to start second guessing that theory.

Angelica stood on the platform watching the people intermingle and go about their lives. Seeing a small boy peek around his mother at her and smile reminded her of what Syn had done at the hospital. She smiled back at the boy wishing she had the power to give him a demon repellent since his mother had unknowingly brought him down into this tunnel with a bunch of them.

She cringed realizing her thoughts had just went full circle... right back to Syn. Feeling a little reckless, she approached the guardrail that kept people from falling down onto the tracks and leaned over it a little bit, looking one way and then the other. Turning to the left, she followed the railing to the end of the massive room and leaned over it again to take a closer look into the tunnel.

All she saw was darkness broken by bits of light from the dim fluorescents that served to illuminate only a few feet around them. They were spread too far apart to be any real help. It was no secret that she hated tunnels and darkness. Right now she was actually wishing Zachary were here with her. With a wave of his hand, he could brighten up anything he wanted with a suspended flame.

When he'd first summoned the small flames in front of her just to show off, she'd called him her little fire fly for weeks. She smiled at the memory. At least Zachary could have provided some entertainment and he was a hell of a lot safer to team up with than a certain Sun God that made her want to press her thighs together in frustration.

Unzipping her shoulder bag, Angelica removed a palm sized crystal orb that she'd acquired from the castle's private arsenal and hopped down onto the maintenance walkway leading through the tunnel.

She didn't look back at the platform... if she had, she would have seen Michael slip into the darkness following silently behind her.

Michael continued to track Angelica's movements through the tunnel and turned his face away when one of the subway trains went flying by him back toward the platform. The draft it created made his hair and clothing whip around him but with it also came the scent of demons... a lot of them.

When he glanced down the tunnel again, he saw Angelica pause and look behind her. As he stepped into the shadows he frowned wishing she wasn't a part of PIT. No good son would like the fact that his mother's job was this dangerous.

Hearing what sounded like scratching underneath him, Michael stopped and leaned over the railing seeing the dark edges of a narrow passage exposed just under the concrete he was standing on. His eyes narrowed wondering what kind of monsters were down there.

Glancing back up the tunnel, Michael hissed not seeing Angelica. With all the hatch and maintenance doors, not counting the fact that there were sub tunnels under this one, he would have to figure out which way she had gone.

Speeding up his movement, he became little more than a blur, slowing down when he came to a cross section that broke off in four different directions.

"Syn," Michael whispered not liking the odds.

He felt Syn brush against his mind letting him know that Angelica was all right and in good hands. He wasn't about to ask his father any questions about that and almost wondered how Syn knew he was there. It would have been a stupid question... Syn always knew where his children were.

Michael looked to the far left, sensing his father's aura down the darkest tunnel and felt relief knowing his mother was safe. Feeling the vibration of another train coming, he leaned back against the wall and stared straight into the long train as it passed.

Sharpening his sight, he caught the quick images of people in their seats then noticed something else. As each separate car went past... there was a lapse between them to where he could see the

other side of the double track. Standing there staring back at him was a woman with long platinum blond hair blowing around her from the wind coming off the train.

Michael no longer cared about the passengers as he focused only on her. She was dressed in an oversized white shirt that fluttered from the pressure of the air. He noted the top four buttons were undone and dangerously close to exposing more than just her flawless cleavage.

He lowered his gaze to see her shirt came to mid-thigh along with the edges of a black pleated skirt that was covering maybe two inches more than the shirt was. The bottom of the cloth was followed by long shapely legs. Slowly raising his gaze back to her face, Michael wondered if she had enthralled him. Even dressed like a street rat, she was the loveliest thing he had ever seen.

Aurora had been caught off guard when she'd felt the power near her skyrocket and crept out of her hiding place. She readied herself for a fight thinking maybe one of the master demons had caught her scent and was closing in on her. She was tired of running from the powerful ones... she'd been running from them since escaping Samuel and coming through the rift.

She wasn't a coward though... she'd killed most of the demons she'd come across, but there were those that actually frightened her so she'd spent an equal amount of time trying to stay one step ahead of them. She knew what would happen if she was captured by the wrong demon... Samuel had taught her that lesson the hard way.

Zeroing in on the soul in front of her now, she felt confusion having nothing to compare it with. The soul wasn't human... nor was it demon. It was more akin to staring into the sun. Her lips parted as she drew her gaze away from the soul and looked at the man with strange amethyst eyes in wonder.

Michael gripped the guardrail ready to leap over it as the end of the train came closer. No matter what she was... she appeared lost and alone and she was staring at him as if he were her savoir.

Aurora inhaled sharply when he was suddenly inches in front of her but she still didn't feel the need to run or fight as she did with the demons. She slowly raised her gaze, pausing at his perfect lips before staring up into the most beautiful eyes she'd ever seen.

"You shouldn't be down here... it's dangerous," Michael warned fighting his instinct to reach for her... to save her from whatever she feared.

Aurora's eyes lowered right back to his lips as he talked and she took a step closer. "Are you real?" she raised her hand wanting touch his face but hesitated. "Can I touch you?"

"I wish you would," Michael breathed as every emotion within him strained to shatter. The second her soft fingertips touched his cheek, one emotion broke free of the rest... want. Dipping his head, he captured her lips in desperation.

Chapter 2

Aurora inhaled the stranger's shuddering breath, sliding her fingers into his silky hair to grip it and pull him even closer. She tilted her head back when his arm came around her like a steel band and jerked her flush against him. His show of strength didn't frighten her... it only made him more real to her.

Michael backed her up against the block wall as he deepened the kiss. He could feel the swells of her breasts touching his chest as she started moving against him in a very seductive rhythm but nothing could be more seductive than the sounds she was making against his lips.

He had a fleeting second where he wondered if she was some kind of demon that fed on sex then pushed the thought away. At the moment he didn't care... if that was what she wanted then he would feed her as much as she needed.

Moving his hand down to her upper thigh, he lifted her and guided both her legs until they were wrapped securely around his waist. As his hand slid up in under her skirt to hold her, he lost his breath again feeling her naked ass in the palms of his hands.

Michael growled straining upwards toward her. He couldn't have been any harder as he pressed himself against her core feeling her heat all the way through his clothing.

Aurora was heady with the sensations of being kissed so fiercely and held by the only male Fallen she'd ever encountered. Running her hand down his chest, she marveled at the rippling muscles the shirt concealed. In her rush, she didn't take time to expose what was hidden there... her true destination was lower.

She reached down between them and cupped the straining hardness she found there. It pulsed against her eager hand, causing her to make a strangled sound deep in her throat. On instinct, she used her hold on him to lift herself and quickly free his thickness from the confines of the cloth. In one smooth motion, she had him where she wanted him.

Michael pulled back from the kiss and stared into her eyes as the throbbing head of his erection pressed upward against her tight, heated opening. His breath left him when that tightness encased and squeezed the first inch of him with disturbing slowness. Their gaze held as she gripped his shoulders for leverage and pushed... impaling herself down on him.

The air rushed back into his starving lungs as he thrust upwards to get even deeper inside her. Did she have a clue what she was doing to him?

Surging forward, Michael trapped her against the wall burying his face in the arch of her neck when his fangs suddenly lengthened. He growled harshly against her ear and lifted her... only for her to fight the separation and force herself back down on him. She rolled her hips and ground against him shattering any control he had left.

Planting his palms against the wall on each side of her, they met thrust for thrust ignoring the train that was coming.

Closing his lips so she wouldn't see his exposed fangs, Michael leaned back and watched her ecstasy as the wind from the subway train made her hair flutter around her angelic face, her cries mingling with the thundering sound of the train as it passed. He felt her pulsate around him as she came and knew the sight of her like this would forever be ingrained within his mind's eye.

Aurora pressed her back hard against the wall, keeping one hand on his shoulder and moving the other up to grip a pipe that was jutting out of the wall above her. Using the pipe to her advantage, she pushed and pulled on it... forcing him into a harder faster rhythm.

This was different from the times Samuel had been inside her. This time, she hadn't had to fight and lose first, nor had she been seduced to the point of giving in just to satisfy the betrayal of her body.

Grinding herself downward on him ripples of sweet pain and disturbing pleasure gripped her and made her strain against him. Feeling him pulsate inside her the same way he had done in her

palm, the incredible sensation magnified tenfold. Unable to hold back, she threw her head back and cried out letting the sound disappear with the subway train as it roared pass.

Michael traced his lips across her exposed neck, reinforcing the rhythm she had demanded from the start. When she pressed her flesh harder against his lips, he jerked back before he tempted fate and moved his hand up under her hair to cup the back of her head. Using his other arm he trapped her, stalling her movements so he could slow the rhythm to a slow pounding pace.

After only a couple torturous strokes, she broke loose from his hold and rode him at a frenzied tempo... dominating him completely. Michael felt her sucking at the part of him deep inside her and growled as he tried to hold back. When she tightened around him and pulled upwards, he grabbed her and pushed her back down as she came.

Aurora threw her head back and arched... making no sound this time as all breath left her and bliss rushed in to fill her up.

Before he could stop himself, Michael struck... fastening his sharp fangs to her neck, breaking the skin as he came hard and fast... shooting his hot seed deep inside her.

Aurora jerked and her lips parted when she felt his fangs enter her. Samuel had done this... feeding on the power of her blood. Her first instinct was to fight, but the sudden spamming of multiple mind-blowing orgasms wouldn't let her. She whimpered through the blinding pleasure of it all realizing he wasn't a Fallen.

Michael felt their hearts begin to beat together as he gave one hard tug on her essence of life and swallowed. He quickly became disoriented as her blood entered him... unleashing something he hadn't been aware of. Retracting his fangs, the sound of their labored breathing filled the thundering silence.

Aurora gripped the front of his shirt and gazed up into glowing amethyst eyes feeling betrayed as his power spiked. Not trusting what was happening she used every ounce of her strength and pushed him backwards, landing on her feet when he went through the railing instead of over it.

She clenched her fingers around the piece of cloth that she'd ripped from his shirt then jerked her gaze to the left feeling even more power approaching at a dangerously rapid pace. Her breath left her in a sob and echoed around her when she felt the after pulses of the orgasm she hadn't given enough time to finish.

Michael hit the electrified track so hard that for a moment, he just laid there still caught in the aftereffects that claiming her blood had caused. The electrical current was nothing to him... only adding to the erratic buzz he already had. The world around him pulsed with the thump of his heartbeat as he sat up and slowly gained his feet.

Looking back up at the broken guardrail, he growled not seeing her. Turning full circle his growl intensified not finding her anywhere.

"No," Michael roared and fisted his hands not understanding what had just happened and not liking what was still happening.

Slowly glancing back the way he had come, Michael felt the glimmer of a pull in that direction and took off as fast as he could go. Pulling the shadows around him, he passed the humans in the station and traced up the steps until he was bathed in the rays of the late day sun.

Michael instantly lost his breath as pain seared him and it took him a moment to realize it was the sun doing it. Fighting the pain, he reached up to finger the necklace in confusion then growled again not finding it.

Shielding the sun from his sensitive eyes, he retreated back into the safety of the underground and leaned against the wall wishing the world would stop moving for a damn moment so he could think clearly. It wasn't the sun that had done this to him... it was her blood.

Glancing back up toward the exit, he wondered if she had known what it was and took it to keep him from chasing her.

Pulling his cell phone from his pocket, Michael glared down at it when it crunched in his tight grip. Blinking in disbelief, he decided maybe he needed to cool off and just wait until the sun went down. Tracing back to where they had made love, he looked around for any evidence of where she had come from to have just been standing there so suddenly.

The intersection broke off in five directions but only two of them were on this side. Not finding any evidence that she even existed, he grabbed the guard rail giving in to the anger riding him. Ripping it from the concrete, he flung it down one of the tunnels so hard that when it finally found a target to crash into the echo was barely a whisper. How dare she do this to him then vanish like a phantom.

Feeling his power pulse again in a disturbing manner he looked up seeing the flickering of light down one of the two tunnels. It wasn't just one light flickering... it was several and coming toward him in a wave.

Michael's amethyst eyes glowed and he bared his fangs just as the darkness slammed him into the same spot on the wall he'd just made love at and a strong hand wrapped around his throat.

Samuel's lips pulled back in the perfect sneer as he looked the man over. He quickly became curious since he was using all of his strength just to hold him in place. He'd been tracking Aurora since coming out of the demon rift but every time he caught up to her, she would hold him at bay with that damn blade of hers and escape. She hadn't been able to summon the blade in the demon world but coming back here had somehow unlocked its power.

Now it seemed she'd started taking a new tactic to avoid him... hiding within the area's other demon masters were still fighting over. It had left him with no other choice but to help her kill the demons coming near her just in case one of them was strong enough to actually claim what was his.

His dark eyes narrowed on what he assumed was a master vampire... one that smelled of Aurora's sex and blood.

"I see you have found my Aurora," Samuel inhaled the lingering scent of a heated mating and felt his own rush of memories feeding his jealousy. What he wanted to know now was how this man had gotten past her blade. "I can smell her on you."

Michael actually smirked, silently thanking the demon for telling him the name of the woman that had eluded him. Feeling his jealousy surface he responded in a cold voice, "She didn't seem like your Aurora a few minutes ago while I was deep inside of her."

Samuel lowered his eyelids hiding his darkest intentions, "Do you think you can replace me by making love to her one time? She has been mine for over a millennium and one fling in the sewers will not break the hold I have over her supple body."

Michael felt undeniable rage thrum through him as the image of Aurora under this demon surfaced. He'd been taught that it was a sin to come between a man and his mate but this wasn't a man and right now he really didn't give a damn.

Samuel stilled himself when the man's eyes began to glow in warning and power he was not familiar with pricked the skin of his hand where they were touching. It would be a mistake to show this one fear.

Leaning forward Samuel smirked and lied, "If she was truly impressed, then why did she leave you to come find me?" He realized his mistake when the tunnel started to vibrate under his feet and he knew he was looking at the cause of the earthquake.

Michael felt his skin began to tingle like it had when he hit the tracks earlier... and he liked it. Hearing the thunder of a train closing in, Michael gave the demon a chilling smile then suddenly shoved him backwards. The demon released him immediately and Michael's smile darkened when the demon toppled over the railing and directly in the train's path.

The transport slammed into the demon, but for a split second he noticed the demon had turned and gripped the train as if hitching a ride. Before he could follow it and finish the demon off, Michael felt the earth around him shake and moved just as a piece of concrete came crashing down right beside him.

Ignoring it, he slowly turned his angry gaze in the direction the train had taken the demon. He didn't care if the world came crashing down... as long as he drained every drop from that son of a bitch first. Moving faster than the train he slammed into the side of it so hard that it rocked on the track.

Before he could climb up to the top, Michael felt something slam into his back and fought the searing pain, trying to throw whatever it was off of him.

Syn had felt the sun touch Michael's skin and followed the link and quickly closed in on his son's position. He arrived just in time to see Michael attack the subway train and the dark smile on his face told Syn everything he needed to know... Michael had just tapped into his true power and wasn't handling it very well.

Coming up behind Michael, Syn pulled another bloodstone from his arm band and rammed his fist into Michael's back, forcing it through flesh and blood. He held Michael in a tight grip as he inserted the blood stone behind his heart much the same way Michael had once done Kane.

The tunnel around them started to vibrate with Michael's rage and Syn knew a cave in would soon follow if it was not brought under control. Planting his feet against the side of the train, he pushed away taking Michael with him. Trying to stun him into submission, Syn slammed Michael into the wall hard enough to leave an impact crater but Michael still blindly fought him.

Feeling that rage only gain strength, Syn sighed wearily before gripping Michael's neck... snapping it.

He caught Michael's limp body and gently picked him up in his arms. Walking a few feet to an alcove hidden mostly by darkness, Syn carried Michael to the closest electrical room and forced the door open. He laid Michael on the floor and stared down him for a moment before leaving him in there.

Closing the door behind him, he turned around and placed his palm against it giving it a demon barrier so his son would not be disturbed. He couldn't afford to help heal Michael... the time it would take for healing was needed for that kind of rage to wear off.

He smirked knowing the female Fallen had rattled Michael's cage then frowned as he glanced back in the direction Angelica was in. Michael's cage wasn't the only one being rattled.

Shadow stayed hidden in her self made prison of the maze Night Walker's called the spirit realm. She might be trapped here in this alternate dimension but that didn't mean she had to make herself a target for Deth's unwanted attention or the hoard of demons he'd brought here with him.

She missed the world of life that even now was nestled somewhere on the other side of the thin dimensional wall that separated the two worlds. Stepping through that wall was rather painful but she'd do it in a heartbeat if Deth would allow it. Problem was... he'd never allow it.

She watched as Deth once again gave Myra some of his blood. It was part of the deal he'd made with the woman before killing her in the human world. As promised, he'd raised Myra from the dead, but it was a slow process because the jealous demon had demanded that he was the only one to feed her.

The one thing the woman had going for her was the fact that she'd only been dead a couple hours. That revival was nothing compared to the process it took a zombie to reform after it had been in the grave for years or even centuries. Shadow sighed in her boredom deciding it would be more fun to watch grass grow.

In Shadow's opinion, stupid demons deserved stupid humans. She'd been witness to the deal... both deals. The one Deth had made with Myra when she'd first had the half-breed child, and the deal Myra had made that allowed Deth to gain at least one of the two things he wanted.

Getting half of what you want never made a demon happy. Instead of looking at it half full, to Deth it would always be half empty.

Shadow recalled that Deth and Myra had started out fighting pretty heavy back then. Myra had spent most of her time running from the mistake she'd made but she'd never been able to outrun the demon that had caught her scent. The more Myra had fought him, the more Deth had wanted her.

Shadow shook her head once again realizing humans and demons were a lot more alike than most thought. Growing weary of the war between them, Myra had finally stopped running and offered Deth a deal.

The first deal had been that Myra would become his lover any time he wished it, as long as he stayed away from the child. Deth had been under the influence of Myra's hunger when he'd agreed to the deal. Just like a man to think with the wrong head.

The second deal had been interesting though. Deth had threatened Myra with the fact that if he couldn't watch over Tiara or ever see her, then he would send someone in his place... the deal hadn't forbid that. Myra had panicked and tried to make another deal with her demon lover. It was amazing how she had never learned not to trust a demon though she had put more thought into this final deal.

Myra agreed to cross over into this forsaken demon ridden world and let Deth revive her on this side on the condition that Deth stayed on this side with her. Shadow knew it was the last step to making sure Deth never got his hands on Tiara "the little princess".

She supposed Myra loved Deth a little but that wasn't why she'd made the deal... if Myra had been powerful enough Deth would have met his demise before the first deal had been struck.

Deth had also been smarter this time and had revised the deal before agreeing to it. He'd made sure Tiara would have the protector he wanted her to have by taking Shadow's binding ring and making a clone from it using her Night Walker blood. As part of the deal, Deth would wear the clone and Tiara could choose a human to wear the real ring so he could tap into the binding spell.

Shadow understood more than anyone the secrets the Egyptian binding ring held. She frowned as she thought about the human that was now trapped in Deth's little game by wearing the ring.

With the rings came Deth's true connection to his daughter. Deth could keep tabs on her for him and Myra through the rings. If Tiara was to ever come across an enemy she would fall to, then the ring would alert him and he would be allowed twenty-four hours on the other side to rescue his daughter before the deal would bind him back into this world.

Myra had been a fool to agree to those terms. If Deth was allowed to leave here, then he would find a way to bring Tiara back with him. What he had not told Myra was that the ring also gave him a little control over the person wearing the ring. At least enough control to make that person stay near Tiara if Deth so chose.

She watched as Deth once again returned to staring at the ring. She wondered how long it would take him to decide to send a demon after his own daughter just to wound her so he could go collect what belonged to him. She knew Deth, had known him longer than she could remember. He might love Myra and Tiara in his own way, but he was evil enough to destroy both of them without feeling much guilt over it.

A demon hating you was one thing... but a demon as powerful as Deth loving you was a worse fate. Myra hadn't known that by agreeing to only being revived by Deth's blood she would not be able to fight him like she had in the human world. She would now become little more than an obedient rag doll for Deth to manipulate for eternity. The only thing Deth had not taken from Myra was her soul.

Shadow looked down at the marks on the inside of her wrists and wished Deth had not returned her own soul to her after he'd used a spell to bind her to him as his Night Walker. At least if she'd lacked a soul, the numbness would have kept her from being bored out of her mind.

She dropped her arms deciding it didn't matter. As long as Deth willed it, she was just as trapped in this world as Myra was. The only thing she was waiting on now was Deth to make up his mind on how long he'd wait before he decided to kill his daughter.

Deth slowly pulled his bare chest away from Myra's lips and rose from the bed, undisturbed with his nudity. He had built this place between dimensions many centuries before, ruled it from its highest peak with an untouchable army... the thousands of souls at his command.

Like his beautiful Myra, he was a necromancer, but his forte was the enslavement of the souls he drew to him rather than leading them into their afterlife.

Those very souls circled around his magnificent home crying out to be released... but Deth never released something once it belonged to him. He knew Myra did not truly love him, nor did he really care if she did or not. She was his and that was all that mattered.

He stared out the window of his bedchamber at the gray colored sky while pulling on a heavy brocade robe. He'd grown tired of the world. With nothing left to fight, even stealing the souls had not held its charm. He'd yearned for the world of demons he remembered and the sibling he'd lost so long ago.

Craven had been born from the same female only moments after he'd clawed his way out of her... but they had not been alike. Craven did not have the strength to handle the war that had been raging and had fallen to it... dragged into the rift and sealed away. Such a weak child to have fallen so quickly.

When he first saw Myra he'd had to have her... her power over souls had called him to her, reminding him of the taste of his brother's power. It was a weak flavor but sensual and seductive in its nature.

After watching her from the darkness Deth found himself drawn to her sexual hunger. For reasons that eluded him, he felt jealousy when she turned to those weakling human males to satiate her need. That's one of the reasons he'd removed them from the human realm... he'd known she would eventually find a way to elude him if he did not seal her away from prying eyes.

Deth concentrated on the ring and felt Tiara's bliss. The sensation of the feeling made his eyes glow red and he punched his fist, ring first into one of the many paintings of Tiara that Deth had taken from Myra over the years. Myra had spent all of her energy keeping him from Tiara and now the child's happiness was an unwelcome barrier.

If Tiara would just suffer then he could go get her. He let his gaze roam over all of the smiling paintings of his child then looked toward the bed Myra was laying on. He'd trapped his lover's soul within that body so that she would never be able to leave him and he would do the same to Tiara.

Shadow stilled herself as she listened to Deth's thoughts and watched the evil smirk appear across his lips. She knew he was finally going to acknowledge her presence which was something he hadn't done since they'd entered this dimension and probably something he would never do again if she accomplished what he wanted.

'Shadow,' Deth called to his Night Walker. Seeing the long dark hair and the young supple body of the Egyptian girl appear in front of him, he knew he had found his way to take his daughter's smile away from her.

"Do you want me to kill her?" Shadow asked narrowing her gaze on her master.

Deth's eyes again turned their eerie red as he brought the ring hand up then struck Shadow across the face with it.

"What makes you think I would give that satisfaction to you? It will be I who ends her life," Deth's voice was little more than an angry hiss. The color receded from his eyes as if it had never been there and he cupped the chin of the face that had turned away from him. "You will go find my daughter and destroy whatever is making her happy."

Shadow held her ground as Deth called forth a small army of nasty underlings, ordering them not only to watch her but to obey her every command. She nodded looking forward to the pain of passing through the dimensional wall. She would do that and more if it would give her a few days away from him.

Deth watched Shadow step into her realm and smiled when his underlings followed her. Turning his attention to the ring on his finger, he moved toward the light shining through the window to admire it. He tilted his head to the side feeling not only Tiara's pleasure but the ring bearer's frustration as well.

“You want her,” Deth whispered, his voice like a silken caress.

He turned the ring on his finger, silently chanting the runic incantations inscribed on the band and he smiled again. The ring began to glow an angry red and tiny flames erupted from the inscription emphasizing the words as he recited them.

“You shall have her... and all she has to offer,” Deth promised. “All you need to do is kill anyone in your path.”

Chapter 3

Chad was still giving Trevor the silent treatment when they pulled into the parking lot at Moon Dance. The only one that had gotten a word out of him was Evey and Trevor was starting to feel a bit left out. It wasn't that he didn't want Chad to live alone. Hell, even he understood the meaning of privacy.

What scared him the most was the thought of Chad going back to that apartment so that whatever had killed him could show back up for a 'murder part two'. No one had been there the last time until it was too late... and he seriously didn't want to relive Chad's death scene. Once had been more than enough.

Trevor sighed when Chad got out of the car without a word and strode toward the entrance of the club.

"Hey, hold up a minute," Trevor called out closing Evey's door a little too hard. Great, now he felt guilt over both friends.

"What?" Chad growled not bothering to turn around.

"Come on man," Trevor said as he caught up and placed a hand on Chad's shoulder, "This isn't us ganging up on you. We just want to make sure whoever it was that killed you doesn't get another chance."

"So you do that by taking away my freedom?" Chad asked with a hard look.

Trevor shook his head, "You didn't see yourself laying there lifeless in a pool of your own blood... that's something I never want to see again. I know you're walking around and talking now, but that doesn't erase the fact that you died because some asshole stuck a knife in your heart and made it stop."

"Why do you care?" Chad asked curiously.

"You know, the other day you asked me how I was able to keep my emotions in check when it came to good cops dying on the streets. Remember my answer?" Trevor ran his fingers through his hair feeling remorse over what he'd said that day.

Chad frowned, "Yeah, you said that after a while you just grew immune to it or something like that."

Trevor looked him straight in the eye, "I lied."

"You what," Chad asked remembering the fact that he'd punched Trevor in the face over that statement. He suddenly had the urge to do it again but thought harder on it this time. He blinked at his friend's confession and remained there for a few seconds after Trevor had walked around him to head inside.

"You coming, or are you just gonna stand there all day?" Trevor asked over his shoulder feeling a lot better now that he had dumped some of the weight he'd been carrying.

"Yeah, I'm coming," Chad mumbled feeling like a complete ass for acting like a spoiled brat all day.

Trevor stopped him before they went inside wanting to lighten the mood, "I have a reputation to keep so... if you don't mind."

Chad waved his hand, "Yeah, yeah, I know... no making you look like a girly-man regardless of how tempting it is."

Trevor raised his fist and growled, making Chad laugh and quickly dart around him to run inside. It was good to see Chad at least making an attempt to smile again. The man really hated being center of attention but that's what he gets for getting himself killed and scaring the hell out of everybody.

When Trevor heard Envy cry out and Chad groan loudly, he opened the door curiously and entered the building. A smirk appeared on his face when he saw Chad sprawled against the bar with an ecstatic Envy clinging to him like a dryer sheet.

“So good to see you,” Envy squealed.

Chad’s eyes went wide at the amount of force she was using to hug him. “Envy,” he rasped playfully, “can’t... breathe.”

There were a few snorts and chuckles at Envy’s display to her recently resurrected brother, not that they blamed her.

“Sorry,” Envy said with a giggle and let go of Chad to smile at Trevor. He quickly looked away and she knew why the moment she felt Devon’s arm come around her.

Trevor looked around at all the preparations for Halloween. The club had already passed out flyers announcing the grand re-opening and everything had to be ready. They had changed their minds from having a private Halloween party, to making it the kickoff of their bigger, better club.

“So, what’s going on?” Envy asked.

“Chad won’t stay at the castle and he refuses to live at Night Light,” Trevor answered earning a heated glare from Chad.

Envy frowned showing her worry, “Why not? You can’t stay by yourself anymore.”

Chad’s expression became brooding as he turned to his sister, “I’m a grown man Envy but I’m not ready for a rest home just yet. It shouldn’t matter if I live alone or not. If whatever attacked me wants to find me, then nothing is going to stop him or her.”

“Or it,” Devon injected into the conversation and extended his hand, “Welcome back to the world of the living.”

Chad shook his hand, “Yeah, I’d just like to be able to live that life with a sense of freedom.” He sighed when he noted Trevor and Devon giving each other the cold shoulder.

Envy frowned, “But why can’t you live at Night Light? It’s the perfect place. No one is getting through those doors without a couple dozen wolves pouncing on them.”

“I wouldn’t feel comfortable there,” Chad answered truthfully. “If I have to, I’ll set up a sleeping space in one of the more private jail cells at the station.”

“Do you mean in the Hole,” Trevor demanded making a face.

Chad shrugged, “At least I’ll be safe and under constant surveillance... which seems to be what all of you want.”

“It’s not like that Chad,” Envy said sadly. “We’re your family... your friends. We just want to make sure nothing comes after you again.”

Trevor ran a hand through his blonde hair as Envy’s sadness hit him like a brick wall, “Okay, I’ve had it with this crap. Chad, you can move into my place... I got more than enough room and I’m rarely there. You’ll basically be on your own with the exception of me popping in every now and then. The alarm system is one of the best available and it’s a lot nicer than the Hole.”

Chad looked over at him with a startled frown on his face. He never even thought of that and the fact that Trevor had offered wasn’t to be taken lightly since they all knew how much Trevor liked his privacy.

“All right,” Chad said softly, actually liking the idea. “We’ll go get my stuff and I’ll move in with you later today. But,” he continued, “I keep my apartment. That way when I want some time to myself I actually have a place to go.”

“Too late,” Envy said guiltlessly. “I cancelled the contract on the apartment yesterday and all of our stuff is now stored.” She shrugged at the look Chad gave her and tilted her chin defiantly, “What? My name was on that lease too.”

“Whatever,” Chad gave up deciding to drop the subject.

Trevor nodded and clapped a hand on Chad’s shoulder, “Well, look at it this way... that’s better than her burning the place down and you having to arrest her for it. I’d take what I can get if I were

you.” He glanced at Envy just in time to see the relieved light in her eyes and knew he’d just made her a very happy girl.

“Come on,” Envy said excitedly, “you gotta see what we’ve done to the club so far. It’s a lot bigger than what it was.”

Chad gave Envy a patient smile and let her drag him from one end of the club to the other. Trevor followed a few feet behind them taking in the new decorations and grinning at the numerous glow-in-the-dark Jack-O-Lanterns that were being set against the walls on the floor.

Warren was on the scaffolding, hanging upside down next to the mirror ball putting something on the faceted surfaces of it.

“Run it,” Warren called out after he’d pulled himself upright.

The lights went out and the mirror ball came to life. Trevor raised an eyebrow as the ball reflected light back across the floor and walls. Hundreds of witches, skeletons, and black cats with their backs arched high in the air were giving the appearance of running from shadow to shadow.

“Looks awesome bro,” Devon called up.

“Did you remember to order the fog fluid from The Witch’s Brew?” Warren asked him.

Devon gave him a thumb up, “It’ll be in tomorrow morning. Nick offered to pick it up for us.”

“He’s Alive!”

Chad yelped when he was suddenly grabbed from behind and spun around. When his feet found the floor again, he had to grab onto the railing to steady himself. Looking over his shoulder, he saw Nick standing there.

“Nick,” Envy admonished. “Don’t do that.”

“Why not?” Nick asked with a smirk. “Tis’ the season to get the crap scared out of you. Besides, it’s not every day I get to see someone who cheated death. I gotta get my hug too.”

Chad had regained enough of himself to bat his eyelashes at Nick. “Why Mr. Wilder,” he said in a sticky sweet voice, “I didn’t know you cared.”

Nick paused and slowly looked back over at Chad who was grinning stupidly.

“Damn,” Nick said when he realized Chad was joking with him. “As long as you don’t EVER do that again... we’ll be fine.”

“Hi Trevor,” Alicia said coming up behind Nick. She hadn’t seen Micah in the last couple days due to her and Damon breaking in their new home at Love Bites. Michael and Syn were supposed to be living there too but so far they hadn’t moved in. “Is Micah behaving himself at work?”

Trevor smirked, “If you don’t count the paper airplane battles, using the window as a garbage can to hit unsuspecting pedestrians walking by, and having to restrain him from spraying silly string all over Tasuki’s car... yeah, he’s doing good.”

Alicia grinned, “Yeah, he told me about the new guy joining him and Titus, and from what Micah says, Tasuki seems pretty cool.”

Damon growled from behind her and she promptly turned around to smack him on the arm. “You stop that right now,” Alicia announced then turned to Nick, “Speaking of crazy vampires, I’ve got something for you.” She waved him away from the others not wanting anyone to see the gift she had for him.

Nick frowned when Alicia slipped something into his hand. “What’s this?” he asked curiously as he stared down at the necklace curled in his palm.

“That is a charm I made to protect myself from falling under a vampire’s thrall,” Alicia whispered then smirked wickedly over her shoulder at Damon. “I switched the gold chain I was wearing with black leather so it would look good on you. Don’t tell anyone you have it. If you wear it the day of the party, then Michael won’t be able to trick you into dressing up like a girl.”

Nick had a smile plastered to his face, “Awesome! And who says I’m waiting until Halloween to wear it?” He quickly put the necklace on feeling safer for it. He ignored Damon who had started growling again and tucked the necklace inside his shirt to hide it. “I really owe you one for this.”

Damon drug Alicia back toward Envy before Nick decided to give her a hug too. He didn't think she'd like it very much if he strangled the jaguar with her gift. He knew Nick didn't remember but the image of Nick all over Alicia in Michael's living room was still too fresh in his mind.

Alicia frowned when several overhead light bulbs brightened then shattered. She looked up at the back of Damon's head when Warren yelled from the rafters something about there being a short somewhere in the wires. She hid her soft smile as she wrapped her arms around Damon in an attempt to save a lot of extra work on the club.

"What are you dressing up as?" Chad asked Nick when they rejoined the group.

"I'm going to be the twenty-first century version of Billy the Kid," Nick answered with a straight face.

"In Layman's terms," Alicia droned, "He's going as himself."

Everyone chuckled when Nick shrugged and went to help Quinn and Kat behind the bar. Alicia suddenly gasped and rushed off toward the back of the club with a predatory looking Damon following close behind her.

"What do you suppose that's about?" Chad asked with an arched eyebrow.

"What do you think?" Devon smirked.

Trevor glanced over at Envy and frowned when he noticed she suddenly looked a bit pale.

"You okay Envy?" he asked softly.

Envy raised her chin with a bright smile and lied, "Sure, I'm great..."

Trevor moved to catch her the second her eyes closed.

"Envy," Chad also reached for her and kept hold while Trevor lowered her to the floor. "What the hell just happened?"

Devon had moved at the same time Trevor did but Trevor had been closer when Envy fell. He kneeled down beside Chad and cupped Envy's cheek.

"Envy," Devon whispered while stroking his thumb across her skin. "Come on baby, open your eyes."

"Has she been getting enough sleep?" Chad asked accusingly.

Envy squeezed her eyes shut as sound drifted back towards her and moaned before slowly blinking them open. She frowned when all three men sighed collectively in relief.

"Why are all of you looking at me like that?" Envy asked and looked around in confusion. "Did I fall?"

"You fainted," Chad explained suddenly getting a little payback from all the worry she'd been doing over him. "Are you okay?"

Envy gripped his hand and slowly stood up, "Yeah, it must be all the excitement going on. I've been having so much fun that I might have forgotten to eat or something."

Trevor shook his head hearing the lie in her voice, "I'm not buying that." He took out his cell phone and quickly dialed a number. The phone rang a few times before the familiar and welcoming voice answered it.

"Hello,"

Trevor smiled, "Hi Mrs. Tully, it's Trevor."

"Trevor dear, how are you?" Mrs. Tully asked.

"I'm doing all right but I need a really huge favor." He watched as Chad and Devon helped Envy sit down on one of the softer seats around the low tables.

Mrs. Tully smiled, "If I can, I'll be more than happy to help."

"I'm over at Moon Dance and Envy just passed out. She seems fine now but something doesn't feel right. Can you spare a few minutes to come and take a look at her?" Trevor asked.

"Of course I can," Mrs. Tully said. "Give me about twenty minutes to get my bag and drive there."

Trevor smiled, "Okay, we'll see you soon."

“Good call,” Devon said shocking everyone else.

Jason lay on the thick mattress in that place between sleep and awake just down the hall from where Tiara and Zachary were making love... again. Even in his semiconscious state he could hear them... feel her ecstasy like a caress on his own heated skin. He pressed the back of his head into the pillow when that ecstasy heightened... unaware that the ring on his hand had started glowing.

Jason’s expression darkened and he suddenly found himself standing at the foot of Tiara and Zachary’s bed watching what he had only felt moments ago. He almost sighed in relief when he realized he was dreaming. When they didn’t notice him standing there, Jason moved around the bed so he could see Tiara’s face. His eyes widened at the way she looked and tried to turn his head but couldn’t.

His gaze landed on Zachary, watching his body move above Tiara’s and he took a step back. For just a brief moment Zachary had transformed into him before reverting back... teasing him with what he could have.

Jason suddenly felt something in his hand and looked down at the dagger fisted in his fingers. The handle was cool against his heated skin and the edge seemed to glimmer at him... tempting him to use it.

Tiara’s voice rang out calling Zachary’s name and Jason watched, detached and horrified as he raised his arm and plunged the knife directly into Zachary’s spine. Tiara’s screams of pleasure turned to terror... it was a soothing sound to Jason’s ears. He looked down at the bed with blood pouring from the wound in Zachary’s back and soaking the mattress.

Jason suddenly regained control of his body and tore himself from the dream with such force he sat straight up in bed. It was only by force of will that he refrained from crying out at such a horrific scene. Tiara’s ecstasy once again filled him and he fisted his hands in his hair, fighting the tears that burned his eyes. Unable to withstand the emotional turmoil, he climbed out of bed and rushed out the front door feeling like a traitor.

It didn’t matter to him if it was a dream or not... dreams were an extension of the heart’s desires and Jason’s wanted Tiara.

Nighthawk stood beside the same distant tree he’d haunted off and on since Tiara’s first night at the cabin. He knew there was an empty room set aside for him next to Tiara’s but the closer he got to her while she and Zachary were alone, the more emotions he would feel. Not just any emotion... it was mostly the hunger coming at him in waves.

At first he’d been surprised he had felt anything and enjoyed the fleeting caress. But instead of Tiara’s hunger being satisfied... it seemed to be the only thing she and Zachary did when they were alone. They were lucky if they were getting an hour of sleep at a time. The only occasion Nighthawk could not feel her sensual call was when they visited the graveyards for her lessons with Craven.

Nighthawk pushed Tiara’s cries of passion from his mind when he noticed Craven had joined him under the tree.

Craven’s silver eyebrow rose when he felt the blood bond he had established with Tiara intensify due to his arrival. He’d spent all week collecting souls, trying to build his army and it had triggered his own hunger several times to the point of feeling the same thing Tiara did... but being a full blooded demon allowed him the option of never feeding it. The need did not expose him to the souls as it did Tiara. That was her mother’s weak bloodline... not his.

Being so close to Tiara’s passion now was not easy but Craven didn’t like easy... it bored him. However, the desire to touch someone was slowly starting to creep up on him. It didn’t matter if he had more control or not, the desire would appear from time to time and he knew it would have to be satisfied soon or he would not be able to lend control to Tiara while they practiced.

He waited patiently for the Night Walker to reveal himself. The last time he'd been with Tiara, she'd shared her concern over not seeing Nighthawk in days. Immediately after saying that, she'd quickly looked around her and murmured, "Never mind... he's here."

Craven felt his own amusement when Nighthawk finally appeared beside him. It was uncanny to see such paleness on the Indian's golden tan skin and it enlightened him to the truth behind Nighthawk's refusal to mingle. He was sure if he were in Nighthawk's place, the constant coupling of the new mates would probably affect him as well.

"When she is ready, bring her to the cemetery where we first met," Craven said softly. "The small one... and make sure her teammates do not follow."

Nighthawk said nothing as Craven vanished but felt a slight weight that had been on his shoulders lift. Perhaps since Craven wanted to return to their first meeting place, that would mean he was going to teach Tiara something new. It was time to accelerate her instruction but Nighthawk had been unable to tear her away from her mate long enough to do so.

The thought of kidnapping her for private lessons had entered his mind several times and Nighthawk was satisfied that he no longer had a reason to hold back from doing so. He narrowed his eyes when the front door of the cabin slowly opened and saw Jason stumble out into the cool night. The human's hand was pressed to his forehead and he was covered in sweat.

He wondered if Jason was experiencing the same kind of problem due to Tiara's emotions coming through the ring. It wouldn't have surprised him if that was indeed the case.

Jason inhaled deeply letting the cool night air drift across his face. He had heard and felt enough over the last week since moving in with Tiara. As if listening to the two newlyweds go at it wasn't bad enough, now he had to feel what she was experiencing. He also kept having to delete the fact that it was Zachary who was making Tiara feel that way... it was enough to give him the wiggly-boos.

Being outside the cabin helped some, but only his ears felt the effect of the separation. He glared down at the ring wishing he could take it off for a few minutes. Before, he'd had to concentrate in order to sense Tiara's emotions... now it seemed he couldn't get away from them. Talk about being between a rock and a hard place.

He watched his hand shake for a moment before self-consciously sliding the tips of his fingers into his pocket. He didn't want anyone knowing he was having trouble with the ring in fear of them taking it off and booting him out of the clubhouse.

Problem was... he had moments when he felt feverish and dark urges had started popping into his head over the last couple of days. Urges that were dark and the polar opposite of his personality. So far he was controlling them, but if that changed then he knew he'd have to speak up.

The small fine hairs on his arms rose and Jason had the sensation that he was being watched. He turned his head and narrowed his gaze toward a large tree in the distance. For a moment, he wondered if the apparition of the form he'd just seen was a figment of his imagination or maybe even a ghost.

Jason's train of thought was disrupted when he suddenly heard something clicking behind him. He spun around thinking a Skitter had somehow survived the cemetery clean up and followed them here.

"Gotcha," Guy said with a laugh. "You should've seen the look on your face. I'm surprised your pants are still dry."

Jason gave Guy a small smile but didn't rise to the bait.

Guy stopped laughing, noticing that Jason didn't look that great. "Are you going to be okay tonight? You'd think a ring that makes you invincible would keep you from being sick."

"I'm not sick... I just haven't been sleeping well," Jason grouched, shoving the hand with the ring deeper into the pocket of his jeans. Maybe it was time to tell someone and Guy wasn't such a bad choice since he practiced in magic. "It used to be that I had to concentrate to know what Tiara was feeling... now that the ring is back in service I'm getting more than I ever bargained for. Strange thing is... the ring is starting to feel kind of haunted."

“What do you mean?” Guy asked seriously.

Jason shook his head having no way to explain it, “Nothing, it’s probably just jet-lag... going from human to superman in the equivalent of zero seconds is actually very tiring.”

“I wonder what’s taking Zachary and Tiara so long,” Guy said sitting down on the steps while Jason leaned against one of the posts surrounding the front porch.

“Yeah, I wonder,” Jason wanted to roll his eyes at the question but he silently thanked Guy for getting away from the subject of the ring. He nodded toward the tree, “I think I saw Nighthawk a few minutes ago... out there watching the cabin.”

Guy frowned in the direction Jason indicated. He’d wondered what the Indian was up to. Carley had caught him a few times looking for a spell that would make Nighthawk seeable and told him to leave it alone. She seemed serious, so he’d dropped the idea. He was glad they had moved all their spell books and scrolls to the cabin. It was a great way to kill time and also drowned out the... noise.

“He’s not exactly friendly is he?” Jason asked.

Guy shrugged, “He doesn’t have to be, his loyalty is to Tiara.”

Nighthawk moved past them and into the cabin. His trek on the spirit road took him to Tiara’s bedroom... a place he’d been several times but never stayed long. He was suddenly there in the room, silently watching Tiara and Zachary as they finished getting dressed.

Zachary walked up behind Tiara as she pulled on a pair of panties and slid his arm around her. “The worst part of the whole day is when you decide to get dressed,” he teased kissing her bare shoulder.

Tiara giggled and reached for the skirt before Zachary talked her into laying out of work tonight.

‘We will see Craven alone tonight,’ Nighthawk told her.

Tiara jumped and placed a hand over her heart. “Don’t scare me like that.”

“Like what?” Zachary asked in confusion.

“Not you... Nighthawk,” Tiara said with a soft smile but quickly started wrapping the skirt around her. It was bad enough she hadn’t even started on the top half.

“Who, that illusive, invisible Indian who has no sociability skills or personality and likes to walk into people’s bedrooms while they’re having a private moment?” Zachary demanded as the temperature in the room rose by several degrees.

Tiara repressed the urge to giggle again as she lied, “He’s not like that and you know it.”

“I don’t know it,” Zachary growled. “For all I know, he’s watching us right now and listening to every word I’m saying about him. All this watching you from some invisible vantage point is more than a little creepy.”

Nighthawk suddenly appeared not an inch away from Zachary making the blonde man jump back in surprise. Tiara didn’t bother to hide it this time and started laughing softly as she tied on her top.

“You had that one coming,” Tiara managed after calming down a little bit.

Zachary grabbed his jacket and slid it over his shoulders. “Yeah, yeah... so where are we going tonight Tonto?”

“We are not going,” Nighthawk said in an emotionless voice. “Tiara and I are going to meet Craven alone.”

“Why alone?” Tiara asked as she slid on her shoes.

“He wishes to teach you something new,” Nighthawk answered and grasped Tiara’s arm.

Tiara’s eyes widened and all that was left of her was the echoing sound of a gasp as she disappeared.

As soon as they vanished, Zachary stormed out of the bedroom and headed toward the front door ... not so calmly slamming it behind him.

“Let’s go,” Zachary thundered seeing Guy and Jason waiting.

“What about Tiara?” Guy asked looking back toward the cabin.

“She’s gone,” Jason answered and followed Zachary to the car.

Zachary glared at him, “That damn invisible, stalking, voyeur Indian took her for some special training with Craven and didn’t tell me where they were going. So I need you to turn that damn ring on and find out where the hell she is.”

Jason looked over at Guy, “I’m sitting in the back with you.”

Chapter 4

Mrs. Tully walked through the front door of Moon Dance and immediately approached Envy, who was sitting in a booth near the bar. She frowned noting Trevor and Devon standing at different ends of that same bar.

“Now,” she said getting straight down to business, “how about telling me what happened?”

“I’m fine,” Envy insisted waving her hand dismissively, “I think I just got too excited or something.”

“I see,” Mrs. Tully raised an eyebrow. “I take it you faint a lot then?”

Envy frowned at her deciding not to even answer. The truth was... she’d never fainted before.

Mrs. Tully pointed to the side door, “Upstairs now.”

Trevor rushed forward to open the door for them. He even kept it open, letting Devon go in before him then growled when Devon tried to close it behind him. Jerking the door out of Devon’s grip he passed him on the stairs with a smirk and again opened the door for Envy when she reached her room.

He looked around the bedroom then back at Devon, “You wanted to grow up to be a teenager... didn’t you.”

Devon’s lips hinted at a smile as they faced off. He and Envy had made love only a couple hours ago right here in this room and their scent was still strong... strong enough for Trevor to get the message.

Chad rolled his eyes at the two knuckleheads and focused his attention on Envy.

“Tell me how you were feeling just before you fainted dear,” Mrs. Tully asked once she had Envy sitting on her bed.

Envy sighed, “I just felt a little lightheaded... it was a fuzzy feeling but nothing too serious.”

Mrs. Tully frowned, “I’ll be the judge of that.” She immediately turned to the men clustered just inside the door. “Out... out, out, out.”

“Can Chad stay?” Envy asked quietly.

Mrs. Tully looked at the young man in question before nodding her head, “The brother can stay... the rest of you leave.”

Devon and Trevor silently grumbled to themselves as Mrs. Tully ushered them out and soundly closed the door behind them.

“What in the hell have you been doing to her?” Trevor demanded in a low hiss. “She’s never passed out like that since I’ve known her.”

Devon glared at him, “If I knew why she passed out, I wouldn’t have agreed with your decision to call Mrs. Tully.”

“You need to start taking better care of her,” Trevor growled. “She’s human and I bet you’ve been treating her like a shifter.”

Devon did indeed feel a bit guilty for Envy not getting enough sleep recently but he’d thought he’d fixed that over the last week.

“You haven’t been here,” Devon stated. “I’ve been with her everyday so I think I know better than you do about her wellbeing.”

“I have a job to do,” Trevor rumbled, “and it involves keeping the streets safe for people like Envy to walk down without worry.”

“Sure,” Devon drawled, “whatever you say government man.”

The door to the bedroom flew open revealing a miffed Mrs. Tully who gave them the glare only a mother or grandmother could muster.

“If you two don’t shut up, I’ll send you downstairs and make you wait for my diagnosis,” She threatened before slamming the door closed again.

“Okay,” Trevor said in a weak voice while backing away from the door.

Devon looked at Trevor, “You think we overdid it?”

“I think we should shut up,” Trevor whispered.

Devon couldn’t help but nod his head in agreement.

Inside the bedroom, Envy remained patient while Mrs. Tully looked her over with a practiced eye. She frowned however when Mrs. Tully didn’t do much more than press a hand to her forehead.

Mrs. Tully finally sat down on the bed next to the red head and debated on how to approach the subject. She had a pretty good idea of what was wrong with Envy but wasn’t sure if she should say anything with Chad in the room.

Seeing the worried expression on her face, Envy’s eyes filled with concern. “Is something wrong with me?”

“I wouldn’t say something is wrong,” Mrs. Tully began, “but I’m not sure if this is the proper environment to tell you my suspicions.”

Envy smiled, “Whatever it is, you can say it in front of Chad.”

Mrs. Tully sighed, she loved Trevor like her own grandson and knew he had claimed Envy as his mate before the woman decided to accept Devon’s suit. It was now a question of which man was responsible for Envy fainting.

“Are you sure you want your brother to stay?” she asked again.

Chad leaned back in the chair he was sitting in and crossed his arms over his chest, “I want to know Mrs. Tully. At this point, I wouldn’t leave even if you tried to make me. She’s my little sister.”

“Fine, just remember there are two men right outside the door that will hear you if you raise your voices.” She gave the stern warning before pointing at Chad. “I don’t want to hear a peep out of you, understand?”

“Yes ma’am,” Chad said, suddenly feeling like he was twelve years old again and in the principal’s office.

“You’re more than likely pregnant,” Mrs. Tully said in an abrupt but whispered voice then pointed at Chad again when his mouth dropped open and he stood up from the chair like a Jack-in-the-Box.

Envy shook her head and pulled on Chad’s hand until he sat down on the bed beside her. “Mrs. Tully, that can’t be right. I’ve been on birth control since before I had my first date,” She whispered making sure to follow Mrs. Tully’s example now that she understood why.

Mrs. Tully frowned sympathetically at the girls naiveté, “Neither of the men out in the hall are human Envy... birth control has never worked against their potency. The moment you crossed that line, the drug was completely useless.”

Envy swallowed hard and she suddenly went pale. “Both of them,” she repeated Mrs. Tully’s words and her eyes widened. She hadn’t had her monthly since a couple weeks before meeting Devon... she had no idea who would be the father.

“How do you know that’s what’s wrong with her?” Chad hissed under his breath. “Don’t you need blood test for something like that?”

Envy silently agreed with Chad, wanting more than just someone looking at her and saying it, “If it’s true, then with the blood test you could also tell when it happened... right?”

Mrs. Tully nodded and pulled her medical bag onto her lap. Rummaging around, she took out a hypodermic needle, “I can let you know for sure in a couple days.”

Envy had turned her face away when Mrs. Tully drew blood but found herself face to face with Chad. Looking him straight in the eyes, she gave him his first threat, “If you tell either one of them before I’m ready, then you’d better hope Kriss and Dean did make you immortal... because I will kill you.”

Chad nodded in understanding not really wanting to be the one to light the fuse that would probably blow them all sky high. Both men had their good points, but he found himself rooting for team Trevor... though he would do so silently.

Mrs. Tully clicked her case shut with an amused smile before getting up to head for the door.

“Just take it easy,” Mrs. Tully said loud enough to get the attention of the two men waiting in the hall. “You don’t have to stay in bed but I wouldn’t overdo it.”

Opening the bedroom door, she stared at the two brooding men and waited for them to stop fidgeting. “Envy is just a little under the weather and needs to relax so... do not add to her stress. She doesn’t need bed rest but I don’t want her doing any hard labor either.” She sent Chad one last warning glare over her shoulder before leaving the room. “You two mules can go in now.”

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