

SANCTUARY

BLOOD BOUND SERIES BOOK 9



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Sanctuary

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Аннотация

Michael is the one everyone expected to keep his cool in the most dangerous situations... but they soon realize it's the calm ones you have to watch out for. His power and temper spirals out of control when he becomes obsessed with a girl that keeps stroking his passion only to vanish before he can find out anything about her. With every taste he gets of her, his obsession quickly turns into an addiction.

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Aurora is bound against her will to Samuel, an ancient and powerful demon who is still stalking her every move. Keeping her freedom means she must stay one step ahead of the possessive demon. When she finds herself drawn to an amethyst eyed lover, she quickly finds her passion for this stranger is leading Samuel directly to her and the man she wants to protect.

Samuel vows to do whatever it takes to keep Aurora bound to his side. In his need to force Aurora's obedience, he unwittingly stokes the fires of a power he has no hope of extinguishing... the righteous fury of a Sun God.

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Blood Bound Series Book 9

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Chapter 1

Nick parked his car a couple blocks from The Witch's Brew. The truth was he needed a few minutes of brisk walking to wear off some of the adrenalin that had built up inside him. The word 'overnighter' was irritating the hell out of him and he wanted to find out if Gypsy's definition of the word was the same as his. That... and this was as good excuse as any to get away from Devon and the mess he was in.

He knew Devon would do anything for Envy, but that temper tantrum of his was going a bit too far. Nick blew his breath out wondering if he would have handled it any better than his big brother... doubtful. It also had to suck to have your personal thoughts exposed like that... especially when your thoughts involved injuring someone. If thoughts were a sin then this world was in big trouble.

The funny thing was, between Devon and Trevor; Nick thought that Trevor was in the right mind frame. Trevor hadn't been in pain long enough to plan a whole murder... unlike Devon, who had probably already decided where to bury the body. While he had the feeling that Trevor was just being nice for show... at least the cop was making an effort to not let his personal feelings toward Devon get in the way.

Right now, the two of them needed to work together and make sure Envy was as comfortable and happy as possible. So far...

that wasn't happening. If this kept going the way it was, it could cause Envy to stress herself out and lose the baby.

"Idiots," he muttered to himself.

Turning the last corner, Nick saw a man leaning against the front window of The Witch's Brew and quickly stepped out of sight. The man was standing perfectly still with his palms flat against the glass... just staring in like a voyeur.

'What do we have here, the overnighter... or a stalker?' Nick cocked an eyebrow giving the guy the once-over. The man looked like a playboy in his Armani and gold jewelry, not counting his hundred dollar 'I'm cooler than you' haircut. He flipped his long bangs out of his face mentally denying the jealous streak he was feeling.

Nick bent down and picked up a rock, rolling it around in his hand before giving it a hard sling. It hit the lamppost behind the man with a loud ping, sounding almost too loud in the twilight evening.

When the man's head jerked around to see what had made the sound, Nick caught the unnatural glow of his eyes when the light shimmered across them just right. He growled inwardly wondering if the city would ever be rid of all the damn vampires.

Silently slipping his pistol from its holster, Nick made sure to keep it hidden in the shadows while he double checked to make sure the chamber was loaded. The last thing he wanted to do was wound the dangerous creature instead of killing it. He tightened the silencer deciding he didn't need an audience for this.

Why a vampire would be hanging out around The Witch's Brew was beyond him... especially since the place sold things that killed them.

Peeking around the brick outcropping, Nick raised his left arm and put the vampire in the gun's crosshairs. Pulling back on the trigger, he smirked when the vampire actually turned and looked at him just before the bullet hit him above the right eye.

Nick moved from his hiding spot fast enough to catch the blood sucker before he fell. He took note of some pedestrians looking his way and sighed in relief. To the onlookers, it just appeared to be two buddies out for a night of drinking who had to hold each other up. He swayed a little to make it look good before rounding the corner of the building and dumping the body behind the trash dumpster.

He stood there a moment before toeing the vampire to make sure he stayed dead. He felt something shift in the air and turned toward the mouth of the alley just in time to see another vampire coming at him.

These city vampires were cowards and hardly ever traveled alone. Couldn't say he blamed them with all of the demons running around. He frowned at the discomfoting change in the city's food chain.

The vampire leapt toward him and Nick held his arms out, catching the vampire by the cloth of his shirt. He used the momentum to send him flying down the alley. He cursed when he felt the vampire grab hold of his gun and pull it from his hand.

It was a good thing his finger wasn't on the trigger or the bullet would have missed the critter entirely.

"You killed Bernard," the vampire hissed.

Nick glanced down at the dead vamp, "Don't worry, you'll be joining your lover soon."

"Shifter trash," the vampire cursed and came at him.

Nick bent his legs at the knee and let his instincts take over. The vampire began tracing toward him and Nick was glad Michael had shown him how to counteract this trick. It wasn't hard for a vampire to accomplish, but it was something that took a while for the newly born vampires to learn how to do flawlessly.

This blood sucker could do it, but he seemed to flicker as though he was moving through a strobe light rather than a smooth transition from one place to the other.

"Sloppy," Nick muttered and reached for the sheath strapped to the back of his jeans. Just as the vampire was on top of him, Nick withdrew the wooden dagger and stabbed it deep into the vampire's throat.

Thick, dark blood poured from the wound and all over Nick's hand. He flexed his wrist and the dagger broke off, leaving the pine wood buried inside the vampire. His head cocked to the side in a feline fashion as the vamp staggered back a couple of steps before gurgling something unintelligible and falling over.

Nick decided to make sure the thing was dead and brought the bottom of his combat boot down on the vampire's head, crushing it. Lifting his foot, he turned it up and made a face at the mess

on the bottom of it before doing his own rendition of scraping his foot on the ground trying to get it off.

Finally satisfied, he went back down the alley to retrieve his pistol and glared at the broken dagger.

“Damn, now I have to make a new one,” Nick complained and took out his cell phone.

The phone rang three times before it was answered by a very familiar voice.

“Hey Nick,” the voice greeted.

Nick frowned, “My number’s unlisted.”

“I know, you’re number is the only one that shows up as a private number.”

Nick sighed, “I need a favor Harley. I’ve got a pick up for the cleaners. There’s a vampire down behind the dumpster of The Witches Brew and another one with a crushed in skull a few feet away in the same alley.”

“Be there in five,” Harley said wide eyed then sighed when Nick simply hung up.

They’d all been instructed not to take the vampires on because of how dangerous even one of them could be. Here Nick was clocking in two of them in the same night... and it wasn’t the first time.

“Damn vampires,” Nick muttered and quickly reloaded the retrieved pistol. Not wanting to press his luck, he came out of the dark alley keeping his attention focused on every movement around him. He discretely pocketed the dagger handle and

stuffed his blood covered hand in his pocket... he'd wash the jeans later.

Nick frowned when he made his way back to the door and found the closed sign staring back at him at eye level. He glared at it. How the hell had he missed that thing? In his defense, he'd been a little busy with a couple of fangers. His gaze lowered to the notice... reading that the shop would be closed tomorrow.

"Damn it," Nick cursed, suppressing the urge to kick the defenseless door.

The overnighter must have been rescheduled. The old saying 'you snooze you lose' came back to haunt him. He completely forgot his paranoia about vampires and marched right back into the alley where the side door of the shop was located. Holstering the gun, he tried the door and found it locked.

"Goody," Nick whispered and kneeled down in front of the door. "This night is just full of freakin' surprises," He ranted to himself. "What did you expect? Her to call you and tell you she was leaving for her... overnighter? Dummy, it's not like you're her boyfriend or anything. Just because you haven't asked her out on a date doesn't mean others won't."

Nick glared at the lock as if it was its fault. He'd already noticed that the store's alarm system was simply for show and had been since the old man died. Either Gypsy hadn't paid the bill or she'd had it turned off not thinking she needed it.

He smirked, the deadbolts might be enough to keep the newbie's out, but this was the city... even he was a pro. The girl

undeniably needed someone watching out for her.

Taking out a small wallet-like item, he flipped it open and withdrew two tools that looked like tiny awls. Placing them both into the lock on the door, he proceeded to pick it open. When the lock turned, he grinned and quickly put the tools away.

Glancing around to make sure he was still alone, Nick smiled as he slipped inside and bolted the door behind him. He'd have to talk to Gypsy when she got home about her 'security' system. Maybe even offer his services... free of charge of course.

Nick stood still for a moment letting his night vision kick in before walking through the storage area and into the main room.

The store was beautiful at night, the streams of streetlight shining in the front reflected off all of the crystals that were scattered throughout the room. The bottles of potions and scents reflected different colors and the glint of polished silver weapons lined the walls. It was serene and hypnotic to his feline senses.

Making sure not to disturb anything, he moved through the shop on a mission... to find anything he could about where Gypsy had gone and just who she was meeting. If he had a rival, then he wanted a face and name to go with it.

"Jealous? Who me? Nooo," Nick rolled his eyes at his little attempt of humor. He'd never really felt jealousy before and the fact that he was feeling it now had him curious as hell.

After combing through all of the paperwork near the front counter, he decided he was looking in the wrong place. Heading back the way he'd come, Nick passed up the storage area until

he came to a set of steps leading down into the basement. He'd wanted to know what was hidden down there for a while now and it looked like he was finally going to get his chance to find out.

His grin faded and his eyes narrowed. The bottom of the stairs was barred by what looked like an old fashioned vault door that had been built into the brick and mortar. He cocked an eyebrow realizing the store must have been built over top of a bomb shelter. Now if that wasn't just as neat as hell. The large wheel on the front of the metal door told Nick that it was a combination lock.

"Great," Nick complained "This place is locked up tighter than Envy with Devon as her warden."

Rubbing his hands together, he stepped up to the door and gave the wheel a spin. Then, pressing his ear against the door he concentrated, letting his feline senses pick up the tiniest click of vibration. He began to slowly and methodically move the wheel around until finally, he got the last click and heard the lever echo as it released its hold.

"Gotcha," Nick whispered and pulled the thick steel door the rest of the way open. He felt excitement bubble up inside of him as he realized he was getting ready to possibly see Gypsy's inner sanctum.

The first thing he noticed was that she'd left the lights on... just not your normal lights. Several crystal vases were scattered around, housing huge candles that would probably stay lit for a week if they were left alone. They added a mystical atmosphere

to the room, showing off a lot of the same crystals The Witch's Brew sold upstairs. From the looks of things, she probably picked her favorites from each shipment and kept them for herself.

Sliding the tips of his fingers over a crystal wizard and then a black crystal dragon, Nick's lips hinted at a smile knowing what to get her for Christmas. His Gypsy girl had a fetish for crystals... not that it wasn't an awesome thing to collect. She had a renaissance type theme going on that fit her perfectly.

The furniture was well used but in a comfortable way. When it was originally bought, Nick was sure it would have cost a fortune. Now, the deep purple almost black upholstery was beginning to show signs of wear and he smiled when his finger brushed against a tiny rip that had been sewn closed with black thread.

His eyes lit up in appreciation at the display of medieval weapons on her wall. She didn't strike him as the type that knew how to use them for anything other than décor, but he was alright with that. He'd never cared for girls that come across as bad asses... they made it hard for a guy to play the hero.

Walking over to the computer desk, he carefully moved the few items around trying to find some clue about where she'd gone. Turning on the computer, he cursed softly when he saw it was password protected.

"Well hell," he griped and started to turn away when he saw something still sitting on the printer tray. Reaching for it, his eyes lit up when he saw it was a corrected flight itinerary... to New York. She'd canceled one flight and rescheduled another.

“So, you left a day earlier than expected,” Nick said and briefly played with the idea of hopping on the next plane to New York but quickly changed his mind. He didn’t even know where she’d gone once she’d arrived there.

Nick put the itinerary back where he’d found it and leaned against the sofa arm behind him. It still bothered him that those vampires had been stalking this place and wondered if he should stick around until she was due back. He toyed with the idea, trying to come up with a good reason for staying.

The store was pretty safe as long as it was daylight, but it wouldn’t hurt to keep it company at night. Gypsy’s return flight wasn’t until tomorrow evening and her security upstairs sucked as far as he was concerned... though downstairs was about as secure as she could get.

Nick cocked a dark eyebrow... that settled it, he was gonna stay the night and guard the place. His gaze slid toward the back room that was sectioned off from the rest of the huge bomb shelter. There were countless strands of crystalline beads hanging to form a wall. Nick sharpened his eyesight seeing through the slim lines into Gypsy’s bedroom and bath.

Moving purposely through the bead wall, he headed into the bathroom and took off his jacket and shirt. Dropping them into a neat pile on the floor, he washed the blood off of his hand and picked up the shirt to examine it. There wasn’t any blood on it but the jacket sleeve had some on the end of it.

Turning the cold water back on, he used the hand soap to wash

out what he could before wringing it out and hanging it over the shower rod. He looked down at the bathtub and smirked at the size of it.

His Gypsy had a garden tub large enough for four people to sit in comfortably. Images of her taking a bath all by herself made him sigh and he conveniently put himself in the picture with her.

Shaking his head, he went into the bedroom to look around and arched an eyebrow at the California king bed. It was obvious that Gypsy liked some things big and he grinned as a wicked thought steamrolled through his mind. Walking to the foot of the bed, he spread his arms out and fell face first into the softness.

Warren walked into the main half of the club and shook the drywall dust from his hair. It was a process getting the new extension done, but at the speed things were going it would be ready just in time for their Halloween Masquerade. He had just entered his bathroom to take a shower when his cell phone beeped at him.

Picking up the device, Warren frowned as he read the text message from Kat. Shaking his head with a heavy sigh, he turned off the water in the shower and headed down to Moon Dance's main room. At least he hadn't already been in the shower when the text came through... it wasn't every day Kat texted him with a '911'.

When he emerged from the side door, Warren quirked an eyebrow at the state Devon was in. His brother was in his jaguar

form with his eyes clenched tightly shut and appeared to be in a great deal of pain. Kat stood over him with her hands on her hips giving him what sounded like a lecture.

The serious expression on her face told Warren that this really was bad. He glanced toward Quinn who was obviously gaining a lot of enjoyment out of it... if the smirk the cougar wore was any indication.

“You need to pay attention to what Kriss told you,” Kat said. “If you don’t, you’re gonna be like this for a while and I’ll feel absolutely no sympathy for you.”

She crossed her arms over her chest exasperated with her brother. Trevor had been gone at least twenty minutes and her bone head of a brother still couldn’t stand up. She questioned Trevor’s ability to calmly walk away. She was sure Trevor felt the same way Devon did... but knew he wouldn’t be moving around if he was thinking bad thoughts about Devon.

She glared at Devon when he growled at her, “Don’t you growl at me. At least Trevor has the semblance of mind to stop thinking like that.”

“Why is Devon on the floor?” Warren asked as he walked across the room.

Quinn smirked from his seat at the bar, “It appears that Envy is pregnant with Trevor’s baby and Devon wants to kill Trevor for it.”

Warren made a face at Quinn since none of that explained why Devon was wallowing on the hardwood floor.

“She was already pregnant and didn’t know it when she mated with Devon,” Kat sent a glare at Quinn for being so vague. “None of them knew it until Envy passed out and Mrs. Tully ran tests to be sure. Now, because the baby belongs to Trevor, Devon wants to kill him.”

Warren squeezed his eyes shut and pinched the bridge of his nose. While that explained a few things... it still didn’t answer his initial question. He sighed and decided to repeat himself, “Why is Devon on the floor?”

“He’s on the floor because Kane has Trevor and Devon under a... spell,” Kat shrugged for lack of what else to call it. “Now, when Trevor or Devon tries to hurt each other, or if they even think about hurting one another... they’re reduced to this.” She spread her hands out indicating the idiot on the floor.

Warren frowned, “Let me see if I caught all of that. Devon is angry because Envy got pregnant before she met him and he wants to kill the father of her baby... but he can’t because Kane was smart enough to put him under a compulsion spell?”

Quinn shrugged, “That’s it in a nutshell.”

“Smart man,” Warren muttered then shook his head wondering why he hadn’t already gotten word of this from Michael instead of hearing it from Kat. He leaned against the bar and stared thoughtfully at his brother for a moment.

The situation was rather funny, but at the same time he couldn’t believe Devon’s train of thought on this. It was obvious his brother wasn’t thinking very clearly. If Devon did kill Trevor,

then where would that leave Envy's baby. Not counting the fact that Envy would always resent him for it... for denying her child the chance to know its real father. This above all else... angered Warren.

"Leave him, he'll figure it out." Warren's voice was cold.

Kat winced, "Ouch, that's pretty brutal."

"You said they're reduced to this state when they think about killing one another," Warren repeated waving his hand at Devon. "The only logical thing would be to stop thinking along that line. We can't force Devon to change the way he thinks. If he loves his mate however, then he'll stop acting like an idiot."

Warren watched Devon's ears flatten against his head and a not so friendly growl rumbled across the room. An answering rumble from Warren silenced the growl and Devon lowered his eyes to the floor before squeezing them shut again.

There wasn't anything Warren could do to save him this time. This was something Devon needed to learn for himself... or maybe he did need his big brother's help in this. A slow devious smile pulled at the corners of Warren's lips as it dawned on him just how to fix this problem.

"I know that look Warren," Kat said quietly... already feeling sorry for Devon, "and don't you dare think about it."

Quinn's smirk returned, "Should I start carrying a camera with me at all times?"

"Yes," Warren said.

"NO!" Kat shouted at the same time.

Warren stepped closer to Devon, towering over his jaguar form. “So what if Trevor’s seed is growing deeeep inside of Envy,” he prolonged the word ‘deep’ on purpose just to cause Devon to react... it worked. “The way I understand it... they slept together for months before you ever laid eyes on her.”

Devon screamed and jerked trying to get away from the pain. “Making love all the time,” Warren continued and tapped his fingers to his chin thoughtfully. “Yeah, I’ve heard that can cause a baby or two,” he smirked wondering how long it would take Devon to become immune to the taunts.

Devon’s temper had forced him into his jaguar form and because of that his animal instincts were pushing him to strike out at the male that was trying to steal his mate. Devon’s head whipped around toward the door and he fought the pain as he started pulling himself across the floor toward it.

“And just where do you think you’re going?” Warren asked. He grabbed Devon by his hind legs and started pulling him across the floor. “Trevor came to this club thinking you were a killer... are you trying to prove him right? And what do you think would happen if you did manage to kill Trevor? Do you think Envy will thank you and run into your arms?”

Devon actually growled up at Kat as he was drug by her. He dug his claws into the floor leaving long scratches in the new tile. Kat watched helplessly as Warren dragged Devon down the stairs into the dance pit, his body thumping on each step.

Quinn put his hand over his eyes and started laughing but

abruptly stopped when Kat smacked the back of his head.

“What,” he said unable to hide his smile. “It’s brilliant. By the time Warren is finished with him, Devon will be completely numb to the topic.”

Kat glanced back toward the stairs Devon had been drug down. “Don’t underestimate Devon’s stubbornness,” She remarked. “How would you feel if I was pregnant by another male right now?”

Quinn sobered at the buzz killing thought, “I’d advise you to tell Kane to brush up on his spells... he would need more than one.”

Kat blinked in surprise at her mate then sighed softly. Well, at least he’d stopped making fun of Devon.

Chapter 2

Chad pulled into the driveway of Trevor's apartment and parked beside Evey. He turned off the car and sat back for a moment thinking about everything that had happened in the last couple weeks. Between him and his sister, he didn't know who was the most screwed up now... well okay, he'd let Envy win that one. Still, his hadn't been a cake walk either.

Just the thought that he'd been killed and brought back to life by Kriss and Dean was nothing less than harrowing. It gave him the chills knowing he was supposed to be buried in a cemetery somewhere... over... done. In short, it scared the crap out of him. To make matters worse, neither Fallen seemed to know what the consequences of their actions would be on future events.

He'd gone back to PIT headquarters to get his duffel bag and luckily caught Ren alone in his office. He'd taken the opportunity to again ask Ren if there was anything he should be aware of. Unfortunately, the all-knowing Ren didn't know anything more than Kriss and Dean and it grated a little bit on Chad's nerves.

At this rate, he would probably spend the next few weeks walking on eggshells to make sure nothing else happened... but in his line of work, that was never a guarantee. Chad had finally just shrugged it off and decided he was just as human now as he'd ever been and to hell with the unknown. The decision had actually taken a load off his shoulders.

“Hello Chad,” Evey’s soft voice called over to him.

Chad looked out the passenger window and smiled, “Hey Evey.” He got out of the car and walked over to her driver’s side door. When her window rolled down, he leaned against it pretending he was actually talking to a person, although his gaze was focused on the lit up dash. “How are you doing?”

“When you look this lovely, it’s hard not to feel good,” Evey answered making Chad’s smile widen.

“I can’t argue with that logic,” Chad said running his hand across her roof.

“Trevor left the key to the front door in my dash,” she opened the passenger door. “It’s all yours.”

Chad stepped back when the door came ajar then slid in the front seat to open the glove compartment. “How’s Trevor doing?”

Evey sighed, “I’m afraid Trevor isn’t here... he said something about letting off some steam by kicking some bad guy butt.”

Chad frowned, that sounded like Trevor but why didn’t he take Evey?

“Why aren’t you with him?” he asked putting a voice to his curiosity.

“He said he needed to be alone for a while,” Evey answered. “He’s upset because he’s afraid the conflict between him and Devon will upset Envy and cause her to lose the baby.”

Chad shook his head, “I don’t think it’ll come to that. Both of them are hard headed but they’d never intentionally hurt Envy.”

“He loves her,” Evey said sounding almost sad.

Chad nodded, "Yeah, I know."

"So instead of thinking about Devon, he's gone to take his pain out on something else?" Evey wanted clarification of the mystery of human nature. The more she learned the more curious she became.

"Why didn't you follow him?" Chad asked avoiding her question. He had a feeling he knew which team Evey was on when it came to the two men.

"My scanners can only track him when he's in human form. Trevor knows that and wanted to give me the slip. Before he left, he transformed into an owl and flew away," Evey explained.

Chad retrieved the apartment key out of the glove compartment and went back to his car to get his duffel bag. Leaning back against his car, he gazed at Evey liking the car more and more every time he came in contact with her. "I guess there isn't too much we can do about it then, is there?"

Evey sighed, "I guess not."

Chad stood there a moment and took in the slightly dusty appearance of Evey's body and smiled. "How would you like a nice bath and waxing?"

Evey started humming and Chad nodded, "One Sexton bath coming up... as soon as I change."

"Chad," Evey called as he approached the door.

Chad looked over his shoulder, "Yes?"

"Don't wear a shirt," Evey purred.

"Ah, you want the Sexton Sexy Special do you?" Chad

appeared to think about it then winked at the beautiful car, “I think that can be arranged.”

Evey continued purring.

Envy walked into Kriss’ penthouse apartment and immediately sank into the familiar comfort of the sofa. She already missed Devon... missed Chad... and every time she even started to think about Trevor she wanted to cry. The only reason she wasn’t crying was because of the baby... it had a calming effect on her. Mix it all together and honestly, she was starting to feel a bit numb.

Dean gave Kriss an odd look but Kriss shook his head, silently telling Dean that he’d explain everything later.

“This is a first rate mess,” Envy said softly and grabbed one of the throw pillows to hug.

Kriss sighed, “It’s not your fault that any of this happened Envy. Devon’s just gonna have to get it through his thick skull that he can’t attack the father of your baby at random.”

Envy lowered her chin to the pillow and hugged it a bit tighter, “He... he promised he wouldn’t attack Trevor.”

“When?” Kriss asked, curious as to why a promise like that had even been made.

“After we got back from that vacation with you and Tabby... they fought in Chad’s front yard. After that, I made him promise not to start anything with Trevor because I didn’t want to see either one of them hurt.” She bit her bottom lip feeling heaviness

in her chest. They hadn't hurt each other but she was pretty sure she'd hurt both of them enough to make up for that.

Dean frowned, "Maybe you should remind your kitty cat of that promise."

"Dean," Kriss said warningly.

"What?" Dean demanded softly. "If Santos loves the girl then he should prove it by keeping his word."

Envy exhaled loudly, "Dean does have a point Kriss."

"Point or not, I don't think this is the proper time to be saying it," Kriss griped.

"If not now, then when? I have to start thinking about the little guy," Envy said quietly. "I don't think the club would be a good place to raise a child. I mean, it worked for Devon and his family... but I don't want to bring my little boy up in a night club."

"Of course not," Kriss agreed "But what do you want to do, move back in with Chad?"

Envy whipped her head back and forth, "Oh hell no. Chad has enough to deal with. Last thing he needs is to take on my problems. Besides... he's already living with the baby's daddy. No, I think until everything settles down, I'm just going to pretend I'm a single parent."

"Another apartment perhaps?" Dean offered before Kriss was stupid enough to suggest she stay with them... permanently.

Envy shrugged, "It's an idea, but I always hoped I'd have a home when I finally decided to have children."

Kriss' expression immediately perked up, "HOUSE HUNTING!"

His outburst startled Envy making her snap her head up and blink owlshly at him. "House hunting?"

"Sure," Kriss said. "You don't want to be at the club when the baby is born, right? Finding a house and filling it with furniture and baby stuff would be perfect for getting your mind off things."

"But where am I going to get the money for a new house?" Envy asked. "I make good money working at Moon Dance... but not that much."

Kriss smiled reassuringly and gently took her hand, "Honey... that's the last thing you have to worry about. I'll help you get the house of your dreams if that's what you want... and don't you dare give me a hard time about it. That's my godchild in there."

To Envy's amusement, he again pointed down at her lower tummy. She gave in to the smile but shook her head, "I can't do that to you Kriss... and you don't have that much money... do you? I mean... I'm a bartender and you're a part time stripper."

"The only reason I bother stripping is because it's fun. I've got a savings account, stocks, bonds, and a few other things I'm not sure of the names," Kriss said sounding almost ditzzy. "I don't really know anymore... but the man at the bank keeps referring to me as his favorite billionaire."

"You are such a moron," Envy said with a giggle and threw a pillow at him.

"Ow," Kriss deadpanned when the pillow hit him in the face.

Dean hid his smirk knowing this was exactly what Kriss needed... someone to take care of, even if it was only for a short while. They were both bad for picking up charity cases it seemed.

He blocked out the playful bickering of his roommates and gazed down at the unforgiving city from the huge penthouse window. It was obvious Kriss was going to be busy for a while with Envy and in the end... Envy would have the security her and the baby needed. This was the perfect opportunity for him to once again stalk the Fallen hybrid that had been trapped with Misery.

Dean had found him completely by accident and since then had silently kept a discrete eye on him from a distance. After a few days of watching, Dean began leaving him small items such as fresh clothing, blankets, and an occasional edible from the nearby deli. The food wasn't always eaten but then... human food was not a necessity. They could live with or without it. The clothing and blankets were taken each time though.

So far, the hybrid hadn't exhibited any evil tendencies and avoided the other demons like the plague. It was a good sign of the hybrid's mental state... but things had a tendency to change if such creatures were left alone for too long.

From what Dean had observed, the hybrid was more Fallen than demon and he'd bet his own billions of dollars that he could get the hybrid to trust him if given some more time. If that happened, then maybe he could save him from the strangeness of this world he'd suddenly been released into.

He closed his eyes remembering the man's tears as he'd burst from the cave wall and fled into the night. That had been the clincher... demons do not cry.

"I'm going out for a while," Dean said suddenly and headed for the door.

"Get some chocolate syrup while you're out," Kriss called out before Dean made it to the door.

Dean paused and glanced back at him, "Chocolate syrup, why in the world do you want that?"

"Chocolate milk," Kriss and Envy said simultaneously.

Dean shook his head and left the penthouse, closing the door on amused giggling.

After the door closed Envy looked up at Kriss, "I didn't bring any clothes with me and I'm starting to get sleepy. It's been a long day... and night. Do you have anything I can change into?"

Kriss nodded, "In the second bedroom." He pointed at a closed door then winked at Envy, "that's where I sleep when I'm pissed off at Dean. The dresser in there has some of my larger shirts and a few pairs of boxers... help yourself."

"Do you guys fight often?" Envy said worriedly, not wanting to take Kriss' refuge away from him.

"Only when he's being a dick," Kriss smirked then jerked his thumb toward another closed door. "That's his spare room if I run him off."

Envy couldn't help but laugh, "You're a nut... you know that?"

"My life's ambition," Kriss sighed playfully then started for

the kitchen. He needed to make a new grocery list before his and Envy's cravings started kicking in. He stopped in mid stride and turned toward the front door. Scratch the list... he wanted pickles right now. "I'm going to clean out the grocery store... don't wait up."

Envy waited until he was gone before slowly getting off the sofa to go check out her room. Closing the door behind her, she opened the dresser and giggled at some of the shirts he had in there. Some were cute with little baby animals on them, some had funny phrases, and others were just solid colors. Choosing a plain black shirt and a pair of Sponge Bob boxers, she placed them on the bed and lifted her shirt over her head.

Her reflection in the mirror caught her eye and she caressed the soft, smooth skin of her tummy. She cocked her head to the side trying to picture her belly full with the child and turned to the side to examine the concave slope of her belly.

"I wonder who you're going to be like," she said softly to the growing baby. "Are you going to be like me, wild and hardheaded... or will you be like him, smart and hardheaded? I hope I make a good mother for you and I know Trevor will be a good daddy."

Envy smiled at her reflection, envisioning the small soul nestled there. "You're already blessed... do you know that? You're gonna have so many uncles and godparents protecting you that I can bet you won't even get a paper cut."

She saw movement behind her in the mirror's reflection and

swung around to see what it was. Moving closer to the balcony window, she pushed the curtain aside and gasped at the beautiful white owl sitting on the railing watching her with deep dark eyes.

The owl cocked its head to the side as though trying to determine what she was before turning its head in the opposite direction. Envy had never seen one so close before and was afraid that if she looked away it would vanish.

The owl turned its head once more toward her before turning its back and leaping from the railing. Its wings spread out catching the draft and it flew off over the city toward Angeles National Forest.

Envy remembered reading somewhere that owls were a sign of wisdom and she hoped it was a sign that she was doing the right thing.

Aurora held tighter onto her small sword and looked back up the side of the building searching for any sign of Samuel. She couldn't believe she'd been careless enough to let him sneak up on her like that. It had been an incredible stroke of luck that she'd gotten away from the roof of the skyscraper in one piece.

As she fell, she'd resigned herself to the fact that this was really going to hurt but an unusual savior had helped her out. On that particular skyscraper were statues of hawks that luckily protruded out from the sides. She'd been able to grab hold of one in mid-fall and swing herself beneath it so she was hidden from Samuel's sight when he looked down the edge of the building.

It felt like she had been holding on for eternity when the sense of his aura finally started to fade. After she was sure Samuel had gone, she pulled herself up and was able to crawl on top of the hawk's head.

Tired and out of breath, Aurora leaned back against the wall of the building to rest for a moment. It took her a few minutes to catch her breath but any breather from Samuel's obsession with her was more than welcome. In her mind, she knew why he kept coming after her... lust, plain and simple.

She wouldn't deny that Samuel was desirable but that was the allure of the more powerful demons. They were beautiful to look at until you saw what was beneath their exterior. Samuel was more beautiful than most demons, but in a lot of ways he was much darker than them on the inside.

She'd been avoiding him as well as she could and it looked like she'd finally lost him again... at least for now. Being anywhere near him left a queasy feeling in her stomach and Aurora didn't know how much longer she could keep fighting him before giving in to what she was used to.

She hated him but at the same time almost craved what he offered... what she had accepted after so long with him. Being on her own was exciting... but it was mixed with an equal amount of fear.

She felt something for Samuel... had enjoyed his body and for brief moments even enjoyed his company. In the other dimension, she'd escaped him countless times only to be

cornered by demons that were not a part of his army. She'd come so close to being killed and a tiny part of her had welcomed the thought of freedom... any way she could get it.

Samuel had always shown up just in time to save her... played the hero several times. She wasn't a fool though. He hadn't rescued her because he loved her and he'd always punished her quite brutally for running away. She'd been his property... his to be cruel to... his to make love to. Now that she had her weapon back maybe she had a chance of breaking away from him completely.

Looking down at the blade in her hand, Aurora sighed heavily. She'd discovered the weapon at a young age. She'd been an orphan and for the longest time had thought her name was Street Rat. It had been a demon that first called her by her real name... right before he tried to kill her. While defending herself, she'd felt the blade just appear in her hand... she'd won that fight.

She never learned how the demon had known her name but in the end it didn't really matter if it was her name or not. It was a far cry better than Street Rat.

After that, the blade had been her protector until she'd been pulled into the rift. She had spent the last few thousand years in a demon controlled realm and under Samuel's rule. The weapon had never appeared to save her within the rift... no matter how much trouble she'd gotten into. She sighed wishing there was someone she could talk to about it... ask the questions that needed answering.

The blade suddenly shone brightly as it was absorbed once more back into her body. Since the blade seemed to think she was safe, then she probably was. Aurora felt relief ease her tense muscles and decided it was time to get down from this building before someone saw her.

She looked down over the edge of the massive concrete hawk and inhaled as the wind rushed upwards lifting her hair around her face. She was still so far from the ground and she wasn't about to dive off for two reasons. Reason number one... she'd probably hurt herself and two, the main reason, she didn't want anyone to see her.

She'd thought about dying while in the rift but she had a chance at freedom now... she no longer wanted to die, so diving face first from a skyscraper was not a choice.

Climbing out onto the wing of the hawk, she looked down at a balcony several stories below and judged the distance. Aurora gripped the edge of the wing and swung herself toward the balcony enjoying the feeling of freefalling. Landing in a silent crouch, she gazed into the window and froze.

Between the part in the curtains, she saw movement and leaned closer to get a better look. Her lips parted when she saw a woman in a short silky nightgown smile coyly at a man sitting on the sofa across the room from her. The lady eased the silk from her shoulders, letting it hang down over her arms... exposing very little covering underneath.

Aurora moved her gaze to the man seeing his eyes darken

with passion. He stood up and removed his shirt, tossing it over his shoulder before stalking toward the woman like a cat slowly moving in on its prey. The woman smiled again and let the silk fall the rest of the way to the floor... exposing all she had to offer.

The man closed in and took the woman in his arms. They shared a passionate kiss before the man reached down and took hold of her, lifting her up. Her long legs wrapped around his waist and when he adjusted her slightly, the woman tossed her head back exposing her throat.

Aurora's breath quickened when the man's lips descended on the offered flesh making the woman in his arms shiver. He turned and walked them into another room, closing the door behind them and blocking her from seeing anything more. Aurora felt the small sad smile that caressed her lips and for a moment wished she was human.

She swung around and leaned against the building, slowly sliding down the wall until she was sitting with her knees drawn up in front of her.

She'd spent her childhood hiding what she was... trying to pretend she was human. Her one wish had always been that she was human. If she had been, she wouldn't have found the hell she did at Samuel's hands and she'd have been free to love anyone she chose.

It had been a boy her own age that informed her of what she really was. His name was Skye. To the humans, he'd only looked about seven years old... the same as her, but she'd known the

truth. He'd been her best friend for a long time and the only company that either one could trust.

They would just smile when the humans mistook them for siblings, their coloring was almost the same and by human standards they were considered beautiful.

Skye had told her stories about the Fallen... and the demons the Fallen had inadvertently created. He should know... he was one of those creations but it didn't bother him. He once told her that he enjoyed looking like a Fallen because it was better to be an angel than a demon. He'd also warned her about the fears humans had and that if they ever discovered what she really was... they would try to kill her.

For years she and Skye had stuck together, moving from village to village every few years before the humans could catch on to the fact that they weren't aging like normal children.

She still remembered the last time she'd seen Skye. He'd smiled at her before walking into the forest with several of the village men who were taking him on a vision quest.

That was the day the demons had come... so many demons. The earth shook with their arrival, killing anything that got in their way. The ground beneath them had opened up and actually sank before a great crack raced through the center of the village square.

Aurora could only stand there and stare in terror at what was happening. A demon roared and came running at her and she'd stumbled backwards just as three men rushed in between her and

the demon, blocking its path. She gasped waiting to feel the hard ground beneath her and screamed when the earth started to rise up around her.

One of the human men, a village warrior, dove down after her but was caught in midair by another demon... that was the last she saw of him. Other humans were falling in with her, screaming all the way and it suddenly dawned on her that she'd fallen into the huge crack. Her wings, only a smoky shadow to the naked eye, appeared and she tried to return to the surface but an inexplicable force continued to pull her down... away from the home she and Skye had chosen.

Before the screaming had stopped, the whole village had been sent into the rift... trapping humans and demons alike. She closed her eyes trying to block out the memory of what had happened to those humans and turned her thoughts back to Skye. She was glad he had went on his vision quest... was glad he hadn't seen any of it. The only hope she held onto now was that he was still alive and living a full life.

Bringing herself back to her present predicament, Aurora leaned toward the glass peeking in to see that the human couple had not come back out of the far room. Reaching up she sighed when the door easily opened and she slipped inside, running soundlessly across the carpet and out into the hallway.

Once at street level, she made sure to keep to the well-lit areas just in case Samuel reappeared for another fight... a fight she wasn't so sure she could keep winning. She didn't really keep

track of where she was going or how long she walked... all she wanted was one night of peace... to rest.

When was the last time she'd truly slept without the fear of being accosted because of what she was? It had been before she was dragged into the rift. And the only moment of happiness she'd found since coming out of the rift was with a man in the subway tunnel.

She reached up and touched the necklace she was still wearing and was caught between melancholy and the thrill of the stolen moments of bliss. It was a memento, something to remember him by because she knew she'd never see him again.

Aurora jerked her gaze up to the fence she was walking beside and looked around tucking the necklace back inside her shirt. For the first time since coming out of the rift, she didn't feel any demons near her. Wrapping her fingers around the tall chain link fence, she stared across the parking lot at the huge building it surrounded.

She didn't know how to read the words that were lit up in red across the top, so for the lack of demons in the area she pretended it read Sanctuary and smiled. Within moments, she had scaled the fence and made it to the roof of the building.

Moving silently out of habit, she curled up against the only door leading into the interior because it had a small overhang that would keep the sunlight from waking her too soon. Another smile appeared on her face as she felt safety here... a place where she could finally rest.

She lay there with her eyes closed and stretched her senses out feeling all of the boundaries surrounding this place. She didn't know why or how... but she felt like she was on an island in a sea of demons and they couldn't come out of the water to get her. Opening her eyes, she inhaled sharply when she did indeed feel the demon energies around the perimeters of the barrier.

Aurora felt their rage and frustration as they tried to break through and couldn't help but smile... they would not get her this night.

Chapter 3

To say Skye was confused was an understatement. He'd somehow gone from one prison into another, not realizing until it was too late. When he was unexpectedly freed from the trap that had imprisoned him and Misery together, he'd stalked the she-demon knowing she planned to release the demons that had been pulled into the rift.

A large part of him actually hoped that Misery would succeed in her quest, but not for the reasons that some might believe. Just because he was a demon didn't mean he liked his own kind.

For centuries, he'd held onto the hope that Aurora was still alive in there somewhere and was trying to find her way back through to this world. However, when he saw what crawled out of the rift Misery opened, his hopes had crashed down around him and he was still in mourning. There was no way that Aurora could have survived among all of those monsters.

He had been trapped with only one demon... Misery... and he'd still been able to feel the outside world. Being so close to freedom had lent him the hope he needed to retain his sanity. But Aurora... she had been trapped in another world with countless demons, many of them masters.

Aurora had been an innocent, white and pure. But to the demons she would have been seen as the enemy... the same enemy that hunted, persecuted, and trapped them.

Now the city was full of demons and Skye had been forced to blend in and disappear among the human populace. Along with the multitude of demons, he'd also seen a small army of demon hunters that were taking out the demon clans one at a time... usually just as they'd established a territory. There were many other demons that had already claimed a stake and were trying to lay low, attempting to blend in the same way he had.

Blending in with the humans was something Skye had learned how to do very early in his life and he'd shared that knowledge with Aurora.

When he'd first met her, he'd known they would need each other's protection. Where as demons often mistook him for a Fallen, there was no mistaking what Aurora was... unless she learned how to suppress her true lineage.

His heart had spilled out on the ground when he returned from his vision quest to find the village and almost everyone in it gone. The human species was no stranger to war... a resilient race in its own right. There had been a few survivors that had fled the massacre to hide in the forest and it was through them that he'd learned what happened.

The villagers cried that demons had appeared among them to eat their souls... then the gods had descended from the sky to destroy the monsters... saving them even though there were many casualties from the sudden battle. Even as they mourned their dead... they were thankful the gods had saved them.

With the village completely destroyed, he and the other village

warriors gathered the survivors and traveled to another village. It was on the second night of sleeping under the stars that Skye noticed a stranger among them... a little girl. No one had questioned her presence, thinking she was a refugee from another village that had fallen in the wake of the massacre... she called herself Misery.

On the third night, Misery pulled him aside and told him in explicit detail what had truly happened to his village and that the Fallen were responsible. The thing that disturbed Skye the most was that she knew he wasn't human... no matter how much he suppressed his power. She claimed that it was his sadness that gave him away.

By the time they made it to the next settlement, Skye was in constant fear of Misery telling the humans what he really was and that same fear kept his mouth shut.

Over the next few weeks, Misery kept the villagers in a constant state of terror by playing pranks on them. Late at night, she would walk through the village in her rotted form... causing mass panic by sneaking up on those that were unfortunate enough to be caught out at night. Some of them were able to reach safety but the others weren't so lucky.

The last straw was when three warriors who had been the best of friends their entire lives killed each other in a bloodbath that painted the entire village square red.

The villagers finally began blocking their doors at night and refusing to venture out until the sun was high in the sky. It wasn't

long before a stranger began visiting the village and purchasing goods from the market. Skye recognized what the man truly was and began to keep to himself... staying away from all the villagers and leaving Misery to her own demise.

That plan of self-preservation failed when Misery began beating on his door in the middle of the night demanding he let her in. He'd ignored the child's voice and slipped out of his dwelling through the back exit. Skye knew the she-demon had been discovered by the stranger... a Fallen who had gotten wind of a demon in the village.

Unfortunately, Misery followed him and in turn led the Fallen directly to him. Skye took refuge in a cave and hid hoping beyond all hope that Misery didn't find him. His heart dropped to his feet when Misery ran into the cave to hide. The Fallen must have seen his chance and placed some kind of barrier around the cave, trapping them for all eternity.

Skye shook off the memories of those agonizing centuries in the cave and continued walking casually through the streets of Los Angeles. He had nothing better to do except to simply wander through the maze of tall buildings and dark alleys. It was late, dark, and most of the humans were sleeping, save for those that thrived on the night.

Demons also roamed the streets, hungrily searching for those humans that stupidly believed the darkness was their home.

He was still astounded at the size of the city, having never seen anything like this when he'd roamed the earth centuries

before. The humans whose minds he touched had lent him the knowledge he needed to understand what he was seeing. Never had he believed the human race could progress to such a level. Before his time in the cave, human dwellings had been nothing more than small huts made out of mud and straw, but now they had towers that reached into the heavens.

What frustrated him the most were that the stories surrounding demon occupation in history had been chalked up to legends, myth, and folklore. If the humans only knew their worst nightmares were reality... society would most likely crumble or they would blame their government for conducting experiments on the human genetic makeup.

Suddenly wanting to get to safety, Skye shimmered through the streets, avoiding the few pedestrians coming in and out of focus like the flashing of a strobe light.

He stopped at the mouth of a shadowy alley and looked into the darkness for a moment, then glanced over his shoulders to make sure no one would see him. Once he was certain the coast was clear, he walked into it with no hesitation. The buildings rose high around him, giving the effect of the darkness swallowing him up. It had taken some time, but he'd found a hideaway in the basement of the huge downtown library.

His gaze easily found the bars covering the basement window at ground level in the absolute darkness. Crouching down next to them, Skye peered in making sure none of the library workers were still on duty and snooping around like they had been for the

past week.

Silently removing the bars, he slowly lowered himself into the deep concrete room before turning and sliding the bars back into place. He took a deep breath knowing he would be safe for another night. Turning back to the main area of the basement, he weaved his way through the almost countless rows of bookshelves that was home to some of the older volumes such as rare first editions until he came to a sitting area that hadn't been used in who knew how long.

An old sofa sat in a small clearing in the bookshelves, the back of it pushed against a windowless wall. More shelves stood tall around it with open boxes of books sitting here and there. A single floor lamp sat next to the sofa, which Skye never bothered to turn on since night vision was one of the perks of tainted blood.

Skye had sought sanctuary here many times since his escape from the cave and so far he hadn't been disturbed. Though he didn't need to rest that often... tonight Skye was exhausted. He'd made more than one valiant attempt to leave the city. However, someone or something had erected a barrier around it in every direction, making escape impossible. He knew there was a way out... he only had to find the key.

He wanted to rage at Misery for causing all of this since it was her fault to begin with. She was a powerful demon with the mentality of a brat. He'd been trapped in that cave with her for so long that when he finally felt freedom... he'd taken it not knowing that freedom was a lie. He wasn't completely ungrateful

though... at least this cage was bigger and the scenery was better.

Misery had made good on her plan to release the demons back into this world but he'd watched some of them try leaving as well. They had all been released from one prison or another, only to fall right into another one with what appeared to be no chance of escaping. It was almost like two worlds had collided and created a bubble.

Skye walked closer to the sofa with the plan of reading a book that he'd picked up from one of the random shelves. The library people had inadvertently helped him learn how to read, which was much easier than he'd expected. Basically, he'd touched their minds to gain knowledge and could now read the thicker books within minutes.

His perfect lips hinted at a smile when it dawned on him that it took longer to turn the pages than it took to read the stories. If he could seep knowledge from people's minds then why couldn't he try to do the same with the books? Laying the book on the top of the nearest box, Skye held his hand over it and closed his eyes.

Dean sat on top of a nearby bookshelf watching the hybrid with curiosity. The man's long pale hair lifted and floated around him as if he were standing in a soft updraft. He raised a dark eyebrow when that updraft illuminated around him in amethyst color and the hybrids body swayed relaxingly. It was beautiful to watch.

Skye slowly inhaled as he drifted through the books, one moment being a pirate on the open seas and the next moment so

in love with a faraway princess that he could taste her lips and feel the cloth of his pants tighten with need for her. His attention was quickly taken as he soared through the sky on a black dragon then was killed by a wizard that was more powerful than he was.

“Figures,” Skye complained as he took a step back from what was obviously the fiction section.

With a sigh, he moved to sit down and frowned when he noticed another set of clothing and a pair of sturdy black tennis shoes. Who in the world kept leaving things down here in the basement? He knew the workers came down here from time to time but he made sure none of them knew about him using the sofa and books.

Skye cursed silently when he realized his exhaustion had caused him to overlook the other presence nearby. He looked around frantically, turning full circle, but saw nothing out of the ordinary. Swallowing, he slowly approached the clothing items and reached out to touch them only to quickly pull his hand away suspiciously.

Dean decided to remain invisible and see what the hybrid would do. He was a skittish one, but hell... being trapped with Misery for a few centuries would have driven a saint crazy. Dean couldn't stand her for more than a few seconds and his patience level was pretty good... at least he thought so.

He looked down at the box of books the hybrid had just scanned and almost smirked at the classic novel about the world's most famous vampire sitting on top. Ah, the ironies of life. He

glanced back at the hybrid when he moved away from the gifts.

“Who are you?” Skye demanded feeling the hair on the back of his neck lift from someone else’s gaze. He’d felt that caress before... it was the eyes of the Fallen that had been stalking him.

“Dean,” Dean whispered, making sure not to startle him. When the silence started to stretch Dean frowned, “Unless you want to be referred to as Boy... I need a name.”

“What do you want?” Skye asked in a cold voice. His gaze darted around the room since the voice seemed to be coming from inside his head instead of a direction.

“Just to talk,” Dean shrugged even though the other man couldn’t see it. He pulled his feet up and rose into a crouch seeing the ‘fight or flight’ light shining in the hybrid’s eyes.

Skye gritted his teeth not trusting the faceless voice. “Is that all you want... really?”

“Unless you want more,” Dean’s voice was seductive as he let his gaze drift down the other man’s body without shame.

How long had this boy gone without feeling the touch of another? He was almost full blooded Fallen and a Fallen felt no bond without touch... it was just the way they were made. That’s why he had stopped Kriss from touching Tabatha too much... why it had bothered him to see them curled up in bed together. He suddenly wondered if Kriss would become jealous if the tables were turned.

“Why should I believe you?” Skye growled knowing this was not a game.

“You don’t have to,” Dean informed him realizing he was going to have to be heavy handed if he wanted to rein in the wild child. “But what alternative do you really have? Either I kill you before you grow lonely and join the other demons... or...” he smiled wickedly looking forward to the fight with anticipation.

Skye’s fear shot through the roof. He rushed for an opening between the bookshelves only to feel a pair of strong arms wrap around him from behind. The force of the hold against his momentum drove the air from his lungs and actually lifted his feet off the floor. He struggled in the hold not bothering to take a moment to catch his breath.

The arms tightened around him and he gasped loudly at the hard body pressed up against him. He suddenly had flashes of the last time he’d been this close to someone... when he and Aurora curled around each other at night to stay warm... when they held hands or gave into the hug they both needed. He could feel everything and that made him all the more frightened.

“Or... you could choose to join the Fallen,” Dean breathed into the shell of his ear.

“Fallen kill beings like me,” Skye growled gripping the arm around his chest but was unable to break the hold. “Or you toss us in a cave or hole somewhere and forget all about us,” he raged as sorrow and anger clashed within him.

Dean sighed and shook his head. It was times like this that he really wanted to beat some of his brethren over the head with his fist for their carelessness during the demon wars.

“If I’d known you were down there with that monster... I’d have saved you!” Dean hissed meaning every word. “I still want to save you.”

Skye stopped struggling but hardened his muscles to suppress the shiver that tried to rake his body. He slowly turned his head toward his captor but stilled when he felt the soft warm skin of the other man’s cheek press against his. He couldn’t stop the pain of loneliness from welling up in his eyes... the touch of this Fallen reminded him of what he’d lost in Aurora.

“Why?” Skye asked in confusion.

Dean brushed his cheek against the hybrid’s feeling the hot tear slide between them, “Because demons don’t cry... you are a Fallen. Even Misery could tell... can’t you?”

Kane sighed and rolled over onto his back. Something wasn’t quite right and he turned his head to look over at Tabatha... that was when he heard it again. Frowning up at the ceiling, he closed his eyes and listened carefully. At first the sound was muffled, as though it were being heard through a mound of pillows. But slowly, the pounding became steady and strong.

His amethyst eyes snapped back open hearing the faint sound of a heartbeat in the distance.

He carefully tucked the covers around Tabatha and placed a whisper soft kiss on her forehead before sliding from the comfort of their bed. Pulling on a pair of black leather pants, he made his way through the darkness of the massive club to the security

room, rubbing his eyes as he went.

As soon as he opened the door, blue light showered him causing him to blink. Kane gazed at the split screen security monitor showing him every angle outside the club, including the roof. His eyes narrowed when the rooftop cam flashed, indicating something had tripped the motion sensors... something that wasn't supposed to be there.

Touching the screen, he brought the area by the rooftop door up to full view and tilted his head to the side. Now that was something he didn't see every day. A beautiful woman was curled up just under the overhang on the roof and appeared to be sound asleep.

"That looks comfy... not," Kane made a face knowing the tiny rocks in the tar had to be biting into her delicate looking skin.

Tabatha had felt Kane leave the bedroom and wondered what would pull him away from the comfort of her bed after she'd spent so many hours wearing him out.

Curious, she sat up and followed his scent to the security room. Peering through the open door, she saw he was absorbed in something on the screen and tiptoed across the room in an attempt to sneak up on him. She had almost made it close enough to reach out and touch him when his voice startled her.

"We have a visitor," Kane smirked hearing Tabatha's quick intake of breath.

"Damn it," she hissed and he heard her stomp her bare foot on the soft carpet.

Kane suddenly turned around and grabbed her, hauling her against him and gracing her with a dazzling smile. “You didn’t really think you could sneak up on the boogiemán, did you?” he teased, nuzzling the side of her face before stealing a kiss.

Tabatha let Kane kiss her and felt her toes curl at the passion behind it but she was dying to know about the girl that was moon-bathing on their roof. She ended the kiss quicker than Kane would have liked... at least that’s what his soft growl was telling her.

She licked his bottom lip then playfully bit it. “And just think, when I was a little girl I was afraid of the boogiemán.”

The sound of a little girl crying out in fear above his grave came back to haunt him... making Kane tightened his hold on her. That little girl had been lost in the woods for days... scared and alone. The thought of what Tabatha must have gone through still had the power to make his chest hurt and knees go weak... it also stirred the darkness within him.

Tabatha felt the change in him and leaned back to stare up into amethyst eyes that were growing darker by the second. She didn’t know what she’d said to trigger it so she tried to get his attention focused back on the roof.

“I thought this place was warded against demons and humans alike... unless they are invited.” She nodded toward the monitor.

“It is,” Kane remarked then had to smile when Tabatha cocked an eyebrow at him.

“Then what’s that?” Tabatha leaned across Kane to get closer

to the screen, ignoring the way Kane was taking the opportunity to caress her rear. The girl appeared to be sleeping but at the same time her body was moving slightly... as if straining away from something.

She looked lost and alone like that and Tabatha felt her heart go out to the poor girl. "What's wrong with her?"

Kane let his hand drop and turned to see what had caught Tabatha's interest. He recognized the symptoms of a nightmare when he saw one. "She's dreaming love."

Tabatha's eyes narrowed just as the girl rolled over, "Kane look... you're right. She's shivering and having a nightmare. We can't just leave her up there like that."

"What..." Kane started and growled when Tabatha rushed out of the room. His eyes widened when he heard the front door of the club softly close. He blinked realizing she was about to scale the walls in her nightie and grinned. In a flash, he was standing below her looking up at the breathtaking sight.

"So that's what heaven looks like," Kane whispered with a sexy smile.

Tabatha glared down at him but realized she'd inadvertently set herself up for it. Of course, Kane wouldn't be Kane if he didn't have his moments of perverseness.

Chapter 4

In her dream, Aurora ran like her life depended on it. Shadows surrounded her on all sides and they were terrifying. It felt like she was running through a maze with no exit and dead ends at every corner. The terror that filled her was becoming overwhelming and she stumbled every few steps... tired of running... always running away from the powerful ones. No matter how far or how fast she ran the darkness was getting closer.

She gasped loudly and her eyes flew open in fright. The stars twinkled above her and she suddenly realized there really was something powerful getting closer to her. Fresh from the fright of the dream and her heart still racing, Aurora quickly found her feet and stared toward the edge of the roof in fear.

Exhaustion was beginning to take its toll, she was so tired... was she so wicked that even this sanctuary would not let her rest? Feeling the doorknob poke into her back, she fumbled for it and quickly opened the door. Hoping to avoid the powerful energy coming at her, she shot inside only to slam into an unyielding body and felt another strange power flare around her.

Instincts kicked into high gear and Aurora did the first thing her survival instinct told her to do... fight. With one swift kick, she sent the powerful being sailing down the long flight of stairs to the floor far below. She turned to confront whatever was

directly behind her but paused in confusion, her face losing all expression when she saw a half-naked female blocking her exit.

Tabatha saw the girl's face go blank but the look in her eyes told her everything... the girl was scared to death and ready to fight her way out of here if she needed to. Tabatha swallowed and held her hands out, palms up toward the girl in a placating gesture.

"It's all right," Tabatha explained. "We only want to help you."

Aurora narrowed her eyes on the woman. Why would someone or something that powerful want to help her?

Tabatha took a step closer to the girl and held out one of her hands. "You're safe here," she said softly and hoped the girl believed her. However, any progress she might have just made was gone with the breeze when Kane chose that moment to come flying back up the stairs and grab the girl in a choke hold.

Her shoulders slumped and she let out a heavy sigh, "Kane please, we scared her. Let her go."

Kane gave Tabatha a hurt look, "Love, she just kicked my ass all the way back down to the main floor. Are you seriously telling me that you're on her side?"

"Your fangs are showing," Tabatha glowered at him then rolled her eyes when he had the nerve to look down and make sure his pants was zipped. She gritted her teeth to keep from smiling since she couldn't blame him for looking... after all, the black leather pants was the only thing he was wearing and the button was still unfastened.

Aurora jerked her head around and stared up at the man holding her checking for fangs. Was he a vampire like the man she'd made love to in the subway?

Kane noticed her looking up at him and couldn't help himself. He smiled at the girl... fangs and all.

"Kane," Tabatha exclaimed and took a step toward them only to stop when Kane pinned her with a warning glare... accompanied by a dangerous growl. "You're so mean," Tabatha informed him in a huff and crossed her arms over her chest.

Seeing his fangs, Aurora's eyes lifted to his and for a second she went shock still. She remembered seeing eyes like those before... deep amethyst eyes that seemed to look into her very soul.

Now that he had the girl's attention, Kane slowly let the smile die knowing this wasn't a game. If it had been Tabatha coming up those stairs instead of him, the outcome would have been the same... except this girl would now be breathing through her neck.

He let his pupils enlarge, "Now then, I've introduced myself. It's only fair that you do the same."

"Vampire," Aurora hissed and started struggling again.

Kane sighed feeling like he was trying to hold on to a snake. "No love... that would be me. The question was what you are. You're not human... that much is obvious. If you were a demon, you'd have been writhing in pain long before breaching the barriers surrounding our home. Now I'm going to ask you one

more time... who and what are you?"

Aurora's lips thinned as she pressed them together. She'd learned as a child to never tell what she was... though the dangerous ones usually knew what she was at first sight. This man had lied to her by playing the part of vampire. She knew he wasn't... his soul was plain as day to her, though she had to admit there was something wrong with it.

As well as she could see his soul, Aurora could also see the darkness around the edges of it and knew there was a chance of it overtaking him if he was pushed too far.

Her heart fell when she realized she'd been right about this place... it was a sanctuary. He'd said demons couldn't cross his barriers and this thought alone made her want desperately to stay. She stopped struggling and looked toward the girl that had tried to defend her. Could she trust them enough to tell them who she really was... she doubted it.

"I just wanted sanctuary from the demons," Aurora said honestly... looking deep into the other woman's eyes. "I can't tell you what I am... I'm sorry. If he will let go of me, I will leave quietly and never return."

Kane noticed the shadow of wings slowly crawl across his arm and for a moment didn't know if he should let her go or hold on tighter. He glanced at Tabatha to make sure she hadn't noticed the warning.

'Kane, she's not going to hurt me,' Tabatha said very loudly in his mind then softened her inner voice to a whisper, 'please,

for me... let her go.’

Loosening his grip, Kane said in a very soft voice, “I believe you won't hurt anyone nor do you want to... I frightened you, right? You are welcome here any time you need sanctuary... you will be safe inside the barrier. But if you want to camp out on our roof, then at least let me get you some warm covers and a pillow.”

Holding his breath, Kane slowly let go of the Fallen and took a step back, disappearing down the stairs. Tracing to his and Tabatha's room, he quickly selected several blankets and two pillows from the closet. He made it back up the stairs before Tabatha had taken more than two steps closer to the Fallen.

Laying the blankets and pillows down next to the girl's feet, he motioned for Tabatha to come with him.

Tabatha nodded keeping her expression calm, although she could have sworn she'd seen Kane's hands shaking. She sent a fleeting glance toward the other woman as she passed her.

Aurora picked up the bedding and leaned against the wall beside the door before slowly pushing it closed behind them. She felt more drained now than she'd been to start out with but she had her sanctuary... at least for a couple more hours.

Tabatha turned on Kane ready to give him a what for, but stopped when she felt his finger touch her lips.

“Shhh,” Kane whispered near her ear, “come.”

Tabatha nodded and remained quiet as she followed Kane back down into the security office. He shut them in and they both watched the monitor seeing the woman still standing there were

they'd left her. Tabatha inhaled softly when the girl lifted a hand to wipe at a tear that had made its way down her cheek.

“Poor girl... I hate to see anyone alone and frightened like that. I wonder why she's alone... she's beautiful.” She glanced up at Kane seeing the muscles in his jaw bounce and knew he was gritting his teeth. “Why did you suddenly have a change of heart and decide to let her stay?” Tabatha whispered as if the girl could still hear them.

Kane nodded at the monitor. “She's right not to tell anyone what she is,” he stated as the girl leaned back against the roof door and slid down it into a sitting position. He shook his head noting the way she was still staring at the covers in her arms with teary eyes.

“She can't be any rarer than you are,” Tabatha frowned seeing the worry in her lover's eyes. She looked back at the monitor and felt her heart break a little as the girl hugged the blankets closer as though someone would suddenly appear and take them away.

“I think she may have crawled out of the rift with the demons,” Kane said avoiding Tabatha's question about rareness.

He needed a moment to think of a damn good reason not to grab the phone and call Dean. She'd obviously lived among the demons for who knew how long and there was no telling how big of a toll it had taken on her. She wasn't trusting of anyone and now that he knew the reason... he couldn't just turn her away. He looked over at Tabatha suddenly feeling his mate's sadness.

“Kane... do you truly love me?” Tabatha asked quietly.

Kane slowly nodded as he searched her eyes, “With everything that I am.”

Tabatha smiled softly at the sweetness of his words. “Then trust me enough to let me in. You’re not alone anymore,” she raised her hand and cupped his cheek. “You’re worried and I want to worry with you. Maybe I can even help chase your demons away.”

Kane took a deep breath. “What if I told you that girl on the roof is probably the only female of her kind on earth?” he asked, his mind still going a mile a minute. “She needs to be with her own kind... her own breed. But if I tell them about her, it will destroy what they have right now. I don’t want to be responsible for that.”

Tabatha's lips parted and she frowned thoughtfully. Bless his heart he was trying, but he wasn't giving her much to go on. She watched his knuckles turn white where he was tightly gripping the back of the chair between him and the monitor. By this action alone, she could tell that this was weighing heavily on him.

“My first instinct was to pick up the phone and tell the men of her kind that she’s here... I want to tell them. But it’s the wrong thing to do. She’s hiding from something out there and with their help, she would be better protected,” he slung the chair away from him and it crashed into the wall startling both of them. “Damn it!”

Kane turned his amethyst eyes on Tabatha, “You would want to tell them too... and we would both be wrong to do it.”

“What would happen if we tell them?” Tabatha asked calmly still not entirely sure what he was and wasn’t telling her.

Kane inhaled deeply before trusting her enough to tell her his most secret thoughts. “The two men in question would stop loving each other and turn that love on her... but only one of them can have her. In the end, one of them would lose everything. Or worst case scenario... she could reject them both and the damage would already be done.

He reached out and cupped her cheek the same way she’d done him. “To tell Kriss and Dean about her would inevitably destroy them.”

Tabatha blinked realizing the full implications of what Kane was trying to tell her... that the girl was a Fallen. She looked back at the monitor and remembered the first time she ever met Dean. He’d been enraged because Kriss’ scent had been on her and believed she’d done something with the other Fallen. Possessive and scary were two words that came to mind.

She bit her bottom lip as she contemplated what Kane had said. If Kriss and the girl got together... there was no question that Dean would become very dangerous. And if Dean and the girl got together... how much heartbreak would Kriss be put through? Kriss had told her why a Fallen could only be with a Fallen. He’d be completely alone without Dean... it would destroy him.

Kane closed his eyes listening to Tabatha's voice as he eavesdropped on her private thoughts. He was looking at it from

Dean's point of view and she was more worried about Kriss. He'd expected no less.

"You have the biggest heart," Tabatha said startling Kane. She smiled and slid into his arms, pressing her ear against his chest so she could hear his heartbeat. "You're right... I wouldn't have thought it through and would have instantly called them thinking it was the best news in the world. How could I be so blind and you see so much?"

She glanced back toward the monitor and added, "I feel bad for her though. She probably thinks she's completely alone in the world."

Kane reached over and turned the monitor off, "We're not completely heartless you know. She now has a place to run to if she needs sanctuary and I have a feeling we'll be seeing her quite a bit."

"I need something to take my mind off of her," Tabatha gave him a seductive pout before disappearing from the room so fast that she left a breeze.

"Damsels in distress... got to love them," Kane traced through the club stopping in his bedroom doorway to admire the view.

She was stretched out on the bed with her tiny silk nightie still on and smiling at him with half-lidded eyes. Kane approached the bed, shedding the leather pants as he went.

Tabatha didn't know how he could make taking his pants off look sexy but he managed it and she couldn't argue with the results. In a matter of seconds, her nightie was gone and

they were once again participating in Kane's favorite pastime... sexual torture... at least that was the way Tabatha saw it.

On the roof above them, Aurora finally gave in to the temptation of the blankets. She spread one of them out on the roof then tossed a pillow down on it. Hugging the second pillow to her chest, she wrapped the other cover around her and laid down thinking about the couple that had found her. They both had amethyst eyes.

She hugged the pillow tighter to her chest as she remembered another with such eyes and wondered if they were the same breed as the man she'd made love to. She'd accused the blond man of being a vampire even though she knew he wasn't... but what else did she have to compare him to. She wasn't really afraid of vampires, there had been several in the demon realm.

One of the many times she'd escaped from Samuel, it had been directly into a nest of soulless vampires and they'd descended on her like a swarm of angry bees. She'd managed to kill a good number of them with her bare hands before being overrun.

Aurora could still remember the feeling of their claws ripping at her clothing and fangs sinking into her flesh. She didn't know who was more surprised... her or the vampires when the ones that did bite her started burning away from the inside out.

The vampires that were left finally fell back once they realized they couldn't drink her. When she'd raised her eyes, she saw Samuel smirking at her from the edge of the mob. What she had

left of the little bit of clothing he'd allowed her was ripped away and she was forced to remain like that for a very long time... never leaving Samuel's sight.

She could have regained her clothing sooner but Samuel had insisted she make love to him without a fight if she wanted her modesty back. She'd decided right then that modesty was highly overrated.

The man in the subway had bit her, but it hadn't felt like the merciless tearing of flesh she'd endured and he survived the sip of blood he'd stolen from her. She rolled her neck to the side remembering the sensation then clenched her legs together when she felt a phantom pulse between her thighs.

Aurora bit her bottom lip. Her chest had felt like something heavy was sitting on it when Samuel had told her he'd killed the vampire. Her relief when she realized he was lying had lifted that weight. She suddenly frowned wondering if that meant the vampire had beaten Samuel in a fight. She sighed knowing that was just wishful thinking.

Across town, Michael leaned against the frame of his bedroom doorway surveying the progress he'd made in righting the room. Everything was back in its place except the bed... his mattress was now missing the antique frame that had once supported it.

He already missed it but shrugged deciding it was better to leave it that way until he had these power surges under control. He hadn't had the heart to throw the frame away though... it was

now stored in the attic. If luck was with him, he would be able to restore it later.

He couldn't help but push his melancholy away and laugh when Scrappy jumped up on the mattress. The little dog looked at him strangely for a moment before he decided to run around in circles so fast he made himself dizzy to the point that he couldn't stay on his feet.

"You're not right... you know that," Michael exclaimed shaking his head.

Scrappy merely whined and finally succeeded in righting himself, still lying down but Michael laughed harder when Scrappy's head kept moving in tiny circles. Finally he took pity on the little dog and picked him up in his arms.

"Well that's one way to get drunk, but I know another way that might be just what I need tonight," he rubbed Scrappy's ears "hopefully my drinking buddy is still free." He sat Scrappy down and patted his pocket for his cell phone then sighed in annoyance remembering he'd crushed it in the subway.

The house phone chose that moment to ring sending Michael tracing down the stairs to the living room.

"Tell Kat you need a fresh bottle of Heat... make that two," Michael started off the conversation by getting straight to the point.

"Having a bad day are we?" Warren asked then glanced over at Devon whom he'd locked in the dance cage. "I've definitely got something to take your mind off your own troubles. You can

have as much Heat as you want if you'll just come help me get a handle on Devon.”

“It’s a deal.” Michael hung up feeling a sudden adrenaline rush.

Deciding to put it to good use, he was standing on the sidewalk in front of the house before the living room clock had time to make it to the next second. Stopping dead, he turned back toward the house hearing Scrappy scratching on the door.

Opening the door back up, he could have sworn the puppy sent him a glare before slowly walking out. “Guess a doggie door might be a good investment,” Michael cocked an eyebrow. “And don’t you go telling your daddy on me.”

Scrappy barked up at Michael before taking off around the back of the house.

“Traitor,” Michael yelled.

Listening to the roaring silence coming from the empty house, Michael closed the door. He missed having Kane, Damon and Alicia living here with him. He’d lived alone for so long before that... he hadn’t realized just how lonely he truly was.

With a heavy sigh, Michael walked away from the house and decided he needed to get to Moon Dance as quickly as he could. For some reason, he just didn’t want to be alone tonight.

The first thing he saw when he entered the club was Kat and Quinn standing against the railing looking down onto the dance floor. He tilted his head to the side, the edges of a smile pulling at his lips.

“What’s going on?” Michael asked when he saw what Kat and Quinn were looking at.

“Devon’s practicing a new cage dance,” Quinn smirked at him and then grabbed the top of his head when Kat smacked him. “What?” he inquired looking innocently at Kat.

Kat crossed her arms over her chest and looked at him as if he were stupid, “You’re joking... right?”

Michael frowned at the weirdness of the newly mated couple and cocked an eyebrow at what he was seeing. Warren was sitting in a chair with his feet propped up on a five gallon paint bucket and he was staring at the cage with a dejected looking Devon inside. Michael cocked an eyebrow when he noticed that the door to the dance cage had a heavy chain locking it.

“Will you please talk some sense into Warren?” Kat pleaded.

“Don’t you mean talk some sense into Devon?” Quinn corrected then took a quick step back when Kat snapped a glare in his direction.

“Do you really want to fight?” Kat asked then took her own step back when Quinn started toward her.

“Yes,” Quinn’s voice came out in a dark seductive purr.

Michael shook his head when Kat took off up the stairs with Quinn right on her heels. He had to admit Kat was often smarter than her brothers and glanced back down into the pit seeing an almost devious smile on Warren’s face.

Yep, whatever reason Warren had taken Devon prisoner... he was enjoying playing the part of jailer.

Feeling eyes on him, Warren lifted his head and waved at Michael. He reached for the bottle of Heat on the floor beside him and held it up so Michael could see it. “Wanna join me?”

Devon sighed now sitting on the cage floor with his back against the bars. Seeing Michael coming down the steps was all he needed. He thumped his head backwards against the steel making the bars rattle. Between Michael and Warren... he would never hear the end of this.

“Sorry to disappoint you Michael but the show is over,” he hissed.

“What did I miss?” Michael asked rubbing his chin as he stopped beside Warren’s chair.

Warren finally pulled his gaze away from his brooding brother and glanced at Michael who was busy sliding the five gallon bucket across the floor with his foot, “You mean you really don’t know?”

“Know what?” Michael asked only for Warren to laugh and hand him the bottle.

“Hey Devon, why don’t you tell him,” Warren suggested glad Michael didn’t know. This was going to be funny as hell.

“Why don’t you go to hell,” Devon retaliated staring at the wall so he wouldn’t have to look at them. “I’m fine now... let me go to her.”

“Her? You’re keeping him away from Envy?” Michael inquired while taking a seat on the bucket.

Warren looked at Michael and held up one finger... then

pointed it at Devon with a mischievous smile. “You can’t go see Envy right now... it’s the middle of the night and she’s probably in bed snuggled up to her Teddy Bear.”

When Devon grabbed his head and started screaming in a tired voice, Michael slowly tipped the bottle up and took a long drink. It was a Trevor pun... he understood that much, but why the theatrics?

Michael felt his healing powers surface and sat the bottle back on the floor... he could feel Devon's pain and didn't like it. He started toward the cage with every intention of fixing Devon but Warren's words stopped him.

“He’s alright... leave him be,” Warren nodded when Michael turned to look at him curiously. “Kane has him under a compulsion spell.”

“Kane did this?” Michael asked rubbing his temple. “Isn’t this why you called saying you needed my help?”

Warren shook his head, “Nope, I need something else.”

By the time Warren finished telling him everything, Devon had quieted down to soft groans. “Where have you been for the last couple days not to have already known about this?” Warren asked. “And in case you didn’t know... your cell phone is going straight to voicemail.”

“We’ll talk about that later,” Michael brushed his own problems to the side and once again approached the cage. From the amount of pain coming off Devon, he’d have to say Kat was right in which brother needed his help. And right now... helping

Warren meant talking some sense into Devon.

Squatting down beside the cage, Michael gripped the bars and tried the opposite thing that Warren had been trying. “Devon, look at me.”

“I don’t think so,” Devon said quietly. “The last time I looked at one of your kind... this happened.”

“Fine, just listen closely,” Michael said calmly. “I know you... have watched you since the day you were born. You’re hot headed and very passionate about everything you do, but above all you’re honorable. Believe it or not... I understand perfectly. You’ve found your soul mate and you love her with all of that hotheaded passion. It’s because of that passion that Envy fell in love with you. You know that... right?”

Devon remained silent as he listened to Michael's gentle voice then finally gave a slight nod. “She loves both of us though. I’ve known it all along. And now... there’s a baby.”

Michael closed his eyes as a vision of Aurora swam through his mind followed by the image of the demon that claimed to have possession of her. Blinking away his own disturbing thoughts, he refocused on the jaguar.

“I see... in your eyes Trevor is winning. So then... what will you do? Give her back to Trevor?” Michael asked point blank.

“No... but I don’t know how to beat him,” Devon gave voice to his biggest fear.

The caged jaguar made a pained face and Michael knew it wasn’t from a migraine... but a pain far deeper than that. “I’m

not sure what you need to do but Kane gave you a huge hint when he put you and Trevor under the compulsion spell. The quickest way for you to lose Envy is to hurt the man she loves... and that goes for the both of you. It's not about a competition anymore."

"Then what do I do?" Devon finally looked at him.

"That's the easy part... you love her exactly like you did before you found out she was pregnant. That is the man that took her away from Trevor in the first place," Michael said as he snapped the lock on the cage. "Trevor has nothing to do with the way Envy loves you."

When Devon didn't make a move to come out of the cage, Michael looked back at Warren and then glanced up the stairs pointedly. The two of them moved away from the cage and back up into the bar area.

Warren stayed quiet until they reached the bar. There were many reasons why he loved Michael and the fact that the vampire had just gotten through to Devon where no one else had didn't surprise him in the least.

"That's why I called you. I know I was being cruel to him, but at first I thought it would work. Make him immune... you know," Warren shrugged.

Michael shook his head and walked behind the bar to grab another bottle of Heat. "You torturing Devon before I got here was probably why he was exhausted enough to finally listen to reason. Don't get me wrong... he'll still have his fair share of migraines from random thoughts before it's all said and done,

but even without Kane's compulsion, I don't think he would have followed through with any of those thoughts. He loves Envy too much to risk her hating him."

"Too bad Trevor caught on to that theory first. It made the bear shifter kind of look like the good guy... or at least it didn't help Devon save face." Warren pointed out still holding the bottle of Heat he'd brought up from the dance pit.

"About that," Michael made a face knowing there was no such thing as a bear shifter. He rubbed his hand over his eyes remembering the bar was probably bugged by PIT and not a good place to be telling secrets. "I think it's safe to leave Devon alone for a while. Let's say we take a drive."

Warren pulled two sets of keys out of his pocket, tossing one to Michael. "I bought a couple things this morning that you might find enticing," Warren hinted with an intriguing smirk.

Michael followed him into the private garage attached to the extended building and smiled when he saw the sleek black motorcycles parked beside Warren's jaguar.

"You do know what I like," Michael said and approached the vehicles.

"Where to?" Warren asked.

Michael started to say his house, but changed his mind associating the place with the loneliness he'd felt earlier. "Let's go to Love Bites. At least I know that place isn't bugged by PIT."

"Must be important if you want to keep it from them," Warren said.

Michael nodded and took up his helmet, “Trust me... it’s very important.”

“Race you,” Warren taunted as he put his helmet on.

Michael smirked, “Yeah right, you’ll be eating my dust.”

Chapter 5

A loud sound woke Aurora. She sat upright forgetting where she was for a moment. The sound abruptly silenced and she slid from the blankets to investigate. She crawled across the rooftop to the huge sanctuary sign and stood up behind the red lettering.

Peeking around the edge of one of the letters, she saw two men parking a pair of two wheeled machines close to the doors. She'd seen humans riding these contraptions around the city and they traveled very fast. It made her question how they kept from killing themselves on them. Humans were fragile creatures and it was usually the brave ones that figured that out first.

She tilted her head to the side curious when she heard male laughter and watched as they reached up to remove the odd looking helmets.

Michael and Warren took off their helmets and grabbed their private bottles of heat from the saddlebags before walking toward the building.

“I won that one,” Michael said.

“You did not,” Warren shot back. “I had you by at least two inches.”

Michael chuckled, “In your dreams.”

Aurora swung around and flattened herself against the back of the sign before sliding to the hard rooftop. Her heart was beating a hard and fast tempo in her chest to the point that it was almost

painful. Thank god he was still alive... it looked like the fight with Samuel hadn't fazed him at all. But, what was he doing here? Had he somehow found her?

Her mind flashed back to the man the woman had called Kane... his eyes had been the same strange color as her lovers'. Was this the home and family of the man from the subway?

Her first instinct told her to run and she almost took that step but curiosity made her stay where she was. She didn't think she'd ever see him again in a place this size with so many souls in it. Yet she'd ironically found him in the one place Samuel couldn't reach her... it was almost funny.

Michael opened the front door and walked in with Warren directly behind him. Warren stopped to take in the interior and nodded his approval.

"So, is this were you've been for the last couple days?" Warren asked.

"No," Michael shook his head, "long story short... I made love to a stranger in the subways, was attacked by a jealous demon, and then murdered by my father." He winked at the horrified look on Warren's face. "But enough about me, I brought you here so we could talk about Trevor without risking the chance that he's actually listening."

Kane had come out of his room when he heard the unmistakable sound of a pair of motorcycles outside. He entered the bar area just in time to hear Michael confess part of what happened the other night.

“You made love to a stranger in the subway?” Kane asked stepping up behind them, making Warren flinch. When Michael looked over his shoulder at him, Kane shrugged, “What? I could feel you coming seeing as how my blood is inside you right now... plus you know I could never resist the hum of a motorcycle.”

“How did your blood get inside Michael?” Tabatha asked making the boys turn toward her.

“Found him dead yesterday love... had to do something to help him heal,” Kane said bluntly.

“What?” Tabatha and Warren said in unison.

Kane sighed seeing the anger start to rise in Tabatha’s eyes and figured he might as well give it a shot at defending himself, “I told you I was with Michael for a little while.”

“And you conveniently left out the fact that he was dead,” Tabatha insisted as she crossed her arms over her chest.

“Nah nah na na nahhhhhh,” Michael teased Kane as he walked on toward the bar that was still set up in the huge room.

“I knew he wouldn’t stay that way,” Kane tried again then admitted just for the hell of it, “even if I did do a few things out of boredom.” He saw Tabatha’s eyes darken more and quickly decided a change of subject was in order. “So Warren, how’s that brother of yours?”

“In need of a bottle of mega-aspirin,” Warren said then caught up with Michael at the bar in the middle of the room. “Why didn’t you call me?”

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