

D. J. Manly



BRENNUS'
WITCH

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Brennus' Witch

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Many of the beliefs, spells and practises described in *Brennus' Witch* are authentic. However, much creative license was taken in this book. Therefore, not everything described in this story is to be interpreted as being akin to Wicca.

CHAPTER ONE

The minute she saw him, she knew she had to have him. There was just something about him, and it wasn't just the way his wavy, wheat-colored hair framed his handsome face, or the incredibly large blue eyes that played up his fair skin. Although it might have been the way those jeans hugged his slim hips or emphasized the delightful curves of his ass...at least, that didn't hurt. No, it was far more than that. When he spoke, it was like music. When he smiled, the edges of his generous mouth seemed to gently curve into it, as if he was aware that that smile alone could devastate anyone in its path.

He was strolling across the raised platform now. Lifting a muscular arm, he wrote 'Brennus Monroe' in plain bold letters across the chalkboard.

Brennus. That was an unusual name. Apparently someone else in the class thought so too, because they raised their hand and said, "Sir, I don't think I've ever heard the name Brennus before. What kind of a name is it?"

"Ancient Celtic," he said, acknowledging the

student with a dip of his head. "Very old."

Yummy, Anna thought. In fact, everything about him was yummy. As he spoke, she tried to get a sense of how old he was. It was hard to tell. He had no obvious physical signs of being more than thirty. In fact, she would have put him at about twenty-five. However, he gave the impression that he was far older than that. It was in his eyes, wisdom, self-confidence, rare in a man so young, but that was what was so sexy about him.

The thought of being in bed with this guy was almost enough to make her cream her jeans right here in her seat. He was definitely not like the pimply-faced students she went to school with. A man like Brennus Monroe would have you on your back...or your knees, with your clothes off before you could say, "Oh, baby...please." He'd make you scream with orgasm, and beg for more.

Brennus Monroe was looking down at the sea of faces now in front of him. He looked amused. My God, Anna thought, he looks as if he's reading my thoughts. She hadn't stopped having sexual fantasies about him since the moment he'd stepped into the room.

"Anna," he said suddenly, causing her to draw up in her seat and meet his eyes.

"Sir," she said, blushing. *My God, he's singled me out. He's noticed me. Maybe he likes me. How does he know my name? Oh, he must have it on a list or something.*

"Why are you interested in this class?"

“Ah...well...I’m a history major, and I think spiritual forces have played a large part in the evolution of humankind. I’m especially interested in the history of the Druids and modern day Wicca.” She wanted to tell him that her brother was a Wicca priest, and that she herself had recently considered becoming a member, but she wasn’t sure how the rest of the class would react. There were a lot of misconceptions about Wicca.

“Well, you would be correct in your assessment that spiritualism has played a large part in history. Most wars have been fought over that very thing,” he nodded, then moved back to the board.

The remainder of the class passed very quickly. By the time Brennus had handed out the outline and explained the requirements of the course, the two hours were gone. “See you next class,” he said, watching the students as they filed out of the room. Anna however lingered behind, walking out in front of him. As he closed the door, she turned and smiled at him. “Thank you, Mr. Monroe. It sounds like it’s going to be a great course.”

“Good,” he said, giving her a pleasant smile, “happy to have you.”

Anna watched as he walked off down the corridor and disappeared from her sight.

Anna was sure after attending two more of Professor Monroe’s classes that he wanted her. Often, he paused when he was speaking to look directly at her. Sometimes he stared at her outright, making her feel as if she was having hot flashes at the tender age

of twenty.

Tonight, Brennus Monroe was talking about the ancient Druids. Dressed in a pair of well-worn jeans, and a red shirt with sleeves rolled up to the elbows, he looked good enough to eat. "Many academics," he said, "believe that the ancestors of the Celts were the Proto-Indo European culture who lived near the Black Sea around four thousand BCE. Some migrated to the south," he scribbled something on the board, pausing for a moment, allowing his eyes to fall on Anna. He cleared his throat. "Sorry, yes...some migrated South-Westerly," he went on. "They created the cultures of Thrace and Greece..."

Anna lowered her head, and smiled secretly. He had been looking at her in that way again, as if he were stunned by her. If only he wasn't a professor. She knew there were ethics governing student-professor affairs, but...damn.

She had made up her mind. She would ask Darien to help her. She knew if she convinced him that it was just the student-teacher thing standing in their way, and that Brennus obviously did feel the same way about her, he'd give them a little help.

When the class was over, Anna gave Brennus a big smile before she left. She didn't stay to chat with him this time. Several students were hovering around, waiting to ask him something. She was anxious to get home and speak to her brother.

* * * *

Brennus brought the young man inside the blazing circle surrounded by stones. He had put him in a semi-trance state so that he would attract no attention to this sacred place. The man in the trance was gazing at Brennus now, dazed eyes filled with desire. Brennus raised his hands high above him. He called out: "Arawn, Brigid, and Danu, ancient Celtic deities. Please bless this sacrifice." As he did, the fire in the center of the circle fanned higher, threatening to engulf both Brennus and the mortal. Brennus shivered, closing his eyes. He usually didn't ask the Gods and Goddesses to bless his food before he consumed it. Tonight though, he felt a pang of guilt for not attending to his spiritual self. After all, if not for his faith, he wouldn't even be here. He'd simply be dead. Sometimes he wasn't sure how grateful he should be for that. Centuries, mixed with joy and misery, frozen in memories, memories that had faded...until now. But why? Why were his thoughts returning to his un-avenged death? He needed strength, strength from the deities to help him bury this pain for good.

Hands were touching him now. The young man moaned against him, laying his head on Brennus' chest. Brennus stroked his satiny brown hair. "It's all right, my friend, the deities approve...and you will come back in another life. This is not the end. If you have learned enough at this level...you will come back to a higher realm." Brennus moved the young man away from him. Smiling, he said, "Take off your clothes. We will celebrate before you move on."

BRENNUS' WITCH

The young man stared dreamy-eyed at the luscious stranger before him, removing his clothes without actually physically being aware of it. His cock and nipples were as hard as rock, although the blond god before him hadn't so much as touched him.

The wind blew Brennus' hair back from his face. He slowly undid the buttons of his cotton shirt, then unzipped his jeans and took them off.

The other man fell to his knees with a groan as Brennus' naked body was exposed to him. "You're beautiful," he whispered, flicking his tongue over the head of Brennus' cock.

Brennus sucked in air, and closed his eyes. Placing his hand on the man's head, he drew his face against his groin. "Put it in your mouth," he breathed. Feeling his cock slipping into the velvet lining of the man's eager mouth, his jaw widened, revealing the razor sharp tips of his incisors. As the man continued to suck and lick his aching sex, Brennus growled deep in his throat, images of thick, flowing blood flashing in his head. Suddenly he thrust the man away from him. He was now sprawling naked in front of him, his legs spread, elbows back in the dirt. "Please," the wanton stranger pleaded. "Fuck me."

Reaching down and grabbing the man by the arm, he pulled him upright, then hurled him around. Pressing his chest against the man's back, he bent him forward and impaled him on his cock. As he thrust, he lifted them both off the ground, running his hands over the living flesh, moving his lips over his throat. The fucking continued, hard and fast as Brennus

fondled the man's testicles and cock.

At the moment of the mortal's orgasm, Brennus sank his teeth into his jugular, his own orgasm coming at exactly that moment. He drank until he felt the young man's heartbeat descend into a faint tap...tap...tap. Then, almost lovingly, he lowered his naked body back down to the ground, wiping the blood off his lips with the back of his hand. The wind picked up again.

Flashes of fire ripped across his mind. He heard a voice. "My beauty...all you had to do was love me." Screaming. Then another voice. "*Murderer...I'll come back...I'll come back for you...and no matter how long it takes, I shall have my revenge.*" The voice belonged to him. Looking down at the dead body curling around his feet, two thick tears of blood ran down his cheeks. *My sacrifice.* "Please," he called out, looking up at the night sky, "I gave you this innocent blood. Now, help me find peace."

But there would be no peace, Brennus knew. He had vowed to come back, and he did. He had also vowed to destroy his murderers. He did. All except for one, Vortimere. He who was responsible for everything. Vortimere had escaped him. Brennus had spent years searching for him, only to find that he had died days before he would have had him. Now, after years of reprieve, the visions of that night of horror were returning to him. What he didn't know was why.

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BRENNUS' WITCH

Anna checked her watch. It was a few minutes after nine. She wanted to make it to the meeting tonight. She wasn't a full member yet, but she had been attending faithfully. So far, her overprotective brother hadn't allowed her to take part in the ceremony of sexual celebration that took place after the meetings. She hoped tonight he would make an exception, because right now she was feeling incredibly horny. She also needed to speak to him about giving her a little help with Brennus Monroe.

* * * *

Darien Rhys lay back on the sofa and closed his eyes. He was trying to gather positive energy to him. It had been a long day. Mr. Simpson had come into the shop this afternoon with a long list of supplies he needed. He could be so particular. Every herb had to be dried to a certain specification. Today he was looking for a specific blend of herbs which required mixing. No matter how Darien mixed it, it wasn't quite right. Finally after mixing some Angus, bloodroot and borage, Simpson decided he wasn't ready to do what ever in hell it was he was planning to do with the concoction. Darien finally suggested to Mr. Simpson that he do the mixing himself. That put an end to that.

At least he hadn't had any born again Christians come into today, quoting scriptures about the devil. No matter how hard he tried to explain to them that he couldn't worship something he didn't even believe

existed; they still came calling, trying to save his soul. Somehow there was some pity for him in that Simpson was considered to be enough of a toil for one day.

He was ready for the coven to come together tonight. He needed to ask the goddesses for strength. Paying Anna's tuition had practically cleaned out his bank account, and the *Grinning Moon* shop wasn't doing much of a business lately. He had hired Anita to do readings, which had brought some extra customers into the store, mostly the non-Wicca crowd...the curious...the adventurous. He knew that the upcoming Feast of the Dead would help, bringing witches in for supplies. It would all work out. Everything was connected, everything was good. What he was doing for his sister would come back to him three times...and it wasn't as if she didn't appreciate it.

When his sister walked in the door, Darien rose off the sofa, and gave her a smile. "Hey, kid, how was your day?"

"Fine," she said. "I need to tell you about my professor."

Darien grinned. "The hunky one? You told me already."

She laughed, throwing her bag down on the chair. "I have to have him, and you have to help me."

Darien raised an eyebrow at his twenty-year-old sister. She was certainly all grown up now. "I see. We're talking about the one who is teaching you about the Druids? Well, I hope he is not teaching lies

and..."

"Darien," Anna protested, "don't worry, if he gets into a discussion of Julius Caesar and how he described the Druids as performing human sacrifices, I'll steer him straight. That's not the point. I need a love spell."

"Love spell?" Darien's eyes widened a little. "You know I don't do those things lightly, Sis. It's imperative that the object of the spell return the feelings."

"He does," she said, gleaming. "He's always staring at me in class, Darien."

"He's not married...involved with someone or...?"

"I don't think so. Please..." she pleaded. "What can it hurt? I know why he doesn't make a move...it's the ethics thing. If he wasn't my professor, I'm sure he'd..."

Darien paused for a moment, then, laughed. "If he isn't hot for your bod, it won't work anyway...so what the heck."

"Then you'll do it?" she asked, hugging her brother's arm.

"Yes, yes...considering that your timing is so good. You have to do these things on a day before a full moon, and that's tomorrow night. I'll do it then."

"See, it was meant to be. Thanks," she gave him a peck on the cheek.

"Are you attending the gathering?" Darien asked her.

Anna nodded. "Yes, but I want to stay for the meal and the orgy after."

Darien gave her a look of disdain. "Anna, the after ceremony is a celebration of our varied sexuality. It is not an orgy. Our sexuality is a gift...a..."

"Look, I know all that," Anna shook her head. "I have sexuality too, you know...and I want to be a part of Wicca. I love the philosophy, the acceptance and the tolerance. I agree with the principles of sexual freedom and female superiority."

"I know you believe you're superior," Darien joked. "I wish you felt superior enough to clean this apartment. I did it last week."

"Ha, ha, very funny. I'll get to it," she waved that away. "Listen, I respect everyone and everything, I don't believe in the devil...or heaven. I love the earth...hell, I even recycle!"

Darien began to howl with laughter. "You've convinced me, and you know everyone loves and accepts you. I just want to make sure you're ready for..."

"If I'm not, I'll leave. Okay?"

He inhaled. "All right."

Anna grinned. "I'm excited about Halloween at the end of next month."

"Feast of the Dead," he corrected. "And it's actually at the beginning of November."

"Oh, sorry."

"Okay, go get ready," Darien said, "then we'll leave." As he waited, he went to look out the window of their small four-room apartment. In spite of the fact that they didn't have a lot of money, he could finally smile. For most of his life he had felt like an outsider.

Everything he was, everything he believed, appeared to be contrary to everyone else. His parents were devout Catholics and when he discovered that he was gay, he just knew that they would see it as sinful.

Wicca gave him the chance to celebrate who he was, to lose the chains of evil and sinfulness, to respect and accept everyone's choices. Most people didn't even realize that he was a Wicca Priest. It was a philosophy he lived, but he had no interest in recruiting anyone. People had to find their own spiritual paths. Like with Anna. He had never encouraged her to embrace Wicca. She wanted to know more about it, and now she seemed to want to be part of it.

After he had come out to his family, they had disowned him. He had gone on his own, and his little sister had followed. She had never forgiven her parents for throwing him out of the house. No matter how much he tried to convince her to go and see them, she stubbornly refused. So, it was the two of them. He paid some of her tuition and she worked summers to raise the rest. They were living a very different life than when they'd lived at home, never lacking for anything...yet he felt richer than ever.

Anna emerged from the bathroom now, ready to leave. They climbed into Darien's beat-up car and headed to the gathering place on top of Mont Royal. After they'd parked, Anna handed Darien his long black robe, and they walked hand and hand to the clearing. Someone had already prepared the circle, which was illuminated by candles. In the center was a

bonfire, and seven members were standing around it, waiting for their leader. Darien greeted them with kisses, as did Anna.

There were seven in all, a small coven, which Darien preferred. There was Anita and her husband Clinton, Clint's younger brother Doug, and two other young men, Pierre and Jamie. Anna often teased Darien about having an almost all male coven, which was unusual for a female dominated religion like Wicca. Most of the men were hot, too. Her brother was no slouch in the looks department, neither. Darien was twenty-four, with thick chestnut-brown hair and hazel eyes like hers. He was almost six feet, and slender. Everyone thought him beautiful, and he had a sweet, soft voice that drew people to him like flies to honey.

Her brother was calling everyone to attention now. "We will do an invocation of the elements," he said, then he began to chant: "Air, Fire, Water, Earth, Elements of astral birth, I call you now; attend to me! In the circle, rightly cast, safe from curse or blast, I call you now, attend to me! From cave and desert, sea and hill, by wand, blade and pentacle, I call you now attend to me! This is my will, so mote it be..."

Suddenly a few raindrops began to fall as the chant continued. People swayed back and forth, paying homage to the ancient Goddesses. Now they were facing north, singing, "Hail to the guardians of the North, mighty earth who feeds us, our home and mother, welcome to the circle." Next they turned to the East, repeating the proper incantation, then the

BRENNUS' WITCH

South, and finally the West. They began dancing around the fire, and singing. Two of the men reached out and took Darien's hands. Gradually they broke from the circle and moved into the shadow.

* * * *

Darien felt the gentle pressure of both Pierre's and Clinton's hands press him against the tree. Clinton undid the black robe, took it off of him and folded it, laying it aside. Pierre went to work on undoing the buttons of Darien's shirt and removing it. While Clinton took down Darien's pants, Doug, Anita and Jamie encouraged Anna to remove her clothing. There was no shyness, no sense of guilt or shame, just the bliss of mouths and hands moving over her naked limbs.

Darien moaned as Pierre took his erect cock into his mouth. He closed his eyes and let his head rest against the tree. Clint began to move his thumbs slowly over Darien's nipples, causing them to stiffen. Darien glanced over just once to see his sister engaged in lovemaking with Anita, Doug, and Jamie. Then Clint pinched both his nipples hard, and Darien gasped. Reaching out, he took Clint's erection in his hand and began to squeeze it, just as Pierre took his own cock into his mouth.

The moon above them was close to full, and Darien could feel the forces of nature gathering around him, embracing his soul. When it was over, they put out the fire and scattered the ashes. Darien took his

sister's hand and they walked quietly back to the car. "How was it?" he asked, breaking the silence.

"Beautiful," she said softly, "loving and warm. I've never felt anything like it. It was more spiritual than sexual...you know."

"Yes," he smiled. "I know."

* * * *

After everyone went home and Anna went to bed, Darien gathered together the material he needed to cast a love spell for his sister. He placed dried flowers and patchouli leaves in a wood box, and put it in a safe place. The following night, Darien took Anna into the spare room and turned down the lights. While his sister waited anxiously, Darien anointed a candle with rose oil, then lit it. A beautiful scent filled Anna's nostrils. Then he took an amethyst crystal massager rubbed with rose oil and told his sister to massage herself with it, beginning at the feet.

Anna was giggling as she began.

"You have to be serious," Darien said. "Are you ready?"

"Yes."

"Repeat after me... I am infused with the light of love."

"I am infused with the light of love," Anna said, rubbing the massager now over her legs.

"I radiate love from my center."

"I radiate love from my center," Anna repeated, continuing to massage herself.

"Magnetized with positive energy..." Darien said.

"Magnetized with...ah...positive energy."

"Like attracts like...my lover is drawn to me like magick!"

"Like attracts like...my lover is drawn to me like magick!"

"Good," Darien nodded. "Now, take this amethyst pyramid in your hands, and repeat... this pyramid is infused with light, it radiates light from it's center...magnetized with positive energy...like attracts like...my pyramid attracts love like magick!"

Anna repeated the words, holding the amethyst pyramid in her hands. "Now what?" she asked.

"Place these objects under your bed and let the candle burn all the way down. Use the oil, massager and incantation often. Carry it with you if you like. If it's meant to be," Darien shrugged, "it will do the trick."

"I know it will work, Darien," Anna said. "You are a powerful witch." She had seen him cast some incredible spells, spells that even some of the more experienced witches like Anita marveled at. All the spells he did were good ones. None of them practiced black magic. It wasn't their way. They believed that every spell they cast came back to them threefold; therefore evil was visited by evil...good by good. Her brother cast healing spells, and once a mother came to him about her son, who was dying of cancer. Her brother cast a healing spell and three days later, his cancer had disappeared. It had scared him to do these spells. He usually left the heavy stuff to Anita.

He seemed to be deep in thought right now, so Anna left him, put the box under her bed and tried to sleep. She woke up and did the incantation three times during the night. Tomorrow night, she would see her professor again.

CHAPTER TWO

Brennus watched the sun as it descended into the dusky sky from his window. He had learned to synchronize his waking with the final disappearance of the sun to the second. He loved this moment. He could probably endure some of the sun if he tried. He certainly didn't need to drink as much as he once did. It was his age. He had been born in six hundred B.C., in the geographical space now known as Britain. He had been abandoned as a child and taken in by a kindly Druid Priest called Guadid.

Guadid had discovered quickly that there was something exceptional about the child he had adopted. His intelligence and curiosity far surpassed a child of his age. Thus, Brennus' own training for the priesthood began early. To be a Druid priest, considered to be the highest of places, required at least twenty years of study and memorization. They were required to know much about the stars and celestial motions, the size of the earth and the universe, about the powers of the immortal gods and the essential nature of things. Brennus spent his time

at the college, studying. When he turned twenty, he became a teacher. Guadid told him that he was a natural. He loved his life. He had never known any other. He loved the respect he commanded and how, through laws, culture and religion, the Druids were able to draw many different tribes together. They even had the power to halt battles by encouraging all sides to come together to negotiate peace. All was well in his mortal life until Vortimere appeared.

Brennus raised the black blinds, and looked out onto the city. From the window, he could see the university where he taught. His head was pounding. It wasn't hunger. The blood he had drunk a few days ago was enough to sustain him for weeks. It was the thoughts that clouded his mind that left his head achy. Thoughts of Vortimere.

Why in the hell was he thinking of him? The man was long dead. It was true he had never paid the way Brennus intended him to. He had gotten away with it...with murdering and torturing him... but he had long come to peace with that.

Hadn't he?

No one knew what Vortimere and his followers had done to him that night...on the night of the Feast of the Dead. The modern world didn't realize that Julius Caesar's talk of ritualistic sacrifice among the Druids was based solely on the activities of one evil priest, Vortimere. After the deed was done, since Druid priests were allowed to live anywhere, Vortimere had moved off and taken his renegade unholy sex slaves with him.

BRENNUS' WITCH

Evil bastard.

Suddenly Brennus smelled the distinct scent of burning flesh. He shivered, trying to shake off the headache. He was expected in class in an hour. He changed his clothes, put on the security alarm, and left.

* * * *

Anna was anxious tonight. She had incanted the words for the love spell three more times before coming to class. It had to work. She wondered how long it would take? Would it work right away? No, that was crazy. It was probably a gradual thing.

When Brennus Monroe walked into the classroom, he spotted Anna sitting in her usual seat and he halted dead in his tracks.

I want to kiss her.

Reaching out suddenly, he placed a hand on the edge of his desk, and took a breath. He felt weird, light-headed, really. That headache that had started back at his condo grew more intense.

His eyes settled on Anna. She smiled at him.

I love you, Anna.

What in hell was going on? He didn't love her. He didn't even know her. Opening up his briefcase, he took out his notes for the evening. Trying to ignore this weird sensation that seemed to be crawling all over him, he began to speak. "We were talking about modern day paganism. Most modern Druids connect their origin to the ancient Celtic people. However,

historical information is scarce so we really don't know for sure. Druidism and other neo-pagan religions are currently..." he stopped.

Anna...I want you. I am crazy in love with you.

Okay, this was goddamned ridiculous. Someone was playing a joke on him...or...had put some kind of a spell on him.

"Are you all right, Professor?" someone asked.

"Yes," he replied, taking a breath, looking over at Anna. *Vortimere*. Why in the hell would his name come to mind when he was looking at Anna? Why did he suddenly feel as if he wanted to devour her? He cleared his throat again. "There are some distinct differences between the ancient practices of..." *Whoa!* A sudden sensation of floating gripped him. Something wasn't right at all. He needed to talk to Anna. "Excuse me, class. I'm sorry. I'm not feeling all that well. I think I'm coming down with something. Let's ah...call it night, okay? Same time next week. I promise we'll make it up."

No one complained. The students all began to shuffle out, happy to be able to go home or out with their friends.

"Anna," Brennus said, reaching out to touch her arm as she walked by him. As he did, his hand felt as if it were suddenly on fire. He withdrew it. "Could you stay for a few minutes?" He wanted to shake her, demand to know what she had done to him, but he wouldn't get anywhere that way.

She smiled. "Professor?"

When the others were gone, he said, "Have you

ever heard of anyone called Vortimere?"

She wrinkled up her nose. "Weird name. No."

I want to hold you in my arms. Brennus laughed out loud. He was losing his mind. "Did you mention to me that you were a member of Wicca?"

She hadn't said anything, but she had thought it. How could he have known that?

Brennus now recalled that she had also thought about a spell...but he hadn't paid much attention at the time. He thought she was kidding. Now, he knew she had gone through with it...a love spell.

"Yes. My brother is a priest, actually," she was saying.

"I see," he breathed. They cast love spells back in six hundred B.C., too. He couldn't come right out and tell her he knew about the spell, but he had to find the one who had cast it. Her brother. It had to be him. It had to be removed. It was doing strange things to him. It still didn't explain, though, why Vortimere came to mind when he looked at Anna.

"Would you like to have coffee, Anna?" he asked suddenly, the headache coming back again.

She gushed. "Sure...if you're feeling okay?"

"A cup of coffee may be just what I need," he said, indicating the door.

* * * *

Anita had just finished a reading in the back room. She was standing there now, looking at Darien with this strange look on her face. Darien stopped

arranging the astrological bookmarks and asked her what was up.

"Up?" she smiled softly, "nothing, really. I just...are you all right, Darien?"

"Sure. Why wouldn't I be?"

Anita arranged her blue floral skirt over her voluminous hips and shrugged. "I think I should do an incantation for you...something to surround you with good vibes."

"Why?" When Anita talked like that, you listened.

"I don't like what I'm feeling. It could be nothing," she shook her head. "Forget it for now. If the feelings come back, I'll let you know and we'll act."

"You're creeping me out," Darien said.

She laughed. "Didn't mean to. Got to get home to Clint. See you tomorrow, okay?"

He kissed her on the cheek. He thought about locking up. It was already past nine o'clock. He had kept the store open late tonight. Business had been quite good. He had sold three cauldrons and a lot of candles today. Anita had done four readings. Everyone seemed satisfied when they came out of the back room, telling him they were going to bring their friends by...and no bible thumpers today. He laughed to himself, feeling a little guilty for calling them that. After all, all faiths were worthy of respect, even if this group got on his last nerve sometimes.

* * * *

Anita sank into the blueness of Brennus' eyes. He had

incredibly gorgeous eyes. He had incredibly gorgeous *everything*.

Brennus made small talk with her for a while, sipping the coffee without really tasting it. "So," he said, "you live with your brother...eh...Darien?"

"Yes," she said, swallowing her sip of coffee. "But he's busy....gone a lot. Ah, he is a Wicca Priest...a witch. How he hates it when people call him a warlock!" she laughed.

"Yes, well, that makes sense, considering that the term warlock was used for a male witch, derived from the Anglo-Saxon, meaning 'oath breaker'. Even the term witch is controversial because it carries so much baggage. I think the correct term today is priest or priestess."

"Oh," she laughed. "My brother doesn't seem to mind the word witch."

"Some don't. There are many more women than men in Wicca. What motivated your brother to join?"

"He's gay, maybe that was one factor. Our background was Catholic, so..."

"Ah, not exactly welcoming of sexual diversity," Brennus said. "In Wicca, there is no absolute truth."

"Neo-tolerance, personal freedom and personal responsibility. Are you a member, Professor?"

"Brennus, please...and no, not officially, but I do subscribe to the doctrine." *Damn this headache*. He reached over and touched Anna's hand, in part because he felt compelled, and in part because he wanted her to lead him to her brother.

She blushed. "Brennus."

Did you have your brother put a spell on me? His anger was bubbling to the surface. He looked into her eyes. He heard a voice, a voice he hadn't heard in centuries. *I love you, Brennus...I love you...forgive me, but you had your chance. Noooooooo!* He heard the scream in his head. He felt his eyes change, his fangs extract. He put his head down, and swirled around quickly in his chair.

Anna was alarmed. "Professor. You really aren't feeling well, are you?"

Brennus excused himself. "I'll be right back. I'm sorry," he growled. Rising, he walked to the door and outside. Ducking into an alley, he tried to rein in his emotions. *Vortimere.*

What was happening to him? He felt his control slipping away. Damn that Darien. He was going to reverse this spell! Finally, assured that his eyes had returned to their normal color and his fangs had safely retreated, Brennus stepped back into the café. "Anna," he said, anxious to have this matter settled, "can we go back to your place...for a drink, maybe...get to know each a little better?"

Her eyes were shining. "Of course," she said. She hoped her brother would work late tonight.

"I'm not being too forward, am I?"

Hell, no. "I trust you, Professor." Oh, Darien, I am going to give you the nicest gift for your birthday.

I might just give Darien a nice gift myself, Brennus thought, his mouth twisting sardonically.

* * * *

As Darien walked up the path to his apartment, he noticed the lights in the living room were on. As he came closer, he heard voices from the open window. One of them was definitely his sister's; the other voice was male, deep and almost musical. Well, his little spell had worked, then. Good. He'd try to make himself scarce. He was tired anyway. He'd introduce himself quickly, then make a hasty retreat to the bedroom.

Placing the key in the lock, he called out, just in case he caught them doing something other than talking. "Anna," he said, "it's Darien, I'm home."

Brennus stood up.

"Darien, I'd like you to meet Brennus Monroe," Anna said, standing up herself now, and looking from one man to the other.

Darien smiled. *Gorgeous hunk of man! No wonder Anna wanted him.* "Nice to meet you, Brennus," Darien reached out his hand. Brennus took it.

The moment their fingers touched, Brennus felt it; the pain. This time it was so acute, it caused him to stiffen. It seared through his head like a train on fire, then, ripped through his chest, his gut, and all through his legs. *Vortimere! There was something desperately wrong here, and it was more than just a little love spell!*

Darien was on the carpet, the grip on his hand so fierce it had driven him to his knees. He couldn't speak. His eyes were rolling up into his head. Anna's yelling in the background was beginning to fade.

"Brennus...what are you doing? What are you doing?" Anna cried out, trying to pull Brennus' hand away from her brother. Brennus held tight, his face animated in a grimace of bitterness and rage.

When Darien's hand went limp in his, something released inside of him. Brennus let Darien's hand fall away from his own. Anna bent down to see to her brother. He was moaning, half conscious. "What in the hell...?" Anna began, turning to look up again at Brennus. But he was gone.

Darien was sitting up now. He rubbed his crushed hand, and blinked. "What happened?"

"I...I don't know," Anna said, standing up and reaching out her hand to pull her brother to his feet. "You shook hands and he...he seemed to...change... he...are you hurt?"

"My hand hurts, but I don't think it's broken...at least, I hope not."

"Well, let's go to the clinic and get it checked out," Anna said, still in shock.

What in hell had happened here?

* * * *

Brennus took to the air. He flew to the top of the mountain, feeling replete with sadness and rage. Raising his head, he let out a cry like a wounded animal. The physical pain he had felt was materializing in front of his eyes, haunting his mind, possessing his soul. Vortimere had returned, and this time, he was his.

CHAPTER THREE

While they were waiting to see a doctor, Anita appeared. Both Darien and Anna were surprised to see her. It was almost one o'clock in the morning. Anita glanced at Darien's hand, now resting on a half melted ice pack, and sighed. "Anna," she said, "I need to talk to Darien alone."

"It's okay," Darien replied, leaning back in his chair, "what ever you have to say to me can be said in front of my sister. What is it? How did you know we were here?"

"I had a dream. It woke me up," she replied, taking a chair beside Darien. "I dreamt you were here...that you were injured. It has to do with a mysterious...ah...man."

Neither Anna nor Darien said anything for a moment. As always, her visions astounded them. "So, who is he?" Darien finally asked her.

She shook her head. "I was about to ask you that. All I know is that you were connected in a former life, Darien...and not in a good way."

Darien sat up, narrowing his eyes. "What does that

mean?"

"I don't know," she said, giving Anna a sympathetic look. "You have a crush on this man?"

She nodded silently.

Anita stood up, winding her long black hair into a ponytail and securing it with an elastic. "He's coming back. He has unfinished business, Darien. Take steps to protect yourself. If you need my help, you know where to find me." She gave both Darien and Anna a kiss, and left.

"Connected in a former life?" Darien said to his sister.

"Do you really believe that stuff?" Anna asked him, arranging the sagging ice bag on her brother's hand.

"I believe that I have lived many lives, usually those memories are accessible if we try hard enough to remember. This whole thing is scaring me. What do you know about that guy anyway?"

"Not much. He's my prof...that's about it," she shrugged. "I feel so bad about this, Darien."

Darien gave her a kiss on the cheek. Then his name was called, and he went in to see the doctor.

* * * *

Anita knocked on the door of the shop a little after eight the next day. Darien was surprised to see her that early. He went over and unlocked the door. Anita studied the cast on his hand and smiled as she entered. "Is it broken, dear?"

He nodded. "Yeah. A small bone. Shouldn't take long to heal."

"Does it hurt?" she asked, pitching in to help him fold T-shirts with nature scenes on them.

"No. It's okay."

"I want to do your tarot cards," she announced, putting down the T-shirts. "We have time before you open. It's only eight-thirty."

He sighed. "If you think it's a good idea."

"I do," she said, taking hold of his arm with one of her fleshy hands and steering him towards the back room.

Once they were sitting across from each other, Anita began to lay the cards out in the shape of a Celtic cross. "I am most interested in the obstacle, the influences, and the distant past," Anita said as she studied each card before her."

Darien watched the cards. "What in hell does that mean?" Darien asked. Tarot was not his specialty.

"I don't know yet," Anita replied, perplexed as she drew the next card. "The Lovers," she breathed out loud. "The Lovers beside the Devil. Unusual."

"Downright creepy, if you ask me," Darien shifted in his seat.

"The distant past has drawn closer, somehow it has connected to your present," Anita said, her gaze caressing the cards carefully. "You are in danger. You will face some..." she paused. "No, this makes no sense."

"What makes no sense?" Darien leaned forward as Anita placed the last card on the table, completing the

cross.

"The cards for Death, Judgment and Justice...all in a row. The Devil and the Lovers, side by side."

"And?" Darien insisted.

"I can't figure out how they all come together, Darien. It's not clear. Be careful."

"Anita," Darien said as she scooped up the cards, "was it my death you saw?"

"I don't know. It seems to be connected to the past...your past...old influences somehow still present or reactivated."

"What about the projected outcome? Don't these cards say something about that?"

"It's a blank," Anita reached over and touched his uninjured hand. "Watch yourself around that man."

"I doubt I'll see him again," Darien said, a strange feeling in the pit of his stomach.

"Don't be so sure," Anita said, standing up. "Don't be so sure."

Later on, Anna came in to help him out in the store. They didn't talk about the incident the night before. When she left at five o'clock, he felt very alone. He couldn't help thinking about Anita's tarot reading.

It started to rain hard. The store was deserted, and although he doubted anyone was going to venture out in this weather to shop, he didn't want to close up right away. He would leave the shop open until nine. He lit some candles around in case he should lose power; then, picked up a book on the autobiography of Gerald Gardner, an archaeologist who did extensive research on the history and practice of

witchcraft, and began to read.

When the lights went out, Darien's heart went to the bottom of his feet. He gripped the book in his hand, reaching over to bring one of the larger candles closer to him. Trying to concentrate on Gardner's description of the Mother-Goddess, he could actually hear his heart beating in his chest. Then, he glanced over at the window and noticed that the lights were on across the street. That was bizarre. He stood up, Gardner still in his hand, and went over to the window. Then suddenly, he heard a voice behind him.

It said simply, "Remove the spell."

Darien dropped the book in his hand. He saw no reflection in the glass in front of him. He whirled around, and there he was. Damn. He should have taken Anita up on her offer to do a spell to conjure up good karma.

"It wouldn't have done any good," Brennus told him, standing quietly in the corner, in front of a row of books on the occult. "It only works on humans."

"What...what...are you doing here?" Darien breathed. "What do you want with me?"

"Much," he replied, giving him a sly smile. "But first things first. Remove that stupid little spell you put on me. I am not enamored with your sister." He ran his gaze over him, suddenly feeling the urge to move closer, to touch him. He didn't move.

"I...how did you know about the spell?" Darien eyed the phone, a few steps away.

"The phone won't help you," Brennus said,

shaking his head.

Darien narrowed his eyes.

"We cast spells like that back then, too," Brennus told him. "They are for humans. This one only succeeded in making me feel a little light-headed."

"Why do you keep saying that...about humans?" Darien demanded. "If you're trying to freak me out, it's working."

Brennus turned his back to him for a moment, running his fingers over the spines of the books on the shelf. "I have traveled so far to find you. For many years, I dreamt this might be possible...that fate would lead me back to you. This is why I am still here, Vortimere. This is why I was strong enough to come back."

Darien didn't know what to say. He had no idea what in hell he was talking about to begin with. The man was clearly insane. It was too bad really...because he was...well...

"...attractive?" Brennus asked softly, turning now to look at him.

Darien's jaw fell. "How did you...you read my mind? Are you a Priest?"

"Actually, yes...or I was," Brennus said softly.

"You must have been quite powerful. I can't read people's thoughts...even Anita can't do that."

Brennus took a step towards him. Darien backed up against the window. "Nothing can protect you now, Vortimere. Nothing can save you...even the delicious packaging you've come back in." Suddenly his face hardened, "Remove the spell. *Now!* Then,

finally I will have my revenge."

"Why do you keep calling me Vortimere? My name is Darien. I don't know anyone by that name." His voice sounded high-pitched, frantic, to his ears.

Brennus was suddenly standing right in front of him. He pressed Darien's body against the window. Darien looked at him with terrified eyes.

"It doesn't matter what you call yourself...or how you hide. You are here now, and you are mine. Now, remove the spell."

"Okay," he said, his voice quivering. "Okay, I'll do it now."

Brennus took a step backwards.

Darien began to breathe again. "Okay," he said nervously as he managed to move away from Brennus. "I need a burning dish, and your pictures...no, I can simply write your names on a piece of paper. Here...here's...the paper," he said nervously, grabbing a page off his counter. He took a pen and wrote "Anna," then, looking sideways at Brennus who had again went to take his place in front of the bookshelf, "is it B-r-e-n-n-u-s?"

"Yes," he said, "and this better work, Witch."

"It will work," Darien said. He cut the paper in two now and held it over the dish. "As I cut their tie, let the bond between them be broken." Then he took the candle and set both halves of the paper on fire. "As I burn the tie," he said, "let the bond be severed. So mote it be." Then he thanked the deities, and glanced over tentatively at Brennus. "It's done."

Almost immediately Brennus felt his confusion

clear. He studied the mortal in front of him now. "Do you remember that night, Vortimere?"

Darien sighed. "I'm not Vortimere. I don't understand." He was holding a package of matches in his hand, little good that would do him.

"You were him," Brennus said. "I've waited all these centuries to kill you."

"Centuries," Darien gasped. "I...you mean to..."

"Haven't you guessed? I'm what these people now days refer to as a vampire."

"I don't believe in vampires," Darien said. "There are no such things as vampires."

"You may not believe in vampires now, but you will," he said, his eyes changing from an intense blue to a fiery orange.

Darien let out a cry. He heard a low growl coming from the man in the corner, then the tingaling of the bell on his door as it opened and a woman stood there, holding a bible. Darien looked at the woman in front of him, then back to the bookcase. Brennus was gone. Darien had never been so happy to see a Christian in his life.

* * * *

Anita sat at the kitchen table across from Darien and Anna. She poured more tea from the teapot, then, boldly met Darien's eyes. "We need a spell to ward off bad karma...a protection spell."

"But none of this makes any sense, Anita. He said he was...a...vampire."

"There is such a thing as psychic vampires," Anita acknowledged with a wave of her hand.

"I'm beginning to think the guy is nuts," Anna said, in despair.

"You and he are connected somehow," Anita told Darien again.

Clint walked into the kitchen now. He grabbed a mug and poured himself some of the hot brew, then took a seat next to his wife. "Maybe you should call the police," he said.

Darien shook his head. "And tell them what...a vampire is after me? He keeps calling me this weird name...Vortimere."

"A very old name...sounds Druid," Clint said.

"He claims to be a priest...and he reads minds," Darien said.

"Now you're getting carried away," Anna accused.

"Look, let's do the spell," Anita announced. "If you are connected in the past and this connection was somehow evil, as I suspect, the Three Red Leaves spell should protect you. Come on, let's do it now, in the daylight."

Darien agreed, but for the first time in a long time he didn't believe anything would do any good. Anita brought three red leaves out into the kitchen. She laid them in a triangle on a flat surface. In the center of the leaves, she placed an already lit candle, and put a few drops of chrysanthemum oil on each leaf. "Repeat after me," she said. "Red leaves, gift from earth...birth to death and death to birth...keep all evil far away...day to night and night to day." After they

had all said the incantation, Anita took the extinguished candle, wrapped the leaves in a white cloth and handed it to Darien. "Place it near your bed within three feet of your head. It will stop all negative thoughts and invaders."

Darien nodded, taking the cloth. "Thanks," he said.

As they headed back to the shop, Anna began to apologize. "I'm sorry for ever starting this. I've dropped the class."

"Ah, Anna," Darien said, turning the car into the parking lot of the *Grimming Moon*, "you'll have to make it up in summer school."

"Never mind," she said, getting out of the car. "Come on, I'll help you today. Do we have a coven meeting tonight?"

"Yes," Darien said, giving her a smile that didn't quite reach his eyes, "It will be all right. Anita is a powerful spell caster. I'm sure this will keep him away. He's probably nuts, that's all."

Anna nodded, and they walked into the store.

CHAPTER FOUR

Brennus was dreaming. The sweat was pouring off his body as he felt the flames licking higher. Vortimere stood there, his haunted eyes wide, crazed with lust for sex and for blood. "If you'd only cooperated, my dear Brennus," he said softly, his eyes traveling over his naked body. "This would have been completely unnecessary. But I've enjoyed tonight, my love, enjoyed touching your beautiful naked body, hearing you cry out with ecstasy...and know that even after you are nothing but ashes, I will still think of you. I will enjoy the memory of tonight, conjuring it whenever I choose to pleasure myself."

Brennus had spit at him, hitting him directly in the face. "I will come back for you, Vortimere, no matter what it means...I will find you...my hate and my vengeance will sustain me! Air, Fire, Water, Earth," he called, looking up at the moon, the burning becoming unbearable now, "elements of Astral birth. I call you now, attend to me. Bring me back in whatever form...make me remember...give me eternal life...so that I may repay my enemies. Give me

the power. Curse on you, Vortimere...curse...." He cried out now, looking up at the moon, dark and just about to wane. This was the last sight his mortal eyes ever saw.

Bolting upright in his bed now, Brennus wiped the sweat from his naked chest. His entire body was trembling. "Tonight...my dear Vortimere, finally, I take my revenge."

* * * *

That night as Darien readied himself for the coven meeting, Anna sat thinking about Brennus Monroe. She couldn't understand any of it. He was so beautiful, so charming and intelligent. He seemed to like her, too. Then he broke her brother's hand, and threatened him at the *Grimming Moon*. It was just too much to take in.

She put all thoughts of that aside as she and Darien made their way to the gathering place tonight that Anita had chosen on top of the mountain. The moon was just a little less than full, and it illuminated the place they stood in the clearing. The breeze was cool, but yet it was fairly warm outside.

They consecrated the ground, then Anita began calling the elements. After, they began to dance around the circle, chanting and thanking the deities.

* * * *

When Darien felt a hand pull him back into the

shadow of the tree, he laughed. A soft silk scarf was being slid over his eyes. He felt a tingling sense of excitement. Pierre had done this to him once before. "Pierre," he protested lightly. "Not this again."

"But you like it, don't you?" a deep male voice replied.

Darien stiffened. *That didn't sound like Pierre.* As a hand pulled him deep into the thicket, the chanting grew fainter. The wind whistled around him, and he tried to cry out but he couldn't. His feet were moving faster and faster, at an impossible speed. At one point, it felt as if they were no longer touching the ground. *What have you done to me? I can't talk.*

He heard a soft laugh in reply. "Afraid?"

The ominous sound of an owl hooted somewhere. Leaves crunched under their feet now as the pace slowed.

"You liked it when Pierre did this to you. It really turned you on. Aren't you turned on tonight?"

Darien shook his head in terror. "What do you want with me?" he whispered, as he felt his body being pressed up against a tree.

"Justice," Brennus replied, his voice deep and deadly. He ran his hand over Darien's chest.

Darien shivered. He reached up to take the blindfold off his eyes, but his hand was caught in an iron like grip. "Do you know what it feels like to slowly burn to death?" Brennus asked him.

Darien gasped as he felt strong fingers begin to undo his pants. "No, how...how could I?"

"You were there, you wanted me then," lips

moved against his cheek, then down to his throat. "Don't you want me now?"

Darien swallowed. Fingertips moved over his scrotum, lifting his sex out of his pants. "Please," Darien begged.

"Please what?" the voice returned, teeth nipping at the flesh of his throat as he began to roughly fondle Darien.

"Don't hurt me...don't kill me. I don't know what it is I've done but...I..."

Brennus held Darien's sex in his hand. Suddenly, he pushed Darien's legs mercilessly apart with his knee, opening the front of his black robe, then undoing the buttons on his shirt. For a second, he pressed his lips against Darien's chest, breathing in his warm skin. Flicking his tongue across one of his nipples, he squeezed his stiffening cock in his hand. "You like that, don't you, Darien...and under different circumstances, you'd be very turned on."

Darien was already turned on. In spite of his fear, in spite of being completely alone out here in the woods with this dangerous man, he felt his sex respond to Brennus' touch.

Brennus leaned down and captured one of his nipples between his teeth. Darien moaned a little, thrashing, trying to push him away. "Do you remember the night you sexually tortured me?" Brennus asked him.

Darien licked his lips. "It wasn't me...it was this other guy...is it that he looks like me or...?"

Brennus laughed, one hand moving down to

massage Darien's balls. "No, Vortimere didn't look at all like you. He's been rewarded for his cruelty by coming back as a beautiful man. It doesn't seem right, does it?"

"Oh, God...oh, God..." Darien moaned, the things this man was doing to him now causing his shaft to throb with desire. Brennus' mouth was trailing down his stomach to his cock...his tongue darting out to trace the head, then moving down the length of it, finally taking it into his mouth. No one had ever sucked his cock like that before. Irresistibly, Darien placed his hands in his aggressor's silky hair. Moaning, he laid his head back against the tree, thoughts of his impending demise taking a backseat to the pleasure this man's mouth was giving him.

When he came, the orgasm rang through him like an explosion; even his teeth rattled. A warm tongue was moving up his body now, pausing to lap at his nipples, then his throat. A hand moved behind his head, and drew his mouth to his. The kiss was deep, slow, sensual. Darien felt a sudden sharp pain in his mouth, then the movement of Brennus' tongue around and around, licking, teasing. Again, Darien moaned, feeling his cock began to twitch, rising. Grasping in the dark for the man's hand, he brought it again to his erection.

* * * *

Brennus was lost in the kiss, in the feel of the mortal close to him. He drank the blood from his tongue,

more for the feeling it gave him than for nourishment. He wanted to be inside of him almost as much as he wanted to punish him for what he'd done. He'd never felt this passion for Vortimere. If he had, he wouldn't have died the way he did.

Darien's arms went around him. His hands tore blindly at Brennus' jacket, his shirt. The buttons flew off into the damp grass. With urgent little cries, Darien felt down for Brennus' pants, grasping his hips and propelling him against the tree. Brennus didn't fight him. He let him do what he wanted.

Darien's fingers caressed his cock. "Brennus," he whispered, kissing his mouth again, tearing his pants down over his hips.

Brennus pushed Darien to his knees. Darien took him into his mouth, sliding his lips over his thick, hard penis. Brennus closed his eyes. The horror of his own death seemed to slip away for a moment as he concentrated on the feeling of his sex inside the envelope of Darien's eager mouth.

I want him to fuck me, Darien's mind was screaming. God help me, I'm terrified of this man but I never wanted to be fucked by anyone like I want to be fucked by him right now...right now...come on...come on...please...his cock tastes so good. It's so hard and thick and I want to feel it inside me...I want to...

How could Brennus ignore the ramblings of Darien's wanton needs? Taking him by the shoulders, Brennus pulled him up to his feet. Turning him around, he shoved him hard against the tree. Darien was hyperventilating as Brennus' hands moved over

BRENNUS' WITCH

his ass, caressing him, then parting his cheeks, a finger beginning to invade his most private space. He heard a deep moan come from somewhere deep inside of him. The finger delved deeper, lips came to land at the back of his neck.

"This is what you've always wanted, isn't it?" Brennus was saying. "Although you did it to me that night...many times...I never did it to you. I was never inside you...and that you couldn't stand. But tonight, I'm going to give you what you want just before...you..."

* * * *

Darien cried out as Brennus' sex plunged deep inside of him, then pulled halfway out, then in again. Then he heard the word, "*Die!*" At that moment, something needle-sharp ripped into the flesh of his throat. The pumping continued, the pleasure insulating him from the pain in his neck as Brennus drank from him.

Flashes of fire entered Brennus' brain now, ropes and torture, naked bodies and sweat. He pumped harder and harder, wanting to think about that no more, and continued to drink.

"Darien," a voice cried out suddenly, "get away from him, Darien!"

Brennus stopped. He turned around and looked at the six mortals who stood watching them. Brennus pulled out of Darien, who had slumped against the tree, not quite on the same plane as everyone around him. He was swimming from pleasure and blood loss.

Brennus took his time pulling up his pants, then wiped his mouth on the back of his hand and gave his audience a devilish smile.

“What have you done to him?” Anna demanded, moving forward. Anita put a hand on her arm. “No, don’t. Stay here.”

“Your friend is wise,” Brennus said with a smile. “She knows I’m dangerous.”

“My brother has done nothing to you!” Anna cried out, tears in her eyes. “Why do you want to hurt him?”

“This is between your brother and I,” Brennus announced. Reaching out and touching Darien’s hair, he said, “Until we meet again, Vortimere. Your death will not take place tonight. The time is not at hand.” Turning to the others, he gave them a slight bow and then disappeared.

There was a collective gasp. “Did you see that?” Pierre asked, walking over to see if Darien was all right. Anna took off the blindfold and helped put her brother’s clothes together. “What happened?” She asked, while Anita went to examine the ground Brennus had been standing on.

Darien shook his head. “I don’t know,” he replied. “I know I wanted him...and it didn’t make sense...I was so afraid and yet I was overcome with lust for him. I...I...”

“Don’t talk now,” Anna said, trying to comfort him.

“It makes perfect sense,” Anita says, “if you were in love with him in another life.”

"I just want to go home now," Darien said, holding onto Pierre for support.

"He's coming back for you," Anita said, giving Darien an intense look.

Darien nodded. "I know that...that's why we have to find out who in hell he is and...who in hell this Vortimere guy is."

"Not *who* he is..." Clint spoke up, looking at his wife, "but *what* he is. Nobody just disappears like that."

"Come on, Clint, he's not some sort of..." Jamie laughed, looking at Darien.

Darien remained silent until they emerged from the woods. When they got back to the car, he told Anna to drive. He lay his head back against the seat, suddenly feeling weak. His neck began to feel sore. Lifting his hand to the tender spot, he rubbed it, then, looked at his hand. There was blood. *Brennus had been drinking his blood.*

* * * *

Anna was very upset, and when they arrived at home, she burst into tears and told Darien that she was scared. "We should contact the police," she said.

Darien tried to comfort her. He held her, and told her to stop crying. He didn't tell her about the blood. That would have made her even more frantic.

He also didn't tell her what he'd been feeling on the way home, this connection to Brennus. It was definitely sexual...but it was much more than that.

There was something between them, and no matter how terrified the thought of it made him, he had to find out what it was. He knew of only one person who could help him. Anita. Would she agree to what he was going to ask of her? He hoped so, because he suspected that his very life depended on it. Who ever this Vortimere was, he had done horrible unspeakable things, and he had done them to Brennus Monroe.

That night as he lay down to sleep, the box Anita had given him to ward off evil lay near his head. He knew nothing could keep Brennus away from him. His will was too strong, a will that had been fortified over lifetimes. He closed his eyes. "If I should live through this night," he whispered in the dark, "give me the strength to face what ever it is in my past life I have done, and help me to heal the pain in Brennus' Monroe's soul." The words hung in the still air above him. His eyes closed. *Brennus. Have to have...have to have him.* His mouth was dry. He saw water, a beautiful sea in front of him, very blue. *Brennus. You can't treat me this way.* "I will not be denied!"

Darien gasped, bolting upright in his bed. Desperately, he grappled for the switch on his bed table lamp. He hit it with his cast, and knocked it off. It went crashing to the ground. Shivering alone in the dark, he looked over at the window to see that it was open, the sheer curtains billowing out across the wall. Shadows moved across his room. "Anna," he cried out. "Anna, where are you?"

Suddenly the door flew open and his sister turned on the wall switch. Beloved light flooded into his

room.

"Darien, what is it? Are you all right?" She eyed the broken lamp lying on the floor. "What happened?"

"I had a dream, that's all," Darien said, feeling foolish. He got out of bed and began to pick up what was left of his lamp. "Go back to bed. It was nothing."

She nodded, giving him a wary look. "Okay, goodnight."

"Night," he said. Leaving the light on, he walked over to the window and closed it. He got back into bed and snuggled down into the covers. He felt such a sense of longing, of emptiness. Closing his eyes, he tried to will himself back to sleep. When the dawn came, he was still lying awake with his eyes closed. Sleep hadn't come. He got up, took a shower and went to work.

* * * *

"Absolutely not!" Anita said, folding her arms across her buxom chest. "I'm not a regression therapist. What if something went wrong?"

"But you could put me into a trance?" Darien probed, drinking his fourth cup of coffee that morning.

"I could, but I won't."

"Anita, if I don't understand the past, then...how can I fight this...him?"

Anita looked down at the worn carpet. "He is only a man. He..."

"I don't believe that anymore, and neither do you," Darien replied stubbornly.

There was an ominous silence.

"There is something..." Anita began, meeting his eyes.

"What?"

"The Ouiji."

A shiver ran down Darien's spine. He laughed nervously. "That's a toy."

"No, it's only a toy in the hands of the novice. In the hands of someone with psychic powers, it can be a powerful tool."

"But...I...wouldn't even know what to ask it. I mean..." He had played with an Ouiji board once as a child, he and his best friend Tom. They had found it in Tom's attic. At first it had been fun. Then, it started moving all by itself, telling them it was a spirit named Equiton who had come to claim their souls. Freaked out, they eventually buried it out in the back yard. Two days later, Tom's grandmother died. It was weird.

"You do know what to ask it," Anita replied, looking around suddenly as one of her clients walked into the store. "Go right in the back, Mrs. Adams," she told her. "I'll be right with you."

"Hello, Mr. Rhys," the woman said with a smile, before disappearing into the back room.

"What do you say...you want to give it a try?" Rita asked, playing with a long strand of glass beads she had around her neck.

Darien nodded. "All right, tonight after I close up

here."

"I'll come back at nine," Rita told him. "We'll do it here."

* * * *

The voice was as clear as the day. It was speaking to him softly, taunting him. He tried to rouse himself from his sleep, but it was too early. He hadn't the strength to wake. His limbs were weighed down by the sleep...heavy as lead. "Leave me alone," Brennus breathed menacingly, his fangs exposed.

"You will be mine, Brennus," the voice replied with a sinister laugh. "Finally, I am here again on the same plane as you. It was meant to be. You want me. I can feel it. This time you want to possess me."

"I will kill you," Brennus growled.

"You may kill the body...but my soul will go on. You *will* be mine," the voice whispered. "You want me, don't you, Brennus? Finally after all this time, you want to fuck the man who took your life."

Trapped in his sleep, like when he was trapped by the ropes...his flesh was being licked by flames. Again he was being consumed. There was no escape. "Noooo," he cried out desperately, thrashing back and forth. "I'll never want you."

"Yet..." the voice said softly, "last night you did want me, Brennus, you did. You couldn't resist touching me...you couldn't resist..."

A terrible sound came out of Brennus' throat, and with every ounce of strength he had, he forced his

body upwards off the bed and into the air. Hysterical laughter filled the room, and Brennus fell back down to his place, the death sleep once again seizing hold of him and paralyzing his body.

* * * *

Darien gave the Ouiji board a wary look. "I don't trust those things," he told Anita. "That thing scared the crap out of me when I was a kid."

Anita smiled. "No worries. It's been blessed by the mother goddess. No evil will attach itself to this board. I've called up a particular spirit. Hopefully, he will grace us with his presence and wisdom. Now, put your finger on the pointer," she instructed, tipping her narrow reading glasses down on his nose.

The store was closed now. A dim light burnt near the cash. The rest of the room was illuminated by candlelight. "What kind of a spirit?" Darien asked, shifting a little in his seat. They were sitting across from one another, the Ouiji board lying on one of the tables they had cleared of merchandise.

"One that can help us," she said evasively.

"Who is going to ask the questions?" Darien inquired, laying his fingers on one side of the pointer.

"I'll begin," Anita said. "Now concentrate, and don't be afraid."

Darien nodded. *Easier said than done.*

"Are you there, great spirit?" Anita asked. For a few minutes, nothing happened. Anita closed her eyes, her mouth moving slightly with no words

coming out. Darien knew that Anita was a powerful medium. That didn't serve to make him feel less ill at ease.

Suddenly Darien's heart lurched as the pointer began to slide across the board. It went to 'no', then 'yes', then moved into the middle. Finally, it settled on 'yes'.

"Great spirit," Anita said, "can you tell me if either of us has lived before?"

The pointer began to move away from 'yes', then back to 'yes' again.

"Do you know who Vortimere is?" she asked.

Darien sucked in a breath.

Again, the Ouiji went away from 'yes', and back to 'yes'.

Darien let out some air. Something icy crept down his spine.

"Is Vortimere in this room?"

"No, Anita," Darien said.

Anita held up her hand, and shook her head.

The pointer began to vibrate, so much so that Darien's fingers slipped off of it. Anita lost her grip as well. They both sat there watching as it began to move of its own volition. Anita quickly grabbed a pen and a piece of paper.

Darien tried to follow the letters. The pointer began to spell out the same word over and over....e-v-i-l e-v-i-l e-v-i-l. Darien moved to stand up. He wanted to get away from that thing.

Anita reached over and grabbed his arm. "Sit down," she said. "It has much to tell us."

Finally, the pointer dragged to a standstill in the middle of the board. Darien looked around him. He shuddered.

"Put your fingers back on it," Anita said.

Tentatively Darien did as she asked.

"We understand. Do you know Brennus Monroe?"

The pointer began to move. It stopped at 'yes'.

"Is he..." Darien began, swallowing. "Is he human?"

Anita gave Darien a look of disbelief. "Of course he's..." then she paused. The pointer moved over to 'no'.

"That's it," Darien said, "I'm finished. I..."

"Darien, this may be our only chance. I may not be able to conjure up this spirit again. I think he wants to help us."

Darien nodded, biting his lip.

"Is Vortimere alive?" Anita asked.

The pointer swung from 'yes' to 'no'.

"Did Vortimere murder Brennus in another life?" Darien asked, his voice quivering.

The pointer slid to 'yes'.

"Oh, my God," Darien said. "Why does he think I'm Vortimere?"

For a long time, the pointer didn't move, then, slowly, it began to move from one letter to another.

Both Darien and Anita began to spell together. By the time the pointer had again come to a standstill, Darien's face had drained of color. Anita sat back in her seat and closed her eyes. The Ouiji had answered, B-e-c-a-u-s-e-y-o-u-a-r-e.

CHAPTER FIVE

Brennus was now convinced that the man calling himself Darien was actually Vortimere. Moreover, he had been deceived last night. He had forgotten how seductive Vortimere could be...how he had made him cry out with need on the night of his death...while he was hating him with every fibre of his being. His body had betrayed him, but so too would Darien's body betray Vortimere. How fitting. It almost made waiting all this time worth it.

Vortimere's soul would not survive the death of Darien's body. Brennus would make sure of that. Vortimere had forgotten what a powerful Priest he had been in his mortal life. The lessons Cuadid had taught him were still with him. It was time to make use of them. The Feast of the Dead was near. He had much to do. He had to find Vortimere and force him to reveal himself. Right now he was cowering within that mortal shell, but not for long. He had ways of making him reveal himself.

Tonight was a night of great celebration. There was a gathering for all the covens in the region, a masquerade party. It was by invitation only, but he wouldn't have any problem crashing. Vortimere

would be there, and so would he.

* * * *

"What if he shows up there tonight?" Anita was asking him as Darien handed a customer their change, and thanked them.

"There will be a lot of people there, Anita," Darien said, walking over to lock the door of the shop. "He won't pull anything in front of all those people."

Anita looked doubtful. "Are you feeling better now?"

"A little, but I had dreams last night. I dreamt of fire and..." He paused. Brennus Monroe had been in his dreams. They had been together in some dark place. Darien had run his hands over his naked, sweat-drenched body...beautiful muscular hills and valleys of flesh. Brennus had been cursing him, struggling against his ropes. He had ignored his pleas...ignored his efforts to free himself. He felt only an overwhelming sensation of lust as he delved his fingers, his tongue into forbidden crevices. Need raged inside him like an inferno, ravishing his soul. He couldn't stop touching him, kissing him. And the more Brennus struggled, the needier he became. When he felt himself erupt, cum spattering all over his stomach and his bed sheets, he awoke, shaken, feeling hot and horny as hell.

"Well?" Anita was waiting for him to elaborate.

He shook his head. "Not important. Anita," he said, looking at her. "I'm grateful for what you did,

but it basically told me what Brennus has already told me. I am the reincarnated spirit of Vortimere. But if I am going to make it right with Brennus, I need to..."

"You can't make it right, Darien. He is a..." she paused, "not human."

"Vampire," Darien said finally. "Brennus Monroe is a vampire. He drank from me."

"What?" Anita's jaw fell.

"He drank my blood the other night, and if you hadn't showed up when you did, he would have drunk me dry."

"Then we need a spell against..."

"No more spells," Darien shook his head. "I need to regress, go under hypnosis, find out what Vortimere..." he sighed, "what I did to Brennus Monroe. Only then can I save my life and save him, too."

"Save him?" Anita gasped. "He doesn't need saving."

"Yes. He does," Darien said.

"He's trying to kill you!"

"Yes, but only because he's in pain," Darien said. "His pain was strong enough to bring him back...to make him cross over. He was a powerful Druid Priest once. I know that. He was good, Anita. Please, either do the regression, or find someone to do it. When I have all the information, then maybe I can..." he was shaking. "Anita, he's going to find a way to kill me one way or another. If I know the facts, at least..."

Anita put a hand on his arm. "I'll do it. Tomorrow, I'll do it, tomorrow."

"Please don't tell Anna," Darien pleaded.
"I won't," Anita said. "Don't worry."

* * * *

The party was in full swing by the time Darien and Anna arrived. They had rented out the reception hall of a four diamond hotel downtown. There were many people dressed in traditional witch garb, a few dressed like the devil. Anna had decided to dress like an angel, complete with wings and a halo. Darien found this droll. His costume was that of a wood god. He wore a halo of leaves around his head and a skimpy golden loincloth around his narrow waist. Roman type sandals and gold body paint completed the picture.

Anna seemed nervous, and she clung to him as they wandered around the room checking out the other guests. A disc jockey dressed in a pointed, star covered hat played tunes from the seventies. "Why don't you dance?" Darien asked, eyeing the refreshment table. He had missed supper tonight.

"What if something should happen?" Anna asked. "You're keeping things from me. I don't like it. I know you and Anita are up to something."

Darien swept his eyes over the masked faces. No one who even resembled Brennus in height or build was spotted. "He's not here, and he isn't coming. Will you stop worrying? Go dance with that guy dressed like a pumpkin over there," he said.

Just then Pierre came up to them. He was dressed

in a black cape. "Guess what I am?" he asked, lifting his silver eye mask.

"Very funny. A vampire?" Darien remarked.

He giggled, running his gaze over Darien. "You look hot. Who are you trying to seduce?"

"No...no one," he said angrily. "Why would you say that?"

"No reason. Come dance, sexy boy," he winked, tweaking Anna's cheek, who giggled.

Darien rolled his eyes as he followed Pierre onto the dance floor. Pierre took Darien into his arms and uttered a deep sigh. He let his hands wander over his back and then down to his buttocks. When he slipped his fingers under the material, Darien protested. "Hey, this is a respectable party. Hands above the waist," he teased.

"Ummm, I want to be a naughty boy," Pierre said. "You're driving me to distraction in that getup."

"Well, I..."Darien began, then felt a hand on his arm.

"May I cut in?" Looking around, he saw a tall man standing in front of him wearing a black cloak lined in red, much richer than the one Pierre had on. His fair hair was tied back, and he wore a black satin mask over his eyes.

No one answered. No one spoke. Pierre stood there helplessly as Brennus took Darien into his arms. The dance was slow, the saxophone slow and seductive. Brennus' hands pulled him in tight against the hardness of his form. "Brennus," Darien breathed, hardly believing that they were dancing together on

the floor.

“Yes,” he smiled down at him, his hands caressing the naked skin of his back. “Happy to see me?”

“Well, actually...you did try to kill me...so I would have to say, no.”

He laughed softly, “Murder and lust is a common playground for you, Vortimere. You should feel right at home.”

Darien looked up into his eyes. They were the most beautiful indigo blue, but right now even though he was laughing, they were as cold as ice. “We need to talk.”

“About?”

“The past...this Vortimere and...” Darien began as Brennus whirled him around at a dizzying pace.

Brennus lowered his mouth to Darien’s throat. Darien’s head went back, he closed his eyes. “I’m going to regress...” he began, but then the words got lost somewhere. He was no longer dancing, he was floating, his head back. He felt soft lips trail down his chest. He moaned softly. “Yes, Brennus...Brennus.”

He was dreaming...dreaming on a soft bed. He raised his hands above his head, his legs spreading out as he moved them over the silky material of the sheets. He felt the loincloth being stripped away. His sex, formerly weighed down, now sprang to life, stiff and erect. He tried to reach down to touch himself but his hands were caught above his head. He couldn’t open his eyes. He licked his lips.

Two hands slipped under him and massaged his buttocks. He felt the presence of a body kneeling

between his legs. As the hands massaged his ass, a face brushed over his groin. His knees were being pushed up, his thighs widened again to an almost impossible width. A tongue began to move against his anus, its quick movements designed to tease and render him defenseless. Simultaneously, a hand mercilessly tortured his cock, rubbing and squeezing it roughly.

He moaned. "Brennus," he breathed as a hand now slid up over his stomach, moved across his nipples, across his mouth. Darien took several of Brennus' fingers between his lips, sucking on them gently as he felt a finger move up inside of him. The hand now caressed the skin of his thigh, a mouth taking his hungry organ, causing his hips to jut forward as an expert tongue moved around the circumference of it. While his cock was being sucked, one hand moved from his anus to massage his balls, the other moving back up over his chest where his nipples were being pinched.

Darien cried out. "Brennus!" *You are my only love. I will go to any lengths to have you. I won't let anyone else touch you ever again. I'll kill them...and I'll kill you!*

Darien came, pumping his hips heavenward, orgasm causing his entire body to shudder with pleasure. He wanted to touch him. He didn't have the strength to sit up, so he moved his face to the side. His eyes snapped open. There he was. The cloak had been discarded on the floor. He stood there in black pants and a white ruffled shirt. He was still wearing the satin mask. Darien reached out a hand to him.

"No," Brennus said. "This is madness. You would kill me again."

"Kill you?" Darien said, attempting to sit up now, but he couldn't. His hands were tied with rope. *Rather than let another man touch you, yes. I would kill you again, my love.* The voice startled him. He met Brennus' eyes. "I didn't say that. I didn't..."

"Yes, Vortimere, you did," Brennus told him.

"Isis, what's happening to me? Tell me what happened that night...who is Vortimere? Why am I hearing his voice inside my head?" Tears were threatening now. He was terrified.

"You were him, in a past life. Usually the past is accessible, but only if we want it to be. You know that. You are a priest."

Darien nodded.

"Vortimere is forcing his way back. His spirit is in you. He wants me."

Darien ran keen eyes over him. He couldn't blame the guy for that. "Please, Brennus, untie me. Maybe together we can punish Vortimere for what he did to you...but I don't know what that was. I have images of fire and...sex...lots of sex. You were bound and he was...I was..." Darien struggled again against the ties.

Brennus said nothing. He walked over, and quietly undid the ties.

Darien nodded at him in gratitude. "Killing me won't solve anything, Brennus," Darien told him, sitting up on the bed.

"I know that," Brennus said. "I must destroy your

soul as well."

Fear seized Darien. "Think about what you are saying. Think about your teachings...our teachings, Brennus."

Brennus sat on the windowsill over in the corner of the room, listening quietly.

"Love and respect for life in all its form is one of our main beliefs," Darien pleaded.

"But there is one clear difference between the Ancient code and your modern day witchcraft, Darien," Brennus replied softly. "We had the Celtic virtues of honor, loyalty, justice and courage. The virtue of honor clearly states that one is required to adhere to their oaths and do the right thing, even if it will ultimately hurt others or oneself in the process." He took a step forward. "I made an oath in front of the goddess of the moon. In return, I was brought back in my original form so that I could fulfill that promise."

The words brought a chill to Darien. "So, you will kill me here tonight and take my soul?"

He shook his head, taking off the soft black mask. "Not tonight. On the night of the Feast of the Dead... that is the night I died. That is the only time I can perform the ritual that will condemn your soul to eternal darkness."

"And tonight was what?" Darien asked, reaching down and retrieving his golden loincloth. "What purpose did it serve?"

He shrugged broad shoulders. Darien met his eyes. For a moment, they looked at each other, then, Darien

understood. "The passion was to bring out his voice, wasn't it? You knew he'd speak through me if you gave him what he wanted."

"That's right."

Darien's hands trembled as he fastened the material around his waist. "Tell me something," he paused and looked at him, "on the night of your death, was there a part of you that was enjoying...?"

"Enough," he said, his voice angry. His eyes began to cloud over, changing to red. His chest heaved in anger.

"I don't know what made me say such a thing," Darien shook his head, just a little frightened of the change in him. *It's just that I want you so much at this moment that it defies logic. I'm jealous that you might have enjoyed another man...even if that other man was me.*

"Really?" Brennus smiled slyly.

"Really what?" Darien breathed, eyeing the door.

"You want me to fuck you, Darien?" Brennus caressed him with his eyes, letting his gaze wander over the smooth, well-muscled chest and the obvious erection poking out of his loincloth.

Darien flushed. "No, I...just..."

Brennus undid the buttons of his white shirt and took it off. Darien was held spellbound as his bronzed, muscular chest came into view. Next, he leaned down and undid the laces of the black shoes he wore. He kicked them aside. When he reached for the button on the top of his pants, Darien's entire body convulsed with throbbing desire...a desire that seemed to be without limits. As Brennus peeled the

pants down over his hips, taking the underwear with them, Darien fell on his knees, much like a slave would who was awaiting the pleasure of his master.

Brennus moved his gaze over Darien, tearing the cord away that held his blond hair in place. He crossed the floor, eliminating the space between them. His cock was hard, ready. He lifted Darien's chin and looked deep into his brown eyes. Darien placed his hands on Brennus' hips, pressing his lips against the base of his cock.

Brennus pulled him up to his feet. He took him into his arms and smothered his mouth with his. Darien's lips were irresistible. He sank his teeth into his tongue and let the warm, smooth liquid cascade down his throat as he ran his hands over his ass. Then with a deep groan, he turned him around in his arms and pushed him face down on the bed on his knees. Grasping his hips, he sliced into him, plunging his thick, massive organ into the depths of him. Reaching around for his cock, he rocked his hips back and forth inside of him, hearing Darien's cries as he began to jerk him off with his hand. Arching his back, his head flung back, Brennus continued to pump into him harder and harder, deeper and deeper until his own body thundered with release.

Darien lay flat on the bed on his stomach. His chest was heaving as he tried to get his breath. He wasn't dead, although if he had believed in the possibility of a heaven, this would have been it. He ran his tongue over his lips, tasting a drop of blood. "Brennus," he whispered with a moan. What a beautiful cock. What

a fuck!

Sitting up now, he looked around him. He was alone. Turning over on his back, he ran his hands over his chest with a contented sigh, touching his cock. No wonder Vortimere wanted Brennus so.

Then reality set in. Brennus still intended to kill him. Vortimere was inside him. He was him, and as much as he might be terrified of the possibility, he was going to have to come face to face with the guy soon.

CHAPTER SIX

“You are resisting the trance,” Anita said to Darien the following evening. “What happened to you last night? Where did you disappear to? We were all worried sick.”

This was the third time she had asked him. “I told you, I was fine. I met someone.”

“Pierre says it was Brennus Monroe,” Anita folded her arms across her chest and peered down at him from where he was lying on the sofa.

“Okay, it was Brennus, but he didn’t hurt me,” Darien said, sitting up.

“What happened?”

“That’s not important. What is important is that unless I can figure this all out, he’s going to kill me...and destroy my soul so that it can’t come back again...on the night of the Feast of the Dead. It’s the night he died...was murdered.”

Anita rubbed her chin. “Did you try to make him see that...?”

“Hah!” Darien exclaimed, scowling. “I even tried appealing to his faith. He told me some stuff about Celtic codes of honor...ancient stuff that...well, let’s

just say it doesn't mesh with our beliefs."

"It's true, they lived in a different time," Anita replied.

"Nita," he said, using her pet name, "I feel this Vortimere. I heard his voice last night. So did Brennus. It was in my head. I know we are one. Do you think I'm paying for the wrongs I did in that life?"

"I don't know. Try not to think about that now. Lay back, we'll try it again."

Darien focused on what Anita was saying. He was trying to clear his mind of all other thoughts, but all he could think about was Brennus...Brennus touching him, Brennus inside of him. Sinking deeper and deeper into a well of darkness, his need of Brennus grew. His mind raced. *He doesn't want me. He's content to shut himself away in the college with his books. He will never want me. He's more powerful than me. People respect him more. He's making love with someone else...someone else...*

* * * *

Anita watched as Darien sat up, staring straight ahead. "Who are you?" she asked, sensing that Darien was gone.

"Who wants to know?" A voice replied, a thick voice with an accent she had never heard before.

Anita tried to remain calm. "Brennus wants to know." It just kind of slipped out. She didn't know what else to say.

Darien's body laughed. "You're a liar. Darien wants to know. He needs to know me so that he can stay alive."

"Yes," Anita replied. She could scarcely breathe. "Help him. This is your doing, not his. What do you want here?"

"Brennus, of course."

"But he wants to kill you," Anita says. "You can't possibly win his love."

"I can't, but Darien can."

There was a long silence.

"What did you do...what did you do, you bastard?" Anita's temper got the best of her. "You show Darien what you did...you show him how to save his life."

It laughed again. "I am not here to save his life. I'm here to feel Brennus' touch once more...just...once more. He can't resist me. Darien is beautiful to him. Tonight when Brennus comes to me—and he will come—I will take him in my arms as Vortimere. Darien is not strong enough to fight me."

"Is it worth killing an innocent young man to satisfy your lust for a few nights with Brennus Monroe?" Anita said between clenched teeth.

"Oh, yes, lassie. If you'd had him, you'd know... well worth it."

"You must have been one evil son of a..." she stopped. Darien had flopped back down on the sofa.

Anita brought him quickly out of the trance. He sat up, giving her a half smile. "Did I say anything?"

"We're in more trouble than I thought," Anita said.

"Vortimere doesn't care about your death. He's here only for one reason...to satisfy his own lust. What a despicable..."

"Did we learn anything about the past?" Darien asked, hopeful.

"Not really. Your only hope is Brennus. He has to see that you are a victim here. Vortimere is using you."

Darien sighed. "If you think he will show me any compassion, then you're wrong. I'll have to connect with Vortimere myself."

"How?"

"You know how."

"No, Darien, it's too dangerous. I don't trust that man. He practices..."

"I have no choice, Anita," Darien said, standing up.

"He said Brennus was coming to you tonight."

Darien nodded. "I'm not in any danger yet. He won't hurt me. Don't worry."

She watched him out the window as he got into his car and drove off. She was worried because she knew where he was going.

* * * *

It was early evening when he finally arrived at Zendle's house, which was tucked away out in the woods. Zendle was a real sleazebag. He had been ostracized from Wicca for dabbling in the black arts. He was also heavily into pornography. Darien wasn't looking forward to seeing him, but he knew that

Zendle was probably one of the best mediums around. He made a living from clearing houses of ghosts and poltergeists. He was often called on by the police in the cases of missing children. If anyone could help him learn about his past life as Vortimere, he could. What it would cost him in return was another question.

When Darien walked up onto the rickety porch, Zendle was waiting. He was an image right out some wizard movie, with his long white hair and spidery fingers. He was wearing a purple robe, with a gold brooch in the shape of a crescent moon pinned to the label. Catching a glimpse of the symbol for the Goddess Isis made him feel a tinier bit more at ease as he stepped into the one room shack.

"Darien," Zendle said, rubbing his hands together as if he were just presented with something good to eat, "what a surprise. What brings you to my humble abode?"

The place stank of something dead. A huge pot boiled on a filthy stove. An odd looking crow-like bird made a high-pitched screech from its perch in the corner. Darien's eyes moved to the mattress on the floor next the stove. *My God, is that where he slept?*

"I...I need your help," Darien said, not wanting to take another step.

"Really? My help?" His eyes moved up in his head for a moment, and he smiled, black teeth emerging from his jaw, "with the vampire, then?" His heavy Scottish accent made the words roll, like he was saying a rhyme.

Darien wasn't surprised that he knew about Brennus. "Then you know he intends to kill me?"

"Only after he be a having you, lad," he cackled like an old woman.

Darien clicked his tongue. "That's not important. I need to get in touch with this spirit inside of me...this Vortimere. I need to know how to get rid of it."

"You can't get rid of yourself," Zendle said, motioning for him to come and take a chair by the old chrome table.

Darien took a seat, keeping his hands clear of the table, which was badly stained with blood. "I need to know what happened between Vortimere and Brennus."

"Thinking that will keep you alive?" Zendle raised a filmy eye. It was hard to tell just how old he was.

"Maybe," Darien managed. "Do you know?"

"Do I know what?"

"Do you know what happened?" Darien sighed.

Zendle narrowed his eyes. "Maybe."

"Well, then, tell me," Darien said, putting his hands on the table and leaning forward, forgetting about how soiled it was.

"I said maybe," he murmured. "But it won't come cheap, lad," he pursed his lips. "Want some tea?"

"No, no tea," Darien said. "Now do you know or not, Zendle?"

"I can find out quick enough," he said. "I know some...but there is a price."

"What...what is the price? I can pay you...I can..." Darien began, digging in his pocket.

"Not money..." He met his eyes.

"Forget it," Darien said, "I'm not having sex with you."

He cackled again. "All right, then. I will use my powers to find out what happened to you in your past life...but you must take off your clothes." He licked his lips.

Darien stood up. "No."

"Well, then," Zendle shrugged. "Face your vampire without any ammunition. He will destroy you...along with your very soul. He's waited a long time, Darien."

Darien sucked in some breath. Slowly, he began to pull his T-shirt over his head.

Zendle stood up. He clutched onto the table as Darien took off his shoes, then, undid his pants. Pausing, Darien glared at him. "No touching. And you tell me the truth, you dirty old bastard."

Zendle grinned. "Agreed, but I get to talk dirty all I want."

"Knock yourself out," Darien sneered. "Do you have to put me under, because I don't trust..."

"No worries, my young stud. You'll be fully conscious. Come on, get them down," he said, his eyes looking a bit bizarre as Darien pulled his pants over his hips.

When he went to sit down, Zendle shook his head. "Pull the chair out in front of me, sit down, spread your legs and clasp your hands behind your head."

Darien followed his instructions, a scowl firmly planted on his face. It could be worse, he supposed.

He could have had to suck his cock.

Zendle stood in front of him now. His nostrils were flaring as he ran his eyes over him. "Sweet young flesh. Tell me, how does your cock feel now, exposed to the air like that?"

"Just fine," Darien hissed. "Now, tell me about Vortimere."

"I can't just tell you like that. Your nipples are so hard, are they terribly sensitive? Be honest, now."

"Yes. Sometimes," Darien said, flushing.

"Tell me about Brennus...what he did to you last time he fucked you? Did he tie you up?"

"He tied my hands...yes."

"Did you like it?" Zendle breathed, fingering himself.

"Yes, I liked it. Is this...necessary?"

"Yes, it is," Zendle replied. "Your relationship with Brennus was intensely sexual, not only in this life but as Vortimere. Vortimere ravaged Brennus before he burnt him alive."

Darien gasped. "Burnt him...alive?" His eyes widened. "Why in the hell would he do such a thing?"

"He loved him. He adored him in fact, couldn't stand the thought of another touching him. He tricked him that night, sent a note and signed it 'D'."

"Who was 'D'?"

"Brennus' lover...or would-be lover. I'm not sure."

Darien felt his mouth go dry. "Did he love 'D'?"

"I don't know," Zendle said. "I can't tell you how Brennus felt, only Vortimere. Tell me more about

your sexual encounter with Brennus, the last one. It will connect you with Vortimere. Close your eyes when you tell me, so that you feel it."

"Are you sure that...?" Darien began.

"It's the only way, go ahead," the old man said, his eyes absorbing Darien's nakedness.

Darien closed his eyes, but he felt nervous, being naked like this in front of Zendle...but he had to trust him. He was his last hope. "I was dancing with Pierre," he began.

"Yes, and you had worn next to nothing that night, knowing that Brennus would notice."

"Yes," he said softly. "I was half naked, wanting only for him to come and rip off the rest of it. He took me away from Pierre. I was caught in his arms. We were dancing. I felt as if I were floating. The next thing I knew I was on a bed of satin, and my hands were restrained. He spread my legs and began to stimulate me with his tongue and his fingers."

"Were you hard, Darien, like you are now just talking about it?"

"Oh, God, yes, so hard, near to exploding. I wanted him."

"Did he fuck you?"

"Not then."

"Did he enter you with his fingers?"

"Yes."

"Did he play with your cock and your balls?"

"Yes," Darien breathed.

"Did he fuck you, Vortimere?" the voice demanded.

"Yes....but only when I begged him," the voice changed, taking on an ancient accent. "He practically fucked my brains out with his big, juicy, gorgeous cock and I wanted that little shit to go away...that Darien...he wants him, too."

"Tell me, Vortimere, what lengths did you go through to have him? Would you have even committed murder to have him? Tell me how you raped him...how you made him desire you in spite of how much he hated you. Tell me everything!"

* * * *

A few hours later, Darien found himself on the road. He was driving towards the city again. He felt hot and feverish. When he had finally opened his eyes back there in that old shack, Zendle was kneeling between his thighs, sucking his cock. He had closed his eyes again, his entire body bathed in sweat. He allowed him to finish the job. He was already at the point of no return. When he came, he cried out like a banshee. Zendle ran his hands over his thighs and then up to his tits. He gave them both a roll between his thumbs and his forefingers. "Sexy bastard," he whispered. "Let me tie you up and fuck you. Please."

Darien pushed him away. "You already got far more than was promised." He began to dress. His head was full of the past, horrifying and real. Zendle had delivered.

"Let me show you my collection of porn," Zendle pleaded. "I have pictures of sexual bondage that will

keep you hard for hours.”

“No, thanks,” Darien said, his heart feeling heavy.

Now he pulled the car off onto the side of the road to take a break. He knew everything. The entire scene played out in front of him. A beautiful Druid Priest dedicated to his faith...an unscrupulous Druid priest obsessed with Brennus' beauty. Together with several other lustful young Druids, they captured Brennus and initiated him into a night of unbridled sexual perversions. Almost mad with the thought that Brennus may be attracted to another, Vortimere burned him at the stake as a sacrifice to the gods and goddesses of the moon.

“His beauty is the ultimate sacrifice. Accept this beauty this night, knowing no one will ever again touch his delicious flesh.”

Tears ran down his cheeks. The words that he'd said that night came back to him like it was yesterday. He had done this. He had tortured and murdered a man out of pure lust and jealousy. He had to make it right, but how? He had to help Brennus.

He turned the car around and headed back to Zendle's shack. Running up on the porch, he burst into the door.

“Come to look at the porn after all?” Zendle smiled at him, stirring something he had in the pot on the stove.

“How? How do I fix this?” Darien demanded, looking down as a big black cat brushed across his leg. “You know, so tell me.”

“For someone who belongs to a group no one

wants me to be a part of, suddenly it seems I've become rather useful."

"What do you want, Zendle?"

"You are a powerful witch, Darien, but to do this, you will need two things."

Darien met his eyes. "Tell me."

"You must call upon the dark arts...and Brennus must be willing to trust you enough to relive that night again."

Darien's heart sank. *Even if he were willing to betray his beliefs, how in the world was he going to get Brennus to...?* "Tell me more."

"On the night of the Feast of the Dead, at the hour Brennus died, you must allow Vortimere to take over your body. This is easy enough to do...demon possession is..."

"All right, yes, and..." Darien winced.

"At the right moment before Brennus dies, you must cast out Vortimere's spirit like one would cast out a demon, reclaim your present soul and save Brennus. That way Vortimere will never return and Brennus' pain will be alleviated."

"I can't do that, Zendle. I'm not powerful enough to...what power do I have?"

"Love," Zendle said simply. "The power of love is what you have."

Darien looked back at him in shock. "Love?" he mouthed.

Zendle put down his spoon and came over to stand in front of him. "Yes, you love that vampire, and it's that love, along with some practice with witchcraft,

BRENNUS' WITCH

that will save the both of you. At the end, it will come down to who loves Brennus the most. Come back tomorrow. I'll show you the spells you need to exorcise a demon when you are under the influence...so to speak." He laughed at his own joke.

"And in return?" Darien asked hesitantly.

"Put a good word in for me with the big shots."

"Done," Darien said in relief.

* * * *

Brennus didn't come to him that night, as Anita predicted. He got into bed, waiting, trying to put the images of torture and death out of his mind. He suddenly felt very protective of Brennus. He understood his wrath. How he had come to feel such love for him, he didn't know. Now all he had to do was convince him to trust him. Hah! That should be interesting.

* * * *

Darien went to see Zandle again the next evening. The spell he had to learn to exorcise Vortimere was complicated. He came home exhausted, physically and mentally. Again, he got into bed and waited, hoping Brennus would come to him. He didn't. He had to see him. If he didn't come to him soon, he would have to find him. He had to gain his trust, or Vortimere would win.

The following day, after closing up the shop early,

Darien made the trip out to see Zendle again. Having just come back from a rather trying hour, he decided to take a little nap on the sofa. He dreamt about Brennus. He saw his face, heard his voice, felt his hands touch him.

Anna woke him when she came into the living room. She saw his face contorting in his sleep, his body restless. "Darien, are you all right?" she asked.

He opened his eyes. "Fine, just tired," he mumbled sleepily. "Anxious to get this cast off my hand. It itches."

Anna fingered the five-pointed star she was intending to hang over the front door.

"Anna," Darien said, catching a glimpse of the pentagram she was holding through half closed eyes, "we have those all over the house now. Don't you think it's enough?"

"One can never have enough protection," she said, pausing to look at him.

Darien sighed and sat up. "Why?"

"Anita is worried," Anna burst out. "She says you've been acting strange. Did you go and see that creepy alchemist, Zendle?"

Darien sighed. "Anna, just stay out of it, okay?" The Feast of the Dead was just a week away. He was nervous as it was, especially about talking to Brennus. He didn't need Anna freaking out on him.

"Zendle's a black witch, Darien. I think he roasts little children in his oven."

Darien laughed. "I don't think his oven even works. Don't worry, little sister. I know what I'm

doing.”

“You could be banned for...”

“Well, then, so be it,” Darien stood up. “This is my life,” he pointed at himself. “If I’m banned, I’m banned.”

“You need the support of the coven right now,” Anna cried.

“To hell with the coven,” he growled. “I need Brennus.”

Anna opened her mouth to say something else, but her brother had walked out the front door.

* * * *

As he drove around the neighborhood, he was beginning to feel badly about the way he had spoken to his sister. He understood her concern, and keeping her in the dark was just increasing her anxiety. He had also been avoiding Anita. He knew she really didn’t approve of Zendle. He couldn’t blame her really, but Zendle was giving him his only way out. That is, if he could find Brennus.

Finally, feeling quite desperate, Darien stopped the car on the side of that road and took a walk in the park. His mind was haunted by images he never wanted to be a part of. *Brennus. We need to talk.*

It was a cold night, and the wind rustled ruthlessly through the trees. Snow was in the air. As his boots scuffed through the leaves, he pulled the collar of his navy coat up around his neck. Shadows danced across the lawns, and hovered over the park benches.

He paused and looked out over the rippling river for a second, before deciding to turn back.

When he felt the fingers curl around his shoulder, he froze, breathing in some of the icy air. "Brennus," he said.

He was released. He turned around to see him standing in front of him, his fair hair loose and softly blowing around his cheek. "What do you want, Darien?" His voice seemed amicable enough, patient.

"We need to talk." He looked into those blue eyes, trying to figure out what was going on behind them.

"So you said. About what?"

"About our...about my fate?"

"There's nothing to talk about. You know. It's not negotiable." He began to walk.

Darien fell into step beside him. "Come on, Brennus. Just hear me out. You do believe in a person's right to defense, don't you?"

"Of course," he nodded, "but in your case, there is nothing to defend. We both know you committed the crime."

"I didn't commit the crime. Vortimere committed it, and yes, we have the same soul, but it's been reconditioned...gone through changes. We don't know how many lives I've had in between now and then, right?"

"Your point is?"

"My point is..." Darien said, grabbing onto Brennus forearm, "maybe I've paid for what my soul did. Aren't we forced to pay in one life for what we did in another?"

"Maybe you're paying now," Brennus said.

Darien fell silent.

Brennus looked down at Darien's hand on his arm, then, he reached for the other one, the one that was still in a cast. Pinching it between his fingers, he cracked it open.

"Hey, what are you...?" Darien began. The pieces of the broken plaster fell to the ground. Taking Darien's hand in his, he held it for a second, then, released it. "It's healed now. You don't need that anymore."

Darien flexed his hand. "What did you do that for?"

He shrugged. "I felt like it."

"Have you been listening to anything I've said, or are you so hell bent on killing me, you don't care?"

"I thought you didn't believe in hell?" Brennus raised an eyebrow.

Darien looked at his beautiful face. He wanted to cry. He looked like an angel, and yet...

"I'm a killer," he whispered.

"It doesn't have to be that way," Darien said, having to practically run to keep up with him now. Brennus wore a long, brown leather coat. It was open, and flapping out behind him. "What if there was a way to destroy Vortimere without killing me?"

Brennus stopped. Without turning around, he said, "That's impossible."

"No, it's not," Darien said, coming now to stand in front of him. *I love you.* Now, what in hell had made him think that at this moment?

"You can't help it. You're Vortimere," he replied, his eyelids lowered.

"No, Vortimere didn't love you, Brennus. He wanted to possess you...to own you...that's not love," Darien said. "Do you know why I know I love you?"

Brennus' blue eyes widened some.

Darien shook his head. "You want to kill me, and all I can think about right now is making love to you."

Brennus' lips parted a little, and he exhaled. "You're insane," he said.

Darien laughed. "Yes, and if you knew what company I had endured in order to learn how to exorcise a soul...you'd...never mind. I think I can destroy...cancel out Vortimere's soul. That way you'd have your revenge. He would never know consciousness again, but it would mean..."

Brennus actually placed his hands on Darien's shoulders. "It would mean what?"

"I would have to allow Vortimere to possess me just long enough to work the spell. We'd have to relive...that night."

"And allow you to kill me again?" Brennus said angrily, backing away. "Do you think I'm a fool?"

"No," Darien said with a sigh. "You'd have to trust me...to...be strong enough to fight him at the right moment. You have to accept the fact that Vortimere didn't truly love you. He couldn't have...and allowed you to die that way. If my love is stronger, I can cast him out. Your pain will end, my..." He almost said, 'love', but Brennus didn't seem to be in any mood for

terms of endearment. Brennus walked over to a bench and sat down.

Darien finally found the courage to go and sit down next to him. He wanted to take his hand. Instead, he folded his hands in his lap. He shivered suddenly. It was far too cold to sit still. "Well," he announced, "if you are determined to go through with killing me in a fortnight, would you consider letting me have the sex of my life in the meantime?" It was meant to be a joke really, but it ended up sounding like a plea.

Brennus looked at him now, and smiled.

Whoa! Anna had always said he had a smile that could run you over and pin you to the spot. Gorgeous.

"Aren't you afraid I'll bite you?"

Darien couldn't help but smile back. "Sure, a little. Are you going to bite me?"

He shook his head. "Not unless you want me to."

Darien laughed. He felt almost giddy. "Does this mean there's a truce between us tonight?"

"I fixed your hand, didn't I?"

"You did."

"Not for altogether selfish motives," he said, standing up.

Darien opened his mouth to speak, but then closed it. *You knew that I...*

"Yes, I knew we'd end up making love tonight. You've been waiting for me to come to you." He began to walk slowly.

Darien walked beside him. "Are you taking me to your lair?"

"My lair?" He glanced at him.

"A joke."

"I see. What about your car? You left it back there a ways," Brennus said.

"Do you know everything?"

"Just about."

"It will be all right. Where are we going?" Darien asked.

"To my lair," he replied, his voice serious.

Darien laughed. He couldn't help it. Whether it was the high of just being in his presence or the cold night air, his laughter rang out into the clear frosty air.

After a few minutes, Brennus joined him.

* * * *

"Is this where we were the other night?" Darien asked as they walked up the steps to Brennus' condo.

"The other night?" he echoed.

"Yes. We were in a room with..." Darien trialed off as Brennus pushed the buttons to turn off the alarm and stepped inside. He switched on a light, more for Darien than anything, and then turned to ask him if he needed anything.

Yeah. I need something. You. He forgot, of course, that Brennus could read his thoughts. He felt the color rush to his face as Brennus looked down at him and grinned. "That can be arranged, but I was thinking more along the lines of a drink."

"No, thanks," Darien said, looking around. The

living room was next to empty. There was a sofa, a small bar. The kitchenette off to the side was immaculate. No wonder, he probably never used it. Beside the kitchenette was an open door. This, he assumed, was the bedroom.

Brennus began to unbutton Darien's coat. "Don't think this changes anything between us, Darien." He said his name, and Darien's heart began to thud in his chest.

"Meaning you plan to fuck me, then kill me?" Darien said softly, moving his lips up beside his ear. He felt absolutely no fear.

"Maybe you should," Brennus said, letting his jaw go slack, revealing his fangs.

Darien lifted one hand to his mouth. Almost tenderly, he stroked the tips of Brennus' teeth with his fingertips. Brennus looked down at him with calm blue eyes. Trailing his fingers down over his jaw, Darien moved them down to his shirt and began to slowly undo the buttons. Brennus growled softly in his throat, his sex now making a conspicuous package in his pants. Darien moved the shirt off his shoulders, letting it fall to the floor at Brennus' feet. Then he reached down for the belt on his jeans. Slowly he undid it, feeling the need radiating from Brennus' body.

Pausing once before sliding his zipper down, he looked up into eyes that now were swimming with flecks of red and orange. Smiling, he relieved the pressure on his eager sex, then pushed his jeans all the way down to the floor. Brennus kicked off his

shoes, stepping out of the pile on the floor. Reaching out, he took Darien's hand and led him into the bedroom.

He's mine...Darien...don't forget that.

Darien stopped and looked around. He could have sworn someone was speaking to him. He shook his head as if to rid himself of an annoying bug, and pressed Brennus down to the silky sheets. Lying on top of him, he gently caressed his fair hair, moving his hand down his square jaw to his lips. The other hand was on his thigh, ever so close to his cock that was threatening to spill out of his underwear. Darien took his mouth in a savage kiss, entwining his fingers with his.

He has a delicious mouth. There is so much you can do with it.

Darien tore his mouth away from Brennus, moving it down to his chest. Trying to recall the words to the spell Zandle had taught him, he closed his eyes and took one of Brennus' hard nipples between his teeth.

Not tonight, you bastard. Nella ke far montra.

His mind quieted almost immediately, and he began to lick the nipple between his teeth, moaning, disengaging one of his hands from Brennus and moving it down to his swollen cock.

Brennus immediately let out a soft cry from the contact. Lapping at his nipple a few more times, Darien reached into the white briefs he was wearing and scooped out his erection. Moving his lips down his chest to his stomach, he let his eyes travel over his cock, on display right above the band of his

underwear. Gingerly, he let his tongue taste the tip, slick with Brennus' juices. "Tonight you're mine," Darien told him forcefully. "Any objection?"

Brennus let his hand move over Darien's dark hair. "No. None what so ever."

Darien took the head of Brennus' cock in his mouth, savoring the taste of the circumference of the perfectly shaped tip. He opened up his mouth wide and took as much of it in his mouth as he could, holding it steady with one hand and moving his lips up and down the length of it. At first, it was slow, then faster until he felt Brennus grab a fistful of his hair and pull. When he exploded, Darien swallowed, withdrawing when it became overwhelming. He sat up on the bed. The light which was coming in from the living room allowed him to watch as Brennus' face contorted in orgasm. He let out a deep growl. His eyes turned a brilliant shade of red, the sharp, deadly teeth glittering in the half light of the room.

Suddenly, Brennus drew him up into his arms. He pressed Darien's head down on his chest, stroking his hair. Darien was surprised at the sudden display of affection. For a few minutes, he scarcely dared breathe. When Brennus did begin to speak, Darien couldn't make much sense of it. "He knew I couldn't resist," he said.

"Resist what?" Darien asked, raising his head off his chest an inch to look at him.

"The packaging," he murmured with a tight little laugh.

"What?"

"You are the dead image of him...pardon the pun."

"The dead image of whom?"

"Daeliah, the man I was falling in love with before..."

Darien placed an arm across his waist. "It's how Vortimere drew you to your death. He sent a note signed D."

"Yes."

"Were you lovers?"

"No, but I think we would have been if..." He stopped.

"Brennus, you can't mean that Vortimere put his soul in my body deliberately? I can't even wrap my mind about that. He'd have to be..."

"A very powerful sorcerer," Brennus finished for him. "And he was...one of the most powerful witches I'd ever seen. And evil."

"I can fight him. I fought him tonight," Darien said, his voice filled with excitement as he pulled away from Brennus and sat up on the bed.

Brennus said nothing.

"I can fight him. I can banish him. We can do it together. Brennus," he said, his voice pleading, "trust me."

"Why should I?" he asked, raising an eyebrow.

"Because I love you," Darien said softly, reaching out a hand to caress his thigh. "And you love me."

"Don't be ridiculous," Brennus said, sitting up now, throwing his legs over the other side of the bed.

"You do. I feel it."

"It's not you, it's..."

BRENNUS' WITCH

"It's me," Darien said, lumbering off the bed and preventing him from escaping out the door. "You feel it too. You know it's true. Help me fight him together."

Brennus met his eyes. "Are you strong enough? When the moment comes, can you banish him forever?"

"We can do it together, Brennus."

"I don't know if I can relive that night, Darien," Brennus said, his eyes sad.

"You have been reliving it for centuries. What's one more night if it means you will be rid of those nightmares forever?" Tears were on Darien's cheeks. He couldn't stand the thought of him in pain, suddenly.

Brennus gently wiped them away with his thumb. He could feel the love coming from him, and God help him...he...wanted him. Taking Darien in his arms, he kissed him. "Take me back to bed and convince me that you love me...and maybe...just maybe I'll consider it."

Darien wrapped his arms around Brennus, hugging him. They stood there embracing for a few minutes, then, Darien backed away. "Come, baby," he said, "I'm ready to show you now." He laughed as he looked down at his erect cock, suddenly quieting as Brennus took his sex in his hand and fondled it. Darien pressed closer against him, and Brennus leaned down and kissed him. Folding his arms around him, Brennus lifted him up and carried him over to the bed. With his lips still pressed to his, he

lowered him to the bed and slid his hands under his hips. Moving away, he raised Darien's legs up over his shoulders and gazed down into his eyes. Without another word, he moved into him. Darien closed his eyes, letting the feeling of his cock inside him take him to another place.

My place!

Darien's eyes snapped open. Brennus wasn't aware of the voice inside of Darien's head. He was lost, his eyes closed, head back, pumping his passion into him with an intoxicating rhythm.

No, you're not going to ruin this for me. You have no place here...no...his delicious sex is mine...and on the night that you will allow me to possess you, I will have him and destroy you at the same time. Brennus. Brennus.

Brennus stopped suddenly, pulling out of Darien's body, his cock aching, his senses alert. *Vortimere*. He was here with him. He looked down into Darien's eyes, eyes that suddenly looked different, insane, crazed.

"Yes, my love, I'm here. Fuck me some more." It was *Vortimere's* voice.

Brennus stumbled backwards across the room. "Get out," he shouted. "Get away from me!" For a minute, he felt panic.

Vortimere stood up. He ran his hands seductively over Darien's naked body. "You can't get enough of him, can you? Now, you know what it would have been like if I'd have let you fornicate with that lusty stable boy. Come, come taste me, my love. Do what you want to this body...for after all," he started to

laugh, "it is only a body."

Brennus hissed in the corner of the room, his eyes blood red with anger. "Bring him back," he demanded. "Let Darien go."

"Oh, no, not yet, not until I've had my fill of you," the voice boomed. Suddenly a reflection of Vortimere's face peered out from behind Darien's eyes. It grew larger, and then exited his body, looming just about his head.

Brennus' eyes widened. For a minute he froze, unprepared for what seeing that face would do to him. He reacted on pure instinct. He bared his fangs and hissed again. The sudden appearance of his hated enemy caused him to flex his haunches, prepared for an attack.

"Kill me, and you kill Darien," he said, laughing. "If you want that amateur witch back, come and show me what you're made of...show me how hard you can fuck me...and then maybe I'll release him."

Brennus let out a howl of rage, his hands curling into fists. *Blood*. He went for his throat, springing at him, then, just as his hands tightened around him, the hideous image disappeared. Darien dropped to the floor.

"Darien," Brennus said, bending down and pulling his limp body into his arms. "Darien." He pushed the hair out of his face, and carried him over to the bed. For a moment, he held him against him, cradling him as if he were a small child. Then he kissed him gently on the mouth.

Darien opened his eyes.

"Are you all right?" Brennus asked him, searching his face, wanting to make sure it was really him.

Darien nodded. "What happened?"

"He took over. It was him, Vortimere, I saw him like..."

Darien put a hand to his cheek. "It's all right. He can't hurt you. It's the spells I've been doing with Zendle. It brings him out...he has to come out if we are going to trap his soul."

"He took over completely. You can't fight him, Darien," Brennus released him and stood up.

"Yes, I can. With your help, we can do it. I wasn't prepared tonight. I will be. I promise." Darien waited for an answer. He needed Brennus to stand with him. He needed Brennus to see that he and Vortimere were two separate entities. "We are not the same. He is..."

"I know that," Brennus put up a hand. "I think you should leave now. I have to be alone to think."

Darien got off the bed and slowly put on his clothes. He took one more look at Brennus before he left, but Brennus had his back to him, staring out the window.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Zendle was ogling him again. Darien was in no mood tonight. He was thinking about Brennus, about whether he had the strength to relive that night again. If he didn't, this was all for nothing. "Concentrate," Zendle insisted. "You have the power, but unless you concentrate it...it's flying all over the damn place. Get your mind off your cock and..."

"My mind is not on my cock," Darien snapped.

"It's on Brennus Monroe's cock, then, same deal," Zendle snickered. "I think that vampire is one big pussy. If he really loved you, he'd..."

Zendle paused in mid sentence. A cool hand sat suddenly on the back of his neck. Darien's mouth formed a perfect O.

"If he really loved him, he'd what, Zendle?" Brennus brought his head around to look directly into the bearded man's face. "Ah...I was saying..." he cleared his throat, "that love is..."

"And what would you know about love?" Brennus asked, releasing his neck with a jerk, then, his eyes floated over to Darien. "If you love someone, you're

willing to walk through fire for them. What do you say, my beautiful witch?"

Darien's eyes met his, his heart fluttering. "I say..." he managed, his voice choked with emotion, "you're right...my beautiful vampire."

They smiled at each other now. Then Zendle remembered what they were doing here. "Okay, enough, I'm going to need a shower. We are trying to save this witch's hide," Zendle said, casting a wary glance at the vampire standing less than two feet from him. "Are you here to help, or hinder?"

Brennus gave him an ironic look. "Well, I'm certainly not here to see you, old man. And don't you ever call me a pussy again. Let's go. Show us these spells. Show me how to get rid of Vortimere forever."

For the next week, they worked every night. Zendle was amazed at Brennus' power, and Brennus marvelled at Darien's will. Finally, on the eve before the Feast of the Dead, it was over. They had gone as far as they could.

"I feel dirty," Darien had told Brennus as they were about to leave the old mans shack. "I feel as if I have crapped on every thing Wicca holds dear. After this is over, I never want to dabble in the black arts again. Do you know the poem...ever mind the rule of three, what you give out comes back to thee?"

Brennus placed his arm around Darien's shoulders. "No, but desperate times call for desperate measures. You had no choice. Vortimere is evil, and we must fight evil with evil. The ancients believed that it was all right to cause harm, if it was justified. You had to

be willing to accept the karmic consequences. Are you...willing to accept the consequences?"

Darien nodded.

Zendle was watching them now, the way their bodies swayed close together. His expression was one of jealousy. "So, what do I get now?" He demanded, rubbing his palms together, fixing them with a lecherous look.

Brennus looked at him, piercing his eyes with his. "I'll tell you what you get, old man. You get to live."

Zendle shivered, noticing the wave of red that flashed through his eyes. He watched with relief as Brennus took Darien by the hand and led him outside. Immediately he went to lock the door.

* * * *

Anna stood beside Anita as they gathered in the circle and began to call to the elements of nature. Clint, Pierre and Jamie and Doug stood opposite them, beginning to chant. It was Anna who saw Darien approach, Brennus Monroe by his side. Tears sprang to her eyes. For over a week now, she'd seen very little of Darien, and when they did meet he was evasive and very curt. Now he was smiling. No one said anything as he joined the circle, pulling Brennus in with him. Brennus and Darien looked at each other, then at the moon. "Fire, Air, Water, Earth," Anita began. "Elements of Astral birth...I call you now, attend to me..." Darien turned sharply when he heard Brennus reciting something in an ancient

tongue he'd never heard. It was so beautiful. They all stood still to listen suddenly, his words sweeping them into the past...connecting them with their ancestors. Switching back into English, he said, "From cave and desert, sea and hill...by wand, blade, and pentacle...I call you now, attend to me. This is my will, so mote it be!" Raising his hands up to the sky, he called out, "Mother, you blessed me once with eternal life. May I ask once more for your blessing to wipe evil from this plane and all other planes for ever and ever."

Suddenly the moon disappeared from the sky, submerging them in total darkness, and the earth seemed to tremble for a moment. A flash of lightning ripped through the sky. The participants all stood looking at each other. As quickly as it came, it disappeared. The earth quieted, and the moon loomed down above them in the silent sky.

Anita began to dance, then moving over to Brennus, she took his hands and drew him further into the inner circle where he too began to move his body.

Anna took the opportunity to speak to her brother. She hugged him to her as his eyes shifted lovingly over to Brennus. Her hold tightened on him, but she didn't say anything.

Pierre, Jamie, Doug and Clint moved over to Brennus and began to touch him like he was a sacred object. He allowed their examination for a few minutes, then disengaged himself. Facing Darien now, he met his eyes. He didn't have to tell him what

he was thinking. It was written all over his face. "Wait for me, Brennus. I need to talk to the others for a moment," Darien said.

Brennus nodded at Anna, and walked over to a tree in the distance.

"Anna, if anything happens to me tomorrow night..." Darien began.

"Won't you be here for the...?"

Darien shook his head. "No...well..." he smiled, "maybe later. Brennus and I must take care of something first. If it goes well..."

She swallowed. "I'm afraid."

"Don't be," Darien said. "If something happens, Brennus will take care of you. I haven't asked him yet but..."

"Darien," Anna sighed.

Anita came now, too, and the others. They all hugged him. "Although we don't clearly understand it all, we're with you," Anita said softly. "We love you."

Darien nodded. He didn't want to cry. Sliding through the circle around him, he made his way back to Brennus. "Don't worry," Brennus told him, "if something happens to you, I will take care of Anna."

"Thank you," Darien said, then they walked without talking.

They went back to that room, took off their clothes and lay down together on the bed. For a long time, they just held each other. Then Brennus touched him, and he lost all control.

* * * *

When he awoke, it was daylight. The blinds were open and the sun was streaming through the window. He was alone. He stretched and yawned in contentment. He wasn't going to open the shop today. He turned over in the bed, deciding to go back to sleep. He was thinking about Brennus, wondering where he went during the day. Last night had been wonderful; their lovemaking had been practically animalistic. He raised his fingers to find the wounds on his throat. There were none. Brennus had kissed and licked the tiny holes, sealing them over.

Vortimere had not tried to impose himself last night. At first they both listened cautiously, pausing in between kisses. After a few minutes, they got lost in the touch and feel of one another, and Vortimere was forgotten. Sighing, he tried to will himself back to sleep but his mind was on tonight. Maybe Vortimere suspected what they were up to, but that didn't matter. With what they had planned, once underway, Vortimere would not be able to resist.

* * * *

Tonight, the night after All Hallows' Eve, was a cold one. There was frost already on the ground. The leaves sounded dead and hollow beneath his feet. Halloween decorations still littered people's lawns, but the lights in the eerily carved pumpkins were all out now. Brennus halted his pace for a moment to

look at a vampire hanging from the porch of an old Victorian styled house. He grinned. He was hunting early tonight. As soon as the sun had descended, he rose from one of his many sanctuaries in the city and took to the sky. He regretted not waking beside Darien, but he couldn't do that, at least not yet. He needed blood tonight, not a lot, but just enough to give him the strength he needed to carry this through. They had recreated everything so perfectly. It had to work. Facing that night again was terrifying, but this time he knew that Vortimere couldn't really hurt him...and if he kept telling himself that it was Darien's hands touching him, he might just be able to bear it.

Continuing on his way through the quiet neighborhood, he saw a woman carrying a grocery bag. He went to sit on a park bench, waiting for her to pass. Leaning back seductively, he laid his arms across the back of the bench. She had spotted him from some distance. She unconsciously ran a hand over her hair. When she approached, she stopped, and smiled at him. "Cold night, isn't it?"

"Yes," he said. "Can I help you with your bag?"

"Oh," she replied nervously, "I just live over there." She pointed to a grey stone building with black iron balconies on the corner.

"Good," he said, taking her bag. As he did he made sure their hands touched. She held his eyes longer than was decent. He knew she wanted him. Her mind was screaming it. She was calculating how long her husband would be gone. *He's playing cards with his*

friends. He won't be home for hours.

Oh, it won't take that long, Brennus thought. By the time her husband came home, she'd be deeply asleep in bed. In the morning she'd get up feeling as if she had just made a donation to the blood bank... Brennus' blood bank, he thought with a sly smile.

Making his way back to Darien, he actually felt quite good. He had made sure she felt as if she'd had the best sex in her life when he drank from her, even though he barely touched her. If her husband was perceptive, he'd wake her up when he got home, and she would probably give him the sex of *his* life. He couldn't help but laugh.

When he arrived back at the condo, Darien was sitting on the steps outside. He looked anxious, suddenly reminding Brennus of what lay ahead. "Where have you been?" He jumped to his feet, searching his face.

"Walking. Don't worry, Darien," he said, touching his cheek, "everything will be all right."

"Yea...well, you're not the one who's going to have some freak take over his body and..."

"Listen," Brennus placed his hands on his shoulders and captured his eyes with his, "if you don't want to do this..."

"What choice do I have...either I do this or you kill me."

He looked stricken for a second.

Brennus dragged him into his embrace. "Do you think I could kill you now? Maybe in the beginning...now...it's impossible. If we don't do this,

Vortimere will continue to torment both of us."

Darien laid his head on Brennus' chest for a second, tightening his hold. "I know the spells backwards and forwards...and you'll be there to help me."

"We can do this together," Brennus said with determination, moving away from him. Taking his key from his pocket, he went up the steps, Darien following behind.

* * * *

Anna was begging Anita to tell her the truth. "I don't really know," she said, sitting at her kitchen table. She stared down into her coffee cup.

"You do know," Anna insisted. "You know what they're planning. It's dangerous...last night, Darien talked as if..."

Anita glanced up at Anna. "We can't help them."

"So, we're just supposed to sit here and wait?"

"No," Anita said briskly, standing up, "we're supposed to get ready for the celebration."

Tears sprang to Anna's eyes.

Anita softened. "I'm sorry, my dear, I know very little about what will happen tonight, except there is no stopping it. Last night, I saw the love between your brother and Brennus Monroe. It's strong. Brennus will protect your brother. In life, he was a powerful witch and now..."

"He is a vampire," she said, letting the words settle on her tongue. "It goes against everything we

believe.”

“But remember, my dear,” Anita said, “we don’t know all the mysteries of the universe. The goddesses and gods blessed Brennus Monroe enough to bring him back from death. Why they brought him back as a vampire, I don’t know...but there must have been a reason. Wicca believes in love, and I saw it last night in its purest form. Love is the most powerful force in the universe.”

Anna swallowed. She too had seen Brennus’ power last night, heard his ancient words. She would have to wait, and beg the deities to protect her brother on this most sacred of nights.

* * * *

Darien sat in the corner. Black candles were scattered around, illuminating the darkened room. He was chanting, an ancient chant with words which came from the book of the dead. “Tiglass...sa...monostor...kamilee....tiglass...sa...monostor...kamilee...”

Brennus stood by silently, waiting. *Come on, Vortimere...come and get me...come and get me.*

Suddenly a gust of wind blew across the room. There were shadows, and then darkness. Brennus gasped for air. Two eyes glowed red across the pitch-black room. “Brennus,” a voice said. A shiver ran down his spine, and suddenly, the candles were lit again. He was back at his desk at the college.

It was odd to look around him and see all the

trappings of modern culture erased. There were no lamps, no color televisions, not even a radio. He sat in front of a fireplace at a plain wooden table reading from a book that outlined the responsibilities of his faith. As the wind howled outside, he knew that any minute a message would arrive for him, asking him to come to a secluded place just outside the village.

Brennus, please meet me. We have much to talk about.
D.

Now, he mounted his horse and rode. This time there was no giddy anticipation that when he arrived, Daeliah would be there waiting for him. He slowed his horse, gazing up at the moon. The time was right. There was no turning back.

When he arrived in the clearing, Vortimere was there. So were the others, shadows of the past. Brennus slid off his horse. His eyes went to the Ankh that hung around Vortimere's neck. He breathed a bit easier. The Egyptian cross like symbol seemed to glow suddenly, affirming the power of Isis.

"Vortimere," he said bowing his head, the long burlap robe he wore swinging around his ankles as he walked, reminding him of where he was.

"Brennus," Vortimere replied, raising a hand to him in greeting. Brennus studied him a moment. He wore a long beard. It was brown, flecked with grey and rather shaggy. His robe was not unlike his own, and rather tattered.

"I received a note and I..." Brennus began. The moon disappeared behind a cloud. He felt the others move in around him. He couldn't think of Darien. He

had to make sure that Vortimere believed this was authentic.

He was seized by the shoulders. Ropes were being placed around his wrists. Several men dragged him over to a tree and laced his hands above his head. "Vortimere. What have I done?" he asked him, struggling against his constraints. His voice sounded the same way it had that night. "Why have you brought me here under false pretences? What manner of treachery is this?"

Vortimere didn't look like himself. His piercing grey eyes shone with an unnatural gleam. It was pure lechery. Reaching up to the collar of Brennus' robe, he ripped it down the middle, leaving his body totally exposed. His eyes settled on his chest, then moved down to his sex and stayed there. "Get that thing off of him," Vortimere demanded of his cronies. "Throw it away."

Fingers tore at the robe, which was attached over his shoulders. Finally it was gone. "You have tormented me far long enough, Brennus!" Vortimere boomed. "And now to even think of taking that uneducated servant as a lover...it's never going to happen." He kept talking; saliva was running down the length of his beard as he practically spat out the words at him. "Tonight I will have you," he smiled, coming closer now and wrapping his arms around the lower part of his body. His tongue darted out, and lapped over Brennus' cock. Brennus shuddered, revolted, as the mangy beard scratched his sensitive skin. "I will make you want me...I will have you over

and over again...do the unspeakable to your beautiful body."

"You will pay for this," Brennus told him, kicking at him. "You will be put to death for what you do to me this night."

"Tie his ankles," Vortimere demanded, standing back to avoid being kicked.

Ghostly hands wrapped rope around his ankles as Vortimere removed his own robe and laid it almost reverently aside. Completely naked now, the ancient priest's sex stood erect and ready. Reaching up and grabbing Brennus' face, he forced his tongue into his mouth. It tasted rancid, a result of the fact that the few teeth he had left in his head were rotting. Stepping back, he let his eyes move slowly over Brennus' body again. His gaze was humiliating. It disgusted him. When one of his scaly hands wrapped around Brennus' cock, he cried out, rancorous. "Gag him!" Vortimere growled. "Shut him up."

Again, almost transparent hands attended to Vortimere's demands, stuffing Brennus' mouth with some obnoxious-tasting material. His cock was squeezed again, then, Vortimere began to play with it viciously until he saw it begin to stiffen. "You're hard for me, Brennus...my beauty." Reaching up he pinched his nipples, then began to suck on them, one by one. As he did, he reached around and ran his hands over Brennus' buttocks. Slapping them, he began to laugh as he removed his mouth from his chest, and moved around to the back of him.

Brennus stiffened as he felt Vortimere part his ass

cheeks with his hands. "I want to play with you, Brennus...like a child plays with a toy. I want to enter and explode my seed so hard in you your entire body will go into spasm."

Brennus knew what was to come, and there was nothing he could do about it. It wasn't time for Darien yet. They had to wait until Vortimere took him to the stake. "Lift me up," Vortimere demanded, and as his devotees raised him, Vortimere delved his sex deep inside of Brennus. The pain was more severe than he remembered. He had been untouched then, a virgin. He had never so much as kissed another being in a passionate way. He knew it wasn't real, it was only psychic pain, but each time Vortimere rammed into him, he grunted, biting down into his lip so hard it started to bleed. His eyes remained blue, his jaw remained closed. He was mortal again.

It seemed to go on and on with no reprieve, others also using him for their pleasure. And then as Vortimere tormented his cock, denying him release, Brennus began to beg him for pleasure. It was his intention all along, of course, and he was reveling in it. The disgust, the degradation, the need...in his mind he saw an image...a beautiful young man. Daeliah...or...was it Darien? He closed his eyes as Vortimere began to suck his cock, imagining that beauty touching him. That's what he had done. That's how he had endured it all without losing his mind. Vortimere was kissing his thigh now, his arms wrapped around his hips blissfully. "Brennus," he moaned. "I love you. I love you. Say you love me. Say

you'll come and live with me. I want you."

There was venom in his voice when he spoke. "I will never love you, you despicable, repugnant old man. You have defiled me, and our way of life. Do you think I'd ever want to be your lover?"

The cross around Vortimere's neck glowed brightly, almost blinding him now. He was being taken down, dragged across the hilly grass. There it was, the stake, waiting for him. "No lover will ever again touch your beautiful body, Brennus...no one will know that ecstasy besides me. You will burn...burn...Brennus...burn!"

There was madness in his eyes as he tied him to the stake. When the fire started, Brennus started to pray, but this time it wasn't to the goddesses of the moon. He was chanting the dark words from the Book of the Dead in his ancient Celtic. These words were meant to rouse Darien's spirit, bring him into the past so that together they could cast Vortimere out forever.

The flames flicked higher. Brennus swallowed something dry in his throat. He couldn't die like this again. He began to chant louder, while Vortimere professed his love for him. "Say the word...I'll put out the fire. Be my lover...be my lover, Brennus."

The Ankh around Vortimere's neck began to throw off a reflection. It began to float off his chest, turning around his throat. He grabbed onto to it, not sure what was happening. *Darien.*

Darien heard words in his head, ancient words Zendle had taught him in that dirty old cabin of his. He repeated them in his head, over and over,

matching the passion and speed of the Celtic script Brennus was following.

The shadows disappeared around Vortimere. He was alone. Brennus winced against the flames now licking at his calves. The twigs were crackling below him, ashes flying up around his head. He coughed, licking his dry lips, then began to chant again.

Vortimere fell on his knee. He looked up into Brennus eyes. "You bastard. You cheeky tempter... you seducer...you...tricked...tricked me..." Holding up a hand, he held his gaze for a moment, then his eyes rolled up in his head. His body went slack and he fell.

Oh, great, Brennus thought. Fine. It looked like Vortimere was dead, but he was still burning. He began to struggle, then, suddenly the body on the ground began to move. Brennus gasped as Vortimere got to his feet. *Nooo!*

"It's me," another voice told him, beginning to hastily untie the ropes. Brennus jumped over the raging pile, burning his hands and his calves in the process. He peered at the man in front of him. "Darrien?" he said in disbelief.

The figure in front of him nodded. "I've taken possession of his soul...but not for long. He fought hard. The only thing that saved me was that he was so distracted by you, he kept losing track of what I was doing."

Brennus was speechless. He felt something change in his body. He was once again a vampire.

"Look at me," Darrien cried, holding out his arms,

then grabbing onto the beard, "I've got to get out of this body."

Brennus hugged him close for a minute, then, held him away giving him a disparaging look. "Yes, you do. Expecting me to make love to that...would be a challenge at best."

Darien gave him a sarcastic look. "Fine," he snapped, never expecting to actually end up exchanging bodies with Vortimere. "Now we need to banish the soul before it comes back again. Remember?"

Brennus nodded. He looked up at the sky. "Together now, okay? Mother Earth...I ask you to cleanse this body of all evil and negative energy." Reaching over and clutching the cross in his hand, he and Darien repeated the secret spell that would wipe out Vortimere's spirit forever.

When it was done, Darien looked up at Brennus and smiled. "It's done. We did it. We did it together."

Slowly Vortimere's face disappeared, replaced by Darien's. The robe fell away from his body as well, and disintegrated into the ground. The only thing that remained was the Ankh hanging around Darien's neck. "Umm," Brennus moved his eyes over his naked body, "now that's a vast improvement."

Darien gave him a teasing grin. "So, what are you going to do about it?"

He was just about to touch him when everything went black. Then suddenly, the candles once again illuminated Brennus' room. Darien stood up from where he sat in the corner of the room. Brennus

embraced him. "I'm glad it's over," Brennus said, "but I am rather disappointed about one thing."

Darien looked up, concerned. "What, my love?"

"You were naked just a while ago," he said.

Darien laughed. "That can be easily remedied. In fact," he said, pulling his T-shirt over his head, "I will remedy that right now."

Brennus went over to the bed and lay down, watching lazily as Darien took off the remainder of his clothes. "My witch," he said softly in the candle lit room.

"Brennus' witch," Darien whispered, as he came over to the bed and fell on top of him. "How I love the sound of that."

"You saved me," Brennus told him, wrapping his arms around him. "You're more powerful than you know."

"You trusted me," Darien said, undoing the buttons on Brennus' shirt. "You love me. The power came from that. The pain is gone now, baby. He's gone."

Brennus smiled. Yes. It felt right suddenly.

"Now love me. I think I've earned it," Darien insisted.

Brennus moved his hands over Darien's back. "Ah, so you expect payment, do you, Brennus's witch?"

Darien covered one of Brennus' nipples with his lips. For a minute he didn't answer, contented to feel his nipple stiffen under the tutelage of his tongue. Then, he raised his head with a smile. "You bet...and every night until the end of my life."

BRENNUS' WITCH

“And if I have anything to do with that,” Brennus replied, reaching down to take Darien’s cock in his hand, “that will be a lot longer than you expect.”

THE END.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

I write not only for my own pleasure, but for the pleasure of my readers. I can't remember a time in my life when I haven't written and told stories. When I'm not writing, I'm dreaming about writing, doing something wild and adventurous, or trying to make the world a better and more open minded place to live in. I adore beautiful men, and I know I'm not alone in this! Eroticism between consenting adults, in all its many forms is the icing on the cake of life!