

Mardi Gras Publishing Presents...

ETERNAL BONDS

BLOOD BROTHERS

'SINGE FRATE'



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ETERNAL BONDS I:

Blood Brothers

Singe' Frate

By

Teresa Wayne

DEDICATION

To my husband, Wayne. Thank you for supporting my endeavors and actively partaking in them as well. You are my best friend, my husband and my playmate forever...

Prologue

1462 AD – A back street of Tirgoviste, Romania:

“Ioana, you must leave now!” A woman stopped in the midst of the raging turmoil around her to yell through the open door of a small cottage. “The Turks are invading—grab your children and run!”

The screams echoed through the township of Tirgoviste. Women, children, and elderly struggled to escape the waves of Turkish forces moving through the streets, trampling bodies that fell before them as they slashed a bloody trail to the castle of Vlad.

Ioana grabbed a small sack and quickly tossed a bread loaf, a few vegetables and a small wooden box into her make shift tote. As she reached to grab a blanket and her sons, they began to make their way into the crowd of dead, mourning and screaming bodies that littered the ground before her.

Ioana held her two boys close to her side, stepping carefully to avoid the bloody hands of neighbors, friends and strangers reaching in agony for help. There was nothing she could do or say to help these people now.

Hugging the cottage stone wall, to dodge the oncoming warriors, she pushed her sons onward, building to building, until finally rounding the blacksmith’s shop at the edge of the township.

Freedom seemed just paces away. She could feel her heart racing in her throat.

"Sorin, Stefan, you must stay close," Ioana whispered between gasps for air. "I can not allow our capture, for it would surely be the end of us."

"Fi mama, why do these men want to kill us?" Sorin questioned his mother, with fear in his voice.

"Yes, fi mama...why?" Sorin's whispered question followed his brother's rather quickly. He too was afraid, but of what he knew not.

Ioana's fear turned to concern for a brief moment, and as quickly as it came – it left. "We do not have time for this conversation. We must make our way across the field to the edge of the forest where we can find shelter, amidst the trees, from this danger." Ioana gave her boys a quick look of positive re-enforcement, and then glanced around for a safe moment to make their dash. Holding the sack, which contained their only possessions over her shoulder, and using her free hand, she pushed the boys forward and ahead of her as they made the dash for safety.

Sorin led the way, moving as quickly as he could with his young legs. Stefan followed, still holding his mother's hand, pulling her along. They stumbled thru the wild brush growing in the field, continuing to run, until finally reaching the forest edge. Pausing behind a large tree to catch their breath, Ioana motioned Stefan and Sorin to stay low, as not to be spotted by any renegade warriors outside Tirgoviste.

The Turkish army moved thru the township and up the mountainside, toward Prince Vlad's castle, destroying, burning, and slaughtering all in their path, with intentions of doing the same to their beloved Prince.

"Fi mama, what will happen if they kill the Prince?" Stefan asked in a childish, nervous, and questioning tone.

Ioana knew she could not hide her secret forever. She feared for her sons' lives, but she feared for her secret lover, the Prince, as well. "If they kill the Prince my sons, they will have killed your true father -- your eternal bond."

Chapter I

Present Day Key West, Florida:

"Bitch, you need to get up out of my seat!" The drunk raised his voice to the young woman seated at what had been his table. "Get out of my seat now, before I knock you out of it." He was staggering and struggling to regain his composure as he slurred.

"This isn't your seat. Your group left ten minutes ago." The young woman spoke very loud over the music. "I'm sitting here, minding my own business, so why don't you run along and do the same."

The drunk staggered once again, catching himself on the edge of the table to regain balance. He drew back his fist in an effort to strike the woman seated in his old chair. As he released to swing, a hand came from out of nowhere, grabbing the man's wrist and breaking its forward momentum. With one swift move, and never releasing his wrist, the drunk was propelled backwards, across two tables where he landed on the stage.

The young woman sat speechless. Everything happened so fast, she had no time to react. She turned in her seat, staring up at the man who laid the obnoxious drunk out, yet never striking him.

The stranger then looked down at the woman with concern. "Are you OK?"

"Yea...I think so," she responded with a tremble in her voice. "Thank you... who are you?"

"I'm terribly sorry. My name is Sorin Tepes', but you may call me Sorin."

He carefully eyed the beauty up and down, as if inspecting his reward for a job well done. Years, he spent in search of his one match. The one female capable of matching his own lust for life and power. Was she the one?

"Tepes'? Are you Polish?" The young woman asked with a confused look.

"Not last I checked," Sorin chuckled, "I'm of Romanian decent."

"You have such a beautiful accent. I knew you weren't from here." The young woman began to blush with embarrassment at her lack of introduction. "Sorry, I didn't mean to seem rude. My name is Desiree." She extended her hand. "Desiree Barret."

Sorin accepted her hand and bent over; kissing the back in a gentlemanly fashion, then glanced up. "Ah, you are French?"

Desiree sat back in amazement at the greeting she had just received. *This man is gorgeous, foreign, and hot! However, this is Key West, so he may be gay. Just my luck... Vacation is almost over and I leave empty handed.* "Yes, I'm of French decent -- about three generations back." Desiree giggled and sipped her cocktail, deciding on her next question. "Do you live here in Key West?"

Sorin waved a server over to the table. "May I have another drink for the lady, please?" He glanced back at Desiree. "What are you having?"

"I'll take a rum and coke," Desiree spoke to the server, and quickly turned her attention back to the hunk seated in front of her. His long dark hair and obsidian eyes presented the facade of the tall, dark and handsome look of a foreigner.

"No, I don't. I'm here on business." Sorin shook his head. "Sometimes, subordinates are careless in their business decisions, and I have to clean up after them."

"This, I understand. I'm a senior editor for a New York publishing company, and my subordinates screw up all the time." Desiree smiled at her own comment, and then found herself gazing into Sorin's eyes. His eyes were addictive, almost hypnotic. She felt drawn to this man through his eyes.

Sorin noticed this woman was responding to his power far too easily, and he needed to focus her attention elsewhere. "Desiree? Would you like to take a stroll with me?"

"I would like that, but not sure if the legs are up to it." Desiree spoke as she attempted to stand with a wobble, from her seat.

Sorin was lightning-quick to catch her, taking her by the arm to offer support.

"Geez... Either I'm really buzzed, or you're really fast!"

"I think you may be a bit tipsy." Sorin quietly spoke, while assisting her in gathering her purse and herself. "The walk and fresh sea air will do you good."

Her body responded to him in a way she had never felt before. The feeling was hungry and primitive. He was dark and delicious and she wanted him like nothing she had ever wanted before.

Duval Street bustled with activity. People flowed in and out of one bar, after another.

"Is this your first trip to Key West?" Sorin asked, as he attempted to maneuver Desiree thru the onslaught of human traffic.

"Yes it is. How did you know?"

"I can sense these things. You seem amazed at everything you see here. Unlike those, who have visited a place before."

"Well then...tell me my next question?" Desiree threw him a quick smirk, while awaiting his response.

"You want to know where this stroll is leading." Sorin said, and threw his head back in amused laughter.

"You got lucky. I must be easy to read tonight. Try this one." Desiree closed her eyes for a moment, thinking a private thought, then opened them, staring forward as she walked, not allowing Sorin to see her expression.

"Are you sure you want me to tell you this one?" Sorin spoke with an evil smirk. "I would love to take you to bed. Is this an open invitation?"

Desiree spun to face him, stunned and embarrassed. She had wished for a night in the sack with this handsome hunk and he read her mind.

"I... uh... I can't believe you read my mind. Of course it was a test... but still."

"Was it?"

Desiree felt the need to change the conversation quickly and began to look around to get her bearings. "Where are we now?"

"This is Schooner Wharf. My boat is docked here."

"You have a boat? You travel on a boat? I thought most business men travel on a plane."

"Ah, here we are." Sorin directed Desiree's attention to a large yacht, docked at the end of the pier. "Watch your step."

"Ioana?" She spotted the name of the yacht as she approached. "That's an interesting name. Never heard that used on a boat before."

"Ioana was our mother's name." Sorin paused for a moment. "She has passed."

"I'm sorry to hear that, but you said us... How many are in your family?"

"Just my brother and myself." Sorin helped to balance Desiree as she stepped aboard the 'Ioana'. "Welcome to my humble home."

Desiree could see the 'Ioana' was definitely a yacht to call home. Over eighty feet of sparkle and shine. With a crew of four, they seemed to maintain a tight ship.

The crew stopped only long enough to acknowledge their presence then scurried about with their duties.

What on earth did this man do for a living to afford this?

"Sorin...exactly what do you do for a living?" Desiree's curiosity was that of a cat at this point. She was dying to know what this guy was all about and had no clue just how close to death she would come, in her attempt to find out.

"Let us not discuss business tonight. Such a boring conversation... would you like another drink?" Sorin assisted Desiree, and her lack of sea legs, to the bar where he mixed her a rum and coke. Leaning across the counter, he sat the drink on a coaster in front of her and leaned in a bit closer, catching Desiree's line of site. "Now... about that last thought of yours."

"Well now..." She began to fidget on the stool, thinking of the proper way to handle this situation. Making up her mind, Desiree leaned in closer to Sorin, almost

nose to nose with him and whispered with a seductive voice. "Think you can handle a wild city girl, on vacation?"

Sorin felt the hunger growing inside him. Something about her excited his inner core. The need to take this woman was great, make her his own, and he knew she would offer little struggle. Moving from behind the bar and taking Desiree by the hand, he quietly led her toward the back of the yacht, and into the master bedroom suite.

She gazed around at the interior of the cabin, admiring the décor of a medieval time long gone. Rich textured draperies hung from the walls. Above the velvet covers of the bed, a beautiful shield hung, emblazoned with a crest bearing a winged dragon embracing a Cross.

"This room is absolutely beautiful, but it's so much different than the décor elsewhere on the yacht." Desiree spoke in awe, as she admired the bedroom of antiquities. Every item, including the dressers and oil lamps were of another time.

"This is only part of my collection. The shield displays our family crest. I keep it close at all times, a good luck charm you might say. The other items are kept for comfort as well. A home away from home, you might say."

Sorin began to move in closer, taking Desiree's chin in his hand to unleash his gaze upon her. "This is only one room and I have so much more...but right now we must see if I can handle that wild city girl that dwells within you."

Desiree became intoxicated by Sorin's eyes. She could hear the words from his lips echo in her mind, leaving her weak to his advances.

With one fluid move, he lifted her into his arms, maintaining his eye contact, to drain her will power as he carried her to the bed.

Desiree felt as if she were floating. She couldn't move, speak, or fight; nor did she want to. This man entranced her and now she was his captive lover.

Sorin placed her upon the velvet covers as gently as a fallen feather. He brought his lips to hers, just barely brushing them together, while taking in her breath. He then slid his hands upward along her side, coaxing her arms above her head. With one hand, he

gripped both her wrist, gently anchoring them above her head, as he pressed his mouth to hers, letting his tongue search the depths of her mouth.

Desiree willingly accepted his probing and released a muffled moan of approval.

As he passionately kissed her, his free hand expertly worked on unbuttoning the satin blouse she wore, while still tucked securely in her short skirt. He managed to spread open what he could, revealing her breasts, still cradled in her bra.

Seductively he placed tiny kisses about her face and neck, while his free hand tenderly fondled her encased orbs.

Desiree moaned at his touch, while slowly rubbing her legs against the cool velvet, as the fire deep in her groin grew hot.

Sorin's lips trailed along her neck and he could feel her heart race through the large artery throbbing just beneath the skin. He felt his hunger churn as he sucked on her neck, feeling the vibration of her excitement flow through her body, his need for her intensified.

Sorin's will was stronger than his hunger and he knew time was on his side. He continued his path downward, letting his moist tongue slip under the cups of her bra, and teasingly, he toyed with her hard nipples.

She arched her breasts toward his mouth, begging for more.

Taking the hint, he pulled one cup; then the other cup of her bra down, displaying the pink nubbins hidden beneath. He sucked each delicately as he brushed his sharp teeth against the sensitive buttons.

She released a shallow gasp, as if a jolt of electricity shot through her.

His hand found its way to her skirt, slowly pulling the hem up around her waist. He skimmed the soft material of her panties with the tips of his fingers. The swollen lips of her womanhood pressed against the fabric, and the feathery touch of his fingers through the material of her panties had her squirming in sensual torture.

She could feel herself flowing wet with desire. "Oh my god Sorin, please take me," she pleaded.

"Have no fear my sweet Desiree, I intend to have you." His voice sounded eerily enticing.

Seductively, he trailed lower with his kisses, while guiding her legs apart. He could see the wetness on her panties and her aroma was intoxicating. His tongue replaced his fingers.

She moaned a deep growl and spread her legs further, opening herself to him.

Sorin placed his mouth on the cleft where her thigh and groin connected. The large vein beneath throbbed with life and he could hold back no longer. His fangs extended as his hunger screamed within him. He drew back his head and widened his jaw, preparing to make his fatal bite.

Chapter II

The cabin door busted open and a voice -- deep and terrifying, vibrated the walls of the yacht. "SORIN... How dare you feed in my place of rest!"

Sorin spun to a sitting position just as the stranger bodily flew across the room like a ghost shadow; tackling and tumbling him off the bed and onto the floor.

Desiree, startled from her trance by the strange screams, had no time to react. She sat up in the bed only to see the stranger standing, and a shadow leaving. Sorin was gone. Trembling with fear and adrenalin, she tried to slide off the bed to make it to the door.

"Please stop," a gentle voice spoke, "I will not harm you... Please stay."

Desiree hesitated. This voice was not the same one she had heard busting thru the door. The voice of this stranger now made her feel calm enough to question his intention. "Who are you, and where is Sorin?"

"Allow me to introduce myself." He slowly attempted to take Desiree's hand, just as Sorin had done, but was met with resistance, so he drew back. "I'm Stefan Tepes', but you may call me Fane."

"You are Sorin's brother?" Now she was really confused. "Why did you bust into his bedroom and run him off?"

"Normally I like to begin my conversations with a formal introduction - and your name is?" Stefan chuckled at his own humor.

"Excuse me, but I'm a bit confused here," Desiree felt her legs weaken, so she sat back down on the edge of the bed, "My name is Desiree Barret, but I don't think that's

of importance at the moment. Now, why did you attack your own brother in his own bedroom?"

"Desiree Barret... Such a beautiful name. French?"

"Look... I've had this conversation once already tonight. So let's get past the chit chat." Desiree became more frustrated and less nervous with this new stranger, but she was not getting the response she desired. "Are you going to answer me?"

Fane walked over and took a seat on the bed next to her. "My brother is a player, and tonight dear Desiree, you were almost played." Fane knew he could not tell her the truth. She would not comprehend the truth at this point. "My brother probably told you he owns this yacht, am I correct? And that everything here is his?"

Desiree could feel the flush in her cheeks. She had been taken for a ride; although fortunately, he did not get the full ride. Remembering, she looked down at her disorganized attire, "yes he did..."

"It is true, we are brothers – actually twins, but that is as far as it goes. He lives for his destiny, and unfortunately, his destiny is to follow me and create havoc in my life." Fane told Desiree enough to settle her mind. "Look... I realize you have had quite an evening, it is very late and you must be tired. I have a guest cabin on board if you would like to stay there for the remainder of the evening? Or...I can call a taxi, the choice is yours."

"I'm not sure..." She looked at Fane with confusion and concern. "Sorin won't come back here tonight, will he?"

"Not tonight. You are safe to see another day." Fane gave her a smile, knowing what her fate could have been.

Chapter III

The morning sun beamed through a crack in the teak wood louver blinds covering the cabin window and shined directly in Desiree's eye, creating a sneeze.

"Bless you." A voice spoke from the corner of the room.

Desiree hurriedly pulled the covers to her neck while focusing her half-asleep eyes in that direction.

A female, dressed in white, fashionable for cruise ship employees, was positioning a serving tray with coffee, on a table in the corner.

"Good morning Ma'am." She spoke in a chipper tone. "Prince Tepes' has directed me to see to your every comfort today. He will be unable to join you until this evening, due to business meetings."

"Well...how presumptuous of him." Desiree spoke aloud, more to herself, than to the female.

"Pardon me?" The female asked.

"Oh nothing...I'm sorry, just talking aloud I guess. Did you say Prince?"

"Yes ma'am." The female walked to the cabin door and immediately changed the subject. "Would you like breakfast on the deck?"

"Yes I would, please. That would be nice. Oh, and wha...?"

The cabin door shut before she could finish drilling the woman regarding the whole Prince thing. *Damn, I hate when people do that.*

Climbing out of the bed and gathering the clothes she wore the night before, Desiree threw on the guest robe folded on the foot of her bed, poured a cup of coffee, then made her way into the head adjacent to her cabin.

Inside, she realized how spacious and well stocked this head was, as apposed to her own bathroom at home. A full Jacuzzi bathtub awaited her. Already filled and steaming up the mirrors. Candles lit along the side of the tub and across the counter left an iridescent glow, only highlighted by a bouquet of flowers strategically placed next to the tub.

"Well, talk about putting a move on someone." Desiree commented to herself as she stepped into the tub of bubbling steam. "He's definitely got balls, I'll give him that. Who does he think he is, to assume I'd even want to see him tonight? Although I have to admit, this is definitely the life...and a Prince no doubt. What more could a girl wish for...or be cursed with?"

* * * *

"Do you wish more coffee?" The female crewmember asked.

"No, I'm done, thank you. Listen, I have a million things to do today and very little time to do them." Desiree rose from her seat at the table. "Please let Fane...I mean the Prince, know I cannot return this evening due to a literary party I have to attend." She paused for a moment. "Tell him thank you for his kindness and maybe we will meet again one day, under different circumstances."

"Yes ma'am...as you insist. The female turned and headed back to the interior cabin.

Chapter IV

The streets of Key West began to fill with tourists. White creamy noses and flowered tropical shirts identified them from the locals opening their street carts and shops, to prepare for the busy day.

Desiree flagged a cab near Front Street and Duval. Sliding into the back seat, she directed the driver to her motel, located on the other end of Duval. Once she arrived, she hurried to her room and grabbed the phone, calling her best friend in New York.

"Mona? It's Des...damn answering machine. Where are you when I need to talk? I just had the wildest night you can imagine. I met a guy, I thought he was good, but turned out to be bad; only to meet his brother that seems good and interested..." She stopped her rapid chatter, only to take another breath. "This guy is rich, with a yacht and his brother--the first guy--you know the one I told you I thought was good but turned out bad, stalks him--the good brother." She paused for another breath. "I've got to go run some errands and get ready for the party and book signing, so call me on my cell. I'll have it with me. Bye."

Desiree hung up the phone, changed into a clean walking outfit, brushed her hair back into a ponytail, grabbed her clutch purse and made her way back onto Duval Street for a little tourist shopping before the party that evening.

Many small shops selling everything from shells and gift items, T-shirts to designer fashions, lined each side of the street. Desiree roamed in and out of each of them, browsing for an outfit that might catch her interest for the party. A small boutique

window caught her eye. A manikin adorned in a shimmering red halter-style bustier dress drew her closer.

"Oooh, I like that... I like that a lot!" Desiree spoke to herself as she entered the little shop for a closer look.

Within twenty minutes, she exited the boutique, with a big smile and a small package, while moving on to the next hopeful retailer.

As she continued, she noticed what seemed to be an alleyway, where a booth now blocked its access. A fortuneteller had set up shop, quietly sitting and waiting for someone to approach. Desiree had always taken an interest in the spiritual gifts these folks were blessed with, and decided Key West was as good a place as any to have her first experience.

"Hello. I'd like a reading." Desiree approached with caution.

The woman looked up at her with warm eyes. "Greetings Desiree. My name is Matilda," motioning her to have a seat as she spoke.

"How did you know my name?"

"There is much I know of you, just from your aura."

"Ok, you know my name...What else can you tell me?"

Matilda reached out across the table and took Desiree by the hand, while closing her eyes.

Desiree watched as a shadow spread across Matilda's face, a shadow of fear. She began to shake her head side to side, speaking loudly as though speaking to someone else. "No, no, no...you will not take her, you can not have her. I will not allow it!"

Matilda opened her eyes and released her grip on Desiree's hand. "Something or someone very evil stalks you," Matilda again took Desiree's hand, this time in a caring fashion, "you must be cautious. This evil stalks you for a selfish purpose."

"I don't know what you are talking about, but you're beginning to scare me." Desiree fidgeted in her seat. "What happened to the simple things in life like finances, my love life, or even my health?"

"You must listen to me, please. This evil is strong and you will not be able to fight it alone. Wait..." The fortuneteller began to tremble; the movement reverberated to Desiree's hand. "There is another...a good spirit. This spirit can save you from the evil, but there will be consequences."

Pulling her hand back from Matilda's grasp, Desiree spoke with sudden urgency. "Ok, I've had enough! I need to leave now. This was not my idea of what a reading was all about." Digging into her clutch purse, she tossed a twenty-dollar bill on Matilda's table and turned to leave.

"Please heed my warning Desiree, for safety sake."

"I'll watch myself, don't worry," pausing, she glanced back at Matilda, "but do you try to scare all your customers?" With that comment, Desiree left.

Chapter V

The ferry moved at a 'Key West' pace; slow and steady, toward the island. Desiree took a backseat view away from the other guests while enjoying the sunset. The literary party was booked at Little Palm Island, for just this reason. Seclusion, privacy, and five star accommodations were generally required when entertaining elite authors. Over one-hundred people were being shuttled in for the celebration, while the authors themselves were booked in individual cabins on the island. Need it be said, the big bucks were flowing tonight.

The Captain and his one-man crew tied-up to the pier as soon as the ferry bumped the dock. Twelve passengers, including Desiree, disembarked and were greeted by cocktail servers holding trays abound with tropical cocktails of all sorts.

Desiree took what looked like a rumrunner, and started to walk up the dock to the main building. The heel of her shoe stuck in between the wood planks, pulling her shoe clean off her foot. *Why on earth did I wear narrow heels?* Bending down to pick up the shoe and place it back on her foot, she lost her balance a bit, only to be re-balanced by another guest following close behind.

"You certainly have a rough time with staying on your feet." The voice of her savior startled her and sounded all too familiar.

Desiree collected herself and turned to the one person she never expected, nor wanted to see... Sorin.

"What are you doing here?" Desiree growled under her breath, while maintaining an air of sophistication. "You are a worthless piece of shit low life. Your brother told me everything about you and I'd advise you to leave this island or I'll call security."

"My, how quickly we forget." Sorin replied, as he took Desiree by the arm in a strong fashion, turning her to face him to cast his hypnotic gaze. "Sitting at the bar on the yacht? You invited me. Remember Desiree?" Sorin held his eye connection.

"I don't remember anyth...", she could feel her determination begin to weaken, her memory lapsing. She tore away from his stare, shaking her head in an attempt to clear her mind. "Maybe I did, I don't remember now."

He again, forced Desiree to look at him, regaining his eye control, while easing his grip on her arm. She was giving in to his mental manipulation now and he did not want to create a scene in front of the party guests. "I have chosen you sweet Desiree. Now, are we ready to have a wonderful evening?" Sorin asked. "I'm sure you will introduce me to all your friends and associates."

She was now under his vampiric trance. Agreeing to his every want and whim, and craving his touch.

Together, they entered the party, to mingle, drink, and rub elbows with some of the publishing world's elite before dinner.

Desiree introduced Sorin to many of the top authors and editors inside the tight knit New York publishing circle, and he showered his vampiric charm on them all. Many guests approached them both, complimenting her on her attractive and unique Key West find, while women flocked to his side, craving his attention. One woman in particular, a New York author, seemed enchanted by his trance as well. She practically wedged her way between them in an effort to gain Sorin's full attention. This all seemed more than Desiree could stomach for one night.

Finding a brief moment to escape the crowd of women in heat, she made her way out to the moonlit deck, adjacent to the main dining area.

Looking out over the calm waters of the Atlantic reef, she felt her inner strength returning. Willpower, she always seemed to lose it when Sorin was near.

Why do I feel this way? Could he be this evil Matilda warned me of? Or, maybe he's the good one? I'm so confused. Why am I even thinking of this? I must be losing my mind. Something just isn't right.

Desiree reached into her clutch purse and pulled out her cell phone. She felt the need to call her friend, Mona, hoping she could help unravel her messed up mind.

The phone on the other end rang four times before Mona's voice graced Desiree's ear.

Hi. I'm not here right now, so you know what to do. "Damn!" Desiree flipped her phone shut. *"She's never home when I need her."*

Desiree stopped and stood motionless, hearing a male voice. This voice called to her in her mind--beckoning her in urgency to leave the island.

She peaked through the glass door, surveying the crowd to confirm Sorin's whereabouts. He was nowhere in site, giving Desiree an even more uneasy feeling.

She hurried around the exterior deck, down the walkway and onto the dock, stopping only to remove her heels so as not to have the same incident as before. To hell with the pantyhose. The ferry would be leaving soon and she wanted to be the first one off the island.

This vacation wasn't ending as she had imagined. The right guy turned out to be the wrong guy, and the other guy sitting on his yacht waiting for her, could be the right guy.

A shrill pitched scream pierced the night air, as Desiree stood up from removing her second heel. The sound was coming from the cabin area, just beyond the restaurant. She focused her hearing, but the sound had ceased as quickly as it happened. Only the ocean breezes thru the palms could be heard.

Two male guests from the party were outside on the deck and heard the sound, as well as the Captain and his deck hand on the ferry. They all seemed to converge on the direction of the scream.

Desiree stood in a state of panic and fear. Panicking to find a way off the island and fear for what created that horrifying scream. Frozen in place and still focused on the chaos before her, the same inner voice as before, urged her to get off the island.

The Captain was the first to appear from the shadows, carrying a limp female body. Her upper torso soaked in blood. A gruesome scene, and one, she didn't want to stick around for.

Chapter VI

Desiree's concentration broke and she perked up when she heard the sound of a boat motor behind her, pulling up to the dock. Turning, she hoped this might be her escape route.

The reflection of the lights on the pier, combined with darkness made it impossible to see who was onboard the small vessel, until they were off and almost in front of her.

A sigh of relief escaped Desiree's lips. "Thank God."

A familiar face appeared before her. It was the female crewmember from Fane's yacht.

"God had nothing to do with this Ma'am." The woman spoke with a coy expression. "Come now, hurry, let's get you off this island, evil abounds here and you are not safe."

"I'm not safe? What are you talking about? Oh, never mind... Just get me the hell out of here, and we'll discuss it on the way."

"Good choice Ma'am." The woman smiled, as she assisted Desiree into the boat. "Besides, you have a date with the Prince, and he doesn't like to be kept waiting."

The crewmember driving the small vessel hurried to pull the ropes from the pylons and push off the dock, as if he too were running from something. The small boat cleared the pier and the driver motored up, bringing the boat to its plane rather quickly, and heading toward the Atlantic.

"Excuse me!" Desiree yelled over the outboard motor. "Why are we headed this way?" Pointing in the opposite direction they were traveling. "My car is back there!"

"Yes Ma'am, I know!" The woman yelled back. "But we've moved our yacht out to open water for the Prince's safety, and we must take you to him, for yours!"

As the two women bounced with the waves splitting against the v-hull of the boat, Desiree pondered on what this woman had just said, and what she may not be saying. Something wasn't right, and she wanted answers. If not from this crewmember, then the Prince had a lot of explaining to do.

The wind and sea spray drew Desiree's attention to the Florida Keys' water under the moonlight. A gorgeous site to behold any other time, but tonight wasn't that time. A silent fear churned in her belly. Fear of the unknown.

A shadow crossed the moon's path quickly and close to the boat, catching her attention. As she strained her eyes against the darkness to catch another view, a loud thump hit the boat just beside her.

Desiree turned to face her worst nightmare. Sorin... He had the other woman by the throat with his teeth, blood trickling from beneath his lips, mixing with the sea mist and spreading quickly, creating a grotesque visual. Caught in a state of terror at the site before her, she jumped with fear when the driver fired a flare into the air.

Everything happened so fast, Desiree could only pray the flare would catch someone's attention.

Sorin completed his kill, letting the now limp woman fall to the deck. Her skin pale from blood loss. He turned to move toward Desiree, his fangs still bearing and his black eyes reflecting in the moonlight, like glass marbles.

She turned a glance to the driver, who with one hand on the wheel, was attempting to reach inside the cabinet door to retrieve what she thought may be a weapon.

Sorin quickly shifted his stare to the driver, who froze his actions and slowly retrieved his hand.

He turned his attention back to Desiree. "You left me all alone at the party." He spoke with an echoed rumble to his voice, and a sinister grin on his blood stained lips.

"Now you must be punished for your disobedience. I was having so much fun with you, too. What a waste. You could have been my chosen one...now you must die."

She moved closer to the side, and as far away from his reach as possible. Contemplating her next move, she tossed a quick glance to the driver for help, to no avail. He seemed more petrified of this monster than she was! With her hands behind her back, she gripped the port rail tightly for balance, and that's when she noticed a rod shaped item just under the lip of the rail behind her.

With both hands, she gripped the rod, lifting it gently and quietly off the hooks it lay supported on behind her, while keeping her eyes on Sorin's every move. She knew from her past deep sea fishing trips, and from the feel and weight, that this rod must be a gaff.

Desiree made a last ditch effort to buy her some time. "What did I do to you, to deserve to die? I hardly know you." Tears of fear began to well up in her eyes. "Who are you...what are you...why me?"

"My interest in you dear Desiree started as making you my chosen one. However, my dear brother, Fane, has now shown interest in you as well - for other reasons, no doubt. Now you are only a meal to me."

"What interest? What are you talking about? You just fed, as you call it, on that poor woman." Desiree stood her ground, her words cracking as she yelled over the motor, while glancing at the female body on the floor of the boat.

"I have no time for this... Fane surely told you?" Sorin's tone seemed violent and reverberating again. "We are vampires," he roared, "the last pure blood descendents of the Dracul line."

Desiree, still absorbed in how to protect herself, had no time to respond to Sorin's statement. She knew this was her last chance. Taking a tight grip of the rod behind her, she moved with as much speed and strength as she could muster, swinging the rod from behind her with full force. Her last strike at hope.

Sorin moved with vampire speed, stopping the rod dead still in his hand, while in one swift move, he pulled Desiree into his arms for the kill.

Chapter VII

"Desiree? Please wake?"

She could hear a soft-spoken voice in her mind, the same voice she had heard before, but in a different language. Calling her back from a place dark and empty. Desiree struggled to return, struggled to open her eyes.

"Desiree, hear me... You must open your eyes and listen to me." Fane continued to whisper to her in his Romanian tongue.

Her eyelids fluttered, as she regained consciousness. Once she was able to open her eyes, her first vision was of Fane.

"Get away from me." Desiree screamed inside, only to have her words release in a weak whisper. "You are evil...you're both evil."

"No sweet Desiree. I'm not evil."

"You're a vampire, aren't you?" She questioned, while struggling to keep her eyes open.

"Desiree, you must listen to me. You are slowly dying from Sorin's attack." Fane turned her cheek toward him, so her eyes would follow and focus on his. "I regret I arrived only in time to save you from his fatal feeding, but not from his bite."

"You said I'm going to die. How do you know this?"

Fane knew he must do the right thing. Explain the situation and offer her options. His guilt weighted heavy on his shoulders, for not protecting her from his brother's hatred.

"My brother drained you near death. Your human body cannot regenerate blood fast enough to heal...but there is another option." Fane sighed. "I can make you one of us."

"Have you lost your mind?" Desiree asked, shaking her head back and forth in a 'no' gesture. "And feed on humans? No thank you."

"There is no need to feed on human blood anymore. There are other options." Fane's tone changed to a desperate plea. "Please listen to me. I own blood and plasma banks all over the world. You will never go hungry."

Desiree struggled to maintain consciousness, to save her own life. "What about my soul Fane? Vampires have no soul."

Fane's despair turned to a chuckling response. "You've been watching too many vampire movies. Some of us have souls."

With weakened breaths, Desiree nodded her head in acceptance of Fane's offer.

"What do I have to do in this ritual, drink your blood?" Desiree asked in a weakened tone.

"That part of vampire movies is accurate." Fane smiled as he continued. "It is whose blood you take in your first feed that's important."

Desiree blacked out.

Chapter VIII

Desiree awoke with a hunger she had never experienced. Gazing around the room, she recognized the décor and realized she was aboard the Ioana. The place where this all started. How appropriate.

"How do you feel my Princess?" Fane reached and gently brushed the hair from Desiree's face.

"I'm starving." She replied.

He immediately began his vampire ritual to start her process of change. A ritual, he had only performed once before.

With the grace of a dancer, he guided her back down onto the pillows.

She lay staring into his hypnotic gaze.

Standing, Fane undressed unashamedly, proudly displaying his muscular physique. As if floating, he glided next to her like a feather on a soft breeze. His hand caressed the exposed flesh of her thighs.

Her body went on automatic, the touch of his hand and lustful gleam in his eyes ignited her core. Her groin ached and grew damp in anticipation.

"May I feed?" she asked, trying to at least seem like she was in control.

"Later," he whispered in her ear as he brushed his lips along her jaw and down her neck. His touch was electrifying sending torrents of sensual waves through her body. His hand moved higher along her thigh and involuntarily she parted her legs. His

travels along her body stalled at her breast, tongue gently circling her pink nipples, as his fingers dipped into her wetness.

Masterfully, his thumb manipulated the sensitive button that guarded her sensitive opening.

When Desiree opened her legs wider, inviting him in, he could feel his own desire grow and become rigid. His erection bounced and bobbed as if searching for her velvety entrance. Ever so slowly, he climbed upon her.

She parted herself more to receive him, while reaching down to grasp his swollen head and rub it against then through her engorged lips, as she guided him into her.

Slowly he pushed in, savoring the feel of her tightness. Inch by inch he eased himself into her warm wetness until his balls rested against her.

She let loose a satisfactory sigh as he sank completely in. Her sigh was his cue to continue. Rhythmically he pumped.

She reached around, grabbing his cheeks, helping to set the rhythm. Her moans grew louder as he plunged into her depths. She lifted herself, burying her face into his muscular chest.

Fane found the sweet spot hidden inside her. He knew this by her intense groans of pleasure as his fleshy head brushed against it.

As they grew closer to climaxing, their fangs extended, saliva trailed from their lips. His pumping grew more vigorous; the wet smacking sounds of their passion filled the cabin.

"Oh yes, God yes, please stay there, ooh my God!" She screamed and threw her head forward with her explosion to bury her teeth into the soft flesh of his chest, tearing the minor arteries. She sucked hungrily on his life's essence. His blood was sweet and intoxicating.

Fane exploded inside her, the feel of her lips on his chest only fed his eruption and he knew that what little blood she took was of no concern.

His last spasm of ecstasy subsided and he lay upon her, letting her feed a moment more on the dribbling she drew from his chest.

Fane noticed her stirring for more blood than his body could sacrifice. He gently opened Desiree's bite into his chest with his finger and reached down to pull the covers up over them. He then rang the service bell next to the bed.

The door to the room opened, and a different female crewmember entered, carrying a tray with a pitcher and two glasses. She placed it on the nightstand, next to Fane, and immediately dismissed herself without an upward glance.

Fane poured two glasses and handed one to Desiree.

She sipped her new life's elixir, and then turned up the glass.

Fane reached out and touched the glass with disapproval. "Slow down...My goodness, you must be famished."

Desiree sipped from the chalice deeply, her eyes never leaving his gaze. He smiled seductively and brushed her cheek with the back of his hand.

"How do you feel, my dear?"

"I...I'm not sure, I'm exhilarated and scared at the same time."

"Have no fear," his voice was calming.

"I feel...I feel safe with you."

"As you should," he said, while gently taking the red elixir from her grasp. "You will always be safe with me." A blood tear fell from his eye, knowing that another innocent was brought into his world.