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D. J. Manly

Fainted

The Hanged Man

The Hanged Man: Tarot card

Tainted

By

DJ Manly

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Tainted - Tarot: The Hangman

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The Hangman Card

Duriken began to laugh, but he took a step back. "So which one of your songs should we play for this scene?" he scoffed.

Lane wrapped the whip around his hand, and glared menacingly at Duriken. "How about 'The Hangman?'"

"Why that one?" Duriken tilted his dark head.

"Don't you know anything about the occult?"

He laughed.

"The Hangman is a card in Tarot." Lane took a determined step towards him. Duriken took another back.

"The Hangman sacrifices much to find the answers to his questions, sometimes even his own life."

"And how does it end?"

"Well," Lane narrowed his eyes. "Sometimes he realises that it's not worth it, that what he was looking for," Lane glanced over at Nigel and swallowed, "was there all along." pp 154

Chapter 1

He glanced upwards as he emerged from the cave. The sunlight stabbed him brutally in the eyes, and he winced as he lifted his arm to shield them from the stinging rays. He pushed forward, his feet dragging over the rocks and through the mud. He stumbled once, then, righted himself, his body feeling as if a ten ton weight was attached to it. His throat was parched, and the water below called to him, enticing him onward. He didn't notice how close he was to the cliff as he clamoured downwards, finally falling on his knees. He literally crawled now to the water. *Remember...a voice in his head said...it was your choice...Lane... you came to me of your own free will...it was what you wanted...*

On his knees now, Lane felt the water float up and soak his pants. He lowered his face, splashing it, and stared down at the blood which was dripping off the tips of his fingers. Sliding forward, he turned his head to the side, finding a patch of liquid sand to rest in. Instantly, he began

to fade, his mind going blank. Darkness and peace...

* * * *

It might have been the moonlight which finally roused him. He pushed up on his palms, pulling himself into a sitting position. He shivered, wet to the bone, but he was alive. And he felt fine now, stronger even. The weakness had left him. He glanced up at the moon and wondered what time it was. He heard a sound suddenly, gasped and jumped to his feet. His keen eyes scanned the surroundings. It seemed that his ears picked up everything now, even the sound of someone breathing behind him. But it was nothing. He was totally and profoundly alone.

He began to walk, following the beach. It was okay, he told himself. He'd get there in plenty of time, and even if he didn't, it wasn't the first time he'd been late for a concert. It probably wouldn't be the last.

Suddenly he froze. There was a movement. He peered into the darkness but saw nothing. "Spying on me, Duriken?" He called out softly. "This is the last time," he said aloud. "Do you hear me? I won't be coming back. I'm sure it's enough. I have what I want from you."

There was no response. Either he was

imagining that Duriken was nearby, or the fiend was ignoring him. It was probably the latter. He was good at that, just tuning him out when he didn't want to deal with him.

He knew what Duriken would say anyway. He'd say that he had heard it all before, and that he'd be back. *It's like a craving. It never goes away. I warned you. No one can give you what I can, no one, except another of my kind. Do you remember the way you like to tempt fate; play chicken on the highway, fuck without condoms? Ah, the thrill of it all...the thought that you could be so near death, then survive. It is the ultimate thrill...your aphrodisiac, Lane. Without that, you are numb with boredom.*

Lane shuddered at the sheer horror of it, but even the taste of disgust in his mouth was flavoured with excitement. *It's just the way you are. There is something in you that needs the rush of experiencing what few ever will...to know what it's like to come within a heartbeat of death, to experience the ultimate physical pleasures. It's what you asked of me.*

Lane swallowed, listening intently to the words in his head, then as suddenly as they came, they stopped. As he trudged on, he wondered if Duriken would ever really give it all to him, or if he would even want it all when the time came. It seemed like Duriken was just stringing him along, giving him tiny tastes, teasing him. Maybe he would just kill him in the end, drain him dry, just like the drugs almost had. Pushing the limits,

testing how much shit he could put into his body before it began to rebel. This was no different. Did he want to go that close to the edge? Make death that much of a certainty. To know what it would be like to be Duriken, to exist the way he did, to live forever and to be beautiful...um, the temptation was strong. But could he trust him? That was another story altogether.

Suddenly, Lane could see the lights of the city, and he began to run toward the excitement and security of the crowds. To the human eye he would have been a mere streak, maybe a flash. Still it wasn't as fast as flying. Imagine flying. He would love to experience that, but at what cost? Maybe he could fly now and he wasn't aware. Better not try. He could break his neck and Jeff would be pissed if he couldn't do the show tonight.

The concert hall came into view. He heard the roar coming from the crowd of people standing in line with their tickets. Ah, so he wasn't as late as he thought he was. Now how in hell was he going to get past all those people without being seen? *You know how.* He smiled. He came as close as he could to the structure without being spotted, and closed his eyes. He couldn't stay cloaked for too long, but if he ran, he could get through the crowd and backstage in a heartbeat.

It was Sandy the drummer who spotted him

sauntering towards the dressing room, and he shook his head slightly. "Well, look who the devil dragged in," he smirked.

Well, maybe not the devil, Lane thought, although maybe pretty well damn close. "Is Jeff bitching already?"

Sandy threw himself onto the beat-up leather sofa as Lane stepped into the room. He was a skinny guy with sinewy arms and a pocked face. He wasn't what one would call beautiful, but he was one hell of a drummer. "Not yet," he said. "You're actually early tonight. Who were you doing this time?"

He wouldn't have believed it if he'd told him. "Someone you couldn't even wrap your mind around, man, he was way out there."

"Weird and kinky?" He laughed.

"You might say that, although a bit of an understatement."

"Wow. Well, you look a wreck."

"I'm going to take a hot shower and change. My clothes here?"

"Yep. Supposed to be."

Lane heard Jeff talking somewhere backstage suddenly, and he eyed the bathroom. "I'm going now to take that shower," he said, slipping into the room. He didn't want to battle Jeff right now, and it seemed they were always fighting lately.

He and Jeff had started Thrill Seek together,

practising out of Jeff's parent's garage five years ago. They'd been right out of high school. They'd had lots in common at one time, he and Jeff. They were both gay, both thrill seekers, hence the name of the band, and both in love with the music. They'd been lovers for awhile, no string lovers, and they'd both partied hard, experimented with drugs, and done crazy things...but Jeff had changed in the last year or so. Where Lane was always looking for more and more excitement, Jeff had slowed down on partying and was prone to criticise everything Lane did. Worse than that, he had started to insist on exclusivity.

It seemed the more popular they got, the more possessive Jeff was of him, and eventually Lane felt as if he were being suffocated. He was not into commitment. He liked variety, and he had no intention of settling for one, when he could have practically anyone he wanted. He was easily bored. He'd always been that way, and he supposed that's what had attracted him to Duriken, although Duriken had come to him.

"You're crazy," Jeff told him one night. "You're going to get yourself killed; the drugs, the unprotected sex, playing chicken with the car and..."

"Look, that's me!" Lane said. "You know what I'm like. I'm the same as I've always been."

"When you were a kid you did lame shit, but damn it, when in hell are you going to grow up? You can't experience every fucking thing in life. What about

love?"

Love. He had no interest in that. Sex, sure, and the more of it, and the wilder it was, the better. But love? It wasn't for him.

They'd had a huge fight that night, he and Jeff, and if it hadn't have been for their contracts, Jeff would have walked out. That was six months ago and things had been strained between them ever since.

Sandy and Tom were the other two members of the band. They were okay guys who minded their business, and tried to ignore the tension between him and Jeff, but Lane knew it had to be rough.

Lane sighed now, letting the water run down over his body. He closed his eyes and wondered how it would be tonight out there on that stage. Would it feel different? Each time he left Duriken and did a show, it felt a little different. His endurance increased, and he became more daring, but he hated not being sure of what he was capable of. Would he go too far? Was he not going far enough? He wanted people to notice but he had to remember Duriken's warning. If he did things on stage that couldn't be explained in terms of some cheap magic trick, people would start asking questions. People would start asking the wrong questions. In the last show he had jumped off the platform which was about ten feet in the air, landing on his feet. He had made sure wires

were attached to his shirt, although he hadn't needed them. With the exception of Jeff, the other two guys thought it was neat, and they didn't question it too much when he showed them the wires.

Someone was pounding on the door to the bathroom now. It was Jeff. He could hear him breathing, and he was pissed at him again, as usual. Lane wasn't sure for what this time, but he knew that he was about to find out.

"I'll be out in a second," Lane growled. Maybe he should eat something. He couldn't remember the last time he'd eaten. Did he need to eat anymore?

"Lane," Jeff muttered, "we need to go over some stuff before the show. Hurry up."

"Yeah, yeah," he called back. He stepped out of the shower, turned off the water and wrapped a towel around his waist. As he cleared the steam away from the mirror with his hand, he took a step back and gasped. There was something different about him, his skin, it looked creamy almost. His complexion was beautiful and his green eyes were brighter, more brilliant. As he ran his fingers through his long brown hair, he noticed a substantial increase in its thickness, and even wet, it looked shiny. He studied his chest suddenly, then unhooked the towel and examined his genitals. His body was tighter, more toned and

his cock looked as if it were at least two inches longer. He laughed. He was imagining things maybe, but then again, maybe not.

Jeff was still knocking. Lane reattached his towel and unlocked the door. "I'm here, chill out, will ya?"

Jeff gave him a cool smile. "At least you're not two hours late tonight."

Lane shrugged, and began to brush his hair.

"Here are your clothes." Jeff handed him some jeans and a shirt, eyeing him. "I don't know where your underwear and socks are."

"Don't need any," Lane said, noticing that Jeff seemed to be anxious for him to get dressed. Jeff was horny. He could sense it, even read it in his thoughts. Jeff wanted him. They hadn't had sex in months.

Jeff narrowed his eyes suddenly. "Are you okay?"

"Sure, why?" Lane asked, pulling on his pants.

"You look ah...I don't know...different." He almost reached over and touched him, then withdrew his hand.

"Thanks, Jeff." Lane patted his arm. "You look great too. So what is it you need to go over with me?"

"Some guitar riffs. I wanted to take it up a notch tonight."

"Sure, let's do it," Lane said, pointing to the

door.

* * * *

"Can you believe it," Nigel exclaimed, "they were talking about me as if I weren't even there."

"My folks used to do that too," David's eyes were fixed to the road as they finally hit the exit for downtown.

"Do you think we're going to make it?" Nigel asked for the hundredth time, grabbing onto the dashboard as David made a sharp right with the van. This was the first time he would ever see Thrill Seek in person.

"We'll make it. Relax. You know how Lane is; he's always late for the concerts."

Well actually, he didn't know how Lane was. He'd finally made the decision to rebel against his parents and go on the road with David only a few days ago. David had been his friend forever. He'd finished high school and almost immediately started following Thrill Seek around the country. His cousin Alex had some in with the band so David had been given passes to backstage parties. He'd even been in the band's hotel suite. When David called him from Boston and told him that he had actually met Lane, there was nothing that could hold Nigel back. He'd been crazy about the lead guitarist and singer of Thrill Seek ever since their first video release three years back.

"I don't know how Lane is," he told David now, "except for what I've read in Popular Music. You're the lucky bastard who got to talk to him up close, even party with him."

David grinned.

"I read a good article about Lane in Popular Music last week."

"Yeah, you didn't tell me," David replied.

"They were saying that Lane was doing these outrageous things on stage. Did you actually see him jump off the platform?"

"Yep. It was awesome."

"He's awesome," Nigel sighed. Lane Carter was absolutely to die for, and there was no one in the rock world today with a better, raunchier voice. His dream had always been to meet him one day, and he was sure, given David's connections, that that day was just around the corner.

"So, when you spoke to your parents today, did they agree to send you some cash or what?" David said suddenly, moving cautiously through the traffic.

"They will," Nigel said. "They're trying to bribe me into coming home. Can you believe my mom offered to buy me a new car?"

"Doesn't surprise me."

"Don't worry. They won't let me starve. I'm sure they've deposited money in my account already." He knew he should probably be more

concerned about it, but he couldn't. Not now. He was feeling high, high on the idea of meeting Lane Carter, and finally getting to see him live in concert.

"Anyway, we're supposed to meet up with Alex here."

"Your cousin."

"Well, actually, he's my third cousin or some such shit."

"Oh yeah," Nigel sniffed. "Is he the one who claims to have slept with Lane? Probably bull."

David shrugged. "That's what he told me. He's been around longer than me. It's possible. Lane's been known to sleep with a lot of different people."

"He's a rock star. There's a lot of pressure," Nigel said defensively. To sleep with Lane Carter... God, what a thought. Um. He was so sexy. He'd give anything just to touch him. He couldn't even imagine actually having sex with him. Well, that wasn't true because he'd whacked off enough in bed looking at his picture and sometimes it felt pretty real.

"Okay, where in hell do we park this heap?" David remarked as they turned onto the street where the concert hall was.

Nigel forced himself back to the present. "I hope we don't miss the band's entrance. I want to see them come on stage. I want to see some of that

wild stuff Lane's been doing. I wonder what he's going to do tonight."

"Knowing Lane lately, it could be anything," David grinned, frantically searching for a spot. "Hell, there's one. Got parking fare?"

Nigel searched his jeans. "My last twenty."

"I'll split it with you later."

"Cool." It didn't matter. Nothing mattered right now except getting out of this vehicle and into the auditorium. As he waited for David to pay the parking, it took everything he could do to stay still. Three times he almost headed across the parking lot without him, but hesitated because he knew that he'd have a hell of a time finding him in the crowd later on.

Finally David was at his side, practically having to trot to keep up with him. "Nigel, slow down. We won't miss anything. I'm telling you, I've never been to a Thrill Seek concert without having to wait for them. They're always late. Typical rock band."

"I'm sorry," Nigel said, noticing that there were still people going in the main door. There was even a small line. "I'm just excited, that's all. This is second nature to you, but it's my first time and I..."

"I'm as excited as you," David grinned, lining up behind some guy with a punk hairstyle. "It feels the same every time."

Nigel grinned back, wondering why he never took David up on his offer to sleep with him. He was cute enough, but they were like brothers really, and he was afraid sex would ruin that.

"What are you thinking about...besides Lane Carter?"

Nigel laughed. "You. I was thinking that I was lucky to have you as a friend."

David reached out and squeezed Nigel's arm. "I'd kiss you," he whispered, "but that big guy at the door might get jealous."

Nigel was still laughing about that when the 'big guy' took their tickets. The laughter soon died however as he moved deeper into the hall and stood in awe at all the people. Never in his life had he ever seen so many people in one place before.

"Come on," David urged, shouting in his ear. It was hard to hear over the thumping of feet and screaming, which filled the room the size of several football stadiums. "We're up there," he pointed.

Nigel squinted, casting an envious glance at the people who were nearer to the stage, and followed David to a roped off place just left of one of the exits. An usher checked their tickets, then lifted the rope which allowed them to squeeze into a small spot in the middle of the vibrating mass. Fifty five dollars to stand in the back near the door and watch Lane Carter on a screen, because there

was no way in hell he'd be able to see him from here.

As if sensing his disappointment, David leaned into his ear and yelled, "Sound will be good here." Nigel followed his gaze to the speakers poised high above them.

Nigel nodded, and gave David an encouraging smile.

"You are in the same room with them," David urged.

Yes. He was in the same room, even if it felt as if he were a hundred miles away.

* * * *

Jeff was pissing him off again. He was complaining about the improvising Lane had done on one of the songs from their latest tracks at the last concert. He was in the process of practically forbidding him to do it that way tonight. Who in the hell did he think he was, God? "The last time I checked," Lane sneered at him as they walked toward the stage, "you weren't the leader of this group, I was."

"Oh, is that the way it is now?" Jeff growled. "Mr. Big shot, Mr. Heartthrob! Just because all the sexy publicity shots are of you, and the groupies drool over you, you think..."

Lane glared at him. "I thought we were talking

about the music."

"Music? Hell," he scoffed. "The fans wouldn't care if you whistled Dixie on the kazoo. You're The Lane Carter, the rock star that oozes sex. Your reputation is..."

"My reputation helps sell records," Lane snapped. "You used to know what being a rock star meant."

"Fuck you, Lane," Jeff muttered as the stage manager motioned to them to get out there. Sandy was already sitting up behind his drums and Tom was making his way to the keyboards.

Jeff picked up his bass and brushed past him. A few seconds later, the opening chords of "Save It for Later," began to play. Lane smiled. Let's give Jeff a little stress, he thought, clutching the top of his guitar. As he walked out on stage, and the curtain began to rise, he heard the announcer scream...*here they are, Thrill Seek...* Lane struck his guitar, then vanished.

* * * *

From down below the stage somewhere in the crowd, Duriken watched. Except for the people in his immediate vicinity who hadn't been able to stop staring at him, all eyes were riveted to the stage. As soon as Lane had vanished, a collective gasp had come over the crowd. There had been a

second or two when the sound coming from the musicians had faltered just as Lane had disappeared from the stage, then abruptly they began to play again. Suddenly, the crowd gasped again, pointing to the platform above the stage where Lane suddenly reappeared, his fingers racing over his guitar strings in a furious rift. As the song ended, Lane leaped off the platform and practically flew in the air, landing on top of the hands of the multitude of fans ready and waiting to catch him.

Duriken shook his dark head slightly. He couldn't help but smile. What a bad, bad boy Lane was. He was never afraid to push the limits. It was quite amazing how he flew off that podium and into the crowd without any fear at all - considering that he had no powers to fly - at least not yet. He watched as Lane was passed back over the crowd and hoisted on the stage. He noticed the look the other guitar player gave him, a look mixed with annoyance and lust. Oh yes, the one called Jeff was losing his patience with that bad boy, and yet if Lane so much as crooked his little finger, he'd be on his knees. He couldn't blame him much.

Duriken remembered the first time he'd ever seen Lane Carter. It had been in a poster in a music store window. The poster looked like something that should have been in an X-rated

magazine with the clothes, or lack of clothes, he wore. Black leather pants which left little to the imagination, half unzipped, shirtless of course, toned, well muscled torso with one pierced nipple. His brown hair hung around broad shoulders, his eyes lined with some muck which somehow made his green eyes look like the sea. But in spite of his homoerotic gaze, arrogant sexuality, and stunning beauty, it was something in his expression which drew Duriken to him. His 'I'm up for anything you have to offer attitude' was not just some pose for the fans, it was genuine. Lane Carter was constantly looking for the next thrill. It made Duriken smile to think that he could give him something no one else could, and he wanted to. He wanted that 'bad boy.'

The music was beginning to deafen him now. Duriken's sensitive hearing could only take so much of it. Besides, although he enjoyed watching the way Lane moved his body seductively on stage, he really didn't enjoy that noise he banged out on his instrument. As he prepared to leave, several hands touched him, running over his forearm and long dark hair. He didn't pay them any mind. He just moved silently through the crowd, without looking back. Lane hadn't even begun to repay him for the gifts he had bestowed on him, but there was plenty of time for that, plenty of time.

* * * *

Chapter 2

Nigel was breathless as he watched the members of Thrill Seek walk off the stage. When David asked him if he wanted to go outside for some air, Nigel shook his head. "I'm afraid to lose my place. I can see the screen well from here."

"I have to go out. Alex is supposed to call. Maybe he can get us into the backstage party after. Would you like that?"

Nigel's face lit up. "Damn. Really?"

David nodded. "Don't move. I don't want to lose you," he said, beginning to move away from him with the phone in his hand.

Nigel stuck his hands in the pocket of his torn jeans. Even though he'd been stuck back here, this had been the best time of his life. It didn't matter that he was looking at Lane on a screen; he was in the same room with him. He could feel the electricity in the air, the heightened sexual excitement, and Lane's voice and guitar riffs

throbbed right through his soul. He wasn't sure though what he thought about this Alex guy David kept going on about. He didn't like the idea that he claimed to have slept with Lane. Of course it was possible. He wasn't stupid enough to take Lane for a priest. He was a rock star. It didn't mean that Alex was being honest. It was probably a lie, but if this guy could get them anywhere near Lane and the rest of the band, this guy could bullshit all he wanted.

Nigel stretched a little now, feeling stiff from the way he'd been craning his neck to stare up at the screen. It was hot in here as well and the sweet smell of pot wafted through the air, stinging his nostrils. He looked around, wondering where David was now. A few minutes later, he spotted him making his way towards him in the crowd.

"I got him," he said with a grin, holding up his phone.

"And? Where is he?"

"Way down there in section D."

"How come? He must be loaded. The tickets down there were a fortune."

"His old man is loaded."

Nigel made a face.

"He's also some lawyer who is well connected in the entertainment industry."

"Bully for him."

David laughed. "So, bully or not, want to go to

a party?" He lifted his eyebrow.

"Seriously?" Nigel gasped.

"No shit. We just got to wait for him near the exit here after the show. He's going to come with passes."

Nigel was speechless.

"You okay?" David howled with laughter, punching his arm.

"Hell, yes. More than okay. You mean we're going to get to meet...?"

"Don't know," David replied. "Can't guarantee they'll be there."

"Well, that sucks! They won't be at their own backstage party?"

"Sometimes they cut out early, or some of them do, but look, there's a chance."

Nigel nodded. He'd be so disappointed if they got back there and Lane wasn't there. To be so close and then...well that was worse than not getting near him at all. "Not to mention, you'll get to meet all kinds of neat people."

Nigel smiled faintly. The only 'people' he wanted to meet was Lane Carter.

* * * *

"What in hell was that?" Jeff demanded as Lane doused his head under the sink in the bathroom. One of the stage hands passed Lane a towel and

he rubbed his hair with it. He was soaked to the skin with sweat. Hastily he hauled off the shirt that was plastered to his torso and reached up on the hanger for another. Throwing the towel aside, he slid the shirt over his shoulders, letting it hang open. He would have taken off the black leather pants but he doubted he'd get them off at this point. Someone handed him some water and he slugged it back, his eyes moving over Jeff's pissed off expression.

Jeff sighed. "Answer me at least."

"A little magic trick," Lane laughed softly. "Didn't you like it? I disappeared from the stage just like I disappeared from your bed."

Jeff's face tightened. "Nice," he said. He was silent for a moment, then, he muttered, "You might have warned me! What do you do for an encore; hang from the ceiling by your testicles?"

"You'd like that, wouldn't you, Jeff?" Lane scoffed.

Jeff rolled his eyes, then pointing his finger, he said, "don't pull off any other surprises out there tonight."

"No worries," Lane said. "Vanilla sex, just the way you like it."

Jeff went marching off swearing under his breath.

A few minutes later Tom sidled up beside him. "So," he said, "what happened to you two? You

used to be the best of friends. Your relationship has deteriorated so much over the last year, Sandy and I are both a little freaked. We don't want to see this band torn apart."

Lane was surprised. It was the first time Tom had ever mentioned it. It was true what he said, their relationship had deteriorated, and deep down it hurt. As cocky and smart assed as he was with Jeff, there was pain underneath. The fame, the attention from the fans, the life in general had come between them. Egos had come between them. He had loved Jeff once, maybe not as a lover, but as a friend, as his best friend. And it seemed that everything Jeff had once admired about him, he now despised. "Don't worry," Lane told Tom, slapping his back, "we'll be alright. We're tired, that's all."

Tom nodded half-heartedly. "Guess it's time to go back out there."

Lane nodded, and followed Tom toward the stage.

* * * *

The crowd was out of control. The security force which formed a barricade around the stage was struggling to keep the crowd at bay. Several crazed fans crawled over the guards to get to the band members. At one point, Nigel tensed as he

saw one of them grab hold of Lane's long brown hair. Luckily they dragged the creep off the stage immediately and the police carted him away.

Thrill Seek was doing their second encore now, a mesmerizing rendition of "Touching Your Skin." Nigel was carried away. Not to mention that he'd had a hard on for the last hour. Lane's sweet raunchy voice sounded raw and filled with sexual promise as he sang...*touch my skin...let me in...into you, baby...into your soul...touch me...oh God...touch me now...run your hands over me...losing control...control...control...on my knees...baby, you got me on my knees...*

The crowd screamed as Lane got on his knees and began to thrust his hips back and forth, making it more than obvious that he was imitating the sex act. His long hair was plastered to his head, and his shirt was half off his shoulders. He ran his hands over his chest and down to the top of his leather pants where he casually opened the top snap and proceeded to dip in one of his hands.

Nigel felt his balls tighten. Jesus Christ! Was he going to cum right here in the auditorium? He was nineteen, and he hadn't cum in his pants since junior high when he'd walked in on the new gym teacher, Mr. Taylor, taking a shower in the locker room. He'd been thirteen. When he felt the wetness slide down his thigh, he sighed. Fucking great! David didn't notice how he shifted his

weight a few times. He was too busy ogling the screen. Then suddenly, they were finished. Lane was on his feet. The drummer stepped down from his platform, and Tom the keyboard player walked over and placed an arm around Lane. Sandy was in the middle, Jeff on the end. Together, with their arms around each other, they bowed.

The crowd stayed on, hollering and stomping but they all knew they weren't coming back out again. Finally after about forty minutes, people began to leave. David pulled Nigel closer to him and eyed the exit. "Let's just stay here for now."

"I need to use the can."

"Good luck," David joked. "Can't you wait?"

Nigel nodded, feeling sticky and uncomfortable, but he was too embarrassed to tell David that. "What if this Alex guy doesn't come?"

"He'll come. He's family."

"You said he was a second or third cousin."

"That's family," David retaliated.

They waited. Finally, David suggested they move to the exit and they waited some more. The security guard began to eye them curiously. "He's going to kick us out of here soon," Nigel said.

David shook his head, then looking around, he grinned. "There he is. Alex," he called out. "Hey."

Nigel watched as a young man no older than himself and David strode towards them. He had

blond hair with a few blue streaks in the front, feathered down over his forehead. In his left ear, he wore a gold skull and crossbones earring, and had a little tuft of hair in between his chin and bottom lip. His jeans were tight; even tighter than Nigel's were, and Nigel had to lie down to zip his up. Nigel noticed that those pants showed off Alex's ass to perfection as he did a little turn. He stood with his back to them for a minute so that they could read what was written on the back of his jacket.

"The Thrill Seek North American Tour," David exclaimed, clearly envious. "Shit. Where did you get that?"

"From the band," he boasted, turning around again, "and look," he opened his jacket and showed off his tight white t-shirt. It had a picture of Lane on it.

"I want one," David said.

"I can get you one," he replied, glancing at Nigel, who would have killed to have one as well.

"Oh yeah, my best buddy, Nigel," David said suddenly. "Nigel, this is Alex."

"Al will do." He eyed Nigel.

Nigel gave him a cool smile. "Hey there."

"So, there you go guys," Alex said, reaching in the pocket of his jacket and pulling out two plastic cards. He handed one to David and the other to Nigel. "You got to have these or they won't let you

back there."

"Thanks Alex," David said, grinning.

"Is Lane back there?" Nigel asked.

Alex lifted an eyebrow. "Probably," he said a little stiffly, "but he's busy. He doesn't like to be bothered unless he invites you. Sometimes I sleep in his room."

Nigel bristled, but he stayed quiet.

"So, coming? It will be easier if you come with me. Everyone knows me," he said, tossing his head.

Nigel mentally rolled his eyes, following behind David who now resembled a puppy dog nipping at the heels of his master. This Alex guy was certainly laying it on thick. Oh well, maybe he would do the same in his place.

As they neared the stage, Nigel could hear the music and a substantial amount of noise. Alex headed to the backstage entrance, lifting his hand to a security guard and flashing his pass. Nigel and David held there's up as well. The guard didn't seem to pay much attention.

Nigel was excited as he walked down the darkened hallway toward the party. All he could think of was the fact that Lane had walked this very hallway when he had come on stage. He glanced into a few empty rooms as they went, noticing some scattered clothes, half empty water bottles, heaps of towels on the floor, and a shirt, a

shirt he recognized as Lanes, the one he'd had on at the beginning of the show. Glancing anxiously at David and Alex who were walking on ahead of him, Nigel quickly ducked into the room, grabbed the shirt and stuffed it into the pocket of his jacket. Before he put it into his pocket, he held it up to his nose and smelt the sweet fragrance of what only could be Lane Carter's sweat. No one would ever know.

When the door was opened to them at the end of the hall by a bored looking middle-aged man with Thrill Seek security written across his jacket, an entirely different world appeared before Nigel's eyes. It was like being in a candy store. Everyone was beautiful, or if not beautiful, then certainly exotic in some way; and there were drugs and sexual activity going on everywhere around them. "Deep in the Night" was playing, one of Nigel's favourite songs and he couldn't help chanting the words under his breath as he moved through the crowd. *Deep in the night I hold you...deep into you baby...deep in the night we are one...forever...*

Alex was literally strutting through the room, lifting his hand to people that Nigel was sure didn't even know who in hell he was. "Help yourself to drinks," he said, waving at the bar on the left, then stopped just before the dance floor. "I'm off to find some pot. See you in a bit. Have

fun," he chimed.

David nudged Nigel after Alex disappeared. "What do you think? Isn't this wild? Seen any band members yet?"

"I think I saw Sandy over in the corner with some girl. She looked like a Goth."

"Are you sure it was Sandy?" David craned his neck. "Where is he?"

"Back there," Nigel said. "I don't want to point. Just as we came in, near that cloakroom. I think. It's really crowded in here."

"Hey," David said, "there's a pool over there. Bet some kinky things go on in there."

Nigel grinned. "David, I need to find a bathroom."

"I'll go with you."

"So, you never did tell me," Nigel said, keeping his eyes open for Lane as they hunted down a bathroom, "what was it like at that backstage party you were at?"

"I didn't get to talk much to the band members, although I did see Lane for a brief time."

"What was he like really?" Nigel asked, finally locating a bathroom. There were two stalls and Nigel went into one while David proceeded to unzip his pants and position himself at the urinal. Using some toilet paper, Nigel tried to wipe some of the dried cum off his thigh. It didn't work well.

"He was polite, a little stoned I think," David

laughed, his voice carrying over to Nigel from outside the stall. "What in hell are you doing in there?"

"I'm coming." Nigel finally took a pee in the toilet, zipped up and came back out. He took a look at himself in the mirror and sighed. "I have way too much gel in my hair."

David grinned, then, shook his head. "You look great. You always look great. You are so sweet, Nigel."

"Sweet?" Nigel said, horrified. "I don't want to look sweet. I want to look sexy."

"You are sexy," David said, brushing his hand over Nigel's pale blond hair. "But it's the fact that you're so sweet that makes you sexy."

Nigel laughed, blushing a little. He glanced at himself in the mirror. Everyone said he had a 'pretty' face. There wasn't much he could do about it. He was always going to look a little girlish maybe, with his shoulder length blond hair which curled a little at the bottom, and his big china blue eyes. He was very slender; and only five foot six which made him look younger than his nineteen years. A lot of men had come onto him, found him attractive, but would Lane find him attractive? He couldn't compete with bigger, more macho looking men.

"You have such a soft, sexy voice and a kind heart," David said. "I don't want you to get hurt,

Nigel."

It was the first time David had expressed any concern. Nigel glanced at him in the mirror. David looked at least five years older than he did, in spite the fact that he was actually two months younger. His mother was Eastern Indian and his skin was dark, his eyes and hair brown. He stood at least three inches taller and was just on the border of being a bit chubby. "We look like Mutt and Jeff, you know that?" Nigel joked, not wanting to get into a serious discussion about his intentions towards Lane Carter. Would he fuck him if Lane showed the least bit of interest? You bet. In a heartbeat, even if he knew deep down that Lane would forget his name the next morning.

When it looked like David was going to try and broach the subject again, Nigel placed a hand on his shoulder and met his eyes. "Don't worry about me. Although I may not look like it, I can handle myself. Now let's get out of this bathroom. Lane may be right outside this door. And David, whatever you do, if we run into Lane Carter, for God's sakes, don't say I'm sweet in front of him, okay?"

David laughed, shook his head and agreed.

* * * *

"I'm going to get going," Lane told Sandy when he saw Jeff making a beeline for him from across the room. Before Sandy could say anything in return, two young women he'd never seen before suddenly grabbed his arm and tried to drag him toward the pool. "Lane," they moaned in unison. "Come swimming with us...please..." They were naked except for tiny bikini underwear and one of them kept pressing her bare breasts against his chest. Protesting, he tried to shake them off of him while Jeff stood by, shaking his head.

"What in fuck are you shaking your head about?" Lane grunted at him. "Come help get these Amazon women off of me!"

Jeff shrugged and came over to help Lane. "Come on, ladies. Lane is busy. I need him for something. You go ahead. We'll join you later."

After some more protest by the two women, they reluctantly walked over to the pool and dived in. "Thanks," Lane said.

"We should talk," Jeff met his eyes. "Please?"

Lane nodded. "Okay, but not tonight. I'm going back to the hotel. I'm beat."

"Sure, get some rest and..."

The rest of whatever it was Jeff said was lost to him as his eyes caught sight of a young man hovering around the pool a few feet away. He was staring right at him. Lane met his eyes. The young man looked away, saying something to the other

young guy by his side. Lane had no idea who he was. He'd never seen him before, but there was something about him, something that prevented Lane from looking away.

"Did you hear me at all?" Jeff demanded suddenly, moving himself in front of him.

Lane's eyes met his. "Yeah, fine, whatever."

Jeff sighed in frustration. He threw up his hands and marched off. Lane's eyes went back to the place that young man was standing. He had disappeared. Someone spoke to him but he waved them away and began to walk in the direction of the pool. Where'd he go? Then suddenly someone tapped him on the shoulder. He turned and immediately was confronted with the face of that young man he was seeking.

"Lane? I'm ah...Nigel. I'm your biggest fan and I..."

Lane met the bluest eyes he'd ever seen. The voice sounded like music in his ears, so fine, so soft. The one who had called himself Nigel paused. His face seemed flushed suddenly. He actually blushed. "I'm a...sorry...I planned what I was going to say to you but I seemed to be lost for words."

"Hello, Nigel," Lane said, smiling. "I'm pleased to meet you."

"Yeah...well, me too, and I don't want to bother you or anything but...could I have your

autograph?"

"I'll do better than that. Let's get out of here."

Before Nigel could respond, Lane took his arm and led him through the groups of partiers and out the door.

* * * *

Nigel had no idea what was happening. They went downstairs where a limo was waiting. Lane took his hand and pulled him into the back seat with him. When he told the driver to take him back to the hotel, Nigel swallowed. "Ah," he said, his hand still clamped in Lane's, "we're going to your ah...hotel?"

Lane sprawled out a little in the seat, his knee touching his, his hair practically grazing Nigel's cheek. "Isn't that what you want?"

It was spell bending to hear his voice; deep, resonant, incredibly sexy, not to mention that he was there...right there with him. What in hell was he supposed to say to that? Was it what he wanted? Hell yes, it was all he dreamed of. Did he want it to happen this way...this fast? He wasn't sure. His head was spinning. He'd had no time to think. He felt as if he were at a carnival on a fast ride.

Lane was looking at him, expecting an answer. "I just wanted an autograph," he said, blushing. "I

didn't think that..."

"I can take you home." He shrugged as if it didn't matter to him. "I'll drop you."

"No," Nigel said, meeting his eyes. "I want to go with you."

Lane smiled. "Okay, but there's no pressure."

Is that the way it was for him? Someone came up to him to say hello and boom; he was in bed with them?

The limo stopped in front of the hotel. The driver got out and opened the door. Nigel crawled out, Lane on his heels. Lane was way ahead of him, standing in front of the elevator, waiting for it to come down by the time Nigel caught up to him.

"Sorry," he said. "I've learned not to hang around too long. Don't want to be bombarded." Already some people in the lobby were beginning to point at them.

The elevator dinged and they stepped in. Lane pushed the floor which said, "Suite 10." Nigel pressed himself into the corner and gave himself an indulgent second to run his eyes over Lane Carter. *Jesus*. He seemed to be getting more and more beautiful as time went by. His body looked scrumptious in those black leather pants and loose silk shirt half buttoned, and half falling off of him. Long glossy brown hair that Nigel could imagine wrapping his body in hung down over broad

shoulders. And those eyes; vivid green, full of emotion. As Lane turned to him, Nigel's eyes settled on his mouth, full and sensuous. *God, kiss me, kiss me, he thought. Kiss me and I'll die right here in this elevator.*

Lane came closer, close enough to cause Nigel to take an intake of breath. He met his eyes. "You're so beautiful," Lane said softly, reaching out to touch his hair, then his cheek. "I want you. I wanted you the moment I saw you. I want to fuck you."

Nigel gasped as Lane took his face between his hands and lowered his mouth down on his. He heard himself moan deeply as Lane's tongue forced his lips open and teased the tip of his tongue with his. Nigel went to put his arms around him, but before he could, Lane abruptly moved away. "Sorry," he said with a grin. "If I keep kissing you like that in the elevator, we'll never get to the room."

A smile spread across Nigel's face. The elevator came to a standstill suddenly. Lane reached into the pocket of his pants, slid some card into a slot and the elevator doors opened into a large, luxury setting room containing red velvet carpets and matching sofas, a huge plasma television, fully stocked bar and remote control stereo. "Wow," Nigel said, watching as Lane went to the bar and poured himself a drink.

"What would you like?"

You. Only you. Forever you. "Ah, nothing for me, thanks." He didn't want anything to dull his senses. He wanted to savour every kiss, every touch. He knew this night wouldn't last forever.

"Nothing? You sure?" Lane asked, surprised. He lifted a glass of smoky liquor to his lips and drank deeply.

Nigel looked around a little nervously. His eyes spotted a room off to the left with a huge bed. "Are you all alone in here?"

Lane shook his head. "No. There are six or seven bedrooms I think. The other guys won't be back until late."

Nigel met his eyes, then, looked away. "Oh."

"Oh what?" Lane asked, putting down his empty glass and taking a few steps in his direction.

"Oh nothing. I..." Nigel's voice faltered. "Did I tell you I'm your biggest fan?"

"Un huh," he said, so close now that Nigel could touch him.

"Did I tell you that I..." Nigel reached out and trailed the tip of his index finger down his chest.

"Did you tell me that you what?" Lane whispered, reaching up and smoothing back some of his hair. He placed his lips on Nigel's forehead, then, moved them to his nose, then yanking his body up against his, he captured his mouth with

his. Nigel was literally swooning. His hands reached up to drag the shirt from Lane's body and as he did, he heard the material rip.

Lane stood back, a little surprised when he saw Nigel ripping his shirt in two, then he laughed softly. "Hey, you wouldn't know it to look at you," he murmured. "You're wild."

"No," Nigel shook his head, throwing what was left of Lane's shirt on the floor, "you're wild. Bad boy, Lane," he whispered, moving his lips to the small gold ring in Lane's left nipple. As he did, he undid the snap on his leather pants and began sliding down his zipper. "You made me come in my pants when you undid that snap on stage," Nigel told him, letting his lips trail down further.

"Oh yeah," Lane breathed.

"Oh yeah," Nigel moaned, licking the skin of his stomach as the teeth of the zip opened. Reaching up, he tugged on the waistband, pulling the pants over Lane's slim hips and rolling them down past his thighs. "No underwear. All the better," he hissed, letting his tongue dart out and lave the head of Lane's cock.

Lane's hand settled in Nigel's hair. "Come on, baby, that's it," Lane urged.

Nigel planned to take his time. For over three years, he'd been fantasizing about this guy. He was going to enjoy himself. Tonight, now that he had him, and he might only have him for one

night, he intended to explore every inch of him. No shyness, no inhibitions. He got onto his knees and finished moving the pants down. He took off his boots and threw them aside. No socks.

As if reading his thoughts, Lane said, "No time for socks."

Nigel grinned, pressing his lips to the top of his foot. "I see that. No underwear, no socks. Less to take off."

Lane laughed softly and stepped out of the pants. Nigel tossed them over his boots, probably really expensive pants, but what the hell. He looked up at him, met those sea green eyes which seemed almost unnaturally bright suddenly. "I'm so hard," Nigel said, reaching up and clutching his ass cheeks in his hands. "And you're so hard. What a cock you have. I've dreamt about that cock, and here it is," he moaned, running his tongue over the shaft as he massaged his ass with his hand. For a minute, he pressed his face against it, savouring the feeling of having him this close. He smelt incredible, a mix of sweat and sex and oh, so male. He kissed his cock, then released his butt cheek with one hand and took hold of his balls, fondling them as he ran his tongue around his shaft, then took the head into his mouth.

Lane hissed softly, his hand moving through Nigel's fair hair. Nigel took him deeper into his mouth, rearing back, opening his throat to take

him deeper. Lane appeared to grow frustrated in his attempt to push his cock deeper into Nigel's throat. Lane pulled away and Nigel felt himself being pulled to his feet and practically dragged to the bedroom a few feet away.

Lane quickly stripped off Nigel's clothes and tossed them aside. He pulled him up against him and took one of his nipples between his teeth before running his hands over Nigel's ass and cock. He pressed him down on the bed, letting Nigel's head hang down over the edge. Nigel whimpered as Lane's hands explored every inch of his body, rubbing and pinching his nipples, lightly slapping his cock, lifting and stretching his balls. Then he felt the tip of Lane's cock, now slick with pre-cum grazing his lips. Nigel put out his tongue and licked at it, then felt his jaws being widened as Lane's cock pressed inside his mouth. Wider and wider, until his jaws ached and Lane's cock hit the back of his throat. At one point, he really wasn't doing anything except moaning in pleasure as Lane moved his cock precisely the way he wanted in his mouth. Suddenly, he tasted Lane's sperm in his mouth, and Lane pulled out, moving around on the bed to pull Nigel's legs up around his waist.

"Condom," Nigel insisted, feeling Lane's cock against his butt cheek.

Lane moaned, then released him. "Wait," he

muttered.

Nigel sat up, watching him as he rummaged in the drawer. Then he swore. "What is it?"

"I don't have any fucking condoms, you?"

Nigel's entire body trembled. "No, sorry." God, he wanted him so much. Why hadn't he thought to bring them? There were some in the van. But it was okay, being here with him like this was enough. "There are other things we can do."

"Yeah," Lane groaned. "Like what for instance, play board games?" His voice was laced with sarcasm.

Nigel moved over to where he stood and took his hand. He pulled him down onto the bed and caressed his hair, then gently touched his mouth with his. "No, like this." His hand moved over Lane's thigh, and he took his cock in his hand. He wrapped his fist around it and began to gently move it up and down his shaft. He placed a hand on his chest and pushed him down on the bed. "I want to touch you. I want to touch you and kiss your entire body. I want to bring you pleasure with my lips and my tongue. Let me."

"...but don't you want me to..."

"Of course I do," Nigel said softly, letting his lips trail over his chest, "but if it's not going to happen, I'm happy just to touch you like this. God, it's a dream come true for me, Lane. You're all I've ever wanted."

* * * *

When Lane opened his eyes, he knew he wasn't alone. That pretty looking boy was lying beside him. Nigel. That was his name. Last night he had kissed him and caressed him for what seemed hours. He'd just about driven him out of his mind. He'd get so hard and then that sweet mouth would bring him to orgasm, and he'd almost not minded that he wouldn't let him fuck him. Nigel. He'd never tasted anyone's body the way he'd tasted his last night. He'd explored every inch of him, even sucking him off, which he rarely ever did.

He turned on his side and studied him now. Sweet. That's what he was, sweet as candy and so young. God, he hoped he wasn't jailbait. He hadn't even asked. Nigel was stirring now, moaning a little in his half wakefulness. With sleepy eyes he blinked up at Lane, then reached out a hand and touched his cheek. "I love that shadow thing you got going there, sexy. In fact," Nigel said, his eyes shiny, "I love you."

Lane froze, then he laughed. "You don't love me."

"Yeah, I do," Nigel said. "I love you."

Shit, he seemed fucking serious. "You're not some kind of a psycho, are you...cause I've had

stalkers and..."

Nigel smiled, stretching. "No. I'm not a stalker. Don't worry. And you don't have to feel obligated to say anything in return. I just know that I love you."

"Stop saying that," Lane snapped. "You don't even know me."

"I do know you." Nigel met his eyes. "Last night I acquainted myself with every single inch of you."

Lane smiled faintly. "That's true. You probably know my body better than anyone ever has, but that's not what I mean." He sobered. "I'm not the kind of guy you love. I'm the kind of guy you fuck."

"You're the kind of guy you do both with," Nigel said. "Fuck you and love you. How in hell could you ever do one without wanting to do the other?"

This guy surprised him, scared the shit out of him as well. "How old are you?"

"Nineteen. And you're twenty-three. You'll be twenty-four in June, June the first actually."

"And how do you know that?"

"Fan magazines. Any true fan knows that much."

Lane nodded, moving off the bed. Nigel watched him. "Are you kicking me out, or do I get breakfast and a shower first?"

"You read the gossip pages too, I see."

"Yep," Nigel nodded, sitting up. "You're not the most considerate lover. Actually, you're the king of one night stands...or one hour stands."

"So why did you come up here with me last night?"

"Because I wanted you." Nigel looked away. "Because I had no choice."

"I don't get it."

"No, you wouldn't," Nigel said softly. "No offence, but given your track record, I doubt you're into touchy feely things."

"You've lost me."

"Yep," Nigel grinned. "So, do I get breakfast? I'm hungry and my parents may decide to starve me back home."

Lane gave him a questioning look.

"Instead of being in college right now, I'm on the road with my best friend, following you around."

"You're a groupie?"

Nigel shrugged. "Not officially. Maybe I'm a wanna-be groupie. How pathetic is that?"

Lane laughed, standing by the door. "Well, I wouldn't want you to pass out from hunger, and maybe I should eat as well. What do you want?"

Nigel smiled in gratitude, sliding off the bed. Lane let his eyes move over his slender, almost boyish form, and Nigel blushed.

"Are you sure you're nineteen?"

Nigel nodded, coming closer and reaching out for Lane's hair. He let the silky strands fall through his fingers. "So soft, so shiny, incredible really. I have another request before breakfast."

"Oh yeah," Lane cleared his throat, feeling his pulses quicken as Nigel ran a hand over his chest, down his stomach, and then sunk to his knees in front of him. He glanced up at him, meeting his eyes.

"Permission granted," he said, his voice breaking a little.

Nigel smiled softly, then, captured his cock in his mouth.

* * * *

When Nigel made his way to the bathroom for a shower with Lane's robe on, he ran headlong into Jeff, the bass player. Jeff was as surprised as Nigel was to see him there. He gave Nigel a curt nod and went into the other bedroom. It seemed to Nigel that he was just getting home.

Just before Nigel climbed into the shower, he heard Lane order breakfast. He hummed a little as he turned on the water, taking a second to adjust the temperature. Lane probably thought he was nuts, but he didn't care. He meant it when he said he loved him, and he knew what kind of a guy he

was. He was insensitive, callous, a risk taker, outrageously promiscuous and he wouldn't know love if it bit him in that fine ass of his. But he was so much more. He was beautiful, and he oozed sex, just looking at him made Nigel hot, and he was incredibly talented. And deep down inside of him there was so much more, so many layers that were hidden, a heart that no one had touched, not in the way he intended to touch it. He knew it the moment he had seen him in that music video. Lane Carter was the man he would always be passionately in love with. And after last night, touching him, and kissing him, it was confirmed.

When he came out of the bathroom, once again dressed, Nigel walked over to the huge table in the dining room and sat down. He poured coffee for Lane and himself and waited. Lane appeared a few minutes later, dressed in jeans and a navy t-shirt. He reached gratefully for the coffee and lifted one of the stainless steel covers off the food. "Go ahead, help yourself," Lane passed him a plate.

"There's enough food here to feed an army," Nigel commented, taking another plate and putting some eggs on it for Lane.

Lane sat down across from Nigel. Nigel could feel his eyes on him as he began to eat. He paused, meeting Lane's eyes. "Why aren't you eating?"

Lane shrugged. "I'm not hungry, I guess, but I

will eat because frankly I can't remember when I ate last."

Nigel narrowed his eyes. "What do you mean you can't remember when you ate last?"

Lane grinned. "I've been busy."

"After all that energy you expended on stage last time, you'd think you'd be famished. Go on," Nigel said, actually picking up Lane's fork and spearing some scrambled egg, "here. You don't want me to feed you like a baby, do you?"

Lane looked alarmed, then laughed. "Christ, no," he said, taking the fork from Nigel and putting the food into his mouth. "It's good," he said. He took another bite, then another.

Suddenly he went white. He stood up, pushing back his chair and went racing into the bathroom.

Nigel followed, concerned. "Lane? Are you alright? Are you sick?" When he began throwing up, Nigel came back out into the dining room, wanting to give him some privacy.

After awhile, Lane returned, looking fine. He apologised.

"God, don't apologise to me. Are you alright?"

"Fine," he shrugged. "It was just a little stomach upset. My stomach began to make some weird protest for some reason, no worries. Look, Nigel, maybe you'd better go. I have some things to do and..."

Nigel nodded. He could take a hint. Lane

wanted to be rid of him now. He picked up his jacket. "So, I guess I'll see you in the big apple?"

"You going to be in New York?"

Nigel nodded. "Yeah, I'll be there." He took a step forward and met his eyes. Then he reached out and touched his cheek before giving him a soft kiss on the mouth. "I'm not giving up on you, Lane. Call me crazy, but we belong together."

Lane narrowed his eyes, giving him a curious look. "I can't promise anything, Nigel. It would be better if you..."

Nigel reached up and placed a finger over his lips. "You're not my father. I know full well what I'm dealing here with. Take care."

Lane lifted a hand and Nigel left the suite.

Chapter 3

Duriken lazily watched Lane as he marched frantically up and down in front of him. "What in hell have you done to me, you monster?"

He lifted an eyebrow, slowly rose from where he sat in his armchair. "I'm surprised you came here, Lane. Aren't you supposed to be on a plane to New York with the band right about now?"

"I'll take a commercial flight later. Answer me!"

"I didn't do anything to you that you didn't ask for. What has brought about the sudden panic, Lane?" He turned and met his eyes.

"I can't eat. I can't keep anything down."

Duriken shrugged. "Your body doesn't require that kind of nourishment anymore. In fact, soon you will need to nourish your body in other ways. My blood won't last forever to sustain you."

"You told me your blood gave me special skills, more energy, great sexual prowess; you didn't say anything about me needing your blood all the time, or that I couldn't fucking eat!"

"I thought that was quite evident," he replied. "The way these gifts are given it through my blood. If I had never given you the blood, you wouldn't have these gifts, and eventually your body will need to sustain the right amount of it in your bloodstream, mine and eventually others. Without it, Lane, you will die."

Lane's head lowered. He was absolutely silent. Duriken opened his arms. "Come, I will give you what you need, and in return, you will give me what I desire. It is a fair trade, right, Lane?"

Lane raised his eyes to Duriken and nodded.

* * * *

"Alex was eating his heart out last night," David laughed, sitting back in the seat munching on a chocolate bar as Nigel silently drove toward New York. "After he saw you walk away with Lane, well he came up to me and..." David stopped now in mid-sentence. "Nigel, you've hardly spoken a word since we left. Are you going to tell me about it or not?"

Nigel sighed. He didn't want to tell David anything, just because it was his. Every moment belonged to him and Lane. He knew the minute he started to tell David, he'd tell him everything and that would be letting the world in.

"Nigel!"

Nigel smiled.

"Did you? Did he? What happened? What was it like?"

"We didn't go all the way, if that's what you want to know, but it felt like," Nigel glanced at him, "it felt like I'd never been touched before, like it was the first time."

"You didn't go all the way? What exactly did you do, and why in hell not?"

"He didn't have a condom," Nigel shrugged. "Neither did I. So, we did...ah...other things."

"And?"

"I told him I loved him."

"What?"

"I told him, you heard me, David," Nigel sighed. "I told him the truth."

"He must have freaked."

Nigel shrugged. "There's so much more to him. He's complicated, but his bad boy image is...well, he was so tender with me last night. He really touched me, and he touched me for the pure pleasure of it."

"Are you losing it?"

"Maybe. I lost it a few years back when I first saw him on the music channel. I'm not giving up on him, no matter what. He's the only man for me."

"You can't mean that, Nigel. There are so many men out there and..."

Nigel shook his head. "I don't care. I don't want anyone else. In the end, whatever happens, he's going to fall in love with me, whether he wants to or not."

David howled. "You're a freak."

Nigel laughed now too, reaching over for a piece of David's chocolate bar. "Well, what does that make you?"

"Don't ask."

"So, what did you do?"

"Nothing nearly as exciting as what you did. I just partied. Met some groupie called Frank and got high. I think he sucked me off in a bathtub and I passed out."

Nigel shook his head. "And you call me a freak!"

"I'm not the one in love with Lane Carter, the guy who is going to shred your heart apart."

"True. So true."

* * * *

Lane was trembling as he walked slowly towards Duriken. He wasn't sure what was happening to him anymore. His body suddenly was craving something that ordinary food just wouldn't satisfy. He knew what it was. He was just too terrified to acknowledge it.

"Take off your clothes, Lane," Duriken told

him. "I want to look at you."

Lane pulled the t-shirt over his head and dropped it on the floor. He kept his eyes on Duriken as he undid the zipper on his jeans and pushed them off his hips. Duriken's head slid back, his jaw opening as two diamond sharp incisors emerged. Lane had thought it sexy whenever Duriken revealed his fangs, but tonight, the appearance of those teeth caused him to feel fear. Duriken was beautiful with his waist length coal black hair and matching eyes. He stood at least six four and had a solid muscular body that would have been the envy of any man. His skin looked whiter than usual tonight. It was clear that he hadn't fed, and perhaps that made Lane more fearful than anything else. "Saving it all for you, Lane," he said softly, reading his thoughts. He reached out a hand. Long, blood red nails made his fingers seem far longer than they were. "Suddenly you're afraid. Why, Lane? What has changed? Suddenly you are more protective of your mortality."

Lane felt those eyes burning his flesh. "Nothing. I...maybe this has gone too far. Maybe I don't want it anymore. I..."

"Oh my beautiful Lane. It's far too late for that," Duriken shook his head as if the thought saddened him. "You are on your way to becoming a vampire...an immortal. There is no turning back

now. Besides, you owe me. Do you think I'm going to just let you walk away?"

Lane sucked in some breath. "I want my life back. I'll give you anything. I'll give you..."

"Yes, you will. You'll give me everything, in fact," Duriken said softly, glancing up overhead.

Lane started as he heard a squeaking sound, then, looked up to see two chains with handcuffs attached descend from the ceiling above his head. Duriken's eyes lit on the chains, then suddenly without warning, Lane felt his arms being pulled upward and then his wrists were caught in the cuffs. He struggled, swearing and then demanded that Duriken release him. "I have to be in New York. I have to be..."

"You will be," Duriken said, moving soundlessly across the room and standing in front of him now. "I'll make sure you make it to your concert on time, my love. No worries." His eyes moved down over Lane's naked body, settling on the thick vein which ran down the length of Lane's penis. "You're hard, hard just thinking about what I have in store for you, aren't you?"

"You're not going to make me like you, are you? Please, Duriken, don't kill me, not tonight." The fear in Lane was like nothing he'd ever felt before.

"Since you are so ungrateful for my gifts," he replied, taking Lane's cock in his hand, scratching

one of his long nails carefully down the center, "the process of turning you will be very slow. I want you to feel every change," he growled, squeezing Lane's cock in his hand, "just like tonight you will feel every touch, every bite. Now I plan to make you suffer. You will feel hunger, Lane, and it will be like nothing you have ever felt before. Hunger." Duriken opened his jaws and clamped his teeth down on Lane's throat. It felt as if two steel hard needles were buried deep inside of him. He struggled, but then Duriken's hand began to stroke his cock. Lane moaned, half protesting and half begging. The other hand held his head and he could hear him drinking, drawing the life blood out of his veins, draining him just to the point where he'd do anything, anything to taste Duriken's blood in his mouth.

Duriken stepped away from him now. Lane swooned. The room was spinning and he could no longer hold up his head. If it weren't for the handcuffs, he would have fallen on the floor. His body felt limp, like a marionette, unable to lift itself up.

"You wanted to know what it was like. You will, my love. You will know what it is like to hunger." On his knees, Duriken took Lane's cock into his mouth. Lane winced as he felt his teeth bite into the vein. Again he drank, then he rose up off the floor to press his mouth to Lane's. Lane

could taste the blood, his own blood and it was driving him mad. "You are mine," Duriken whispered, running his hands freely over Lane's body, "now and forever. I might decide to take an eternity before I finally bring you over. You will pay dearly for the answers you seek, Lane." There was some laughter, then, he felt Duriken undo the cuffs and carry him over to a bed where he laid him down. Lane wavered in between consciousness and unconsciousness. He was hardly aware of Duriken placing his cock against his lips. It was the blood that roused him. Duriken's cock was bleeding, and the blood filled his mouth at the same time as the vampire's organ. Lane moaned; the more he sucked, the stronger he felt. The fog lifted and he drank enthusiastically. Duriken was so aroused he roared, throwing back his head and suddenly going soft in his mouth. Duriken seemed to ejaculate but there was no evidence of it.

Lane licked his lips, the blood congealing there. Duriken was now on the other side of the room. "You may go," he said.

Lane sat up. Again, something had changed. He knew he wasn't yet like Duriken, but he was less like himself than he had been. "Tell me, tell me what is different. I feel it. I feel it so profoundly that..."

Duriken's dark eyes met his. "You will know

soon enough. Don't eat food. It will only make you sick, and wear sunglasses in the day, even inside."

"I can't go in the sun?"

"The sun won't kill you, but it could give you one hell of a sunburn. It actually burns your retinas."

"I want my fucking life back," Lane exploded. "The disadvantages are starting to..."

"Not necessarily," Duriken smiled. "You can stay hard now for hours. In fact, your libido is ten times what it was. And you won't need to sleep much. Think of all you can do. Oh, and you might even be able to fly."

Lane was afraid. "What about crosses and mirrors and..."

"Crosses are not a problem. You might fade a bit in a mirror at times but overall you'll be able to see that beautiful reflection of yours. And you'll probably find you can read everyone's thoughts around you. You'll have to learn to tune them out. They'll drive you crazy if you don't."

"Duriken, I..."

He was gone. Just like that, he left him. He often did that. He would grow tired of the conversation and leave smack in the middle of it. Lane stood up, checking his body for marks. There were none, none on his throat or on his cock. He knew that there had to be marks. He dressed

quickly, having no idea what time it was. He had to get to New York.

A few minutes later, he left Duriken's lair, a luxury condo in the middle of downtown Boston, and hired a taxi to take him to the airport. It was almost dawn when he boarded the plane to New York, first class. Luckily no one on the plane seemed to recognise him. He had donned dark sunglasses, and paid for two seats way at the back of the plane in the corner. There were too many voices in his head. He could hear the muddled thoughts of all the weary passengers around him. He tried to block them out by concentrating on the upcoming concert, and the fact that he was going home to New York. He didn't want to think about Duriken, or the things he'd said to him. That brought fear. He thought about one of the songs he was going to sing in the show tomorrow night. For awhile the voices faded. Then suddenly a scent filled his nostrils, a scent he was unfamiliar with. It was coming from the steward who stood nearby asking the passengers if they wanted coffee. It wasn't perfume, or even sweat. It was blood. He could smell blood. And as she came closer with the coffee cart, and leaned down to him, he could actually hear that blood pulsing through her veins. "Coffee, sir?" she asked with a smile.

He waved her away, shaking his head. She was

thinking how he had to be that rock star Lane Carter from Thrill Seek. She was thinking that she had a lay away in New York. *She'd love to see the show. She'd love to see him after the show. Dirty girl, she teased herself, what about Frankie? To hell with Frankie. This was Lane Carter, and he was hot.* "If there's anything I can do for you, Mr. Carter," she smiled at him.

Lane swallowed. "No," he managed. "I'm fine."

She nodded and disappeared with her cart.

Lane finally took a breath. He clamped his teeth together, clenching his fists. What in hell was wrong with him? It was then his tongue bumped up against something unfamiliar in his mouth. He moved his tongue towards it again, and panic seized him. It was his teeth. One tooth on the side of his mouth, on top was protruding a little more than usual. It was sharp and as he ran his tongue over it, he tasted the salty tang of blood in his mouth. Hastily, he undid his seat belt and raced down the aisle to the bathroom.

"Sir," the steward said, "the seatbelt light is still on and..."

"To hell with the seat belt light," he growled, ripping the door of the bathroom open and slamming it shut behind him. Hyperventilating, he opened his jaw with his hand and peered in the mirror. My God! Lane touched the sharp incisor with his fingertip, and then moaned. God help

him, it was true, it was all true. He was becoming a vampire.

Chapter 4

“Guess what?” David said.
“What?” Nigel replied, taking a bite out of his hamburger. Luckily his mother had taken some pity on him and put a few hundred bucks in his account. He bet she hadn’t told his father.

David closed his cell phone connection and stole one of Nigel’s fries. “Alex has a room at The Plaza, that’s where Thrill Seek is staying. He’s willing to share if you don’t mind sleeping on the floor. There will probably be a hell of a party tonight.”

Nigel nodded half-heartedly. He wasn’t that crazy about Alex, but it beat sleeping in this van. And it meant he would probably get the opportunity to see Lane again. “That was nice of him,” he murmured. He never did ask Lane if it was true that Alex had slept with him, but he supposed it wouldn’t have been cool to do so.

“So, we’re in the Big Apple. What do you want to do?”

"Honestly?" Nigel suggested. "Sleep. I'm beat. I've been driving all night."

"Sleep? Man," David muttered. "It is true that you haven't had any sleep. I wonder where we should park. Alex didn't mention parking."

"So who's paying for this room, Alex?"

"Probably Alex, like I said the guy has disposable income if you know what I mean...and he has connections so..."

"Right. Connections. Maybe Lane himself booked the room for him too."

"Nasty. You really don't like Alex."

"I'm surprised he wants me in his room at all, given how he acted when he saw me take off with Lane the other night. The way you said it was..."

"Well forget it. Forgive and forget, okay? Anyway, maybe that's why he invited us," David grinned. "He wants details."

"Well, he won't get any from me. How long we here for?"

"A few days. They're doing a couple of shows, two here and one in Jersey."

Nigel leaned back in the driver's seat, and looked around him. They were in the parking lot of the biggest fast food restaurant he'd ever seen. It was mind blowing. Everything looked exciting but he was so tired he could hardly keep his eyes open anymore. "I'm going to crawl in the back and get some sleep. Sorry, David, but I'm..."

"It's fine. I'll lock the van and go off for awhile. I'd like to check out Fifth Avenue."

Nigel nodded. "Do we have the tickets for tonight?"

"I booked them two weeks ago, remember. Don't worry. We'll pick them up at the box office before the concert. We're sitting this time."

"What section?"

"It's R but it's in the middle."

Nigel laughed. "The screen is probably bigger in that section."

David shook his head. "Ha, ha," he said. "Get some sleep. I'll wake you later."

"Sure no one will mind that..."

"We bought burgers, right?"

Nigel laughed. "The special."

David shook his head, grabbed his packsack and got out of the van. "See you later," he said, shutting and locking the door. Nigel slipped into the back, lay down on the seat and pulled a blanket up over his shoulders. He was asleep almost as soon as his eyes closed.

* * * *

The taxi driver worried about his sister's cocaine addiction on the way to the Plaza Hotel, and Lane kept fingering that sharp incisor. For some reason, the tooth on the other side wasn't protruding like

that. Maybe it was just a dental problem he needed to check into. He paid the driver as soon as the guy drove up to the curb outside the hotel, and told him to 'get his sister into rehab pronto,' which caused the driver to stare at him as if he were a ghost.

He felt like a ghost as he went to check in at the desk. He was a little dizzy, and there was a humming of voices attacking his ears. The man at the desk smelt of blood and his heartbeat was slamming against his chest like a kettle drum. The guy handed Lane his key and smiled. "I'm a big fan," he said, "got tickets in the sixth row tonight."

"Who do you know?" Lane scoffed, taking the key and heading toward the elevator. Sick. He felt sick. He wanted to vomit as the elevator careened up to the top floor. And the first thing he saw as the door opened on the suite was Jeff.

Jeff's thoughts attacked him immediately. *Where had he been? Who had he been sleeping with? Did he give a shit about him at all anymore? Why did he still have to want him so much when there were men lined up to get into his bed?* Lane put his hands over his ears. "Stop. I don't want to know how you feel, okay?"

"What in fuck are you on?" Jeff demanded. "I haven't said a word yet."

"I'm not ON anything," Lane told him, brushing past him. "Don't start anything with me

right now okay? I'm going to lie down. I don't feel good."

"This life is finally catching up with you, eh? Do you realise that we waited three hours on the plane for you to show up yesterday? What did you do, take a commercial flight?"

"Yes."

"You could have told someone."

"I was indisposed."

"Ha," Jeff jeered as Lane headed into the bedroom nearest the front door. He slammed it behind him, and threw himself on the bed. The room spun. He closed his eyes, and dreamt that he was flying, flying in the air. Duriken was there, laughing at him, his beautiful cold eyes mocking him. *The hunger is about to begin, Lane. You wanted to experience everything...experience this...*

He woke up in a cold sweat, his entire body convulsing. He wrapped his arms around his waist and curled up in a little ball, moaning. He didn't even realise that Jeff was in the room until he felt his hand on his forehead. He opened his eyes.

"You look terrible, Lane. Are you okay?"

Lane took his hand, and squeezed it in his. "I need..." he began, moving the other arm up around Jeff's shoulders and pulling him closer, "I need you, Jeff. I need you."

Lane wasn't sure what was more agonising, the

smell of Jeff's blood or the scent of his arousal. Whichever it was, it was driving him out of his mind. He ripped at Jeff's clothes like a wild animal, trying to shed his own at the same time. Grabbing Jeff by the shoulders, he hauled him down on the bed, flipping him onto his stomach while he reached between his legs to roughly fondle Jeff's growing erection. He licked his shoulder, then licked his shoulder again, positioning his cock at Jeff's entrance while he pulled him up onto his knees.

Jeff was protesting, struggling a bit in Lane's arm, but there was no escape. Lane held him fast and with very little effort. At the same time as he plunged his cock into him, he brought his mouth down on top of his shoulder and bit. He was actually surprised to hear the skin tear, feel the blood flood into his mouth.

Jeff cried out more from the invasion of his ass than from the bite. As Lane licked and sucked, he began to thrust, causing Jeff's pain to gradually replace itself with sublime pleasure. Lane withdrew his mouth from the wound. Licking at it, he watched fascinated as it disappeared. He hadn't drunk much. He didn't need much. All he felt now was this incredible virility and stamina. He felt as if he could go on fucking Jeff for hours. Then he suddenly wondered if he could cum. Maybe he couldn't. Duriken never did. He was

holding Jeff's hips steady now, slowing his rhythm, listening to Jeff's low guttural moans...and Oh Gods, and it was suddenly important to him that he please Jeff, that he make him happy. Some of those feelings he'd once felt for him returned, feelings of brotherhood and affection.

Jeff was leaning back in his arms, his hair brushing Lane's cheek. Lane ran his hand over his chest and down his stomach, taking hold of his cock as he began to thrust again harder inside of him. He felt Jeff's sperm fill his fist. He closed his eyes, letting himself lose control. He half laughed with relief as he felt the cum move up his own shaft and pour into Jeff. He was still a man, still human. He released Jeff and got up off the bed. He looked in the mirror, noticing the tiny spot of blood on his lower lip. He licked it away.

Jeff was speaking to him suddenly and Lane turned to look at him. "That was incredible," he said softly, lying back on the bed. "Why? Why now after all this time?"

"I don't know. Maybe to reconnect. Don't read anything into it. It was only..."

"I know," Jeff said. The fact that Jeff was in love with him came through loud and clear. Lane closed his mind to Jeff's thoughts. He watched him pull on his clothes. "Are you sure you're okay?"

Lane nodded. "Tired. What time is it?"

"About two in the afternoon. Want to go out? Maybe we could go and eat something."

Lane shook his head. "No. You go ahead. I'm going to sleep."

"I'll bring you something back," Jeff said.

"I'll get room service later."

Jeff seemed to accept that. He lifted a hand and left the room.

Lane sunk down on the bed and put his face in his hands. *Blood. He had drunk blood. Oh God. Oh my God.*

* * * *

Alex had been obnoxious since they'd arrived, and Nigel could tell that there was a lot simmering under the surface whenever he looked at him. David seemed oblivious to it all and kept going on about the room. "Isn't it great, and just think, Nig, the guys are just a few floors above us."

"Six actually," Alex sniffed.

"We really appreciate it, Alex," David said for the hundredth time.

"You know what they say," Alex sneered, glancing at Nigel, "keep your friends close but your rivals closer."

When he saw Nigel's look, he brightened up and sang in an overly cheerful voice, "kidding!"

Nigel gave him a cool smile and sat down on the edge of the bed.

"So, what did happen with Lane?" Alex asked suddenly, trying to sound casual about it.

"You first!" Nigel replied in the same sing song voice Alex has used in his previous statement.

"Oh, you mean when I slept with him?"

"If that's even true," Nigel muttered.

David shot Nigel a look of caution.

"Oh, you mean you're calling me a liar?"

Nigel tilted his head and met his eyes. "Maybe it's not a lie; maybe it's just a little exaggeration."

"You want details?"

"No." Nigel really didn't want that at all. The thought that there was even a chance Alex had made it with Lane hurt; and he knew it was not rational. Lane had slept with plenty of guys before him.

"Then what?"

"Nothing, let's drop it. I'm sorry I brought it up. Can we forget it please?"

"So, did you?"

"Did I what?"

"Did you fuck with Lane the other night?"

"No," Nigel said. It was the truth. They hadn't fucked but they had done far more than fuck, but he wasn't about to tell Alex that.

"So, what did you do with him?"

"We talked, had breakfast."

Alex blinked. "You are full of it. You spent the night with Lane and didn't fuck?"

"I told you. We didn't fuck, okay."

"Didn't you want to?"

"Of course," Nigel said.

"He didn't want you? He rejected you?"

That thought seemed to please Alex immensely.

"We didn't have a condom."

"You turned him down because of a condom?"

Nigel shrugged. "He's been with a lot of men, and I like to be safe."

"He must have been pissed, wasting his time on you like that."

"He wasn't that pissed."

"So you left then?"

"No, I spent the night. I told you, we had breakfast."

"Now you're lying. Lane doesn't spend the night. He boots them out because he likes to sleep alone."

"Did he boot you out, Alex?"

There was a long silence, then, David piped in with, 'can I turn on the television?"

"Sure," Alex said, "it's on music videos."

"Super," David said, and that was the end of that conversation.

Two hours later, Nigel was following David to the box office where they were to pick up their tickets for the show. The woman took a few

minutes to locate the tickets which caused Nigel to get a little edgy. "Are you sure you booked?"

"Yes," David sighed, drumming his fingers on the edge of the counter. Finally, the woman said, "Ah yes, here they are. Two tickets. Those were put through on your credit card, Mr. Adams."

David took a breath. "Thank God," he told Nigel as he took the tickets and walked away from the booth, "my card is almost maxed out. Whew!"

"Shit," Nigel said. "Are you sure I can't pay for mine? How much is it?"

"It's your birthday present, remember? Here," he passed him one of the tickets. Seventy nine dollars to sit in the R section.

"Thanks. What about your card though?"

"My mom will make a payment on it tomorrow. I just spoke to her today while you were snoozing."

"You're lucky. I don't have a credit card."

"It's my mom's," David laughed. "She told me to take it in case of emergency. She was pissed at me for maxing it, but shit, it only has a thousand dollar limit on it."

"We need jobs. My mom isn't going to keep putting money in my bank account all the time. She's indulging me now."

"We could be strippers for the band," David teased, stopping in front of the van.

"Yeah, right," Nigel laughed.

"Except you'd strip for Lane for free."

"You bet your ass," Nigel muttered with a grin, and crawled into the passenger seat. "Where we going to park this thing?"

David shrugged. "We'll find a place. No worries."

Chapter 5

Lane pulled on his faded ripped jeans and brushed his long brown hair. He was trying to decide between two different shirts when he heard Sandy calling to him from the other room. His voice sounded frantic.

Lane threw down the hair brush and left his room, following Sandy's cries into the bedroom down the hall. Sandy was trying to pull Jeff up off the floor.

Lane ran over and took Jeff's arm, helping Sandy to put him into a chair. "What in hell happened?"

"I don't know, he just fell, man," Sandy placed his hand on Jeff's forehead and tilted his head back.

"I'm fine," Jeff said, protesting as he settled back into the chair, "I just got a little dizzy, that's all. I'm okay."

Lane sucked in some breath. He knew it had to be the blood he'd taken from him that afternoon.

Shit. He had no idea that it would affect Jeff like that. He moved Jeff's head back and forth a little, discretely checking for marks. There was a mark, but it resembled a hickey, nothing anyone would be too concerned about. He let out some air.

"Should we call the doctor?" Sandy asked, glancing anxiously at Lane.

"No doctor," Jeff growled. "I told you, I'm fine."

"He'll be okay," Lane said. "Try not to overexert yourself too much tonight," Lane said. "And try to go to bed early."

Jeff made a face. "Go to bed early, here, tonight? You got to be kidding. This place will be crawling with people."

Lane sighed. "Well, maybe you'll just need to go somewhere else. I'll talk to the band manager and see if he can't take you to some quiet place to sleep tonight."

Jeff nodded. "Okay," he said, closing his eyes.

"Did you eat?" Sandy asked.

"Maybe not enough."

"Well," Lane interjected, "I'll call room service. Get you a big steak, just the way you like it."

"No time for that," Jeff said. "It's almost six."

"So, we're late. What's new?" Sandy grinned.

Just then Tom came in, wanting to know what was going on. He looked as if he'd just got up out of bed.

"I'm fine," Jeff said, "just tired and hungry." He glanced at Lane as he walked over to the phone on the night stand and dialled room service.

The food arrived quickly and Lane sat watching Jeff closely as he devoured the steak. He felt more than guilty, he felt like a thief. My God, if he'd taken too much, he might have killed him.

Jeff seemed better as they headed downstairs in the elevator and was whisked into the limo. The band manager fussed over him some, then, agreed to take him to a quiet place for tonight after the show. "First thing tomorrow," Shawn Macenroy said, as they sped towards the auditorium, "you're getting a thorough going over by the band doctor."

"That quack?" Jeff jeered, causing the others to laugh.

Shawn frowned. "He's a good doctor. It might be time for a rest for the whole bunch of you. After Philadelphia."

"It would be time to do some studio work," Tom chimed. "I have some new material."

Lane nodded. "What do you say, Jeff?"

"Cancel the rest of the tour?"

"Postpone it," Shawn corrected.

"We'll see," Jeff replied. "We'll see."

* * * *

Nigel looked doubtfully at the sky. "It's going to rain," he said, shifting his weight on his feet as they waited in the long line up to get into the show.

"No, it's not. Stop saying that," David muttered.

Nigel smirked. "Me not saying it isn't going to prevent it from happening." He felt a few sprinkles.

It began to pour. They waited at least two more hours before the line began to move. Needless to say, they were both soaked to the skin before they got inside. He realised that he was going to be soaking wet through the entire show.

However, the minute Lane came on stage, he forgot how damp he was. He forgot everything. He was closer to him tonight, but not close enough. He could barely see him, and again had to resort to watching him on the screen. Lane was fantastic, the band was sensational, and the crowd was just as unruly as it had been in Boston.

When it was over, Nigel was tingling all over, and as he and David walked out in the night air, he shivered. By the time they reached the street where David had parked the van, he was having hot and cold flashes and he began to sneeze.

"Nigel," David said suddenly, "are you sure this is where I parked the van?"

Nigel glanced around him on the dark street.

"Yep. I remember that house there."

"Fuck! Fucking shit. The van's gone."

Nigel moaned, then he sneezed again.

They began to walk. David was looking for a police station so that he could report the van missing, and Nigel was feeling more miserable with each step. All he wanted to do was get back to the hotel.

"Are you sure you know where you're going?" Nigel asked David suddenly. He looked around him. "I have no clue where we are. Do we even know how to get back to the hotel from here?"

"Don't worry. Let's find the police and they'll direct us."

They continued to walk. It got colder. Nigel wrapped his arms around himself. He began to cough. They had been wandering the streets for almost two hours with David muttering, "I'm sure there's a police station around this corner," for the umpteenth time, when Nigel stopped dead in his tracks and said, "David, I'm going to ask someone."

David protested, but Nigel walked up to this man on the corner and asked him where the nearest police station was.

The man gave Nigel directions to the bus. It was almost an hour later when they walked into a downtown Manhattan police station. They had to wait another hour before seeing a cop and making

a report. It was almost three in the morning when Nigel and David walked into the lobby of the Plaza hotel.

Nigel was sick. His head was spinning, and he was flushed with fever. He wanted to lie down, but when they returned to Alex's door, it was locked. He was obviously partying upstairs.

"Come on," David said, "we'll find Alex and get him to open the door."

Nigel nodded, following David to the elevator. "Can we even get into the party? We don't have any passes."

"I'll ask for Alex."

As it turned out, there was no one at the entrance to the suite. The elevator doors slid open when David pushed the button. The music was blaring in the suite and there were people slow dancing, and making out all over the place. Nigel wondered if Lane was there, although he didn't really want him to see him like this.

"Where in hell is Alex?" David muttered, stepping over half naked bodies. Alex was like nowhere. Several half open bedroom doors revealed small groups of people participating in drug use and/or group sex. "I think Alex is in one of those rooms," David told Nigel, "but I don't want to go in."

Nigel moaned. "Fuck it, find me a chair somewhere. I got to sit down."

They made it into the dining room which was empty and Nigel fell into the chair. He laid his head on the table and sighed. "God, I feel like shit."

"You rest, I'll go and see if I can find Alex and get the key."

"Cool," Nigel replied, closing his eyes. He coughed a few times, his head aching. He felt himself drifting away.

* * * *

Lane picked Nigel up in his arms and carried him into his bedroom. It was the only room in the suite which hadn't been used that night. He brought a glass of cool water to Nigel's lips, then pressed a wrung-out cloth against his forehead. He was really sick. The fever was raging through his body.

His friend David stood hesitantly at the door, watching as Lane began to move the cool cloth over his friend's chest. "Does he need a doctor?" David asked frantically. "I don't have the money for..."

"I'll take care of it," Lane said.

"My van got stolen tonight. We were supposed to stay in Alex's room, he's my cousin...but I can't find him and..."

"Alex?" Lane picked up his head. He had the vaguest recollection of seeing that guy somewhere

tonight.

"Yeah."

"You can stay here. Pick a corner. There have to be blankets somewhere. I'll take care of Nigel."

"Thanks, man," David smiled. "You know, the show tonight was really something else and I think..."

"Thanks," Lane said, cutting him off. He could hear the guy's thoughts, thoughts that started to stray towards getting into his pants. It was time to move him out. "Go and find a sofa before they're all taken."

"Sure, thanks again," David said and left the room.

Lane opened Nigel's shirt all the way, moving the damp cloth over his chest, down to his stomach. He was so sweet, too sweet really, and the more he touched him, the more he wanted to. He put down the cloth suddenly and moved away from him. Hard again. Damn. He'd been hard all night, and he was sure he'd fucked at least three guys here in the suite, three guys he'd never seen before. He'd taken a little bit of blood from them too, not a lot, but a taste. Alex. Alex had been one of those guys, and he'd come back for more. Lane had tossed him off, not wanting to get too friendly with him. He was a little possessive. He got pissed off and took off with someone. That's it. He hadn't done anything to him. Had he? He hadn't drunk a

little too much. Jesus. Lane put his hands in his hair. Jesus Christ.

He walked back over to the bed and looked down at Nigel. He wondered if he gave him a little taste of his blood, if it would help his fever. Maybe he should just call the doctor. Could he do it? Could he cure a cold?

Sitting on the edge of the bed, he lifted his wrist and then bit down on it. The blood bubbled quickly to the surface, several red dots lining his skin. He looked at Nigel, then placed his thumb at the corner of his mouth. Opening his lips, he pressed his wrist there.

Nigel licked his lips, taking up the drops of blood Lane had deposited on them. Then Lane quickly withdrew his arm. He watched with amazement as the bite marks disappeared from his skin.

He felt tired. He switched off the lamp, lay down beside Nigel, and drifted off to sleep.

* * * *

It was the sun which called Nigel to open his eyes. For a minute, he had no idea where he was. He sat up, looked around. The place beside him was messy, the pillow was down at the bottom of the bed. "Alex?" It didn't look like Alex's room.

"Nigel," he heard a voice suddenly. It sounded

a little frantic. "Nigel."

Nigel blinked. "Lane?" It was Lane's voice. "Where are you?"

"Under the bed. Please," he breathed, "go and shut the blinds."

"Why? What's wrong? What are you doing?" Nigel got down on the floor and peered under the bed.

"Please," he said, "please close the blinds."

"Okay," Nigel replied. He stood up and went over to pull the blinds across the window. Immediately, the room darkened. "They're closed," he said.

Suddenly he saw Lane emerge from underneath the bed. "Thanks." Nigel didn't know what to say. He studied him for a moment as he stood up. "Bad hangover or something?"

"Yeah, something like that? How are you feeling?"

"Fine," Nigel said. "I think I had a cold or something last night, but it seems to have passed."

Lane nodded, then, he smiled. "Guess I can do it."

"Guess you can do what?"

"Ah, nothing, be a doctor. I brought you in here last night and gave you some aspirin, that's all."

"Thanks," he smiled. "I wasn't even aware. Shit, the van got stolen, well David's van and..."

"He told me," Lane said, searching around for

his sunglasses.

"Why are you wearing those in here?"

"My eyes hurt. It's nothing."

Nigel moved closer to him. "I've missed you," he said softly. He felt in his pockets and brought out a couple of condoms. He held them up and smiled.

Lane laughed. "You came prepared this time."

"I didn't plan it. I just put some in my pocket and..." He paused, running his eyes over Lane. God, he wanted him. He wanted him right now. He was trembling as he took a step closer. Lane was leaning against the bureau. He still had his jeans on from last night and an oversized silk shirt which hung down over his shoulders, open at the chest.

Lane lifted his head up. Nigel took his hand, raising his other hand and removing his shades. "You're so beautiful," he began, then took a sharp breath and stepped back. "Lane, what's wrong with your eyes?"

Lane blinked. "What? What's wrong?" he asked, pushing himself off the bureau and disappearing into the bathroom.

A few seconds later, Nigel heard him let out a cry. "Jesus...oh my God...Jesus Christ."

Nigel raced into the bathroom. He went to place a hand on Lane's shoulder, but he jerked it away. "No," he said, "don't touch me. Get away

from me. Get out of here, go, go!"

Nigel was hurt. His heart sank. "Lane, please..."

"I said get out!" He turned around, growling at him, and when he did, Nigel saw eyes that were glowing blood red. "Go while you still can."

Nigel gasped. He turned on his heel and ran back out into the bedroom. He hovered near the door. "Lane," he called. "Lane, what's happening? Let me..."

He heard the bathroom door slam, then lock.

Nigel tensed. "Lane, are you alright?" There was no answer. He placed his hand on the door knob and turned. He hunted the suite for David and finally found him asleep on a sofa in the living room. He shook him. "David. We got to go. Let's go, okay? Where's Alex? He must be in his room by now."

David followed Nigel sleepy eyed to the elevator. "Hey," he said, "what happened to your cold? You were really sick last night."

"Yeah, I guess I was, wasn't I?" Nigel narrowed his eyes.

"Yeah, Lane was playing doctor. He must be good." David grinned.

Nigel fell quiet until they reached Alex's room. The door was unlocked, and Alex was lying on his bed.

"Alex," David said, going over to shake him

awake, "hey, man, you locked us out last night and..."

Nigel came closer. He looked down at Alex and then touched him. He was cold. Nigel let out a cry. "David," he said, "my God, fuck, Alex is dead."

Chapter 6

There was a hell of a lot of people at the police station. The police were questioning everyone who had been at the backstage party for Thrill Seek, including the band members.

Nigel spotted Lane walking out of one of the interrogation rooms and rushed over to him. "Lane, are you alright?"

Lane nodded. "Yeah, fine. You?"

"A little shaken up."

Lane reached out and squeezed his shoulder, then, he put the dark glasses back on. "I'm sorry about earlier. I think I was on a bad trip."

"I thought you'd given up the drugs. The fan magazines said that..."

"Temporary relapse, that's all."

"Oh," Nigel nodded.

"So, this means you guys have nowhere to stay, no van, nothing?" Lane lifted an eyebrow.

"We'll manage."

"You and David can stay in the suite if you

like," he shrugged.

"Really?" Nigel smiled. "That would be great."

"Okay, anytime. I'll let the manager know and he'll make sure you have access."

"I'll tell David. Are you sure the other guys won't mind?"

"They invite who ever they want, why not me?" He lifted a hand and walked out. Two bodyguards led him to the limo which was waiting outside.

* * * *

In the limo, Lane closed his eyes. The sun was going down now, but it didn't afford him the relief it should have. *My God, had he killed that guy Alex?* Had he drunk so much of his blood that it had stopped his heart? He was trying to remember. He could see Alex milling around him earlier that night. It was shortly after the concert, and Alex was making it clear that he wanted him. Every time he came near him, Lane could hear Alex's heart thumping in his chest, taste the blood pumping through his veins. For a while, he fought the temptation. What with Jeff collapsing before the concert, Lane was afraid, afraid of his own impulses. He ignored him for awhile, dancing with various people, talking shop with Shawn, then, Alex had cornered him on the way to the

bathroom. He had dragged him towards one of rooms, whispered nonsense in his ear while stroking Lane's cock.

"Come on, Lane. You know you want it. And I don't care if you want to bareback. Not having a condom won't stop me."

Lane had looked at him curiously. "Why did you say that?"

"No reason," he shrugged, giving him a seductive look.

They were in the bedroom, alone. Alex was pulling at his pants. Lane remembered pressing Alex against the wall, kissing him, pressing his lips to his throat. *Did he bite him? Did he drink his blood?* He remembered the taste in his mouth, warm and gurgling against his teeth. He remembered being inside of him, the sound of his voice urging him on. *But he had walked out. That guy had walked out of that room after.* How in the hell did he get back downstairs? If he'd drained him, then they would have found his body there in his suite, right?

The limo pulled into the underground parking lot and stopped. The door was opened. The driver was peering in at him. "Mr. Carter?"

Lane could see the artery moving in his neck, under his skin. He could taste him. He could taste his semen in his mouth, mingled with his thick, rich blood. *Fuck.*

Lane scrambled out of the back seat, briskly brushing past the driver, almost pushing him over. "Mr. Carter?" he called out. "Are you alright?"

Lane kept his head down. There was something wrong, something terribly wrong. He rushed to the elevator, hoping the driver would just let it be, but he was on his heels. "Mr. Carter? Are you alright?"

"Leave me," Lane said, and when he spoke, his voice sounded like gravel. "Just go. Get out of here."

The driver scurried away, and a few seconds later just as the elevator arrived, Lane heard the limo screech away.

In the elevator, Lane turned his face to the wall. "Please...please," he whispered, hoping to hell that he didn't meet anyone on the way up. It was barely five a.m., which meant the chance of anyone getting on with him were minimal. When he reached the floor of the suite, he heaved a sigh of relief and made a beeline for his room.

He was afraid to look in the mirror, but he knew he had to. He felt compelled too. He walked in and reached for the light. He peered at the reflection. At first, there didn't appear to be any. Lane began to hyperventilate. No, no, no...no... Then his image appeared. His face was ashen, his eyes two overly bright orbs which glowed

unnaturally. He allowed his jaw to open slightly and there were two razor sharp incisors peeking out from his upper jaw. He pressed his thumb to one of them and then noticed the bubble of blood which immediately sprang to the surface. He grabbed his wrist and held his finger over his pulse. It was still there. He was still alive.

When he heard a noise, he stiffened. Had he forgotten to lock the damn door?

"No, you locked it," a voice said.

Lane hardened, as he turned around and looked into the face of Duriken. "Am I like you now? Am I a monster? Did I kill him? Did I kill him?"

"Frankly, Lane," Duriken replied, wandering out into the bedroom with Lane on his heels, "you are overreacting."

"Overreacting?" Lane cried out. "That guy Alex is dead. He's dead, and earlier I drank Jeff's blood. He collapsed on the floor before the..."

"Yes, yes, and if you don't keep your voice down, Lane, you're going to wake up Tom and Sandy...well...maybe not Sandy." He smiled.

Lane gasped. "What did you do? Did you do something to Sandy? If you hurt him, I will..."

"You will what?" Duriken asked, laughing as he casually reached out and took Lane by the throat.

Lane struggled to breathe as Duriken lifted him

off the floor and gazed up at him with blazing eyes. "You wanted to know what it was like. Do you think it's free? Do you think everything you have done in your miserable little mortal existence is free...without consequence? All the hearts you have broken, fucking without a second thought, sometimes you couldn't even remember their names...think of what you have done to Jeff? You have broken his heart more than once...and your poor parents. What have you done to them? Rehab and stupid accidents with your car...not to mention..." He stopped, tilting his head now, and then lowering Lane to his feet.

Lane held onto his throat, coughing, practically blue in the face.

Duriken walked around the room, waiting for Lane to recover. "You are not yet a vampire. The process will be slow. I will gradually give you the blood that you need. One night I will drain you, then fill you like you have never been filled before. Maybe. If I don't decide that you're unworthy. Are you unworthy, Lane?" He turned and gazed at him. "Are you going to tell me that now you don't want my gift? After you have come this far, you would insult me."

Lane shook his head. He didn't want to die.

"Good choice. You belong to me, Lane. Come to me." Duriken opened his arms.

Lane took a breath, hesitating. "I don't want to

take human life."

"Well, you should have considered that before you began the transition. You must drink blood if you are going to exist."

"But why now...why when I'm not even a..."

"Say it, Lane. A vampire."

Lane swallowed. "A...vampire. I'm not one yet, am I?"

"Not completely. No. But you still need blood. Come."

Lane was pulled like a magnet to him. He didn't even feel his feet move.

"On your knees," he commanded.

Lane fell on his knees.

"You know where I want your mouth. And you may drink until I tell you to stop."

Lane opened the linen pants he wore and took out his cock. It was cold but hard. He pressed his cheek against it, then put it in his mouth. His own tears mingled with Duriken's blood as he bit down into the flesh of his shaft, and began to drink.

A few seconds later he felt Duriken's hand in his hair. Initially, he thought it was a sign of compassion, but then he released him as soon as he had brought him to orgasm. His organ went flaccid and he pushed him back. "Why the tears?"

"I don't want to kill anyone," Lane said, looking up at Duriken.

"Then you better not invite Nigel and David to stay here."

Lane blinked. "How do you know about..."

"Nigel?" He laughed softly, bidding Lane to get to his feet with his hand. "He is in your thoughts often."

"He is?" Lane got up off the floor.

"Are you that self absorbed Lane? Wait, don't answer. Of course you are."

"I wouldn't hurt Nigel," Lane said defensively.

"You didn't think you could hurt Alex either."

"I...it was me? I watched him walk away and...I don't remember. Jesus. How do I control it?"

"How do you control anything? Lane," Duriken sniggered, "you and control haven't met yet. When have you ever exercised control? You take exactly what you want when you want it, regardless of the consequences. You have no control as a mortal, how do you expect to have any as a vampire?"

"Teach it to me."

"No. I can't," he said, looking completely bored now. He sighed, walking over to the window. "The sun will be up soon. Be careful," he said, and he was gone.

Chapter 7

David looked happy and relieved when Nigel told him they had been invited by Lane to stay at the band's hotel suite. "That's great. Isn't that great?"

Nigel knew that David was trying to be upbeat. He had to be feeling bad about Alex's death. Aside from that, the van had been stolen and they had been at the police station all night. It was almost nine o'clock before they arrived in the lobby of the hotel. "I've really got to sleep," Nigel said. "I'm dead on my feet."

David nodded.

"I think Lane said he would inform someone at the desk so that we could have access to the suite. I'll go and see," Nigel said.

The individual at the desk, a portly woman with a red face looked at Nigel as if he'd just come down from Mars. "I'm sorry, young man," she said. "You'll have to leave. You cannot have access to the band's suite."

Nigel sighed. Lane must have forgotten, or he had changed his mind.

David frowned when Nigel came walking back over. "It was bullshit, right?"

"I'm sure he just forgot."

"Yeah, right. He obviously doesn't give a shit. So, what now?"

Nigel shrugged, not willing to believe that Lane didn't care about him at all. "I don't know. We wait in the lobby until he comes down. I could ask the desk clerk to call him but I doubt she would."

"What a bitch."

Nigel grinned. "She's just doing her job."

"Let me try. Then we'll find out exactly what Lane is made of."

"Better not. I'm sure she'll get security to kick us out of here. I don't know why you are so fast to think the worst of him."

David rolled his eyes. "I could say the exact opposite about you."

Nigel sighed. "Forget it. Let's go and get coffee at that place across the street and come back later."

"Okay," David said, but Nigel could hear the doubt in his voice.

Nigel stared out the window of the coffee shop with dry, tired eyes. David was talking about going home. Nigel knew it probably made sense, and if it hadn't of been for Lane, he would have

jumped on a bus right now and headed back home. "I can't," Nigel said finally. "If you want to, that's okay but..."

"I can't leave you here all alone."

"I'll be fine. I won't be alone. I'll be with Lane."

"That's a fantasy, Nigel. You have no vehicle, and no place to sleep."

"Lane will..."

"Nigel," David snapped. "Wake up. Lane is not responsible for you. You spent one night together, and you didn't even fuck. Maybe he invited you to stay at the suite on a whim but he obviously didn't mean it. Look, you slept with Lane Carter, almost, now that's something. Get out while you can, with your heart intact. You have your memories."

"I love him," Nigel said, meeting David's eyes.

"Love him? Nigel, you don't even know him. Come on, he's not boyfriend material and you know it. It looks like he's not even human being material."

Nigel looked down at his hands. "I know his rep. I know he has one lover after another. I know I'm probably going to end up with my heart shattered to pieces but I don't have a choice."

"Of course you have a choice!"

"No," Nigel said, "I don't. He is the one for me. The only one."

"Nigel, Jesus Christ, you're being ridiculous. He's a fucking rock star, an ex druggie with an

overactive libido. He's a fantasy. It's self-indulgent fun but it's not real. He..."

"Stop," Nigel said, holding up his hand. "If you want to go home, go. I won't hold it against you, but I'm staying here."

David stood up. "Fine. Stay then. You're nuts, Nigel. You're fucking nuts!"

Nigel watched David walk out of the restaurant and down the street. For a second, he felt completely and utterly alone, then, he looked across the street to the Plaza hotel. Lane wouldn't abandon him.

* * * *

He had killed a man. He had fed off Alex and now he was dead. He hated Duriken, hated him to his soul. *I want my life back*, he cried out, but no one answered. Either way, he was damned. If he demanded that Duriken release him, Duriken would kill him, and if he accepted this so called "gift," of his, he was dead anyway...or un-dead.

Suddenly he gasped, remembering what Duriken had said about Sandy. *Jesus...Sandy!* Lane tore open the door to the bedroom and went racing around the suite, calling out Sandy's name.

When he saw him pick his head up off the sofa where he lay watching some silly cartoon, he gradually began to breathe again. "Sandy, thank

God," he said, racing over to him and pulling him into a bear hug.

"What's with you?" Sandy demanded, giving him a wary look. "You know I'm straight," he teased.

Lane laughed, patting his shoulder and releasing him. "No worries. Where's Tom?"

"He's gone off with some chick."

"Oh, good," Lane said, squinting at the sunlight coming through the window. Casually he walked over and closed the blinds.

Sandy didn't comment. He was engrossed in the cartoon, leaning back and laughing now at something on the television.

Lane wandered out of the room again. He felt tired, exhausted all of a sudden, but he knew he was forgetting something. When the phone rang in the hall, he picked it up, ready to tell who ever it was to forget it. He needed to sleep.

"Mr. Carter, this is the front desk," the voice said. "I'm so sorry to disturb you but I have this young man here who says..."

"Nigel," Lane said suddenly. "Shit, I completely forgot. Give him a key to the suite."

There was a silence on the other end.

"Is there a problem?"

"No, sir. I will do that."

"Good," Lane said and hung up. He headed for his room, walked in, locked the door and lay

down on the bed. After that, blackness closed in on him and he was no longer aware of anything.

* * * *

Nigel didn't say 'I told you so' because he was so relieved that David hadn't been right about Lane, he almost kissed that woman at the desk. She handed him the key somewhat begrudgingly and Nigel headed for the elevator. He inserted the key in the slot when the elevator came to a halt, and the doors opened onto Thrill Seek's hotel suite. It seemed dead. He walked in, looked around and called out to Lane.

It was the drummer Sandy, who Nigel suddenly noticed padding down the hallway toward him in his bare feet. Shirtless, with only a pair of ratty sweatpants on, he pushed back his long hair and grinned. "Nigel right?"

Nigel was flattered that he remembered his name. They'd never even spoken. "Yeah, how did you know?"

I heard Lane on the phone a few minutes ago. He told the desk to give someone named Nigel a key."

"That's me. Where is Lane?"

"Ah, I'm not sure. Maybe in his room. It's the first one on the right."

"Thanks," Nigel smiled.

Sandy lifted a hand and disappeared around the corner. Wow, this place was massive. There were rooms everywhere. When Nigel came to Lane's room, he knocked, then knocked again. No answer. "Lane," he called out. "It's Nigel. I just wanted to let you know that..." He tried the door handle. Locked. He sighed. Oh well, at least he was in the suite now. He knocked a few more times, then walked away.

Sandy was in the kitchen, making a sandwich. "Hungry?" He looked up from where he was slicing cold chicken.

Nigel nodded. "Yeah, I am."

"Help yourself. Where's Lane?"

"His bedroom door is locked. I can't get in."

"You can have any bedroom you want, except for the first four. There are two spare."

"Thanks," Nigel said, moving over to the counter and helping himself to some bread. "I really appreciate you guys letting me stay here."

Sandy shrugged. "We often invite people. Sometimes it's just the current fuck, you know." When Sandy saw Nigel's expression, he froze. "Jesus, I'm sorry," he said. "I didn't mean to..."

"It's okay." Nigel said. "I...well...makes sense I guess."

Sandy took a bite of his sandwich and pushed the mayonnaise jar towards Nigel.

"Thanks. Actually, Lane and I haven't done

anything... much... yet... and I, well, I intend to be the last."

Sandy's eyes widened. "The last what?"

"His last," Nigel said, grinning.

Sandy just about choked. "Whoa there, Nigel. We're talking about Lane here. I don't want to burst your little bubble but..."

Nigel perched himself on one of the stools, and took a bite of his own sandwich. God, he was hungry.

Sandy watched him eat with wide eyes. "When was the last time you ate?"

"Ah, I think before the show last night."

"You don't have any money?"

Nigel nodded, swallowing. "Yes, I do, but not a lot, and last night my friend's van got stolen, then we were hauled into the police station because we found...well..."

"Alex. You were staying in his room."

Nigel nodded.

"I'm sorry."

"He was related to my friend. Now David has gone home."

"Might not be a bad idea if you went with him."

"I can't," Nigel said. "Lane is the love of my life. And I know who he is and that he's a bad boy, but I can't help it. I won't give up on him."

Sandy finished his sandwich. "Well, good luck,

kid, and you can hang around as long as you like, no skin off my ass, and Tom don't care about those things, although Jeff might not like it."

"Because he's in love with Lane," Nigel said matter-of-factly.

"Where do you hear this stuff?"

"Everyone knows that."

Sandy made a face. "Well, he'll be back so watch your step around Jeff."

"I will. Thanks for the sandwich and the warning."

Sandy grinned and left Nigel alone in the kitchen.

* * * *

As the sun went down, Lane opened his eyes. The ticking of the clock on his nightstand seemed unusually loud. He could hear his own heart beating strong and steady in his chest and for a moment, he took succour in that. He lay there for a few more minutes, listening to the sounds around him, then got up to take a shower. He was only under the water for a few minutes when he heard someone calling to him. It was Jeff. He got out, wrapped a towel around him and hurried to the door. "Where's the fire?" He growled as he pulled the door open and let Jeff pace into his room like a restless tiger.

"What's that kid doing here?"

"What kid?"

"The one you were with in Boston?"

"Nigel? Is he here?"

"Yes, Goddamn it. He's asleep in one of the bedrooms. Sandy told me you invited him to stay in the suite."

"Him and his friend," Lane replied lazily, beginning to dry some of the water off his skin.

"Well, his friend isn't here, just him. I want you to get rid of him."

"Why? He has no place to go."

"We're not a charity, or a fucking shelter."

"Mr. Compassion," Lane said, walking over to the closet and pulling out a pair of jeans. "Looks like you got your strength back."

Suddenly he felt a hand on his shoulder. "Lane," Jeff said softly.

Lane felt his blood stir. He wouldn't drink from Jeff again. He wouldn't.

"Lane?"

Lane turned around, his jeans in his hand. "Jeff, the other day was..."

"I love you. You have to know that. Can't we try to make this work? We're good together and..." Jeff's hand reached out and tugged at the towel around Lane's waist. It fell to the floor. Jeff's eyes caressed his naked flesh, settling on his sex. "It's not hard. I want to make it hard." He went to

his knees before Lane could protest.

When he took Lane's cock in his hand, Lane leaned back against the wall and closed his eyes. He shouldn't allow it. He should tell him 'no,' but he knew he wasn't going to. He felt Jeff take his cock into his mouth and he moaned a little. He knew instinctively that his eyes were changing. He could feel the tips of his incisors elongate, scraping against his lip. He let his fingers tangle in Jeff's hair which brought a groan of contentment from somewhere deep inside Jeff's chest, and then let his hand trail down to the side of his throat. He caressed his jugular vein, then, pressed his thumb against it, feeling the blood flowing through. *No, no. Concentrate on your cock, Lane, the sensations in your cock, ignore the hunger. Ignore it.*

Lane's jaw widened. He placed his hands on Jeff's shoulder, pushing him back. He began to lower himself to the floor, pressing Jeff's shoulders against the floor, when he heard a gasp.

"Jesus Christ, Lane! What in the..." Nigel was standing in the open door for a second, then he quickly disappeared.

Lane reared back. Jeff fell on the floor.

Jeff was grumbling as he picked himself up off the floor. "See," he said. "I knew he'd be a pain in the...Lane, what are you doing?"

Lane took some deep breaths. Control. Duriken told him he lacked control, always giving into his

impulses. It meant he could control this thing, this impending monster inside of him. He turned back around, and from the look on Jeff's face, he must have returned to normal. "I ah...nothing."

"You should tell that kid that..."

Lane knew that Nigel had seen him as he was about to drink from Jeff. Lane closed his eyes. He had promised not to drink from him again. "Fuck, Jeff," he flung at him, pushing back his hair. "Don't come on to me anymore. Let's just be friends, okay?"

"You didn't fight very hard," Jeff bit back. "You give me mixed signals."

"I didn't give you any signal. You just assumed that..." Lane sighed, picking up the towel and hooking it back around his waist. "I have to see Nigel," he said, brushing past him.

"Sure, run to him, you bastard," Jeff called after him.

* * * *

Nigel stood in the living room of the hotel suite. His entire body was trembling. He wasn't sure anymore what he saw, but one thing was for certain, Jeff was on his knees sucking Lane's cock.

When Nigel felt a hand on his shoulder, he turned around slowly. He knew that his eyes were probably red from crying. He looked down at his

feet, embarrassed.

Lane picked his chin up with his finger and searched his face. "Are you alright?"

Nigel nodded, taking a step backwards. He didn't want him to touch him right now.

"What you saw..." Lane began. "Well...I..."

"What I saw was Jeff sucking your dick," the anger came out clearly in his voice. He felt an utter fool.

"That's all?" Lane replied.

"Isn't that enough?" Nigel snapped. "I've only been here a few hours, and you..."

Lane stepped forward suddenly and pulled him into his arms. He hugged him tightly, then released him.

"What in hell is wrong with you?" Nigel asked him. Lane was smiling. He looked immensely relieved about something.

"I'm sorry. Jeff and I...well, it didn't mean anything to me, Nigel. And I think we need to discuss..."

"I know," Nigel put up a hand. "I don't have any right to..." He broke off. David was right. Lane would never truly devote himself to one guy. The very thing that attracted Nigel to Lane would eventually break his heart.

Lane fell quiet. Nigel wasn't sure why he was looking at him the way he was. He met his eyes, beautiful green eyes, and all the anger he felt

melted away. Lane smiled at him, a mischievous, little boy smile. "So, you coming to the show tonight?"

"I'd like to, but I think David took off with my ticket."

"You don't need a ticket," Lane replied with a laugh. "You can come with us, hang out backstage, or down front."

Nigel's eyes widened. "Oh my God, you mean it?"

Lane grinned. "Of course. Unless you don't want to."

Nigel ran up to him and punched him hard in the chest.

"Ouch."

"What in hell do you mean 'don't want to?' It's a dream come true. Do you know where I've been watching your concerts from?"

"The rafters?" Lane mocked.

"Practically. What time do we leave?" Nigel ran his eyes over him. He looked scrumptious standing there in that towel. It made Nigel's cock ache.

"In a few hours. If you want something to eat, order room service."

"What would you like?" Nigel asked, wrapping his arms around Lane's narrow waist and giving him a hug.

"Nothing for me. I ate earlier."

Nigel gazed up into his eyes, fingering the condoms in his pocket. "Have a taste for something other than food?" He took one of them out and slowly trailed it over Lane's naked chest, pausing at the top of the towel.

Lane opened his mouth to say something but Nigel prevented him by reaching up and pressing his lips against his.

"Oh, isn't that just fucking cosy," Jeff's voice bellowed out now from the hallway. "Why don't you just lie him out on the floor, punk, and have a go at him right there?"

Nigel backed away from Lane, giving him an apologetic look. Lane turned to say something to Jeff, but he had stalked off down the hallway. A few seconds later, they both heard a door slam.

"I'd like to say I'm sorry," Nigel said, "but I'm not. If you want Jeff, tell me because I..."

Lane placed a finger on Nigel's lips. "Shush. Come on," he said softly. "Let's go to my room."

* * * *

"Am I hurting you?" Lane asked Nigel as he pushed just a little deeper inside of him.

"God no," Nigel groaned, letting his cheek move against Lane's jaw. "Go on, God, you feel incredible there."

Lane kissed him gently on the side of the neck,

and placed his hands on both sides of Nigel's slim hips. He tipped him forward some, delving his cock even deeper. Nigel had driven him half crazy with need. He couldn't ever remember wanting someone like this. It was the way Nigel had touched him. They had walked into the bedroom together and Nigel had closed the door. Then he took his hand and led him to the bed. The towel was stripped away almost instantly, and then Nigel had pressed him back against the pillows. "I want you so much I ache," he told him. Nigel had kissed every inch of him with such tenderness, such desire; it had carried Lane away completely.

And now, being inside of him, hearing him breathe, hearing the small sounds of pleasure coming from his body, Nigel invaded all his senses.

He ran his hands over his chest, down his stomach, fondling his cock as he began to thrust himself in and out of him. Nigel's skin was slick with sweat, his breathing shallow. He cried out.

"Nigel," Lane grunted, pausing in his movement, "are you alright? I'm not hurting you, am I?"

Nigel uttered a half grunt, half laugh. He reached behind him and touched Lane's rough jaw. "No, no, baby, don't stop. Please, Lane, God, don't stop."

Lane tightened his hold on him and increased

his pace. He felt as if he could do this forever, be inside of him forever. He almost forgot about his hunger. The Ecstasy he was feeling in his arms blotted it out for a time, then it struck, seizing him and refusing to let go. He knew he was changing. He felt it just like an arthritic limb feels the coming frost.

Nigel cried out. Lane reached for Nigel's cock, cradling it in his hand, squeezing it gently. He felt the semen flow into his hand, and he lowered his mouth to Nigel's throat. *No. Don't. Don't drink. Don't. You could hurt him. In the throes of passion, you could kill him. Cum...cum, damn it.* The tips of his teeth grazed Nigel's tender skin. Nigel's entire body trembled, then he heard a strangled sob coming from him. He was crying. Lane folded his arms around him, rocking him as if he were a small child. "Shush, shush, baby. It's okay," he said, kissing his shoulder.

Lane allowed Nigel to turn around in his arms now. His lips came down on his, smothering him with a kiss. Nigel's arms snaked around his waist, yanking him closer, his mouth opening to his. Slowly, Nigel's tongue did a sensuous dance around his. Then abruptly he yanked his head back, and said, "Ow."

Startled, Lane watched as Nigel touched the side of his tongue with his finger. It was bleeding. The blood on his tongue was suddenly

overwhelming, and Lane grabbed Nigel's shoulders and captured his tongue between his lips. He closed his eyes as drops of Nigel's blood wet his lips.

Nigel didn't seem to mind. He laughed a little as Lane pulled back. "What do you have in your mouth, sweetie?"

"Nothing. Why?" Lane asked, touching the tip of one sharp tooth with his tongue.

"I cut my tongue on your tooth, I think."

"I...ah...well I broke my tooth and it's jagged. Haven't had time to see a dentist. Sorry about that."

Nigel smiled and kissed his mouth again. "It's okay. Nothing serious." He let his eyes move down over Lane's nakedness as he knelt there on his knees on the bed. "That was incredible. You're incredible," he said softly, letting his fingers move over Lane's chest, playing a little with his nipple ring.

Lane smiled. *No, he was incredible.*

"It was worth waiting for," Nigel whispered, lying down on the bed now and uttering a huge sigh of contentment.

Lane gave himself the luxury of admiring his slender form. His skin was so soft, yet he was all man. He sunk down beside him, the hunger had subsided some. *There, you son of a bitch. I can control it. I have control.*

"Where are you?" Nigel asked him, moving closer and placing a head on his chest.

"Here, with you," he said.

Nigel looked deep in his eyes. "No, you were somewhere else. There's something on your mind. What is it?"

"You. You're on my mind. I'm thinking that..." He stopped. What in hell was he doing? He couldn't now at this point in his life do the unthinkable and fall in love...not with what was happening to him.

"What? You're thinking what?" Nigel asked, his hand caressing his chest, those eyes staring into his soul.

"Nothing," Lane said. He had to put some distance between them now. He had to stop himself from spiralling into the depths of those eyes. Abruptly, he moved away. He knew Nigel was hurt. It showed all over his face. "I'm sorry. I'm not a very touchy feely kind of guy. I don't cuddle so well."

"Then you'll just have to learn," Nigel said, sitting up, running a hand through his hair.

Lane didn't reply. Sometimes Nigel surprised him. He seemed like such a gentle spirit, easygoing, not easily ruffled, but Lane suspected that there was far more to Nigel than met the eye. "Time to get ready to go to the show. If you intend to eat, now's the time."

"Do I get a shower?"

"Sure. Might be better to do it in your room because..."

"My room?"

Lane cleared his throat. "Yeah. You're welcome to use the room down the hallway to..."

"And to sleep? You want me to sleep down the hallway too?"

"I prefer to sleep alone," Lane said, not looking at him.

There was silence. Lane didn't want to see his reaction. He walked into the bathroom and started the shower. He couldn't have Nigel sleeping with him. What if he changed in the middle of the night? What if his hunger got out of control and he hurt him? God, he didn't want to hurt him. Sleeping together would only bring them closer, and this thing was bound to get worse, rather than better.

* * * *

Nigel placed his head in his hands for a moment. When he heard the shower running, he got out of bed and came to stand in the doorway of the bathroom. He watched Lane through the shower door, the taste of him still on his tongue. He wanted him again, his cock aching as he traced the lines of his body with his eyes, following Lane's

hands as he lifted them above his head to shampoo his hair.

He'd felt the connection again this time when they touched. He knew Lane felt it too. He didn't understand how he could just run hot and cold like that. Whatever he was keeping buried deep inside was eating him alive.

Nigel wasn't about to let him get away with any of this act he was putting on. He went back to his pants and took out a condom, then he yanked open the shower door, surprising him a little, and stepped in behind him. Nigel picked up the soap and began to slide it over his back.

"It's okay," Lane said, his voice shaking. "I can do it."

"You can't do this," Nigel murmured, moving his lips in between his shoulder blades, "or this," he said, sliding the soap between his buttocks. "God, you have a great ass. It's just about bloody perfect," Nigel whispered, moving the soap up and down his crack. The other hand reached around Lane's waist and wrapped around his cock. "Hard again? You're a real stud, aren't you? It's not just an act for your fans."

Lane laughed slightly, then quieted when Nigel began to move his hand up and down his shaft.

Nigel gave him a nudge forward. "Put your hands on the wall over your head. Come on; do it," Nigel urged, feeling his own cock began to

pulse with need.

Lane leaned forward and slapped his palms against the tile, laughing some.

"Higher," Nigel urged.

Lane slid them higher up on the wall, the water from the shower soaking his hair, causing the shampoo to run down his back in rivets. "How's that, master?"

Nigel moved the soap out of his long hair with his hand, then, instructed Lane to turn the water off, which he did almost immediately.

"Now, my plaything," Nigel commanded softly, pressing the soap against Lane's anus, "I plan to have my way with your body." He squeezed his cock, then, reached between his thighs to massage his balls. He dropped the soap and reached the other hand around to tweak his nipple.

Lane made a sound, shifting his weight.

"Stay still," Nigel urged, pinching and tugging at one nipple while fingering the nipple ring on the other. "You like that?"

"Yeah, I like that," Lane groaned.

Nigel left his fingers at one of his nipples, casually playing with it, then moved the other hand back to his cock. "God, how can you stay hard so damn long?"

Lane didn't answer.

Nigel leaned over and picked up the condom

he had placed on the corner of the tub. He tore it open with his teeth as he pressed his erection against Lane's ass. "I want to fuck you. I'm not sure how you feel about that but you're the sexiest thing I've ever seen and I..."

"Do it," he groaned. "Fuck me. Fuck my ass, Nigel."

It was an incredible gift, being allowed to slowly move his cock inside that ass. And no matter what happened from now on, this moment would be one of the most precious in his life. His gentle movements deeper and deeper inside of Lane were gradually replaced by a blinding lust that caused him to lose all control. He clutched Lane's hips. He heard the sounds coming from his chest, felt the sublime pleasure of slicing in and out of that tight space, the building pressure that told him he was about to have the fucking orgasm of his life.

He barely heard the roar which came from Lane. His entire body shook with a spine tingling sensation and the air escaped from his lips. Lane's head came back and Nigel saw the flash of red, the searing gaze which caused Nigel to propel himself backwards, practically falling.

Lane's arm swung around in a motion that was far too fast for Nigel to see and caught him just before he hit the porcelain. He was yanked upwards, close to his body, and those eyes, those

eyes that were usually a beautiful shade of green were rimmed with red, and he was faced by two menacing sharp teeth on both sides of his jaw. "Lane, Jesus....Jesus...!"

Lane released him abruptly, which caused Nigel to stumble again, this time reaching out and bracing himself against the wall to save him from falling.

Lane ripped open the shower door with such force it tore it off its hinges.

Nigel was shaking. He wasn't sure what in hell just happened. It wasn't the first time he seen Lane's eyes shining like that. The last time Lane had said something about drugs. He didn't know of any drugs that did that to a person, and the teeth. Jesus, those were teeth you'd see on a...vampire? He shook his head. He was being ridiculous.

Nigel shook his head as if to clear it, then took a towel off the rack and stepped out of the shower. He wrapped it around his waist and called to Lane. There was no answer. He walked into the bedroom, and saw him standing naked by the window. "Lane."

"Leave me," was the response.

"I'm not leaving. What in the hell was that in there?"

"Aren't you afraid?" He didn't turn around.

"Afraid of what? You? No. Never. Please, Lane,

tell me what's happening."

"You wouldn't believe me anyway."

"Yes, I would. Is this a joke?"

"Joke?" He turned around, staring at Nigel from across the room. "No, it's no joke."

"Then what?" Nigel took a step towards him but Lane put up a hand.

"Don't come any closer."

Nigel sighed, his heart aching. "Lane," he pleaded.

"I..." Lane began.

"You what, my love?"

"Don't. I can't be your love."

"But you are my love, whether it's possible or not. Tell me, Lane. I'm not leaving until you do."

"It seemed at one time in my life, I'd done just about everything. I don't know why I'm like this, always looking for the next thrill, always going to edge, but I am...or...at least I was." He took a breath. It sounded jagged, pained.

Nigel swallowed, squeezing his hands into fists at his sides. He couldn't bear to hear the pain in Lane's voice, but he knew he must. He took another step. He wanted to touch him, comfort him, but again Lane put up his hand. "No," he bellowed. "Stay away. If I'm going to tell you this, you must keep your distance."

"Okay," Nigel said. "Go on."

"Duriken must have known that about me. He

told me he saw a poster of mine. He said that my posture...my arrogance wasn't an act; I was actually the cocky bad boy I was pretending to be. Somehow reality and showmanship were the same."

"Who is ah...Duriken?" Nigel had a problem even saying his name. It sounded daunting...evil.

Lane sighed. "He's a vampire."

There was a strained silence. Nigel laughed a little uneasily. "A Goth?"

"No. Not a Goth. A vampire. He came to me one night in my hotel room, after a concert. He challenged me to have sex with him, told me it would be dangerous...warned me that I might not even survive it."

"And?" He couldn't even believe what he was listening to.

"It was the ultimate high for me, and he knew it. It was not ordinary sex..." Lane paused. "Promise you'll believe me."

"I promise," Nigel urged. "Tell me everything."

Chapter 8

Lane's mind went back to that fateful night a little over a year ago. The memory of it was so vivid, so clear. It was as if it happened yesterday. They'd been in Los Angeles. The concert had been great, but he'd been tired. He had a headache, and Jeff wasn't helping. He had been brooding for a few days over finding Lane fucking one of the roadies. He remembered staying at the party for awhile, trying to relax. Jeff wouldn't let up, and finally he had said 'fuck this,' and marched out of the suite. He had barricaded himself in his room. He'd turned off all lights except for a dim lamp on the night table, lit a huge joint, and crawled onto his bed naked. He intended to get high, masturbate, and fall into a deep sleep, but of course, he never did sleep that night. He lit the joint and took a few hits, closing his eyes as the drugs began to mellow out his tension. His hand snaked down across his chest to his cock and he began to casually play with it, imagining that

hunky guy he'd seen in the audience earlier slowly licking the shaft.

Even to this day, he had no idea how he'd gotten in. He hadn't even been aware that he was standing there at the foot of his bed until he said, "Hello, Lane."

When he first looked up and saw Duriken, he thought he was hallucinating. He was really stoned, and the light was dim. "Ah yeah, sure," he began to laugh but the laughter quickly died as Duriken reached out and grabbed him by the throat, lifting him off the bed with one hand. He had struggled, a silent scream dying in his throat as he felt his air being cut off. Then, he dropped him. He landed hard in the middle of the bed, feeling like the effects of the pot had suddenly completely worn off. He rubbed his throat, choking, straining to talk while Duriken watched him silently from where he stood a few feet away.

"What is it you really want?" Duriken said suddenly, his voice a seductive whisper. His eyes glowed an unholy glow, and he grimaced, two razor sharp fangs emerging suddenly. One hand with long sharp nails began to crawl up Lane's leg.

Lane's eyes watched the long white hand move along his thigh in the direction of his cock and he began to whimper.

"Scared?" Duriken taunted, folding those white

fingers with their claw like nails around his sex.

Scared wasn't the word. He was fucking terrified, and something else as well. As Duriken began to squeeze his cock in his hand, Lane felt it swell. "Ah," Duriken remarked, "it's true. Fear and arousal do go together in some mortals. Desire," he whispered, moving closer, scratching one of his nails over his testicles, causing Lane to wince slightly.

"Who...who are you?" Lane asked in wonder, his eyes moving over him. He took his breath away, his skin so pale, contrasting with his black eyes and long hair the colour of coal...so shiny it was almost blinding.

He withdrew his hand from Lane's cock, and removed the long black trench coat he wore. Underneath he was dressed simply in grey linen pants and a dark navy turtleneck. "Stand up, Lane," he said. "Tonight, I plan to use your body to give me pleasure. I won't guarantee that you will be still breathing in the morning, but I guarantee you this...this night will be like none other. I will bring you to the edge, show you pleasure as you ever known. You will never be the same again if you survive."

Lane blinked, slowly getting up off the bed. He looked into those dark eyes, and nodded. "Yes," he said. "Yes." God, he had never guessed at that time how he would learn to regret those words.

Duriken took his hand and wrapped him in the long black coat he had just taken off. He placed a hand over his eyes. "Close them," he said. "You will die of fear."

Lane did as he told him to, feeling himself being lifted off the floor and then floating, cool air surrounding him. He tried once to see what was happening but Duriken kept his hand in front of his eyes, only removing it when he felt his body touch down on the concrete floor.

He looked around him, feeling the long coat being ripped away. He stood there naked, shivering in what seemed to be some kind of isolated dungeon.

"Welcome to my home," Duriken said, walking around him slowly, his eyes examining every inch of him. When he wrapped his arms around himself to keep warm, Duriken yanked them away. "Stand with your arms out to the side. Never hide yourself in my presence. Tonight, your body belongs to me. I'm free to do what I want with it. Is that understood?"

When Lane didn't answer right away, Duriken repeated the question, this time his voice boomed in his ear, practically bouncing off the walls. "Is that understood?"

Lane nodded. "Yes, yes, I..."

"Good," he said, smiling, those sharp teeth peeking out from behind his lip.

"What...what are you? Are you a..."

"I'm what mortals like to call a vampire. Do you believe in vampires, Lane?"

"Ah, no." But he was beginning to.

Duriken abruptly caught Lane's arm and dragged him across the floor. Lane slowly lifted his head up to see the handcuffs dangling from the chains in the ceiling. Suddenly he realised that the floor beneath his feet was rising and steel traps sprang up from out of the wooden structure to wrap around his ankles, pulling his legs further apart and almost knocking him off his feet.

Duriken seemed to find Lane's fear amusing. He threw back his dark head and laughed. Lane felt his hands move over his ass, then slide up his flanks until he had lifted up Lane's arms. One cuff was snapped into place around his wrist, then the other. Lane's breathing grew shallow, his pulse began to pound. Duriken moved around to the front of him and let his eyes settle on Lane's cock. "Hard," he mouthed, reaching out and slapping it a few times, causing Lane to cry out. "Pleasure or pain, Lane. Can you tell the difference?"

In a panic Lane tried to free himself from the restraints, but there was no escape. Duriken kept walking around his body. Lane could feel his breath on his flesh. For the longest time, he didn't touch him. He waited for Lane's cock to get harder, his balls to tighten even more. When the

whip came down on his back, it felt as if his flesh was being set on fire. He clenched his jaw, moaning in agony. When Duriken was satisfied that he hadn't missed an inch of his flesh there, he came around to the front. The sting of the whip on his genitals was excruciating. There were moments when he begged Duriken for death. Then just when he thought he couldn't take one more lash, he felt the soothing lap of Duriken's tongue. He licked every inch of him, Lane's blood staining his tongue. And the pain was gone, so were the marks. It was as if it had never happened. Before Duriken finished his healing bath, Lane's body was undulating with need. He craved Duriken's touch, longed to feel those cold pale hands stroke his cock. He wanted him desperately.

Duriken began to lick his nipples, slowly, sensuously as if they were some rare delicacy. Then he bit one. The bite was deep and the blood ran in one thick stream down his chest to his groin. Duriken licked the blood, following its path, then opened his mouth to take Lane's cock inside. Lane let his head go back. He moaned as his cock went deeper into Duriken's mouth, hitting the back of his throat. Duriken swallowed, and for a second, Lane stiffened. It felt as if his cock was going to completely disappear in Duriken's mouth. One sharp nail inched up inside of him

and Lane began to buck, sure that Duriken meant to rip him apart. The fear was acting as fuel for his sexual arousal and his cock throbbed. God, he was hot. He was so hot, the sweat pouring down his chest, into his eyes. It was impossible but his cock was in Duriken's throat. He could feel the sublime pleasure of his cock being compacted there, the pressure intense, then releasing, then closing again. That finger began to scrape inside him, causing him to jerk forward as he was gripped with a sensation that was neither pain nor pleasure, but rather something in between. He was making some noise he'd never made before. It sounded like howling.

Finally Duriken released his cock, and pulled his finger out of him. He felt a thick leather collar snap around his neck, then his wrists and ankles were released. He was pushed forward on the floor, on his hands and knees, the collar jerked his head back so that he was forced to look up into those fierce glowing orbs. "I'm going to fuck you, Lane. Those publicity shots are meant to tease, make your fans want to fuck you, or be fucked by you. Do you know how those pictures tormented me? How I wanted to fuck that fine ass of yours...how I wanted to taste your blood."

Lane saw those teeth again. Duriken grabbed his hair and yanked it back, then knelt behind him. He felt the prick of those razor fangs as if two

steel rivets were suddenly implanted into his neck. He struggled, but to no avail. After a few seconds, he went quiet, lulled into a trance, hypnotised by the sounds of the sucking and swallowing.

Then a strong arm latched around his throat and he was pulled up to his knees. Without warning, the thick cock plunged into his inner core, all the way, as deep as it could go and probably even deeper. He tried to cry out but the collar around his throat was being pulled tighter. The thrusting began, his entire body shuddering with the force of it. He felt weak from the loss of blood and if it hadn't been for Duriken holding him up by the collar, he would have fallen to his knees.

Suddenly the pressure on his windpipe lessened and he felt his entire body pulsate with pleasure. His cock was exploding as he felt Duriken go soft inside of him. His cock was still pumping as he dropped forward onto his knees, then flattened out on the floor. The chain attached shifted around to the front and landed beside him. He sighed, his entire body going slack as his eyes closed and he slept.

* * * *

Nigel hadn't moved from the moment Lane had started talking. He was both fascinated and

horrified by what he'd told him. "Then he made you...like him?" The words had to be forced from his lips.

"Not yet. I mean, it's a gradual thing. After that night, whenever the whim took him, he came for me. And eventually he let me drink just a little bit of his blood. The first time, I didn't want to. I fought him like a wild animal. He forced me. But after the first taste, I wanted more. I craved it. Then I felt myself changing."

"And now. Are you...?"

"No. I'm still alive. I'm still mortal." There was sob in his throat. "Nigel, my heart is beating and I don't want...I don't want to die..."

Nigel ignored Lane's warning and closed the distance between them. He pulled him roughly into his arms. "I won't let you die."

"I don't have a choice," he said, trembling, clinging to Nigel. "If I refuse to become...what he is, he will kill me. If I accept, well then..."

Nigel held him away, searching his eyes. They were normal. "There has to be a way to stop this."

"The only way to stop it would be to..." Lane lowered his voice to a mere whisper, "to destroy Duriken."

Nigel shuddered. "How? Is it like I've read? I mean, I can hardly believe...are you sure he's not just a man who thinks..."

"Nigel, you saw my eyes. Look," Lane opened

his mouth and showed Nigel the two sharp teeth which were just poking out of his jaw. "They get bigger."

Nigel fell silent.

"I'm not making this up. I know it's my fault, but now that I know what it's like, I don't want it. I see so much more now. I see the magic of life and..." he paused and met Nigel's eyes, "I see love. For the first time in my stupid, idiotic existence I see love, and I see it in your eyes."

Nigel's heart almost ceased to beat. Tears stung his eyes. "I would have never believed that you would say that. Do you know how I've dreamt of..."

Lane touched his cheek. "I would have never thought I'd say that to anyone either. Anyway, none of it matters if I can't find a way out of this, Nigel."

"We'll do it together, whatever it takes, but I think we need to consult someone."

"Who? Who in the hell can we consult?" Lane threw up his hands. "We just can't walk up to a doctor and ask him what I can take for this?"

Suddenly Nigel froze. His mouth opened and he began to tremble.

"What? What is it?" Lane asked.

"Alex? Did you kill...oh my God, Lane. Did you kill Alex?"

Lane hung his head. "I don't know. Nigel,

baby," he said, looking up at him, "please. I honestly don't know. If I did kill him, I didn't mean to."

"Did you see him that night? Were you in his room?" Nigel was breathless.

"That's just it. I wasn't in his room. I admit we fucked around a bit. I think I drank from him but..."

Nigel groaned.

"Hold on. He walked away after, that I know. And I was never in his hotel room."

"Could he have had just enough strength to make it to his room before he...you know...died?" Nigel felt his mouth go dry.

"Maybe. That's why you should go. I could hurt you. When I get this urge to drink blood, I..."

"You haven't hurt me yet."

"What about in the shower? Nigel, use your sense. I'm a...a..."

"You said it yourself. Not yet you're not. If destroying Duriken is what it takes to save you from this, then that's what we'll do. We just need to figure out how to do it."

"Yeah, right," Lane muttered.

Chapter 9

Nigel felt more than just a little uncomfortable huddled between Lane and Jeff in the back of the limousine on the way to the concert that night. Lane had been really tense after his confession, and Jeff looked really pissed off. The piece of pizza Nigel had eaten a half hour ago felt as if it were lodged somewhere halfway between his throat and his stomach. It wouldn't take too much to encourage him to puke it all up...preferably all over Jeff who was really pissing him off with his demeanour. Just before they had left the hotel, he had leaned over and hissed in his ear, "...enjoy your moment in his bed, punk. You're just the flavour of the week, and remember, it was me who was sucking his cock earlier."

He hadn't the time to reply because Lane had taken his hand at that moment and dragged him into the limo. Unfortunately, Jeff crawled in right after, which left him wedged between the two of them. Sandy and Tom sat across from them on the

other seat.

Nigel tried to ignore his uncomfortable position by letting his mind wander. Naturally it wandered immediately to vampires. *My God*. Nigel could hardly believe that he was thinking about vampires at all, but he was. There was no denying that Lane was afflicted by this Duriken, and that Duriken was not human. They would have to destroy this thing, but how? Garlic, holy water, crosses, stakes through the heart...Lord, maybe they'd have to cut off its head. He shuddered inwardly. This was surreal.

Nigel glanced at Lane. His eyes were closed. He looked pale and he'd been shifting around a lot. He wanted to ask him if he was alright but he didn't want to call attention to him. Suddenly, the sounds of screaming fans invaded his ears and the limo was surrounded. People were pounding on the vehicle, blocking the path to slow it up which caused the driver to lay on his horn and reduce his speed to a crawl. Women pulled up their tops, men displayed their cocks. Nigel's eyes flitted from one debauchery to another, while Lane and the other members of Thrill Seek didn't bat an eye.

Eventually the limo managed to enter the underground parking garage and the door began to lower. Security skirted the last enthusiastic fan away from the door before it closed, having to chase one of them around the parking lot for a few

minutes, before he was caught and half carried outside. "Holy shit," Nigel breathed. "Is that what it's always like?"

"Just about," Lane commented, opening his eyes.

Nigel checked his eyes quickly to make sure they weren't doing something freaky, and then let Lane pull him out of the backseat. Lane kept hold of his hand all the way, until they reached the back stage area. "I have to change, and tune my guitar," he said, releasing him.

"Cool. I'll stay out of the way."

"You can watch the show from back here or go down front with the security. I'll hail Jack, the stage manager, and get him to give you an access pass so no one hassles you, okay?"

"Thanks," Nigel said, leaning forward and kissing Lane briefly on the lips. "I love you," he whispered.

Lane smiled, blushing a little. He lifted a hand and disappeared into his dressing room.

It was exciting being backstage, watching the people scurrying around before the show, hearing the vibration of the crowd coming through the floorboards. When the band was finally ready to go on, Nigel stood watching them file past him, Lane trailing at the end. Nigel let out some air as he saw him. He looked horrible. Pale, and those eyes looked just slightly brighter than they should

have been. He took a chance and pulled him out of the line. "Lane, are you alright?"

He shook his head. "No. I feel like shit. I'm so weak and I almost took a hunk out of the hairdresser when he went to spray this shit in my hair."

"Maybe you just don't like hairdressers," Nigel suggested with a wiry grin, trying to make light of the subject.

"Nigel, I can taste it..." he lowered his voice, "the blood. I can see it almost pumping through peoples veins. I don't know if...what if I change right there on stage...in front of everyone...What if...?"

He was frantic. Nigel pursed his lips, thinking.

"Are you coming or not?" Jeff practically growled at him from where he stood a few feet away. "We're waiting for you, Lane. You can fuck the boyfriend later."

"Come with me a minute," Nigel said, pulling Lane forward into the dressing room. "I got an idea."

Nigel heard Jeff swearing as they disappeared into one of the dressing rooms, and Nigel shut the door.

"What are you doing?" Lane asked impatiently as he watched Nigel open the huge makeup kit on the dressing table.

"I'm going to make you a Goth."

"A Goth?"

"It's ingenious. If you change, people will think its part of the act, now sit down, and I'll do it."

* * * *

Lane was in shock when he looked at himself in the mirror less than fifteen minutes later. Nigel had applied white theatrical makeup to his entire face and rimmed his eyes with black. His mouth was also painted black, and his hair was covered with what looked like black lacquer. "Oh my fuck," he said.

"Put these on," Nigel urged, shoving black jeans and a loose fitting long black shirt at him. "Damn, too bad we don't have a Celtic cross."

"I thought vampires were supposed to be afraid of crosses," Lane protested, pulling on the clothes.

"You're not a vampire. You're a Goth."

"Oh. Okay. Shit, Nigel, don't come too close to me. I'm ravenous. I can smell the blood and..."

"Hold on, Lane. Just hold on. Maybe we can...I don't know..." Nigel took a step backwards. This was completely new and unexpected. He didn't know what to do. The blood bank? Maybe he could get some blood from...what in hell was he thinking? How in the hell could he do that?

Lane was already out the door. Nigel followed on his heels. Jeff was slumped in the corner, his

arms crossed, definitely pissed. When he saw Lane come out of the dressing room, he stood up, his eyes widening. "What the fuck? Is it Halloween?"

"Shut up," Lane said. "It's my new look. If you don't like it, then just piss off," he grunted. He squeezed by Jeff and headed in the direction of the stage.

* * * *

Duriken watched Lane on the stage with a renewed interest. How innovative. It was a perfectly splendid way to cover up the visible changes which were occurring. The drugged out fans seemed to love it, although Duriken was sensing negative vibes from the one called Jeff. He didn't like Jeff. He had even thought of draining the bastard, but that wouldn't be good for Thrill Seek, and Thrill Seek was going to be instrumental in increasing his wealth. Now, the one called Nigel was another thing. He was simply in the way, an obstacle to be disposed of when the time came.

Lane was singing some song now about pain. The guitar rift whined out the agony of something precious lost. Pain. He hadn't even begun to feel pain, not really. Duriken smiled. Tonight, he would change all that.

* * * *

The faces in the crowd began to swim in front of him. Lane wiped the sweat from his eyes, feeling his strength begin to drain bit by bit. He caught sight of Nigel standing to the left of the stage below, beside a burly security guard. He wanted to ask him if his eyes were glowing, but he didn't need to. He knew they were, and he could feel the sharp teeth began to protrude over his lower lip. The crowd roared. He stepped back, closed his eyes for a minute, telling himself to hold on. Tommy was standing at his left, his fingers poised on the keyboards. He gave Lane a questioning look. *I need blood. I need his blood.* Lane was drawn to him like a magnet. The sounds of the crowd faded into the background and Tommy's heartbeat thudded deafeningly in his ears. His jaw widened almost of his own volition, and Tommy shook his head, laughing. He thought it was a joke. He thought Lane was playing the part.

When Lane seized him by the hair, the jugular vein in Tommy's throat just about sprang out of his neck in front of Lane's eyes. He felt Tommy begin to struggle, laughter dying on his face. He was saying something but Lane couldn't hear him. The music ground to a halt, and then he felt someone pulling at him. Someone yelled, "Help me. Help me get him off stage!"

* * * *

Lane turned around, he was salivating, and he went instantly for Nigel's throat, who was trying to push him through the curtain and into the backstage area. Several pairs of hands tried to drag Lane backwards but he fought them all, his teeth clamping down on Nigel's flesh like a steel trap.

Nigel let out a cry. The pain was incredible. He called Lane's name several times trying to get him to come back to reality, but it was like he was possessed, his eyes horrifyingly bright. Security guards tugged and pulled at Lane without success, and were practically thrown off their feet when Lane finally released Nigel.

Nigel stumbled a bit, then with someone's help, stood upright. He watched as Lane wiped the back of his mouth with his hand, then abruptly swirled around and disappeared. Everyone was dazed. No one really could put in words what just happened. A medic tried to check Nigel's neck, but he shooed them away. He pulled his jacket up around him. No one needed to see the marks.

Jeff looked as if he were about to come over and ask some questions, so Nigel quickly left. Where in hell had Lane gone? Nigel was afraid, afraid that Lane would hurt somebody, kill somebody even. He closed his eyes as he approached the fire

door. Had Lane killed Alex? From what he had just been a party to, it was all together possible. He sighed. He loved him but, was loving him enough to get through something, that frankly was way beyond his understanding?

Nigel opened the door and stepped outside into the crisp night air, wincing from the pain shooting up into his neck. He took a few steps, then, suddenly felt a hand fall on his shoulder. Thinking it was Lane, he went to turn around but the hand clamped down harder, rooting him to the spot, and causing him to cry out. "Good evening, Nigel," a voice said, "I'm very pleased to meet your acquaintance."

Chapter 10

When Lane's eyes snapped open, they instantly caught sight of a movement. Following the path of a mouse scurrying across the dusty, cement floor; he suddenly reached out for it with his hand and scooped it up easily by the tail. He watched for a moment as it struggled helplessly. That was him. He was that mouse, struggling. Just as it quieted, seeming to accept its fate, Lane released it. It dropped to the floor with a startled squeak, then, disappeared into its previous hiding place. The thirst had quieted some. The pain seemed to linger far away in the distance, throbbing, pulsing, but not threatening to drive him mad like it had out there on that stage.

He was a monster, reduced to some fiend who existed only to drink blood. *Nigel*. Lane rose to his feet, wondering where Nigel was. Had he hurt him? Had he killed him like he had killed Alex? He looked around him. He was surrounded by concrete. No door. No window. *Nigel*. He was

near. But where?

"Duriken?" He called out. "Where are you? Do you plan to leave me here? What have you done with Nigel? Duriken! I know you can hear me. What have you done with..."

Lane took a step backwards as Duriken's voice suddenly filled the enclosure. "But, Lane, it was you who drank his blood, not me."

"He was fine when I left him, and..."

"Maybe I finished him."

Those four words echoed in Lane's head. "No," he whispered. "Please, say that you..."

"You really do care about that pathetic mortal, don't you?"

Lane leaned against the wall, closing his eyes. Yes, he cared. In fact, if he'd of met Nigel earlier, he might not have accepted Duriken's invitation at all. *I love him.*

"Nonsense," Duriken laughed, reading his thoughts. "A less than memorable fuck wouldn't have changed you, Lane."

"You tell me what you've done with Nigel!" Lane demanded.

"Nigel is fine."

"You're a liar."

"Maybe. Maybe not."

Lane bit his lip, the only thing saving him from losing his sanity was this feeling that Nigel was close to him, and that he was still alive.

"I'll do anything you want, Duriken. Just let Nigel go."

"I don't make deals."

"What in fuck do you want?"

"You, Lane. I want you of course, as do countless others. Why should I be any different than your fans?"

"Screw you. You're not my fan."

"Oh? You'd be surprised."

"Stop screwing with my head."

"It's not your head I intend to screw if the truth be known."

Lane sighed. "Just kill me, and get it over with."
There was silence.

When the silence became unbearable, Lane called out to the vampire again. Suddenly, there was a rattling above his head. His head shot up to see Duriken descending from the ceiling. In his left hand, he was dangling an unconscious Nigel by the neck. Lane let out a cry, wincing when Duriken literally threw Nigel's body into the corner. He took a step towards Nigel but Duriken put up a hand. "If you touch him, I'll kill him. You want to save him, then, you do what I say." Duriken's eyes blazed into Lane's.

Lane nodded. He had no choice. "You promise to let him go after and..."

"I promise nothing," he grinned, the tips of his fangs glinting.

"Then why should I..."

"Because if you don't, I'll kill him right now...right in front of you."

Lane uttered a jagged sigh. "What do you want me to do?"

"Take off your clothes," Duriken told him.

Lane swallowed and began to undo the buttons on his shirt. Duriken stepped forward and wiped at his face. "You look more like a clown than a Goth. The boyfriend's idea, I suppose?"

Lane pushed his hand away. "Yes, and a good one. It will save a lot of questions since I went berserk out there on the stage."

"Yes, but you never did have much self-control, like I said."

Lane sneered. "I don't think you can compare." He threw the black shirt aside, then, began to strip off the pants. He could see Duriken in front of him, waiting patiently.

When he finally stood there totally naked, Duriken came closer again. He placed his forehead against Lane's. "I want you to spend eternity with me," he whispered. "I am your slave."

"Slave?" Lane jerked his head away. "I think it's the other way around, isn't it? You have me right where you want me."

He laughed slightly, a terrifying sound, and put some distance between them again. Then he walked over to Nigel and picked him up in one

hand.

"What are you...?"

"No worries," Duriken said, coming back to him, and reaching out for his arm. "Just a change of location." Before Lane could utter any protest, Duriken whisked them both up and out.

* * * *

Lane landed on the floor of a room which looked as if it were ripe for the likes of torture. It actually looked like some sort of medieval dungeon with chains and a stretching rack, and what looked like a genuine suit of armour holding a huge axe posed in the corner. He shook his head to clear away the macabre image, then realised that Nigel was huddled on the floor only a few feet away. He crawled towards him, placing a hand on his calf. He said his name, then felt himself sliding across the floor away from Nigel.

Duriken had his arms secured in metal bracelets above his head before he was even half aware of what was happening. "Now, my love," Duriken whispered softly against his cheek, "now the real test begins."

* * * *

"I think this is my favourite song of yours, Lane,"

the voice was saying. Nigel could sense the movement across the floor. He could hear the click of the tape machine as the music started to play. A strong guitar riff...then Lane's raw, raunchy voice...*touch me with every desire...don't hold back...give it all...give me all you got, baby...tonight. I'm not afraid to die in your arms, I take the risk that it might drive us apart. To the edge I will go, anytime, my heart beat quickens...please say you are mine. Touch me with every desire...don't hold back...give it all...give me all you got...*

"Can you guess why it's my favourite, Lane?"

Nigel moaned. *Open your eyes. Open them now.* Lane was moaning. He wasn't sure if it was from pleasure or pain. He could hear him, even over the music which was blasting at full volume all around him.

"Choose to go on, Lane," the voice urged. "Choose it. If you want to save him, then let me feed you. Let me."

"Noooooooooooo!"

The scream which came from Lane's lungs finally forced Nigel's eyes open. He blinked and looked around. He gasped in horror as he saw Lane's naked body hanging in the corner, covered in blood. He was suspended by his wrists, his feet barely touching the floor. He twisted back and forth, trying to stay out of Duriken's reach. Nigel tried to rise to his feet.

"Run!" Lane cried out, suddenly looking at Nigel. "Get out of here, Nigel. Go!"

Duriken had a whip in his hand. He cracked it several times on the floor, then grinned over at Nigel. "There's no place to go, is there, Nigel? And really, you don't want to leave. You won't leave." Duriken looked at Lane. "He won't leave you."

"What will it take?" Nigel managed, on his feet now. The room spun a little. He swallowed the bile in his throat, glaring at the vampire standing less than a few feet away. "What will it take for you to let him go?"

"Nigel, go," Lane called out again, weakly.

"There is no letting him go. He wanted this. Didn't he tell you?"

Nigel trembled. "Maybe he wanted to find out what it was like to live forever. He's changed his mind."

"Too late," Duriken replied. "He's almost there. There's no going back."

"He's not like you." Nigel took a step forward defiantly.

"Yes, he is. One more step and he will have made the transformation."

"He's not like you..." Nigel repeated. "Yet." He glanced at Lane. Oh God, how he loved him. He couldn't lose him.

"Those two holes in your throat say differently," Duriken mocked.

"He'd never kill me. He loves me."

Duriken began to laugh, then he sobered, the laughter dying on his face as if he could just turn it off and on at will. "You care to bet your life on that? Literally?"

Nigel sucked in some breath, glancing at Lane, who appeared to have lost consciousness. Then he nodded.

"This should be fun," Duriken said, rubbing his hands together. He dropped the whip on the floor. The song faded out, and there was an ominous silence. "Usually I don't wager but this is such a sure bet, I'd be a fool not to."

"Let's do it," Nigel said, his chin up defiantly.

"Very well," Duriken appeared to grin, his white face taking on the look of a contented corpse. "Lane is desperately in need of blood. I've had a good long drink from him, not to mention the blood he's lost from the whip."

Nigel closed his eyes.

"You think he was wild on the stage when he tried to take a hunk out of the keyboard player, and then attacked you, you haven't seen anything yet. He's going to make a nice meal out of you. Shall I release him?"

"And if you're wrong? If he doesn't kill me?"

"We both know what you want."

"And?"

Duriken acknowledged his dark head. "I'll let

you both walk out of here."

"And Lane will return to normal?"

"He'll never be totally the same, but he won't crave blood if that's what you mean. Eventually some of the powers I've given him will disappear."

"That's what we want."

"Remember, boy," he added, "Lane now has all my powers. He has the power of hypnotism. He can render his victim powerless. He can seduce you without even touching you. The only thing he isn't, is immortal. That will come once I take his life."

"That's the final step. Then he will be like you."

"Correct."

Duriken walked over to the tape machine and fiddled around with it for a moment. "I'm just trying to pick the right theme music. What should I do with your body?" He turned, blinking innocently.

Nigel avoided his eyes.

Duriken shrugged as he reached up above Lane's head and undid the handcuffs. Lane fell in a heap on the floor. "He'll wake up soon enough," he said, heading for the door. "You might want to use this," he suggested, throwing Nigel the whip. "Could hold him at bay, buy you a few minutes."

Nigel kicked it to the side. "I...I won't need it."

"Brave, brave fool. How love makes a fool of

you mortals.”

Nigel glanced over at Lane. He was moving.

“Oh yes,” Duriken said, turning to smile at Nigel, “I chose the song, ‘Our Last Night.’ I thought it appropriate. Looks like the dead...oh...excuse me, the near dead, have arisen.” Then, he was gone.

Chapter 11

While the recording of Lane's deep baritone voice belted out the rock tune, 'Our Last Night,' Lane slowly rose to his feet. Nigel tried not to react when Lane slowly turned his face towards him. He didn't even look like Lane. The vestiges of the white makeup Nigel had put on him before he went out of the stage were still visible in places, but it wasn't that which terrified Nigel. It was the cold look in eyes which were filmed with red. Nigel knew what the red was. It was blood, and there were faint lines of it running down his cheeks.

It's the last night I will hold you...the last night you will smile at me. We are not the same, you and I...this is our last night together....

The words of that song struck a chill down Nigel's spine, especially since the man who was singing them was standing right there in front of him...at least what was left of that man. "What has he done to you?" Nigel whispered.

Lane moved his body slowly. He cocked his head when he heard the sound of Nigel's voice, then stared at him. Lane's mouth opened revealing the two sharp teeth. He threw his head back, and snarled almost like a dog. He reached out a hand, and when he did, Nigel saw the long, opaque nails. He began to salivate, and Nigel's eyes actually did go to the whip on the floor. He had to hope that there was something of Lane left in that body, because if he couldn't reach him, he knew that it would be indeed his 'last night.'

...touch me...touch my soul, baby...hold me close and maybe if you don't let go...but we're not the same...you and I...don't let this be our last night...noooo, baby...not the last night...

"Lane," Nigel said sharply.

He was still snarling, salivating now, looking at him as if he wanted to devour him, but he didn't move.

"Lane," Nigel said again. "Listen to me. We can beat him. We can beat Duriken. Fight it. Fight this, please. Please."

Then he spoke, his voice sounding almost like gravel. It wasn't Lane's voice. "I want only one thing from you, Nigel." He took a step. "I want to drink that luscious blood of yours. Right now, I can almost taste it. Come. Come to me."

Nigel avoided looking at his eyes.

"You know you want me, Nigel," Lane's voice

reached his ears but Nigel couldn't see his mouth moving. "You've always wanted me."

The guitar riff whined into the air, distracting Lane for a moment. He paused, listened.

Nigel shuddered, tears streaming down his cheeks. "I love you, Lane," he managed to say, paralyzed now in fear as Lane moved closer. "Lane, did you hear me? I said I love you."

Suddenly Lane's face was inches from his. His skin looked almost translucent, his blood red eyes fierce. "Yes, Nigel. I heard you," he said, placing his hands on Nigel's shoulders. "I'm glad you love me, because tonight you're going to die in my arms."

Nigel struggled as Lane tilted his head and revealed those fangs again. "Jesus, Lane," he shouted, "Lane." The song was dying in the background, Lane's voice fading out forever, and Nigel looked directly into those red eyes. "I know you," he said. "I know you. You're not a vampire, Lane. You can save yourself, Jesus, stop...stop, Lane. I love you. I fucking love you."

The teeth sank down into his neck. Nigel struggled to maintain consciousness. He reached out with his free hand and stroked Lane's hair. "I love you, Lane. I love you. I believe in you. You have the...the...the..."

* * * *

The blood tasted so good in his mouth. He let it stay on his palate, swishing it around a bit before sucking more of it. There was a touch, a hand moving over his hair, a faint voice, and a face. *Nigel*. The heartbeat was slowing, growing fainter. He felt the body grow limp in his arms. He held it closer. *I love you, Nigel. Listen to me. We can beat him. We can beat Duriken. Fight it. Fight this, please. Please. I didn't kill Alex. I didn't kill...Nigel...Nigel.*

The heartbeat was too faint, although it was still there. Lane lifted his head. Nigel's head had flopped backwards, his eyes still open, unseeing. "Noooooooo," he cried out, falling to his knees with Nigel. He smoothed back his hair. "No, no, no," he said, "breathe, breathe, baby," he said, feeling for his pulse. "Nigel, don't, don't...oh fuck, fuck." He lowered his mouth and placed it over Nigel's, trying to breathe the breath back into him. "You can't die. I won't let you..." Suddenly, he bit into his arm. The blood quickly rose to the surface. Lifting Nigel's head, he forced his bleeding limb to Nigel's mouth. When nothing happened, he shook him, again forcing his blood into Nigel's mouth.

"Guess he lost," Duriken said, appearing suddenly in front of Lane and Nigel's lifeless body.

Lane looked up at him, his eyes filled with bloody tears. "You bastard," he seethed, placing Nigel gently aside and standing up to face him.

"Now," Lane said, reaching over and picking up the whip off the floor, "you die."

Duriken began to laugh, but he took a step back. "So which one of your songs should we play for this scene?" he scoffed.

Lane wrapped the whip around his hand, and glared menacingly at Duriken. "How about 'The Hangman?'"

"Why that one?" Duriken tilted his dark head.

"Don't you know anything about the occult?"

He laughed.

"The Hangman is a card in Tarot." Lane took a determined step towards him. Duriken took another back.

"The Hangman sacrifices much to find the answers to his questions, sometimes even his own life."

"And how does it end?"

"Well," Lane narrowed his eyes. "Sometimes he realises that it's not worth it, that what he was looking for," Lane glanced over at Nigel and swallowed, "was there all along."

"How touching."

"Isn't it!" Lane sneered, and cracked the whip on the floor.

Duriken laughed. Lane lifted the whip and cracked it again, this time, winding it around Duriken's neck. "You think you can destroy me! You're an animal. You killed your own heart

and..."

Lane tightened the whip, cutting off Duriken's words. He knew it wasn't enough. His eyes went to the axe which was hanging off that suit of armour in the corner of the room.

Duriken was tearing at the whip around his neck, his eyes zeroing in on the same thing as Lane.

Lane grabbed Duriken by the throat, surprised at how strong he'd suddenly become, however he knew almost immediately that Duriken was stronger.

"It's too bad," Duriken whispered hoarsely against his ear, "we could have been so beautiful together, eating our way through this pathetic world." The teeth tore into Lane's throat savagely, and Lane closed his eyes. He wondered if he'd see Nigel again. Was there a heaven...probably not for the likes of him.

As Duriken drank, Lane saw flashes of the faces of each of Duriken's victims. Some of them were dressed in costumes from hundreds of years before. He saw him scrounging the battle fields, like a rat, finishing off the fallen. He saw himself, then, he saw Alex, alone in his room. He watched as Duriken drained the life blood from him, and he felt the grateful tears wetting his cheeks. *I didn't kill him.* He wanted to cry. He didn't kill Alex, but he had killed Nigel. He had killed the only thing

he'd ever loved. He felt his body weaken. He was fading. He was ready. He was ready to die.

* * * *

Someone was speaking his name. His eyes fluttered open. He looked around him. He was in a hospital, a bag of blood hanging above his bed. "I'm alive," he said softly.

"Yes, Mr. Carter, you certainly are," a beaming nurse told him. "How are you feeling?"

"Tired."

"That's natural. You lost a lot of blood in the accident."

"Accident?"

"You don't remember, do you?"

He shook his head slowly, looking around him.

"You had a bad drug reaction to some cold medication you were taking. You attacked someone at your concert, then, disappeared. Your car was found in the ditch a few miles from the concert hall. You were very lucky. You've lost some blood, but you'll be fine. Actually, if the doctor gives the word, you'll be going home tomorrow. The rest of the band is here. Would you like me to let them in?"

Lane narrowed his eyes. Was this a dream? *An accident, a reaction to cold medication?*

The nurse had disappeared. A few seconds

later, Jeff, Tommy and Sandy came walking in. They were all talking at once, saying how worried they were and so on and so forth. Lane heard the words but they weren't making much sense. Jeff came over and leaned down closer. "Get well," he said. "We need you." He gave him a brief kiss on the cheek.

Lane grabbed a hold of Jeff's arm. "I'm sorry, Jeff," he said. "I'm sorry for everything. I promise you things will be different now."

Jeff nodded. "No worries. We'll talk later. Get some rest."

The nurse returned, shooing them all out of the room. "Mr. Carter needs to rest. You can come back tomorrow and take him home," she said. They all left as quickly as they'd come, and Lane watched the nurse as she fussed around his pillow and checked the drip. "Okay," she said, "you rest. And Nigel said he'd see you tomorrow as well."

"Nigel." Lane reached out and gripped her wrist. "Did you say... Nigel?" He could scarcely breathe.

"Yes," she said, pulling away, rubbing her wrist with a strained smile. "You have a strong grip there, Mr. Carter."

"Sorry," he said absently. "He's alive? Nigel is alive?"

"He was when I saw him a few minutes ago. Now rest. I've given you something to help you

sleep."

She was gone, and Lane fought to keep his eyes open. *Nigel. Nigel was alive.* He opened his mouth, and with his finger, he felt his teeth. They seemed normal. Had it all been a bad dream? His eyes were closing again and he slept.

* * * *

Nigel was sitting by the bed, touching his hair when Lane opened his eyes.

Nigel smiled softly at him. "Hi, sleepy bear."

"Nigel, what...how...you..."

"I'm okay," he squeezed his hand. "Shush. Don't get excited. The only place you're allowed to get excited is in bed with me." He winked.

"Close the door," Lane said, his gaze skirting across the room.

Nigel got up, closed the door, and turned the lock.

"Okay, from the beginning," Lane insisted. "Where is Duriken, and why aren't we dead?"

"Duriken is no more. I hesitate to say dead because he was already dead..."

"Yeah, yeah...okay. How? How is it that he's...no more?"

Nigel placed his hands on his hips. "Easy. I'll

tell you. Your blood did the trick. I woke up and I felt pretty strong actually, and I saw Duriken," he paused, taking a breath, "I saw him...well I can't say it, but I knew I had to stop him, so I grabbed that axe and I..."

Lane's eyes widened. "You chopped off his..."

Nigel put up a hand. "Yes, and it took two attempts. Can we not talk about it? It was pretty gory."

"Okay. And what about this drug reaction and...accident story?"

"Well, I made that up," Nigel shrugged. "I think I should be a writer."

"Or a professional liar."

Nigel chuckled. "That's our story. You have to stick to it, okay? Otherwise there will be too many questions that you won't be able to answer."

Lane nodded. "You brought me here?"

"Yes."

"But how did you fake an accident? Where is the car and...?"

"As far as anyone knows, I took the car you borrowed back to its owner, an owner who cares to remain anonymous," he waved.

"And the cold medicine?"

"You can't take sinus stuff," Nigel shook his head. He laughed, then, took Lane's hand in his. "It explains everything, because no one would believe the truth. Just forget it now, Lane. It's over."

It's really over. Let's put it behind us."

Lane pulled him closer. "Kiss me then."

Nigel kissed his mouth gently. "I love you. I love you so much."

"Are you alright?"

"I'm fine," Nigel said, running his hand roughly over Lane's thigh, "but I'd really like to ah..."

"Here?"

"What better place?" Nigel teased. "The door's locked. Are you feeling strong enough?" Nigel glanced up to notice that the blood and other tubes had been removed.

"I feel fine," Lane said. "I'm supposed to be going home later today."

"The nurse told me late this afternoon. I'll be back to pick you up," Nigel said, slowly moving the blanket and sheet off of Lane's body. "Sexy nightdress," he licked his lips.

Lane laughed.

"Let's take it off," Nigel uttered a soft growl at the base of his throat, pulling at the material.

Lane sat up and undid the gown in the back. Nigel didn't waste any time. He dragged off his own clothes and threw them in a pile. Then he reached over and pulled the faded blue hospital gown off of Lane, tossing it with the other clothes on the floor.

Lane's eyes widened as Nigel crawled on top of

the bed and straddled him. "I want your cock," he said, meeting his eyes, then leaning over and brutally bruising his lips. At the same time, he took hold of Lane's cock and began to roughly handle it, squeezing and slapping it until it began to seriously stiffen. "Yeah," he moaned, two hands now pulling on Lane's cock, "look at that gorgeous piece of meat. I want that inside of me."

Lane moaned, moving his hips upwards. He was now seriously turned on. Nigel was moving his hips back and forth, making sure that Lane's erection came in contact with his balls. "We don't have any lube or..." Lane managed.

"Don't need any, baby," Nigel said, reaching up to play with his own nipples. He pinched them, running his hands down over his chest to his cock. Lane watched him as he licked his top lip, then wrapped a fist around his cock, pushing it down so that the head slid over Lane's shaft. One of Nigel's hands moved over his belly up to his chest where he played with Lane's nipples for a few minutes then bent his head down again to take Lane's mouth in a deep, sensuous kiss.

Lane felt both Nigel's hand now take hold of his cock as he sat back up straight. He rubbed it between his palms, applying some extremely pleasurable pressure. "You are so sexy, Lane. God, I've wanted you for so long. I can hardly believe I'm holding your cock in my hands, so big, so

beautiful. I want it inside me now."

Nigel moved up some, lifting himself so that he could position Lane's cock between the cheeks of his ass. "Umm," he said, moving Lane's cock head around until he hit the right spot.

Lane closed his eyes, biting down on his bottom lip. He dug his head into the pillow. "Fuck," he breathed. "God, Nigel..." Nigel was teasing him now, moving the head around his anus slowly, without letting it in.

"What, baby?" he asked seductively. "What do you want, baby?"

Lane reared upwards with his hips. Nigel laughed.

"Oh that," he said. "Umm, me too."

Lane felt his cock begin to enter Nigel. Nigel was guiding it very slowly up inside of him, causing Lane to groan slightly.

"Patience, Lane. Patience," Nigel hissed, his face contorting in pleasure. "You're halfway." Nigel rose up a little to give himself more leverage, then bore all the way down on Lane's cock.

Lane let out a cry and then Nigel met his eyes. "Come on, big boy, fuck me. Let it go and really fuck me."

Lane reached up and grabbed Nigel's hips. He began bucking up into him, wanted to fuck harder but it was still Nigel in control in this position.

Nigel let him go for awhile, keeping his hips stagnant as Lane pushed in and out. Then, he pressed Lane's shoulders back to the mattress and smiled at him. "Okay stud, my turn." His hands on Lane's thighs, Nigel rode his cock in a frenzy of wanton need. Lane could do nothing but watch him in fascination. Nigel suddenly threw his head back and howled like a banshee, cum squirting up out of his cock. He then swung up off of Lane and grabbed his erection in his fist. Frantically, he jerked him the rest of the way off.

Lane let out a shout as he exploded, and Nigel collapsed on top of him, moaning as he ran his hands over his chest and kissed his throat. "Baby," he said. "That was sweet."

"You're sweet," Lane said, petting Nigel's hair.

Nigel engaged his lips in a lingering kiss, then, got off of him with a reluctant sigh. "Guess I should get going. The nurse is going to be pounding down the door soon. I'll be back to get you this afternoon," he said, pulling on his clothes.

"Okay. Come in the limo."

Nigel nodded. "Okay. Think Jeff will okay it?"

"Sure he will."

Nigel paused as he did up his pants. "You're not planning on performing tomorrow night, are you?"

"Why not? I just had an Amazon fuck, didn't I?"

He grinned. "Is that what it was?" He paused suddenly as they both heard pounding on the door. Nigel laughed, then reached over and unlocked it. "Here comes that bossy nurse."

The door rattled open, and she looked perplexed. "Was the door locked?"

"No," Nigel lied.

"That's odd," she murmured. "I'm sorry but you'll have to go now. The doctor is on his way to see Mr. Carter."

Nigel gave her a little salute, then turned and blew Lane a kiss. "See you later," he said. "Why don't you call the suite and tell me when you're ready?"

Lane agreed.

As Nigel walked down the hall, there was a little bounce in his step. He was full of energy and he couldn't wait for Lane to come out of the hospital. He loved him so much. There was nothing or no one who could ever separate them now. Nigel pushed open the front door of the hospital and sang a Thrill Seek song under his breath as he walked down the street. *Nothing will ever be the same now...now that I know the secret...you and me, babe, making love...for always...*

Suddenly, he was forced to come to a stop. There was a huge transport truck blocking his way. It was slowly backing up over the sidewalk right in front of the hotel. Nigel glanced around

him. There was no one in sight. He grinned, then flew up in the air, easily scaling the semi-trailer, and headed for the hotel entrance.

*Coming soon by D. J. Manly to
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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!

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