

Hellbourne

Heart & Soul

Amber Kell

A Literary Road Press Publication

Literaryroad.com

6523 California Ave SW, #193

Seattle, WA 98136

ISBN: 978-1-934037-66-9

Copyright © 2009 Amber Kell

Cover design by RDF

Photos provided by Stock Exchange & Istockphoto

This book may not be reproduced in whole or in part by email forwarding, copying, fax, or any other mode of communication without author or publisher permission.

This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places and incidents either are the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, events or locales is entirely coincidental.

Luc woke in a pocket of heat so intense he thought for a moment he was already back in hell. As he tried to focus his sleepy eyes he realized why he was so warm. Bran was spooning him from behind while Nikko lay before him, not touching, but close enough he could feel the vampire's body heat. Lying between them was like sleeping in a furnace.

Luc's sweat-slicked skin dripped on the cushions. He needed a shower, bad. Careful not to disturb his lovers, Luc eased himself from Bran's hold, stood up and climbed off their makeshift bed.

As he got to his feet he could feel his body pulsing with from their evening of sex. Sex magic was one of the most powerful ways of recharging. From the power coursing through his body like an electric current, Luc knew the ceremony had worked, but at what price? Looking back at the men lying on the cushions reminded him why he felt a little ill. How could he enjoy himself when he traded his relationship with Bran to lay with Nikko?

In all the years they were together, he had never brought another into their relationship and Nikko didn't want this as a one time thing. To Nikko, Luc was partly his and Luc couldn't in good conscience deny him but he knew there was no way the alpha wolf would share his mate, no matter what he claimed before the ceremony.

Bran wasn't the type to share and trying would only fracture the already tenuous relationship they'd rebuilt after Bran dumped him for a female. Luc and Bran's relationship had some patching up to do and Luc had a feeling Nikko wouldn't do anything to help the relationship between Bran and Luc along. The vampire master made no bones about how much he wanted Luc for himself.

With a soft kiss on Bran's cheek Luc went to take a shower.

Luc stripped and turned on the faucet, waiting for the water to reach a scalding temperature. Pleased with the steam level, Luc stood under the shower to soak his hair, closing his eyes to protect them from the water. His head hit the tile when a pair of strong arms enveloped him.

"Oops, sorry love." Bran's deep voice eased Luc's tension.. "I wanted to give you one last power boost."

Looking through the water, Luc saw that the alpha wolf's eyes didn't match the jovial tone he was projecting.

Bran was scared.

Luc leaned in and kissed his lover. "No matter what happens to me, my love, I will always return to you."

"I know." Bran whispered. "But I can't stand knowing that they torture you every year and there's nothing I can do about it. I'm the alpha wolf. I should be able to protect my mate. You're in a league of your own my sweet and I'm not powerful enough to protect you from the bad guys in your life."

Luc stroked Bran's cheek. A tender gesture that always made his wolf's eyes shine with adoration. "Show me how much you love me and I'll take your love down with me to the depths of hell."

Bran lifted Luc from the tub, forcing him to wrap his legs around his lover in order not to fall.

“No matter what they do, remember me and I’ll help you through.”

Luc knew that Bran believed that. His lover didn’t know the trials he went through. If he even had a hunch, Bran would’ve found a way to lock Luc up, away from his relatives.

Their love making was slow and easy not their usual hot claiming. It was as if Bran was trying to soak up the moment. Slow kisses and sensual touches eased Luc’s tension. When Bran finally entered him, Luc felt immersed in Bran’s spirit as if they could never separate their two auras again.

With slow measured strokes, Bran pumped Luc, his cock sending him into ecstasy.

Bran whispered in Luc’s ear, “You are mine. And no matter what they do, they can never take that away from us.”

But Luc could feel the desperation in Bran’s act. On some level, Luc knew his lover was saying goodbye in case this was their last time together.

Twenty minutes later Luc was clean and dressed, wearing a pair of jeans and a t-shirt he got as a gift from the pack years ago. It was blood red with the words *The Devil Made Me Do It* in bright white letters. Somehow it seemed appropriate for his upcoming day. Bran had gone to get some food from the kitchen and Luc was too anxious to sit. He idly paced across the antique rug, wondering how long it would take to wear a path in it.

Luc’s skin sizzled and the smell of marshmallows alerted him that he was no longer alone.

“Hello Michael.” Luc said without turning around. He wondered if anyone ever had the gall to tell the alpha angel that he smelled like marshmallows.

“Hello, Baby Luc.” Michael’s deep voice vibrated up Luc’s spine. It was always nerve racking to be so close to that much power.

Slowly he turned around to face the archangel. The man towered over Luc, his white wings on full display. In his hands he held Luc’s guitar.

“My guitar!” Luc shouted, reaching for the instrument. “I know Jerrod retrieved it from Nikko’s club but I’ve been too busy to play.”

Michael lifted it out of reach. “It is imperative that you take this with you when you go and don’t let them part you from it.”

“Why?” Every year Luc asked and every year Michael didn’t answer so he was surprised when the angel responded.

“Your father won’t be easily persuaded to return you to this realm. From what you tell me he is eager to have you stay. Keep the guitar as close to you as possible at all times, it could be your salvation.”

Luc shrugged and took the guitar. It glowed brightly in the lamplight. The instrument was a gift to Luc on his eighteenth birthday by the angel Gabriel. Every year he took it to hell and every year he brought it back. Luc smiled when he stroked the golden instrument. The guitar was made from some extinct tree that Luc had long forgotten the name of.

“Promise me.” Michael’s deep voice demanded.

“I promise.” Luc slid the strap over his head. “They’ll be coming for me soon. Don’t forget *your* promise.”

Michael’s large hands clasped Luc’s shoulders. “I promise to sever your link to Bran if it looks like you won’t be coming back.”

“And if I come back tainted?”

The chill in Michael's eyes was both reassuring and frightening. "I will destroy you so completely that even your father can't bring you back."

Luc let out a breath he hadn't realized he was holding. "Thank you."

Michael placed a kiss on Luc's forehead. "For luck." He glanced over to where the Nikko was still sleeping. "What do you want me to do about the vampire?"

Luc shrugged as he stepped back from Michael's embrace. "Nothing. I think he'll be fine without me."

"You don't believe the two of you are mates?"

Luc's gaze at the master vampire. Nikko's gorgeous body was only partially covered by the sheets leaving a great deal of smooth, silky skin exposed. "I think he wants a mate so badly that he'll take the first person he feels a connection to. But no I don't think we're mates."

"Then you're wrong." Michael's eyes glowed as if he was looking into Luc's soul. "You are mates but not in this time. The three of you are joined souls but souls only properly linked in twos. Now is the time for you and Bran. Once Bran's place on this earth is through, your soul will link with Nikko's until Bran's soul is reincarnated."

Luc held back his tears. "So I'm going to continually lose my lovers and have to find them again?"

Michael placed a finger beneath Luc's chin and lifted until they were eye to eye. "No relationship can last centuries without change. You are lucky enough to have the two mates of your heart forever. You were never meant to meet Nikko during Bran's lifetime so it makes me wonder whose hand is dabbling in your life."

Luc sighed. "It doesn't matter because we met and now he thinks he should have part of me."

"Get through your punishment in hell and I'll see what I can do on this end. Make sure you come back whole."

Luc nodded. "I'll do the best I can."

With a final kiss on Luc's forehead, Michael vanished in a cloud of dust.

"He always knew how to make an exit." A deep voice beckoned from behind. Luc spun around to see Bran standing in the doorway with a tray of food.

"You could've come in instead of lurking by the door."

Bran shrugged. He brought the tray to the living room table before giving Luc a light kiss on the lips. "I didn't want to interrupt in case he came to give you information to help with your ordeal. Interesting thing about the vamp."

Luc nodded but he could feel sadness choking him, a ball of tears clogging his throat. He didn't know if he wanted to survive incarnation after incarnation of his beloved wolf. He was greedy and wanted to keep the one he had.

Bran took Luc into his arms, holding his lover close. Luc inhaled. The scent of Bran permeated deep into his lungs. Even in the depths of hell he could still smell that intoxicating combination of wildness and spice.

"He can have you in the next life. In this one you're mine." Bran said before taking Luc's mouth in a perfect kiss. It was the kind of kiss that only appeared in dreams. The slow slide of Bran's tongue sent spikes of desire through his body as his arms wrapped protectively around him. Luc knew they didn't have time for any more sex but he cherished the warm flood of desire flowing through his body. When the alpha pulled back Luc knew that if that was the last embrace he will ever have, it was perfect.

Luc knew his brother had arrived when he felt the flash and fire heating his backside. "Greetings, Galthine." He didn't need to turn around to know which of his brothers came to fetch him. Galthine was the only one of his brothers powerful enough to punch a hole through dimensions.

Luc could do it at the age of five. Another reason his brothers hated him.

Bran's chest vibrated, a deep growl growing inside.

"Down puppy." Galthine taunted.

Luc placed a tender kiss on Bran's cheek. "I'll see you later."

Bran gripped Luc's upper arms, giving him a gentle shake until Luc met the were's eyes. "I *will* see you later." Bran demanded.

Breaking away from his lover's embrace, Luc turned towards Galthine. The demon stood before an open doorway awash in flames. Giving one last longing look at his lover, Luc walked through the doorway.

He emerged in his father's throne room. Four of his five brothers stood around Lucifer: Sault, Tavo, Lain and Freen stood two on each side of the devil's chair of bones. Some people thought the chair was made from the bones of humans who annoyed Lucifer, but Luc knew the horrible truth. They were the bones of the other angels who'd fallen with him.

The only way to insure you were king of hell was to get rid of the competition.

So Lucifer killed his brethren and magically enchanted them into the throne so they could never reassemble and challenge him for hell. If you looked closely on the back of the chair you could see the bones of wings.

Luc was careful to never look at it directly when his father wasn't sitting in it.

"Greetings, Luc." The devil said with an evil grin.

Luc looked up at his father. Despite the pleasant smile on his stunning face, Lucifer's eyes told the real story. His father was determined to keep him here. Leaving this time would take a lot more effort.

"Greetings, father." Luc gave a low elegant bow. One always bowed to the devil especially if you didn't want to. Lucifer kept a jar of ashes by his throne. They were the remains of those who refused to bow before him. Their screams often filled the throne room until it drove petitioners mad.

One of Luc's goals in life was to never give his father a reason to add him to the ash jar.

"I'm giving you one more chance to voluntarily agree to join my ranks as my right hand man."

Luc kept his head down and his eyes on the black marble floor. He could feel the glares of his brothers searing into him. They slaved for their father to gain the attention and respect Luc got just by being alive.

"I respectfully decline."

Lucifer's laugh was enough to chill Luc's blood.

"Respectfully?" The devil laughed again. "You are such a sweet boy. It's a shame we have to break you before you can be my top hell lord."

The devil's voice was filled with remorse. Luc would've believed him if he didn't see the emptiness in his eyes.

“Let’s see.” Lucifer tapped his chin like he was thinking things over. “Let’s go by age, youngest to oldest. Sault first, then Tavo and Lain. I know how much they enjoy torturing together. Then Freen and we’ll save Galthine for last. You each have one hour to persuade him. That good for you boys?”

The five agreed. Luc rolled his eyes. It wasn’t as if any of them would dare to disagree. Sault headed down the marble stairs, his one eye flickered with an unnatural light as if there were fireflies trapped in his pupils. Luc shivered with unease. Sault was usually the easiest on him but he didn’t think it would happen this time.

“Let’s go.” Sault said as he reached Luc’s side. Of his brothers, Sault looked the most like Luc and Lucifer. But Sault’s hair was more white than gold and his skin was bronze. Rumor was that when he was born Lucifer was annoyed with Sault’s imperfections and said that if he was going to have a bad copy he wanted it to be completely ruined. It was a miracle that Sault wasn’t killed at birth. Luc knew that his own looks were a source of anger for his brother.

Sighing, Luc turned to follow Sault.

“Just a moment Luc.”

Shit.

Reluctantly he turned to face his father again.

“Just to make things interesting this year I’m removing your healing powers. Your brothers won’t have to work so hard if they don’t have to redo everything their predecessor did before.”

Luc turned pallid. The only thing that kept him surviving each year was his ability to heal all the damage done to him from brother to brother.

Before he could say a word, Lucifer waved a hand and Luc felt something drift away from his body. A piece of his abilities lifting away. Feeling increasingly vulnerable Luc turned to see his brother’s wide smile.

“Come baby brother and let’s have some fun.”

“I have a feeling my idea of fun and yours are not the same.” Luc said.

“Luc.” His father’s voice stopped him right in the entry way. He didn’t bother to turn.

“I really like your shirt.”

“Thanks.”

Luc followed Sault through unfamiliar hallways of stone walls and marble floors. “Reorganized since I left?”

“Hell hasn’t reformed for you yet.” Sault said as they continued their trek.

Luc stumbled on a jutting rock. “What do you mean?”

“It reforms every year when you come.” Sault stopped and looked back at his brother. “How could you not know that?”

“I thought it liked that shape. I didn’t think it had anything to do with me.”

Sault gave a bitter laugh. “Didn’t you know everything has to do with you?”

“Sault.” Luc started.

“Forget it Luc. Let’s get this over with. I have other things I want to do today but if I don’t give my best effort father will hear of it and take my other eye.”

Sault lived under the devil’s threat; to blind him at any time. Luc would’ve felt more sympathy for Sault, had his brother avoided torturing him every year. When they were children Luc and Sault had played together but Lucifer never let Sault know he was an

imperfect copy. Luc was perfection. Eventually Sault's anger drove a wedge between them.

They ended their walk in a cool white chamber. It was completely empty with a white concrete floor and blinding white walls. It was like being in the middle of nothing.

"You redecorated." Luc smirked.

"Just for you baby brother, just for you." Sault muttered an incantation. A platform rose from the floor and a pair of manacles descended from the ceiling. For a moment Luc thought of bolting but he knew the repercussions of not taking his punishment. Holding back his sigh, Luc headed for the platform.

"Strip first."

Nodding, Luc propped the guitar against one white wall before stripping off his clothing.

"What is it about you and that guitar? You lug it around here every year and you have yet to use it for anything? Is it a weapon?"

Luc shook his head. "It's just a guitar."

"Hmm." Sault gave it one more look but didn't mention it again. He waited until Luc stripped and stood on the dais. "Nice necklace. I'll let you keep it on, it gives you a slave boy air that I find quite enchanting." He quickly fastened the manacles on each of Luc's wrists before stepping off the dais.

Walking over to one wall he pressed a button Luc had missed in his first scanning of the room. The wall rotated. On the other side was a large assortment of torture devices. Covering the wall in a tidy array were whips, knives and blunt instruments..

Luc swallowed his fear, closing his eyes to try and center himself. He could do this. He had to return to his lovers. Unfortunately, one of the rules was he had to keep conscious or he would have to forfeit. This was the first year where that was a real possibility.

"Father banned me from marking your face, so your eyes are safe."

Over the years, Sault's favorite taunt was that he was going to take Luc's eyes so that Lucifer could see a marred image of himself. But Lucifer always was careful to tell his sons that Luc's face was sacred and any damage would be reflected permanently on the offender. It kept Luc's face from total destruction, however the rest of his body was free for mutilation.

"Father told me you if I don't punish you properly, he'll kill my lover."

Luc was surprised that his cold brother had taken a lover, but in hell you didn't have to be a nice guy to get someone to fuck you.

"We both know you will come out of this just fine one way or another. Father won't let you get killed, but he has no such problem with my lover." Sault said snapping a metal tipped whip through the air.

"It doesn't mean I'm going to look forward to this." Luc said. He fought his instinctive cringe when Sault slid the whip across the floor. The scrape of metal against the concrete floor reminded Luc of all the other times he'd been the recipient of this whip.

Luc closed his eyes. Sometimes it was better not to see what was coming. That didn't stop him from listening though. A whistling in the air warned him seconds before his skin was flayed; when he felt the warm, wet trickle of his blood flowing down his back.

Luc screamed as the whip fell again and again. He hoped Michael remembered his promise because the chances of him surviving this time weren't favorable.

"Don't worry brother this will hurt me much more than it will hurt you."

Luc hissed as the whip ripped into his flesh again. "Somehow I doubt that." He gasped.

* * *

"He'll never love you, you know." Bran said casually.

Nikko flashed him a fanged smile. "I don't need his love as long as I get everything else."

"You just keep telling yourself that." Bran growled. I know you were listening to Michael. You weren't even supposed to meet Luc yet."

Nikko shrugged to hide his annoyance. He didn't like the fact that Luc was supposedly Bran's this time. He went to the bar and poured himself a glass of red wine. He saw Carn standing in the doorway listening to them but he didn't care. The demon would stand by whomever Luc chose. "What's to say an accident won't befall you and poor Luc will be all alone and having to cry on my shoulder."

Bran growled deeply. "Because if anything happens to me, Luc will kill you. He might look like a fragile boy but he can crush you if he chooses. And trust me if I'm dead he'll be very angry."

Nikko laughed. "Luc wouldn't hurt a fly. The most he could do would be to drown me with his tears." The vampire held up his hands. "I adore the man but he's not exactly butch."

"What part of potential hell lord didn't you understand?" Bran said flashing his fangs.

"He killed those demons for you." Carn said stepping into the room.

"What demons?" Nikko asked.

"The Pithel that came while you were gone."

Nikko walked over to the red-skinned creature. "Why didn't I hear about this?"

Carn shrugged. "Luc asked your people to keep it quiet."

"What happened?"

"They came demanding your territory and Luc informed them they had the wrong place. One of them objected so Luc tore out his heart. End of discussion."

"Huh?" Nikko took a drink of wine. "Looks like me and the pretty boy are going to have a little chat when he gets back."

* * *

A punch to the back had Luc arching to avoid the strike. It was difficult to do when a punch from the front jerked him back. The twins were double teaming him. After Sault whipped the skin off his body he dragged Luc and his guitar over to the twins' chambers.

The dual demons liked to use their fists. They said it added a more personal touch.

Tavo punched him again from behind and Lain in front. Each time they let out a grunt like prizefighters that made a particularly good hit. He was certain some internal bleeding was involved.

"How are you doing Luc?" Tavo asked placing his punch right in the base of Luc's spine. "Ready to give up yet and tell father you'll join us."

“No.” Luc said through gritted teeth. He was certain there would be solid black bruise across his entire body.

The pair looked at Luc with merciless eyes. Identical twins were rare in the demon world, so they were considered quite a catch by the other demons in hell. With their black hair, yellow eyes and golden skin they were handsome to demon kind. But Lucifer never let them forget that they didn’t favor him. Their mother had been a demon concubine that he killed after she gave birth to the twins. According to Lucifer she’d outlived her usefulness.

“We don’t want you to join us anyway.” Tavo said.

“We’d rather kill you.” Lain agreed flashing a pointy-toothed smile. “But father won’t let you die so it’s rather pointless.”

“But it doesn’t matter because this time he’s not letting you go.”

“Wh-what?” Luc gasped out between hits.

Tavo stopped punching to stand next to his twin. “Awww, didn’t you know. Father has decided to keep you this time so you might as well give in. He’s not going to let you go back to your handsome wolf. But I bet he’d let you have all the demons you’d like.”

“The best part about this, is that you aren’t even competition because you’ll only want the males.” Lain looked quite pleased that he’d figured that out on his own.

For the first time, Luc couldn’t see any light at the end of the tunnel. Misery wrapped Luc in its dark embrace. He would be truly trapped.

“I think we’ve lost his attention.” Tavo said.

“No problem.” Lain lifted his foot and slammed his heel into Luc’s upper thigh, smiling when he heard a loud crack.

Luc screamed.

“See, now we have his attention.” Lain smiled.

Freen was waiting in his torture chamber when Luc was carried in.

“What’s up with the guitar?”

Tavo shrugged as Lain put Luc on the torture seat. It was a reclining leather chair that Freen had custom designed for his victims. As a chair it was remarkably comfortable with good back support and padding. If you didn’t notice the arm and leg shackles you would think it was a luxurious piece of furniture.

Freen set Luc’s hands on the arms and flicked the shackles over until his wrists were pinned to the leather arms.

There was nothing remarkable about Freen’s appearance. He looked more like an accountant than a hell lord. Freen’s mother had been human and he’d inherited none of Lucifer’s amazing looks or powers. He made up for his ordinariness by being the best torturer the devil had. His plain face hid the soul of a true sadist.

He shook his head sadly at the twins when he saw Luc’s condition. “You didn’t leave me much to work with. He’s already so damaged a lot of my artistry will be lost. Freen prided himself on creating carved designs on his victims. Some of them were quite beautiful if you overlooked the hours of torture used to create them.

“Not our problem.” Lain said. The twins walked out the door before Freen could complain any further.

Freen gave Luc a scowl. “What’s up with the guitar?”

“I always bring it.”

“Yeah but you usually put it in your room.”

Luc nonchalantly explained, “It soothes me.” He was hoping that his brother didn’t try to destroy it. Luc was pretty certain that Gabriel bespelled it so it couldn’t be destroyed but he wasn’t positive and he didn’t want Michael angry if it was destroyed.

Freen laughed. “Well by all means let’s make sure you’re soothed while I torture you.” He picked the guitar up and set it on the table next to his assortment of torture implements. “There now you’ll feel all better.”

He chuckled while he picked up his favorite flesh slicing knife. “Do you know that our father had a new set of knives made for me just for this event? I want you to know how very grateful I am to you for that. These are never dull and will always magically clean themselves after a torture. Best quality around.”

His plain brown eyes lit with an unnatural glee, they looked like doll’s eyes. “I hope that you appreciate my technique. I’d love to be your chief torturer when you become Lucifer’s right hand man. There’s a lot of competition in hell you know and a little nepotism never hurt.” Freen chuckled. “Well it will hurt *you*.”

Luc felt the cold blade slicing into his stomach followed by indescribable pain. To keep his sanity he concentrated on Bran; remembering Bran’s kiss, reliving Bran’s touch, inhaling Bran’s scent. He trusted his love to get him through.

* * *

“He’s not worthy of you, you know.” Galthine smiled.

Luc could see the pleasure in his brother’s eyes as he looked at Luc hanging by manacles. His body was a mass of bloody cuts, bruises and bits of hanging flesh. There was very little that didn’t hurt and Luc was hanging on to his sanity with the last thread in his arsenal; his devotion to Bran. He didn’t want to disappoint his lover. Bran would be heartbroken if Luc didn’t return, not to mention what would happen with Jerrod and Carn. Luc still had hopes the two of them would get together but that would never happen if they were pulled into the depths of hell after him.

Luc gritted his teeth as Galthine jabbed at one of his open wounds.

“That must really hurt especially since you can’t heal.” Galthine’s face had the first smile Luc could ever remember seeing. It sent tremors of fear down his spine.

Luc could feel each cut and bruise on his body but he didn’t need to wonder how he looked because there was an enormous mirror opposite him, an added dimension to his torture. He wondered idly what would happen if he never healed. Would Bran still love him and his scarred body?

I can survive. I can survive.

Luc replayed the words over and over again in his head. It was his mantra for getting out of hell. If he showed any weakness to any of his brothers at any time they would move in for the kill.

He wasn’t going to be stuck here. He’d promised Bran.

His attention snapped back to Galthine when the demon placed a hot brand onto his leg.

Luc screamed. It wasn’t just hot; Galthine had laced the brand with poison so that when he stuck it to Luc’s leg it seared into his skin along with the brand. Luc could already feel his leg going numb. Luc tried to stay awake.

“Pay attention!” Galthine snapped.

Galthine calmly placed the brand back against the wall like a gentleman would his walking stick.

“I can’t believe you would go through all this with a wolf that would toss you aside so easily.” Galthine laughed bitterly. “After all those years together he didn’t even wonder about his sudden yearning for a litter of pups.” The demon picked up a spear with his right hand and pierced Luc’s left leg with one powerful thrust.

Luc’s mouth gushed with blood as he bit his tongue, holding back his screams.

Galthine’s words suddenly sunk into his pain-fogged brain. “You entranced Bran.” He forced through his cracked, puffy lips.

Galthine laughed. “Yes and you didn’t even stay and fight for him. It wasn’t that much of a compulsion. I was testing you to see how strong your love was.” The demon shook his head sadly. “You didn’t even put up a resistance. You fought harder for that damned vampire with the Pithel demons than your soul mate.”

“You sent the Pithel demons?”

It was all starting to make sense. He had to survive this if only to tell Bran how very sorry he was.

“Don’t worry about your little puppy. He won’t have time to mourn you. After I get done here I’m taking a few of my men and wiping out everyone in that little house of yours. I’ve learned that your misery has a fabulous energy. I’m going to live off of that for a long, long time.”

Anger surged through Luc, stronger than any that came before. There was no way he was going to let *anyone* touch his lover.

Bran had to survive.

Galthine leaned forward and whispered in Luc’s ear. “Before I kill him, I’m going to fuck him and find out why you’ve been so loyal all of these years. He must be a great piece of ass since you could have any male on the planet. And don’t bother going to father. He encouraged me to help you break your earthly ties.”

“It will be so much fun.” Galthine purred.

The ember of anger flared until Luc could only see a glow of white before his eyes. Images of Galthine touching his lover crossed Luc’s mind until he wanted to kill something. To slash anything between him and what was his.

“That’s it.” Galthine laughed. “Think of me and your pretty wolf. I could use a new pet since the last one killed himself to be free of me.”

Luc’s brain went primal and memories of Galthine’s last pet, a pretty blue-skinned demon, played in the back of his mind, like a film.

“Maybe I’ll make him shift and then skin him for a new rug.”

Luc felt something in his brain snap.

Must protect. Must protect Bran.

He pinned his brother with a fiery look of hate. For the first time in his life, Luc saw a new expression in his brother’s eyes.

Unadulterated fear.

“No one touches my wolf.”

The manacles hissed and fell to the ground like shards of glass.. Luc fell three feet and walked across the sharp pieces barefoot towards his brother.

“No one!” He said, his powerful voice echoed throughout the room. The floor shifted and the walls shook with his fury. “You will never touch my wolf or anyone else who is mine.”

As he walked, Luc’s vision cleared and the brands, cuts and whip marks disappeared from his body. Unaware, he marched up to his brother. “And if you ever do I will banish you to the void forever.”

The void was the ultimate threat. Few things ever reappeared from the corridor between heaven and hell and the ones that did generally killed themselves within the first few minutes.

In the void there was nothing except your own mind and some people’s minds were a frightening place.

Galthine’s laugh was more nervous than mocking. “You don’t have the power to access the void.”

Luc was caught off guard. Galthine was right. Only his father and the angels had the ability to open the void, but in that moment he knew he also could open the place that even angels feared to tread.

“Don’t bet on it.” Luc said. “Now I think it’s time to find father and tell him that you all failed.” He knew that his smile was miles from nice. “I wonder what he has in mind for punishment.”

Galthine paled.

After grabbing his guitar and waving to his brother, Luc walked out the door. How did he heal? Did father take pity on him after all?

It didn’t take long to reach Lucifer. The halls of hell repositioned themselves to give him the most direct route. Obviously he wasn’t the only one who wanted him gone.

Luc tried to convince himself he was hurt, but couldn’t. His father was in his usual perch on his throne of bones.

Lucifer eyed his offspring as Luc walked to the bottom of the stairs leading to the devil’s throne. He gave his father a low bow.

“I see they failed once again.”

“Yes.” Luc said simply.

“I’ll have to think of suitable punishments for them.” Lucifer said. The smile he gave Luc had more teeth than usual. “Now, my dear son, I suppose you think I’m going to let you go now that you’ve survived your brothers once again.”

Luc frowned. “That is the agreement.”

“It was.” Lucifer gave another disconcerting smile. “But did you verify the rules before you came through the portal.”

Shit.

The number one rule of hell was to verify the rules before entering. Since they did the same routine each year, Luc had grown lax and hadn’t verified the rules before going through the portal.

There was no way this was going to end well.

“So instead of sending you back into the bosom of your lovers and friends they are going to have to come here to claim you.” Because there was no way his lovers could retrieve him, Luc knew he would spend an eternity trapped in hell.

“He’s taking too long.” Bran said pacing the floor.. He bit at one nail as he looked once again at the clock. *Step, step, check the time, step, step.*

Nikko looked up from his book, his eyes following the pacing werewolf. “What do you mean?”

“He means it’s almost two in the morning. Every other time Luc was back by midnight.” The deep, familiar voice of the Archangel Michael filled the room.

Bran turned around to meet the fathomless eyes of the angel. Over the years he’d had occasional contact with Michael but it never got any easier. He always felt like an ant beneath a magnifying glass. The energy that rolled off the angel burned his skin and caused Bran to growl in anger. It was easier to show rage towards the archangel than admit he was scared shitless that his lover was trapped in hell.

Nikko came to stand beside him in an unusual show of solidarity.

“I think Lucifer has decided to keep our baby Luc. Someone will have to go get him.”

“I will.” Bran said.

Nikko was silent.

Michael pinned his cold gaze at the vampire. “Are you not also going to volunteer?”

Nikko shook his head. “I’ve done some horrific things in my life. If I were to step a foot in hell Lucifer would keep me for eternity. I love Luc but I can’t chance it.”

Michael nodded as if he already knew the answer. Bran decided that the all-seeing angel probably did. “We need someone to stay here anyway to help pull Bran and Luc back over.”

“I’ll go.” Jerrod peeked around the corner, his eyes wide with apprehension. “I can’t leave my master in hell.”

“I’d prefer to stay here.” Carn stood slightly behind Jerrod looking frightened. “Galthine might decide to keep me if I show up in hell. I can’t take the chance.” The demon shivered, his body shaking with fear. “If Luc stays there I have to return but I can’t go any sooner. I just can’t.” Carn started to sob.

Jerrod wrapped his arms around the shaking demon. “Shhh. It’s all right. Bran and I will go after Luc. You stay here and keep Nikko company. Shhh.”

After much stroking, Carn settled down. “I told Luc I would return to be with him if he stayed in hell. If it turns out he’s staying on purpose have him send for me. I might not be brave but I owe Luc my life.”

Jerrod stroked Carn’s rich red skin tracing the swirls of gold across one cheek. “I don’t think my master would’ve left us voluntarily. Something is keeping him there.”

Bran watched the two interact and wondered how close Luc’s new pets had grown in such a short space of time. Jerrod’s touching was intimate as if the pair were a bit more than friends.

Holding back his tears, Bran knew Luc would love to hear about it. Luc had a romantic streak three miles wide and if he guessed correctly his lover had hoped that Carn and Jerrod would get together when he assigned the demon to the vampire. Luc would be excited to learn that his plan worked.

Straightening his spine, Bran looked at the archangel. “What do I have to do?”

Michael looked the group over. “I can only send one. Bran will be the one to go.”

“I can’t go also?” Jerrod asked his eyes wide with worry.

"No. Only one."

Nikko glared. "Then why ask me?"

"I wanted to know the level of your devotion to Luc. If you were more dedicated then I would send you instead of Bran."

"It's not a matter of devotion to not want to be trapped in hell."

Michael shrugged raising his wings an inch off the floor. "It is a matter of perception."

Luc looked at the bars on his cave cell and knew there was no way out. Those weren't the usual metal bars. These ones held the spirits of dead men's souls. If you listened close enough you could still hear them screaming. To break them meant Luc would be dragged into the void for eternity. Something Lucifer knew his youngest son wouldn't chance.

"Nice touch father." Luc mumbled. He knew that Lucifer wasn't far. The devil would let his son sweat it out before turning up the torture. Maybe he'd send Galthine to try again but Luc doubted it. His father wasn't one for repeating his past mistakes. Since Galthine failed to persuade Luc the first time he probably wouldn't get a second chance.

"Luc."

Luc turned around.

Salvador walked up to the bars his eyes shining with tears. "Looks like I came just in time."

Luc frowned. "What are you doing here?"

Sal's clothes were torn, showing more than one bite mark through the tattered cloth. It looked as if the three days he'd spent in hell were rough ones. "I came to save you."

"B-but didn't you try to send me here only a few days ago?"

Sal shook his head. "I knew that by poisoning you, you would be restored but Bran would kill me, sending me here. Now that I'm here I can rescue you from your father."

"So let me get this right. You tried to kill me so that you could get here before me to save me."

Sal nodded.

"What kind of whacked out plan is that?"

Sal smiled. "Ask your angel. He's the one who came up with it."

"Michael."

The pieces of the puzzle fell into place for Luc. No wonder Salvador's sudden wish to become pack leader and take Luc hadn't made sense. It wasn't his plan. "You have no desire to be pack leader, do you?"

Sal shook his head. "I told Michael you'd figure it out but he still sees you as a kid who can't handle the truth." Sal stepped closer to the bars. "I wanted to tell you but now isn't the time to chat. Let's free you."

Luc could see the longing in his former pack mate's eyes.

"I don't see how you can get me out of here."

Sal produced a ring of keys from his pocket. "I didn't spend the last few days kicking my heels. I've been trying to devise a plan to get you out of here once you're trapped. Luckily there's no such thing as discretion in hell. I heard two demons talking about your father's plan to trap you and figured out how to help. I lifted these off the dungeon master so we'd best get out of here as soon as we can."

Luc warned, "Be careful not to touch the bars they're made out of souls of the dead and will suck you into the void if you make contact."

"Good to know." Sal cautiously approached the jail cell, careful not to touch the bars as he placed in one key into the lock after another. The fifth one fit and the doors swung open.

Luc jumped back as the door screamed past him. Not taking a chance with having the cell close again he rushed out, holding his breath until the door resealed behind him.

He was glad that he'd hurried.

"What now?" Luc asked hoping Sal had a follow up plan.

"Can't you just make a portal and get out of here?"

Luc shook his head. "I have to do it from my childhood bedroom and if I'm not mistaken, it's two floors up from here."

Sal swallowed. "You can make it. When you get back please tell Bran that I'm sorry for everything."

Wrapping his arms around Sal, Luc squeezed him tight. "You can tell him yourself." He said as he stepped back.

"What?"

"If Michael sent you here to help me, then you aren't meant to stay. Come with me and I'll get us out of here together."

Sal cupped Luc's cheek. "I'm sorry Luc, for everything. I've always loved you and I hated to die with you thinking I wanted you dead. If I get out of here I want you to know that I was always and will always be your friend."

"I know Salvador." He pressed a kiss on each of the wolf's cheeks. "Now let's get our asses out of hell."

Sal laughed and grabbed Luc's hand. "Do you know how to get to your bedroom from here?"

"No. If you haven't noticed hell moves as my father wills."

"That explains why I got so lost yesterday. I thought I'd taken a wrong turn."

Luc squeezed Sal's hand. "I'm surprised that you were able to get to me."

Shrugging, the wolf tugged Luc through the iron doorway and over the fallen guard.

"Did you kill him?" Luc asked curiously.

"Just knocked him out. I wasn't sure what the penalty was for killing someone in hell. I didn't want to have a reason to stay here in case Michael ever remembered me and tried to get me out."

"Good thinking." Luc knew that it didn't matter if you killed someone in hell. They always came back. After all they were in hell because they were dead souls or demons and neither could be permanently killed.

The pair turned the corner and Luc caught his breath. Galthine stood blocking their way, his large body making it impossible to get around him unnoticed.

"What's wrong?" Sal asked as Luc pulled him back around the corner.

"My brother is out there." Luc whispered.

"Will he help us?"

Luc shook his head. He didn't want the demon to hear him speaking.

"Come out, come out baby Lucifer." Galthine growled. "I know you're close. I can smell you."

Luc's body started shake. He didn't know how he healed the first time but he doubted he would be able to heal from whatever his brother planned for him this time.

"Come on baby brother, ripping your head off will only hurt a little." The demon's voice was low and persuasive. If Luc was any less powerful, the lure of Galthine's magic would have him running into his arms. That was how Galthine got his prey despite his sinister appearance.

Sal leaned forward to whisper in Luc's ear. "What do we do?"

Luc pressed his hand to the wall and imagined his room. For a second he thought he felt the wall shift but it stopped before anything formed. Since Hell usually allowed him a path his father must be controlling the structure.

"I'll go distract him." Sal said.

"No." Luc grabbed the wolf before he could do anything. "I've got an idea."

Luc whistled in a low tune. Seconds later, a trio of hounds appeared. They panted and sparks shot from their mouths.

"Get Galthine." He told them in a low voice.

The fiery hounds looked at him with soulless black eyes before giving a ringing bark and racing down the halls.

From around the corner he could hear his brother curse.

"That's cheating!" Galthine shouted.

Peeking around the corner, Luc saw his brother go down and pulled Sal down the hall behind him. There was just enough room to squeeze by but Luc knew Galthine wouldn't stay down and that he would come after them as soon as he was free.

"Run Sal!" Luc shouted picking up speed. He felt the wolf running behind him, his breath hot on Luc's neck.

Luc followed the familiar path to his room and luckily it was still the way he remembered. Hell hadn't reformed into different pathways.

It struck him then that Lucifer wasn't trying to stop him. Something else was going on.

Unfortunately, Luc didn't figure it out until he crossed the portal to his bedroom and into the arms of his brothers, Tavo and Lain.

"Gotcha." Tavo said with a wide smile. "Father thought you would come back here."

Lain gave an equally chilling smile. Too bad you're so predictable." He looked at Sal standing in the doorway and smirked. "What is it about the wolves that has you so enthralled?" Lain said looking Sal over like a piece of meat. "Maybe we should try one out and see what we're missing."

"Yeah, we don't usually get a chance to play with the shifters." Tavo agreed, setting Luc to one side.

"Now boys you know father told you to leave this one alone."

Sault walked into the room looking the twins over with disfavor. "If you touch him, I'll tell."

The twins stood around Sault like matching bookends. "Don't make us hurt you brother."

Sault flipped back his white-blond hair. "Father will make you suffer if you harm me."

Tavo shrugged. "Maybe, but not if we bring him Luc."

With blindingly fast motions, Sault whipped out a pair of swords and separated both twins from their heads. Warm blood squirted across Luc's bare chest. He held back the bile surging up his throat like an upcoming tide.

"Sault." Sal said disgusted. "I can't believe you did that."

Before Luc's surprised gaze his brother walked forward and kissed Sal with a passion that should've set his bedroom on fire.

"I may be a substitute for Luc but I'd never let them harm a hair on your beautiful head." Sault said to Sal. He turned to Luc, his eyes colder than a hellhound's heart. "Take him with you when you go and I will owe you a favor for eternity."

"I would've taken him with me anyway." Luc confessed. He didn't know what got into his brother but he wasn't going to shove aside some help. Scanning the room he grabbed some of the clothes he left there and grabbed his guitar. He didn't know who had returned it to his room but it was time to get the *hell* out of hell.

A loud pop filled the air and Bran appeared in the room.

"Bran!" Luc threw himself in his lover's arms. Joy filled him until he thought he'd burst but it was quickly followed by stark terror.

"What are you doing here?" He shouted. "My father will kill you."

Bran gripped Luc's arms and gave him a good shake. "There is no power in heaven or hell that could stop me from coming for you." He took Luc's lips in a brutal kiss that conveyed need, love and fear. All the emotions they were kept bottled inside poured from his body and into Luc's.

When they finally broke apart Sault was clapping. "I'm beginning to see why he's stayed with you all these years. Too bad you aren't loyal."

Bran glared at Sault.

Luc turned Bran's face towards him. "I found out that wasn't your fault."

"What?"

"Galathine planted the idea into your head and placed a spell so it would consume you. He didn't count on your wolf denying the claiming."

Bran smiled. "I was wondering why it became so important to me. Even while I was pursuing the females, I longed for you but I couldn't seem to stop myself."

Brushing the tears from his wolf's eyes, Luc gave his lover a gentle kiss. "I'm glad. Now let's get out of here."

For the first time Bran noticed Sal. He growled and flashed a set of suddenly sharp teeth at the other man.

Luc smacked him in the chest. "Stop that. He did it all for me. Michael put him up to it."

"What?" Bran stared at Luc as if waiting for him to say he was kidding. "Is there anything in our life that wasn't orchestrated by someone else?" He asked disgustedly.

"Us. We might be soul mates but no one can predict love."

Bran gave Luc a sappy smile and interlaced his right hand with Luc's left. "Let's get out of here beautiful."

Luc nodded. "Let's."

Before Luc could start his chant, the room dissolved. When his vision cleared he was in his father's throne room looking up at the chair of bones.

Crap.

“Luc, my son. How kind of you to bring me visitors. I’ve always wanted to meet this wolf of yours but you know I’m not allowed to visit the earthly plane.”

There were many moments in Luc’s life where he felt scared but they were all eclipsed by the sight of his father smiling at the love of his life.

“It’s a shame that Galthine was so easily able to influence you.”

Bran bowed his head but not before Luc saw his disgruntled expression. He knew the were felt bad enough, it didn’t help that everyone kept throwing it back into his face.

“I almost killed you when you broke my son’s heart but I decided it was more punishment to let you live without him.” Lucifer turned his frightening gaze onto Luc.

“But then you forgave him. Why is that son? Why would you forgive someone who hurt you?”

“The same reason I forgive you each year father. I love him.”

Despite being the king of evil, there were moments in his life that Luc cherished. Moments that involved his father. Like when he was five and his father made it snow in hell because Luc had read a story about snow and wanted to see it. Or the litter of hellhound puppies he got for his tenth birthday. Not to mention freeing Luc from hell so he could explore the earthly plane. Yes, Lucifer did many things to help his son but that didn’t make him a good guy.

“What do you think I should do Luc? You escaped from your prison and got your brother to kill the twins. It will take a great deal of energy to bring them back. What do you think is a suitable punishment?”

“Letting him go.” Freen appeared out from behind Lucifer’s throne, his dark eyes gleaming with malice.

“Let him go?” Lucifer frowned at his son. “Why would I want to do that?”

“Because I’m certain Michael sent the wolf after Luc and if he doesn’t show up soon the angel will be very angry. We don’t need a holy war because you’re peeved.”

Lucifer waved a hand and Freen was thrown across the room. His slim body slammed into the rock wall and he tumbled to the ground in a graceless heap.

Luc tried to feel sympathetic but since the man just spent an hour torturing him it was difficult to drudge up a proper amount of sympathy for his brother.

When he looked up, his father was stroking the beard on his chin. His malicious eyes luminous. “He does have a point as much as I hate to say it. Did you want to go spend your life with this wolf of yours?”

Luc nodded. “Yes father.”

“Very well. Then you can both stay here.”

Lucifer said it like he was conferring a great favor. Luc felt his heart stutter. “Bran is not going to stay in hell.”

“Why? Doesn’t he love you enough?” His tone was perfect, almost fatherly “I’m sure Michael wouldn’t object if you were with the love of your life.”

Luc knew that Michael wouldn’t be able to do a damned thing if Lucifer kept him.

“I love him enough.” Bran said stepping forward. “I’ll stay with him if that’s what I need to do to be by his side.”

“I wasn’t talking to you.” Lucifer said, his eyes glowing red.

There had to be a way out of this. Luc couldn’t think, couldn’t function. Images of his beloved wolf trapped in hell for eternity rattled his brain like a hamster on crack.

No.

Remembering Michael's words, Luc pulled the guitar around the front of his body and started playing. His fingers strummed a tune, a forgotten melody that floated through his brain and flowed through his fingers.

Before he knew it, Bran was grabbing his arm and pulling him backwards.

Luc looked up and his fingers froze on the strings.

"Keep playing."

Swallowing the lump of fear in his throat, Luc backed away slowly letting Bran guide his steps. The chair was dissolving.. Bones set in the chair for centuries were rising from their place and reforming into their former shapes. By the end of Luc's song, six angels regained their skeletal structure and flesh was starting to grow and cover the bones.

Luc wanted to stop and run out screaming, but if he stopped now they would only be partially formed. So he let Bran lead him away step by step. When the last angel formed, the six turned on Lucifer. The screams followed Luc, Sal, Bran and Sault as they ran out of the room.

It felt like an eternity since Luc last saw the welcoming doorway of his room. Grabbing a pillowcase he snatched bits and pieces of his life in hell and stuffed them inside. He wouldn't be returning here, ever.

"Ready to go?" Bran asked, taking the pillowcase to carry for his lover.

With a final glance around the room, Luc nodded. "Yeah, I'm done here."

"Take me with you." Sault said.

Luc looked at his brother in surprise. "Why would I want to do that?"

"Because Sal is my lover and I don't want us to be parted."

Luc looked at Sal and his brother.

"Forget it." Bran said. "You tortured Luc for years."

"I had to." Sault turned his one eye to Luc. "I won't say that I wasn't jealous but I never wanted to hurt you. Father always had the upper hand and would make threats if I became reluctant. You know I always took it easy on you."

Luc nodded. That was true. As easy as a person could who was supposed to be torturing you.

"Please Bran." Sal asked the alpha. "I have never asked for anything but I am asking for this."

Knowing Bran would make the right decision in the end Luc closed his eyes and formed a portal in his mind. When his eyes opened he could see into the living room of his house.

"Fine, come with us." Bran growled. "But if you do anything to hurt Luc I'll rip your head off of your shoulders."

"Fair enough." Sal said.

Only a demon would think that.

"Everyone through, I have to go last."

One by one everyone walked through the portal. Luc took one last look around.

"Goodbye father." He said sadly before exiting hell for the last time.

He left hell and walked into the arms of his vampire.

"Baby, are you all right?" Nikko clutched Luc like they had been separated for centuries.

"Air." He gasped.

“Oh sorry.” Nikko relaxed his hold but he still didn’t let go of Luc entirely.

“Master.” Luc looked over the vampire’s shoulder to see Jerrod and Carn standing there looking at him with astonishment.

“Hello, boys.” Luc wiggled out of Nikko’s embrace, escaping with just a few bruises from the vampire’s tight grip.

Jerrod ran across the room and wrapped himself Luc. Sobbing, his body shook. “I-I was s-so worried.” He wheezed, clutching Luc tight. He placed soft kisses all over Luc’s face.

Luc pulled Jerrod away so he could look at him. Tears raced down the vampire’s face. “It’s okay honey. I’m all right.”

“Did they hurt you?”

Luc nodded. He couldn’t lie to the vamp. “But I’m fine now and I won’t have to go back again.”

He didn’t want to think about what would happen if Lucifer overpowered the angels again. His father wasn’t the forgiving type.

“He couldn’t even if he wanted to.” Michael’s voice boomed through the room. “It’s nice to see you’ve chosen your side.”

Releasing Jerrod, Luc turned to confront the angel. “What happened back there?”

Michael threw back his head and laughed. “What do you think happened?”

Bran growled. “How did Luc make those angels reform?”

“The song was an unbinding spell. It unbound the spell your father created to set the angels in his chair. When you played it, you freed them from their confinement and they were able to overtake Lucifer.” Michael said.

“Will he be all right?” Luc hated himself for asking but Lucifer was still his father.

Michael nodded. “But he probably won’t be in any condition to run hell for quite some time.”

Bran stepped forward to wrap an arm around Luc in a show of support.

Luc smiled. “Thank you Michael for everything and for sending Sal and Bran to help me.”

“Thank you for getting me out of there.” Sal said from the shelter of Sault’s arms.

“But I don’t know what I’ll do now. I can’t return to the pack after Bran killed me in front of them.”

He had a point. The pack wouldn’t accept him after everything he’d done even if he did it for Luc’s benefit.

“You and Sault can stay here with me.”

“Really?” Sault’s face lit with joy, an expression Luc couldn’t remember ever seeing before. “Thanks Luc. I won’t be here forever just until I can figure out what to do with myself.” He nuzzled Sal’s cheek with his nose like an affectionate cat. “And my lover.”

Luc watched as Sal glowed. Who knew that his psychotic one-eyed brother was a closet romantic?

He turned to his own lover.

“Bran we still have the problem of where you’re going to live. You can’t just leave your pack; And Jerrod and Carn can’t come and live with wolves.”

Bran held Luc’s face between his two large hands forcing him to look into his eyes. “Despite my past behavior I know where my future lies. I will come and live with you. I

want to sleep beside you, wake up beside you and fight over who gets the first cup of coffee in the morning. I've missed your skin next to mine and if one day you decide you wish to be a demon lord, I'll murder a basketful of kittens in a playground full of kindergarteners if it will send me to hell to be by your side."

Luc stroked Bran's hands with his own. "I don't know if that is the most romantic thing I've ever heard or the most disturbing." Luc said, leaning up and placing a soft kiss on his lover's lips.

"I give up, I can't compete."

The pair turned to see Nikkolai looking at them with disgust. The vampire had his hands on his hips as he regarded them. "You win Bran. I release any claims I have on Luc. Sorry Luc, but Bran's your man and from that display I can see I don't have the devotion to even be in the running. But I guess you knew that." The vampire gave a self-effacing grin. "Jerrod would give his life for you, your demon would let you take him back to hell to be your servant, the wolf let himself be killed so he could help you and this one," he waved his hand towards Bran, "would do anything for you. I love of you but I don't think that I'm ready for the amount of commitment you require."

He gave an evil glare to the werewolf who glared back. "Luckily werewolves don't live forever and by the time your devoted pet is gone I'll be ready to be yours. Until then, consider me your mate in waiting."

Luc stepped away from Bran and walked over to the vampire. Looking into Nikkolai's eyes he removed his necklace and placed it in the vampire's hands, closing his fingers over it. "Then why don't you hold onto this until we're ready."

Nikko nodded and slipped the priceless necklace into his pocket. He put his hands on Luc's shoulders. "If you ever need anything, anything," he said with a little shake, "I will be here." He leaned forward and whispered in Luc's ear. "I know what you did for me with the demons and I owe you one."

Luc smiled and gave Nikkolai a soft kiss on the lips, barely brushing them. "Maybe you should look for another mate instead of waiting for me."

Nikkolai laughed. "You're kind of a hard man to replace. No, you can live happily ever after with your wolf and when that part of your life has run its course I'll be here waiting."

"Make sure you have hot sex with a lot of hot guys while you're pining." Luc laughed.

Nikko placed a kiss on each of Luc's cheeks. "Will do. But know that each of them will wear your face."

Luc nodded, but couldn't keep the sadness from his expression as he watched Nikko leave. He gave a smile to his lover when Bran walked up behind him and gave him a hug.

"He'll be fine." Bran whispered in his ear.

"I know." Luc said turning to kiss his lover. "I know."

Nikko left Luc's house, fingering the necklace in his pocket. When he got to his room above the club he went to the sideboard and poured himself a glass of aged brandy. "I will have you one day, my love." Nikko said, sipping. "One day we will be together."

Although it was tempting to take out the werewolf sooner than later, he'd rather have a sad-eyed beauty leaning on him for support than an angry hell lord sending him down

under. Sitting down in his beautiful empty suite, the powerful vampire leader leaned his head back and dreamed of the day when he could call Luc his own.

The End